

Hon Michael Wood

MP for Mt Roskill

Minister of Transport

Minister for Workplace Relations and Safety

Deputy Leader of the House



02 AUG 2021

Matthew Hooton

fyi-request-15867-cb2a0763@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Matthew

I refer to your request dated 22 June 2021, pursuant to the Official Information Act 1982, seeking:

“ all written advice you have received as Minister of Transport since 1 January 2021 on:

1) human rights, labour standards and environmental issues associated with the mining of cobalt, lithium, nickel and other rare earth metals required for the batteries of electric vehicles

2) how batteries required for electric vehicles will be recycled or disposed of in New Zealand over the next 30 years, and in what volumes, and how any disposal sites will be kept safe...”

I have not received any advice within the scope of your request, however I have provided some information below that you may find useful. The Climate Change Commission's final report covers this and can be found at <https://www.climatecommission.govt.nz/our-work/advice-to-government-topic/inaia-tonu-nei-a-low-emissions-future-for-aotearoa/>.

I agree that more transparency is needed about the humanitarian impacts resulting from the manufacture of batteries for electric vehicles. The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights outlines the responsibility of companies to respect international human rights in their global processes, including in their supply chains. This requires that companies carry out human rights due diligence “to identify, prevent, mitigate and account for how they address their impacts on human rights”.

Using the international standards on human rights and supply chains, Amnesty International assessed the quality of cobalt sourcing practices of 29 large companies, including large electric suppliers. You can find the final report of this assessment at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr62/7395/2017/en/>.

I understand your concerns about the environmental and humanitarian impact resulting from the manufacture and disposal of batteries for electric vehicles. The Government is carefully considering the overall impact of electric vehicles, including battery recycling, refurbishment, and reuse, and the environmental and/or humanitarian impacts resulting from the manufacture of batteries for electric vehicles.

In 2020, the Government announced that e-waste, including EV batteries, will be one of six products to be declared “priority products” for regulated product stewardship under

the Waste Minimisation Act 2008. Regulated product stewardship helps put the responsibility for a product's life-cycle and waste management on manufacturers, importers, retailers and users, rather than on communities, councils, neighbourhoods and nature.

In 2020, the Government approved \$97,200 in funding from the Waste Minimisation Fund for the Battery Industry Group (BIG) to research and develop a scheme for large batteries, for both stationary energy storage and EVs. You can find out more about the BIG scheme at <https://big.org.nz/>. You can also find out more about regulated product stewardship at <https://environment.govt.nz/what-government-is-doing/areas-of-work/waste/product-stewardship/EECA>.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Wood', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Hon Michael Wood
Minister of Transport