

Transcript of the Spotlight video from the Australian broadcaster 7News

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Transcript:

(00:05) Tonight, the clean green dream destroying lives. >> Every Australian should be concerned about this. It's renewables at all cost. >> If a farmer or a primary producer did that, they'd be in jail. This is absolutely criminal behavior. paying the Chinese to own our renewable future. >> I'd simply say >> They're blocking us in gate.

(00:41) >> The madness they don't want you to see. Sir, don't be shy. Don't be shy. I >> don't think we can blame the Chinese for taking advantage of our stupidity. >> Chris Bowen is a train wreck. Everything he touches TURNS TO CRAP. So why are we letting this happen? >> But Minister, why can't you sit down and answer open, honest questions? >> Hello, I'm Michael Usher and welcome to Spotlight.

(01:16) War in the Middle East is hitting Australia where it hurts, the hip pocket, and it's exposed a dangerous truth. Our reliance on overseas supplies means our energy security is hanging by a thread. The government says the answer is more renewables, wind, solar, and massive battery farms. But as you're about to see, the push for a clean, green future is coming at a deadly and devastating cost.

(01:43) Tonight, reporter Liam Bartlett uncovers the harsh reality behind the energy revolution we're being sold. If there's a single mineral that sparked our renewable revolution, it's cobalt. It has been the key element in practically every storage battery on the planet. From our EVs to our homes to the monster batteries now straddling the outback.

(02:20) And Culazi in the Democratic Republic of the Congo's deep south is where most of it comes from. It's called the cobalt capital of the world. A majority of the open cut mines here are Chinese own controlled by the Communist Party. But there's a dark truth to Cowazi that the Chinese try to hide from Western journalists.

(02:53) men, women, even children forced to work in medieval conditions just so countries like Australia can have cobalt for our renewable energy grid like the thousands of massive batteries we'll need to store all that wind and solar power. The fact is our clean green dream is a congalles nightmare. >> It's little wonder they call it blood cobalt.

(03:47) I >> tell you what, I've seen a lot of mining operations. Never seen one like this. You coming? Yep. I'm got you. Yep. Unbelievable. That Tens of thousands of subsistence or artisal miners, a slave labor army, live and die at places like Shabara Mine. >> To witness Shabara is to make you wonder where simple humanity fits into the master plan of our government's renewable energy policy.

(04:40) Almost 80% of the world's cobalt is mined in places like this in this region. And the Chinese are the criminals here, both for these people and for the environment. But make no mistake, we're also contributing to this man-made hell. These subsistence miners are not officially employed and work with the most rudimentary tools.

(05:24) Often just their bare hands to pick off cobalt ore. All too often things turn deadly. An unknown number of workers were buried alive in this mine collapse at Shabara late last year. Now excavators chip away at the remaining slates of loose rock. Not to recover bodies, but

cobalt or >> the red flashing. In a residential district of Kwazi, we find hundreds of miners doing what is possibly the most dangerous job in the world.

(06:19) >> How how deep is that, Kimble? >> It's 105 m deep. >> 105 m? >> Yeah. 105 >> straight down. >> Yeah. The Chinese companies take no responsibility for the deadly risks that come with these improvised underground mines. Primitive shoring, no safety harnesses, and if something goes wrong, no chance. >> Jeez, look at that.

(07:08) >> And they just go down with bare feet. >> Yeah, just bare feet. But uh >> but they don't have a they didn't those guys didn't have a safety harness or anything. They no harness, nothing. >> Yeah. No, no, no. There's no problem. >> Those are all of them. But it's 100 100 meters down. >> Yeah.

(07:26) That's why we say that when you commit some some error, oh you fall down, you die. It's just like this. This is a resting job. >> Dozens of men make this descent at a time, sliding through narrow bottlenecks with the everpresent threat that the shaft will cave in. All for \$30 a day. >> Is it worth it? Is it worth Is it worth people risking their life to get this stuff to sell to China? >> Yeah.

(08:08) Yeah. In way to survive to to look for money. We don't know what we can do. That That's what happens. >> It's a very That's the toughest way to earn a living that I've ever seen, I think. >> Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Bringing the cobalt ore up is even more dangerous. Sacks passed from one man to the next. A single slip could take dozens to their deaths.

(08:36) >> You're helping the Chinese get rich. >> We are not helping him. We are forced. That's the problem. We are forced. Yeah, we are forced. Remember, the Chinese are monopolizing this cobalt to build pretty much every type of battery in Australia's renewable energy chain. And if what you've seen so far gives you pause for thought, it gets worse.

(09:06) A whipping directed by three Chinese bosses. One of them appearing to smile against miners suspected of stealing cobalt. >> Patrick Kenongi had to watch this happen to his brother. I felt so sad. It was that's I saw it. I didn't have a power just to stop the police the soldiers who were beating my young brother.

(09:38) >> And that was your own brother? Yeah, I want to stop it. >> To ensure it's vicelike control over the workers, one Chinese mining company has even bought the cobaltri land beneath this village. The deal involving local corrupt officials means everyone who lives here must mine for cobalt. That includes the children, many under the age of 10.

(10:13) It's very terrible to see these children in the mind. They're exposed to many danger and it's very terrible. >> Glattis NMBBO works for an organization that tries to intervene and get these children in school. Do you think the Chinese companies rely on these these child workers to maintain their profits? >> Yeah, because uh the coboard for children is is very cheap.

(10:50) Is very cheap and they they don't care about the the health of the children. They >> they know they know >> they know what's going on. >> Yeah. All up, there's about 40,000 children working in Colazi's cobalt mines. Unable to collect as much ore as adults. They earn a pittance for taking the same deadly risks. >> Have you ever asked the Chinese companies to stop using child labor? We are talking to them, but they don't want to listen.

(11:39) They don't want to listen. >> These kids are not only cheap labor for the Chinese. But just like the adults they work alongside, they're expendable. Dozens of videos we've obtained prove just how cheap life is. At this mine, a Chinese company has sent in these artisal miners to illegally scavenge for cobalt ore. It's only so long before the mine's security fire on the miners.

(12:22) There's mass panic and a stampede kills over a hundred. Many more are still missing. Our attempts to investigate the aftermath. Sparked this confrontation. There's no safety. Some people are dying in a Chinese mining. But you cannot see uh anybody talking about it. It's very quiet.

(12:55) Some siblings said they keeping secret keeping secret. Yes. And the abuse and exploitation continues right up the supply chain. The cobalt ore gathered by the artisal miners has to be sold at what are called buy houses run by Chinese brokers. These brokers set extraordinarily low prices often claiming that the ore is inferior quality. The locals have no comeback except anger and frustration.

(13:46) So he was worried that the Chinese buyer was being deceitful and >> trying to hide something. >> Exactly. Exactly. They are cheating on people. Yeah. Of course. Yeah. They're cheating. They're cheating. Okay. Understand. Naturally, we had questions for these Chinese brokers. >> That guy's running up to warn him, I think.

(14:19) Running up to tell him, >> I think so. >> Yeah. >> We're from Australia. >> So, you do? >> Yeah. Australia. >> We'd like to know how you operate here. How you >> how you sell the cobalt? >> I >> can we talk about the cobalt? How you dictate the prices? Sir, don't be shy. Don't be shy. >> Are are you being fair to all the Congalles? >> So why why are you hiding your face? >> You know, incredible.

(14:53) >> The people who dominate the market, they're very very shy when it comes to explaining actually how they do it and how they get all the money and how they buy it at the price they dictate and then send it back to China. The final step in China's operation happens at this tightly guarded facility in Kwazi. Here, the blood cobalt mined by children and slave labor is mixed with regular ore, concealing its dirty origins from countries like Australia, where it's destined to be used in our renewable grid.

(15:39) It's here in South Australia's Mid North where our renewable revolution hit a fork in the road. Because when it comes to renewables, storage, energy storage is everything. South Australia has always been more dependent on renewable energy than any other state. But in 2016, there was nowhere to store all that generated power.

(16:09) So, when a once- ina century storm hit, triggering a statewide blackout, 850,000 homes and businesses were left in the dark with no backup electricity source. So, a bloke called Elon Musk promised to build the world's biggest battery right here. He said he'd do it in under a 100 days or it would be free.

(16:36) He did it in ' 63. Come and have a look. The Hornsdale big battery seemed to be dramatic proof of concept that renewables could provide an uninterrupted power source. Politicians and industry fell in love with this thing. But just one point Elon didn't mention. According to Amnesty International, this almost certainly contains blood cobalt from the Congo.

(17:07) And it gets even worse. Next on China's renewable rampage, copper. A poisonous tidal wave of uranium, arsic, cyanide, and acid. The catastrophe. They're blocking us in. Go. Go. China's trying to cover up. >> Turn around, mate. Quickly. >> So why are we letting them vandalize Australia? If a farmer or a primary producer did that, they'd be in jail.

(17:40) This is absolutely criminal behavior. We're in central Queensland about to get an aerial view of the destruction that's happening in the name of our renewable transition. With me is cgrapher and environmental activist Steven Nacowski. He's been a greeny all his life, so you'd think he'd be a champion of renewable energy.

(18:22) Well, think again. To me, this brings tears to my eyes. This is absolutely criminal behavior. If a farmer or a primary producer did that, they'd be in jail. Far from supporting the net zero policy being pushed by Federal Energy Minister Chris Bowen, Steven believes it's the greatest environmental catastrophe of our time.

(18:52) What this country is trying to embark on is a new industrial revolution. And I see dystopia. I just see a dystopia future. Steven has spent the last four years mapping the devastation our green revolution is causing. The latest figure from Minister Bowen is that we need 10,000 km of transmission lines. We need tens of thousands of wind towers.

(19:28) And when people start talking about a green energy superpower for this nation, that sends shivers down my spine. To achieve that, we need about seven times the spatial footprint of the state of Tasmania covered in glass and steel. And most of it is made in China. Across the entire Australian continent, Steven tracks every road, every transmission line, wind turbine, and solar panel submitted for approval and the damage they're causing to the land and the wildlife. Yeah.

(20:14) So, look, we've got some more birds and bats here. You can really see that they've they've been impacted directly beneath the blades. So, this is a fresh kill would have happened last night. This is not for the climate. This is all about big business and money. >> This wind farm, 1,100 hectares of clearing. >> Well, what just to put the wind turbines on? >> Just to get the holage road.

(20:40) So, you can see the nature of the terrain. It's very rugged. Really, really rugged topography. So a lot of land needs to be cleared to get these big components, the 80 m long blades up into these mountains. So the roads need to be about 70 m wide. So the tops of all these mountains are going to be uh ex dynamited out with you the use of explosives.

(21:06) And this is only the tip of the iceberg. Below us, 100 wind turbines stretching as far as the eye can see. Each one of them 200 m high and built by Chinese turbine giant Shing Jang Goldwind. >> This is great forest. This is remnant forest full of koalas and greater gliders. >> Well, what what did they do with the koalas? Well, in the management plan, uh, if a koala has been found that is injured from the land clearing events, they need to be hit with a blunt forced instrument to the back of the head.

(21:54) >> What? They just euthanized the koala. >> That's right. Yeah. So, they euthanize the koala or any mammal for that in that for that matter. >> And the collateral damage to our wildlife is set to rise. So, what we're seeing here is 100 wind towers. What I've mapped for Australiawide is 31,000 additional wind towers yet to be built.

(22:19) >> What? >> Well, 31,000 wind towers are in the pipeline at different stages of the approval process right now. on top of these >> on top of these >> 31,000 >> 31,000 >> and most of them either Chinese made or built with Chinese components they and every other source of renewable energy from solar farms to giant batteries needs copper copper to generate it or copper to transmit it.

(22:54) up to 12 times more copper than is required for the fossil fuel power grid. Which means, surprise, surprise, that China has scoured the planet for dirt cheap copper to sell back to us. They found it in Zambia. And once again, China has thrown away the rule book. February 18, 2025, the Chinesebuilt wall of a massive tailings storage facility in Zambia's copper belt collapses catastrophically due to shoddy design and construction.

(23:40) The mine is owned by Sino Metals, a Chinese government company. The dam burst caused an unprecedented environmental disaster. The destruction immense. But it was the level of deception by the Chinese company that was also pretty amazing. You see, Sino originally said it was just a small dam burst, a little toxic spill of about 50,000 tons.

(24:10) But according to an independent investigator, the horrific truth was almost 30 times higher than that. 1 and a half million tons, a poisonous tidal wave of uranium, arsenic, cyanide, and acid. >> The damn waste was so acidic it could dissolve human bones. It swept directly into the Kafou River, a vital waterway that sustains more than half the nation's population.

(24:42) Over the years, we've had a number of mining disasters, but this is probably the biggest well, ever since I was born. >> We went to question the Chinese mine management, >> but suddenly three trucks tried to block us in. We're getting in the car now. Let's get in the car. >> They're trying to block us in.

(25:04) Quick, >> they're trying to block us in, mate. >> We know activists have been detained here without cause. >> They're blocking us in. Go, go, go, >> go, go, go. They're blocking us. Turn around. Turn around. >> Turn around, mate. Quickly. >> Turn around. Turn around. >> Go, go, go, go, go, go, go, go, go. Fast, fast, fast.

(25:26) >> Up here. Keep going. Keep going. Keep going. Get out of here. Drive, drive, drive. Okay, where are we? >> The head office for this mob is a bit further down this road, but we've been told in no uncertain terms if we try to approach them, we'll be arrested. Now, that's what Sino Metals has done. It's made this a no-go zone for journalists and anyone else who tries to hold them to account.

(25:51) They've also tried to silence the farmers whose lands are pretty much now toxic waste dumps. They offered those farmers \$25 each when this spill happened to sign a deed of agreement so they'd never have the right to sue the Chinese-owned company. The good news is that almost 300 of those farmers refused to sign and they've started a class action lawsuit historically for this country for \$80 billion.

(26:21) >> This is not going to be easy. We are fighting a country in short. You know who the owners of the mine are. >> Lawyer Meuli Batakarti and his colleagues represent the local farmers suing the Chinese state-owned mining giant. >> I think it will be important that we stay in the fight. >> We don't give up.

(26:44) Of course, we are dealing with powerful people, powerful companies. We're going up against a giant. It's a David versus Goliath affair. Yes. all this copper that Sino metals, this Chinese company is making its profits on to sell to countries like ours for a green future. >> Yeah. >> How do you make sense of that? >> Unfortunately, uh we are at the should I say the tail end.

(27:15) We're at the tail end of the chain because you guys on your part of the world, you're talking about clean energy, you're talking about renewable energy, green revolution and whatever. Maybe the question I'll throw it back to you is it really clean? Maybe it's clean on your side, but on our side it's definitely not clean and we're not seeing the cleanliness about it.

(27:35) We are paying a hefty price to take clean energy to you guys on on that other side of the world and I guess we are carrying you on our shoulders and it's it's quite heavy. And we are paying a a huge price. Some are paying with their lives. >> Up next, the fight to save Australia's Amazon. >> For Beijing, this is a nothing.

(28:10) They couldn't give a damn about it. >> As China prepares to decimate a national treasure. >> Well, I don't think we can blame the Chinese for taking advantage of our stupidity. While farming communities facing an existential threat fight back, >> Chris Bowen is a train wreck. Everything he touches turns to crap. There are surely few places on Earth as beautiful as Tasmania's wild western wilderness.

(28:55) The Tarkine is the southern hemisphere's largest cool temperature rainforest, a relic of the ancient supercontinent, Gondwana. It's where I meet the father of Australia's green movement, Dr. Bob Brown. This is magnificent, Bob, isn't it? >> Well, it's an ancient myrtle. And it's a giant of the rainforest. And who knows, 500, 600,000 years old.

(29:30) This tree has seen it all. And it marks Bob's breaking point with our government's green energy policy and its dependence on China. The bulldozers would move in. These trees would go. Not this one. This one would go. Yes. It's in the way. That's it. That's the end of its career. Done. Finished. Out.

(29:57) And out of sight, out of mind. That's the beauty of this as far as MMG is concerned. They think people aren't going to see this. >> Bob's talking about MMG, a Chinese mining giant we discovered plays an integral role in the Chinese Communist Party's campaign to dominate the global cobalt market in Congo. Now, you'd think with all that a company like MMG would not exactly be welcome with open arms here in Australia.

(30:34) Well, be prepared for a shock because not only does this Chinese company own and operate a mine here, its operations are smack bang in the heart of Tasmania's pristine wilderness. Worse still, to expand its existing copper, zinc, and lead mine, MMG plans to bulldoze hundreds of hectares of the Tarkine for a new gigantic tailings dam of toxic sludge.

(31:10) >> For the mining corporation run from Beijing, this is a nothing. They haven't been here. They haven't seen it. They don't care about it. They couldn't give a damn about it. But Australians should care about it because cool temperature forests like the Tarkine are our most effective tool for storing CO2 emissions.

(31:42) If the powers that be eventually give this Chinese company the approval, what sort of damage will happen here? Well, utter destruction. It'll become a completely devoid of life and that means forever. Never get it back again. You know, Beijing these days has more billionaires than New York. They don't care.

(32:14) Why should they? And if they can get compliant governments to tick off in what they're doing, fantastic. The Communist Party flag is flying very proudly here. And why wouldn't they be confident? You see, we've been told by an insider at the Department of the Environment that the approval for this controversial tailing dam has already been decided.

(32:45) So if a company like MMG came to you and said, "Okay, look, you just give us this bit of forest. We're going to be so much more productive. We're going to produce so much more copper and zinc that it's going to produce another 6,000 wind turbines and 60,000 solar panels and put another 50,000 electric vehicles on the road.

(33:06) And that means the world overall, especially in Australia, will be greener and Chris Bowen will be very happy. What would you say to that? >> Well, I'd simply say The world is not going to be greener. The world is going to be more deprived of its environment, of its life, a bit more of what this wild planet gave life to all of us, which sustains all of us will be destroyed.

(33:32) and your public relations campaign doesn't get past me. >> In Tazzay, it's virgin rainforest to be sacrificed on the altar of renewable energy. All across the mainland, it's our \$100 billion farming industry. In central Queensland, thousands of acres of prime agricultural and grazing land will be covered by more than a million solar panels.

(34:07) The site is bigger than Norfolk Island. It's 2 and a half times the size of Great Keell Island and it's 7,264 football fields of this beautiful soil that will be going under toxic junk. I'm sure plenty of us have been here a long long time and for these turkeys to come in and just think this is great is going to destroy our our future and our lives.

(34:41) The Creed family has been here since the 1860s. Now they feel they are being forced out as a solar farm which will surround them is given our government's final tick of approval. >> We know a lot of this market's being dominated by Chinese suppliers, Chinese manufacturers. How do you feel about that? >> Well, I don't think we can blame the Chinese for taking advantage of our stupidity.

(35:10) I mean, if if you've got something that you can sell to stupid people and they buy it, it's quite smart. We're food producers. Like, I've wanted to produce food since I was little. Like, that's all I wanted to do. And I mean, I'm I'm sick of being a policeman here trying to fight this thing. >> Farmers in Western Victoria's Mali Food Bowl are also in the crosshairs of the government's green general, energy minister Chris Bowen.

(35:42) net zero and climate action is unquestionably in Australia's economic best interests. It makes no economical sense. It makes no environmental sense. >> Farmers here have decided the Mali will be ground zero in the fight back against net zero. If Chris Bowen has his way, hundreds of properties here will be torn up to create a 400 km corridor for transmission lines.

(36:21) That includes Marcia McIntyre's farm. It's been in the family for six generations. When the minister Chris Bowen gets up in parliament and says smart people in Australia, the rest of Australia, farming communities are behind this. What goes through your mind? >> Well, you know, we we have met with Chris and we've told him specifically that our community and that's that's our entire broader community is against this.

(36:50) And he basically said he doesn't believe us or he didn't want to hear it. We f we left that meeting thinking it wouldn't matter what we said uh it would be completely ignored. This is what the 85 m tall transmission lines will look like. And around it, much of the Mali is set to become a vast renewable energy zone covered by Chinese-made wind and solar farms.

(37:13) In total, these zones cover nearly 8% of Victoria's total land area. Mom, I'm on >> farmers are pretty pragmatic and if they thought that this was a good project for Australia and if they thought this was going to be beneficial to Australia, you know, they'd negotiate to get a good deal out of it.

(37:35) But, you know, it would happen. Everybody knows that this is this is bad for Australia. It's an unnecessary project as is the entire renewables roll out. After the break, >> this is the largest pure cobalt project in the world. >> Australia's squandered opportunity. >> We have 80,000 ton of cobalt in reserves.

(38:01) It's almost one car for every adult in Australia. >> So why is our energy minister putting our taxpayer dollars into this Chinese Communist Party project instead? Australia stands accused of preaching the noble cause of renewable energy while ignoring the horrific reality of China's influence over our renewable grid. From the destruction of our protected forests and farmland to the critical minerals like cobalt, China pillages from developing countries.

(38:57) What makes this terrible place even worse and our complicity in all this even less justifiable is that we don't need China's blood cobalt. You see about 14,000 kilometers in that direction. We've got the world's second largest reserves just sitting in the ground in what was once and could be again Australia's mineral treasure trove.

(39:35) You know, Australia's got probably the best geology in the world. We've got everything in the ground, but one of the challenges is how do we get it out of the ground? How do we get some value for the nation? And how do we build our economy going forward? Since its inception, Andrew Tong's Cobalt Blue has spent \$115 million digging and testing to confirm a record-breaking cobalt deposit just outside Australia's iconic mining town.

(40:07) >> So, this is it. >> This is it. Welcome to the mine site, Lamb. In total, we have 120 million ton of ore that we want to mine. And that'll take about 20 25 years to mine. >> That's a lot of cobalt. It's a big reserve. >> It is. >> How does that compare on a world scale? >> Uh this is the largest pure cobalt project in the world.

(40:30) Um and we're looking to bring it into production as soon as we can. >> Cobalt Blue has even developed a revolutionary way of refining cobalt. But their or reserve is effectively worthless because China is flooding the world with cheap blood cobalt from Congo which Australians are being sold in the form of cheap Chinese-made batteries.

(40:59) Are you comfortable with the fact that we end up buying cobalt from Chinese manufacturers? >> Look, personally, I'm not very comfortable with that. We've been very happy for China to take near monopolistic positions in all of these critical minerals. We've done that with no regard to the environment, no regard to labor standards and been very happy to buy back the products.

(41:24) >> Andrew has even secured 30% of the funding to build a refinery in Western Australia on the proviso that he can find the rest of the finance. But incredibly, the federal government still refuses to guarantee a bank loan. >> Let me get this right. Your company has got all the necessary environmental approvals.

(41:47) You've proven up your reserve. We know how crucial cobalt is. So why won't the federal government go ahead and underwrite a bank loan to help you build the refinery? >> Uh that is a work in progress, but you really need to talk to the federal government about their priorities. To say those priorities seem to topsyturvy is an understatement.

(42:14) Energy Minister Chris Bowen's capacity investment scheme is pouring billions of federal dollars into underwriting renewable energy and battery storage projects. Under its rules, a local company like Andrews stands little chance against the cut price bids of, you guessed it, China. And here is the shocking example.

(42:42) This \$100 million mega battery under construction in South Australia is owned by a Chinese state company, Pacific Blue. But incredibly, it's included in Minister Bowen's capacity investment scheme. Now, that means Aussie taxpayers like you and me basically underwriting a project owned and run by the Chinese government.

(43:09) After the break, it's not a trick question. Our fiery encounter with Energy Minister Chris Bowen. What are you afraid of? Over 3 months and more than a dozen emails, Energy Minister Chris Bowen refused our request for a formal interview. >> Morning everyone. Good to go. I think so. So, we sought him out at a press conference on the country's fuel crisis.

(43:50) >> Minister, if this war in Iran has shown us nothing else, hasn't it proved once and for all that your obsession with renewables will only lead us down the track to another energy crisis? >> That's a pretty loaded uh That's a comment, not a question. >> No, it's a question. >> Well, it proved it's a very loaded comment.

(44:12) Uh what it shows is that we need to continue to work on energy security. I make this point and I reject the premise of your question. >> Well, it's an open it's an open question. It's not a it's not a trick question. >> Are you asking a question or you having >> Well, go ahead. I'd love I'd love an answer, a proper answer. >> Certainly. Uh energy must be secure.

(44:29) Renewable energy is is a secure form of energy. The Australian sun cannot be interrupted uh by a war or anything else. the solar energy has to travel 150 million km from the sun. It doesn't have to travel the 150 km of the straits of Horns. While we're building that secure renewable energy, obviously we continue to ensure that our most immediate task is energy security uh including all the work the government has been doing working closely.

(44:56) >> We haven't got we haven't got it. That's why you're here this morning. >> Closely with industry to >> That's why you're here this morning. At what point during this crisis do you put the flag up and say, "Listen, I'll resign." And hand it over to someone who's more competent. >> There's a journalist behind you has a question. I'm going to go to her.

(45:18) >> Well, no. Look, I've been trying to ask you questions since the 24th of January. >> Open open and honest questions about your renewables obsession. and your office has continually 13 emails, minister, continuously rejected our reproach. Now, why can't you sit down and answer open honest questions? >> I think you need to show a bit more respect to your colleagues.

(45:41) This is a full room of journalists. Everyone gets one question. >> Oh, I think everyone here would like to know the answers. Actually, >> I think everyone here would like to ask their own questions. Behind you. >> Our question is pretty simple. Will we come out of the current energy crisis and our dependence on foreign oil into a new one where China controls our renewable energy grid? So, let me get this right.

(46:10) Your renewables transition policy will not alter one iota despite what this war has shown us with the failure of your energy policy. Um, I'm not sure how you could assert, Liam, that the war in Iran is the fault of Australian renewable energy. I really don't understand that. >> Hasn't it shown us what fuel actually matters and runs the country? Your focus has been wholly and solely spending billions of dollars we haven't got on questionable green infrastructure, tying us to China, not worrying about where the minerals come from.

(46:40) >> Okay, that's a comment, not a question. >> But okay, well, why don't you sit down? Why don't you sit down? >> I'm holding a press conference. You don't sit down, answer questions. What are you scared of? I >> I hold a press conference every day. This is the first time you've >> No, no, no.

(46:54) For a formal interview instead of you being able to deflect to my colleagues, what are you afraid of? >> I've been holding a press conference every You've chosen to come to this one. Good on you. That's >> I've chosen to come because I've had to chase you down because your office won't front up. >> You've come to a press conference.

(47:08) Congratulations. Other journalists have been at every press conference I've held. I went here first and then I'll go here. Yeah. I'll come to you in a moment. And that was it. >> Might leave

it there. Thanks, guys. Thank you very much. >> The minister dealt with us as he's dealt with the thousands of other Australians right across the country who just don't believe him.

(47:42) You can read the full statements on tonight's story on our website, but not one from Minister Bowen. We asked again for answers. His office declined.

Now, before we go