

From: environment portfolio [EXTERNAL] (parliament) <environment.portfolio@parliament.govt.nz>
Sent: Friday, 20 March 2026 1:37 pm
To: ministerials@epa.govt.nz
Cc: Aaron Napier
Subject: FW: PS-COR1854 | commissioning | Briefing Note
Attachments: Meeting Request Form FINAL.docx.pdf; COR1854 response to Cherie.docx

Hi Annie

Thanks for this draft!

FYI – attached draft has been amended slightly to refer to a meeting that the Minister is attending with Gigablue next Wednesday.

Aaron, FYI as I understand you are leading the Gigablue work from MFE and preparing the meeting note.

Ngā mihi
Ashleigh



Ashleigh Watson (she/her)

Private Secretary – Environment | Office of Hon Penny Simmonds
Minister for the Environment | Minister for Vocational Education
Associate Minister for Social Development | MP for Invercargill

Mobile: 9(2)(a) Email: ashleigh.watson@parliament.govt.nz Website: www.beehive.govt.nz
Private Bag 18041, Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6160, New Zealand

From: Ministerials <Ministerials@epa.govt.nz>
Sent: Tuesday, 17 March 2026 5:44 pm
To: Environment Portfolio <Environment.Portfolio@parliament.govt.nz>; Ministerials <ministerials@epa.govt.nz>
Subject: Re: PS-COR1854 | commissioning | Briefing Note

Kia ora Jojo,

Ministerial response to this correspondence attached.

Ngā mihi,

Annie Williams (she/her)

Principal Adviser, Government Engagement

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From: Environment Portfolio <Environment.Portfolio@parliament.govt.nz>

Sent: Thursday, February 26, 2026 12:52 PM

To: Ministerials <ministerials@epa.govt.nz>

Subject: PS-COR1854 | commissioning | Briefing Note

Hi team,

Please prepare a response to the correspondence below by 19/03/2026.

Thanks in advance,



Ashleigh Watson (she/her)

Private Secretary – Environment | Office of Hon Penny Simmonds

Minister for the Environment | Minister for Vocational Education

Associate Minister for Social Development | MP for Invercargill

Mobile: 9(2)(a) Email: ashleigh.watson@parliament.govt.nz Website: www.beehive.govt.nz

Private Bag 18041, Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6160, New Zealand

From: Cherie Tirikatene 9(2)(a)

Sent: Friday, 20 February 2026 6:03 PM

To: Toni Biddle <Toni.Biddle@parliament.govt.nz>

Subject: Briefing Note

Kia ora Toni

Thanks for your call today. Happy to clarify my potae in this instance and send you the briefing notes detailing my current status and required next steps for Gigablue.

Please let me know if you need anything else. I look forward to hearing if the 11 am appointment for the 3rd of March has been confirmed.

Also looking forward to catching up when I am on the Mainland next.

--

Ngā mihi, nā

Cherie Tirikatene

Ngāi Tahu | Ngāti Māmoē

Director Strategic Partnerships and Cultural Engagement

| GigaBlue | Aotearoa | New Zealand |

| 9(2)(a) | www.gigablue.co |



Office of Hon Penny Simmonds CNZM
Minister for the Environment; Vocational Education; and
Associate Minister for Social Development & Employment

MEETING INFORMATION FORM

Organisation	Gigablue
Date & Time	Weds 25th March, 11.45am
Venue Address	Minister Simmonds office, Parliament.
Key contact <i>(Name, email, and contact number)</i>	Neale Jones, 9(2)(a) +64 27 529 1079
Topics of discussion, key issues, or opportunities you would like to raise with the Minister	As the Minister responsible for the legislative framework governing operations in New Zealand's Exclusive Economic Zone, Gigablue is keen to provide you with an update on the programme (next stage planned to start November 2026) and discuss its forward work in the Great South Basin.
Attendee(s) information <i>(Name, job title, brief background information)</i>	Guy Shafran - Co-founder and COO Gigablue Aotearoa - leads Gigablue's global operations, orchestrating manufacturing, deployment, and measurement on land and at sea. Sharon Naveh - VP Regulatory Compliance - ensures compliance and collaboration through communication, planning. 10 years as a senior executive
Supporting documents <i>(Please feel welcome to attach any briefings or background papers you would like the Minister to read in advance of the meeting)</i>	A briefing will be provided prior to the meeting.
Photography & Filming Often photographs are taken during the Minister's visit. If the organisation takes any photos, we would be grateful to receive copies and, before they are used , permission should be sought from the office. Often a staff member accompanying the Minister will take photos. In order for us to use/publish any photos taken or	Neale Jones, 9(2)(a) +64 27 529 1079

obtained from you, we need to obtain consent from the people in the photos. Please supply an appropriate contact (name, telephone number and email address) for the Minister's office to contact, following the visit, to arrange consent	
NOTE TO ORGANISATIONS	
Staffing	The Minister is usually be accompanied by 1–2 staff members at meetings and engagements.
Access instructions	If the meeting is going to be held in the Minister's office in Parliament, please report to Executive Wing reception on arrival. A member of our team will be alerted and will meet you at reception.

Please note information about meetings and events related to the Ministers' portfolios will be proactively released. For each meeting in scope, the summary would list: date, time (start and finish), brief description, location, who the meeting was with, and the portfolio. If you attend a meeting with the Minister on behalf of an organisation, the name of the organisation will be released. If you are a senior staff member at an organisation, or meet with the Minister in your personal capacity, your name may also be released. The location of the meeting will be released, unless it is a private residence. The proactive release will be consistent with the provisions in the Official Information Act, including privacy considerations. Under the Privacy Act 1993 you have the right to ask for a copy of any personal information we hold about you, and to ask for it to be corrected if you think it is wrong. If you would like to ask for a copy of your information, or to have it corrected, or are concerned about the release of your information in the meeting disclosure, please contact the sender. You can read more about the proactive release policy at <https://www.dia.govt.nz/Proactive-Releases#MS>.

Hon Penny Simmonds

Minister for the Environment
Minister for Vocational Education
Associate Minister for Social Development and Employment



23 March 2026

PS-COR1854 / 26030

Cherie Tirikatene
Director Strategic Partnerships and Cultural Engagement
Gigablue
9(2)(a)

Dear Cherie

Thank you for your email of 20 February 2026, including a briefing note outlining the challenges of Gigablue undertaking research in New Zealand. I appreciate the significance of Gigablue choosing New Zealand to test your technology.

As you are aware, the Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf (Environmental Effects) Act 2012 (EEZ Act) has not been substantially amended since its passage in 2012. I acknowledge the challenge of legislation keeping pace with rapid developments in technology, such as yours.

The Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) has advised that it has been engaging with Gigablue to better understand the nature of the proposed activity and how it fits within the framework of the EEZ Act. This engagement has included requesting further information, assessment of the proposed activity, amendments by Gigablue to the proposed activities, and internal consideration of this new and novel technology.

I understand that the EPA advised you on 25 September 2025, that it was not, at that time, satisfied the proposed activities were permitted activities under the Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf (Environmental Effects – Permitted Activities) Regulations 2013.

The EPA informs me that following further engagement, Gigablue submitted an updated pre-activity notice on 26 January 2026 for a significantly more constrained activity. On 25 February 2026 the EPA confirmed that, on balance, it considered this more constrained trial falls within the definition of a permitted activity, provided it is undertaken strictly in accordance with the description provided and that all mitigation measures were fully implemented and adhered to.

The EPA is responsible for monitoring compliance with the EEZ Act and enforcing the requirements of the Act, and of regulations made and consents granted under it. Section 14 of the EEZ Act prevents me from giving directions relating to the EPA's consenting and enforcement functions.

You may be aware I am meeting with Gigablue on Wednesday, for GigaBlue to outline the project, research objectives, and the next steps in its New Zealand programme. I look forward to meeting with representatives to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely

Hon Penny Simmonds
Minister for the Environment