

From: Bonnie Hartfield <Bonnie.Hartfield@mfe.govt.nz>
Sent: Monday, 30 March 2026 8:41 am
To: Matthew.Barbati-Ross@mfe.govt.nz; Aaron.Napier@mfe.govt.nz
Cc: Matt.Adams@mfe.govt.nz; Catherine.Prior@mfe.govt.nz
Subject: RE: **CLASSIFICATION** RE: EPA Response to RNZ on Gigablue

Kia ora Aaron,

Further to below, please find an outline for the aide memoire for your review - [Outline - AM.docx](#).

We think it would be useful to work on this AM with MFAT and consult with DOC/EPA. If you're comfortable with this, I can email our MFAT colleagues and give them a heads up.

Ngā mihi,

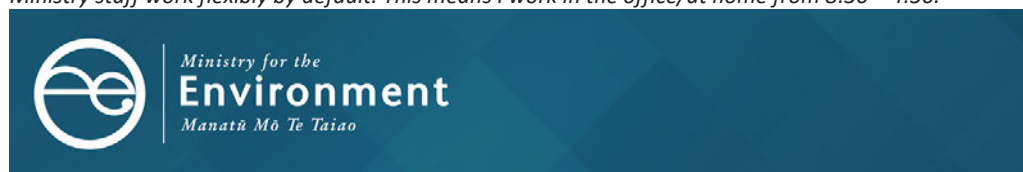
Bonnie

Bonnie Hartfield ([she/her](#))

Advisor | Kaitohutohu
Marine Policy | Kaupapahere Moana
Natural Environment Policy | Te Rōpū Te Whakahaere Taiao me te Urutau

Ministry for the Environment | Manatū Mō Te Taiao
environment.govt.nz

Ministry staff work flexibly by default. This means I work in the office/at home from 8:30 – 4:30.



From: Matthew Barbati-Ross <Matthew.Barbati-Ross@mfe.govt.nz>
Sent: Friday, 27 March 2026 11:04 am
To: Aaron Napier <Aaron.Napier@mfe.govt.nz>
Cc: Matt Adams <Matt.Adams@mfe.govt.nz>; Bonnie Hartfield <Bonnie.Hartfield@mfe.govt.nz>; Catherine Prior <Catherine.Prior@mfe.govt.nz>
Subject: FW: **CLASSIFICATION** RE: EPA Response to RNZ on Gigablue

Kia ora Aaron

Proposed approach:

- EPA respond to 2 & 3
- We provide aide mem on 4 & 5 week of 13 April – **9(2)(h)**
[REDACTED] We'll provide outline early next week for your review.

Will you respond to the MO?

I can call EPA manager to make links. They are likely to ask to see / input to new aide mem. Suggest we consider this once we have agreed outline for advice next week.

Can you confirm you're ok to share the previous aide mem on general mCDR context with EPA? They will ask us again. It was contextual on mCDR rather than specific on an MFE position on Gigablue, so I suggest ok to share.

Kā mihi, Matthew

Matthew Barbati-Ross (he/him)

Manager | Kaiwhakahaere

Marine Policy Team | Kaupapahere Moana

Ministry for the Environment | Manatū Mō Te Taiao

9(2)(a) | matthew.barbati-ross@mfe.govt.nz | mfe.govt.nz

Ministry staff work flexibly by default. For me, this means I work from Te Pātaka-o-Rākauhautū/Banks Peninsula.



Ministry for the
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From: Aaron Napier <Aaron.Napier@mfe.govt.nz>

Sent: Wednesday, 25 March 2026 9:29 pm

To: environment portfolio [EXTERNAL] (parliament) <environment.portfolio@parliament.govt.nz>; Ministerials <Ministerials@epa.govt.nz>; Annie Williams <annie.williams@epa.govt.nz>; Matthew Barbati-Ross <Matthew.Barbati-Ross@mfe.govt.nz>; Matt Adams <Matt.Adams@mfe.govt.nz>; Bonnie Hartfield <Bonnie.Hartfield@mfe.govt.nz>; Jojo Woodham [EXTERNAL] (Parliament) <Jojo.Woodham@parliament.govt.nz>

Cc: Tiffany Vail <Tiffany.Vail@mfe.govt.nz>

Subject: CLASSIFICATION RE: EPA Response to RNZ on Gigablue

Hi Jojo,

Thanks for this the notes you've captured below look pretty good to me 😊 @Matthew Barbati-Ross can we discuss the actions below, time permitting it would be good to round back to the Minister in next week's weekly. I'm thinking it might be useful to paint a bit of a picture for the Minister on a page of what we'd need to do from a legislative/international agreements/science perspective to follow through on their ask for us to make amendments to legislation just so that the Minister can conceptualise the scale of the request and how long that might take. That can be put alongside Gigablues proposes research/commercialisation timelines for comparison.

[@Annie Williams](#) I think in relation to question two it might help to place emphasis on the legislative constraints but acknowledge the obvious challenges around information sharing, maturity of the science and categorisation of the activity. [@Jojo Woodham \[EXTERNAL\] \(Parliament\)](#) correct me if I am wrong but it came about from a statement that Cherie Tirakatene made whereby she relayed that the EPA had advised them they were constrained by the legislation.

Regards,

Aaron Napier

General Manager, Data and Insights Products

Strategy, Stewardship and Performance (SS&P) | Te Hunga Mārama o Te Taiao

Ministry for the Environment | Manatū Mō Te Taiao

027 247 1893 | aaron.napier@mfe.govt.nz | environment.govt.nz

PA: Charlotte Duns | charlotte.duns@mfe.govt.nz

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

Sent: Wednesday, 25 March 2026 2:54 pm

To: Ministerials <Ministerials@epa.govt.nz>; Annie Williams <annie.williams@epa.govt.nz>; Aaron Napier <Aaron.Napier@mfe.govt.nz>

Cc: Tiffany Vail <Tiffany.Vail@mfe.govt.nz>

Subject: RE: EPA Response to RNZ on Gigablue

Kia ora Anna, Annie – just providing a read-out of actions from the Minister’s meeting with Gigablue today, for your awareness. Also noting that Gigablue is an agenda item for the Minister’s meeting with Barrie O’Neill and Dr. Allan Freeth next Tuesday.

Copying in Aaron who attended from MfE. Aaron, please add to the below if I’ve missed anything!

Minister Simmonds has requested the following:

1. **EPA:** To please provide regular updates on Gigablue’s existing trial (recently permitted activity for 50T(?) of product), and updates on the status of the next planned scaled-up iteration of the trial (estimated for October/Nov).
Suggest this could be done through fortnightly updates on an ongoing basis, as needed.
2. **EPA/MfE:** Q: In its assessments so far, what constraints has the EPA identified to the scaling up Gigablue’s research activity to the open ocean?
E.g. categorisation of the activity under the EEZ (nature/purpose of research), any issues with the methodology and/or particular information gaps regarding the environmental impact.
3. **EPA/MfE:** Q: Is permitted activity assessment required each time Gigablue scale up its research activities, i.e. is there not one overarching permissive activity for the entire research phase? Is there any pathway for the latter?
My understanding is that each time the activity changes (e.g. in scale), it needs to be assessed whether it is permitted or not under the EEZ. This is part of the reason why Gigablue could not proceed with a larger trial in the first instance, and had to scale down.
4. **MfE:** Provide background on what Gigablue previously sought reg. change for (i.e. specific technology/activity) vs new ask for a wider category exemption (mCFS v. mCDR?)
Aaron, as discussed, please provide this via a Weekly Update item (rough ETA for when the team could provide this?)
5. **MfE:** 9(2)(h)

EPA team suggest points 2&3 could be addressed in next week's meeting, as the Minister may bring these matters up in conversation.

MfE team happy to talk through staging of advice on points (3,) 4 & 5.

Thanks all, and do get in touch if any questions/clarification required.

Nāku, nā
Jojo



Jojo Woodham

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: jojo.woodham@parliament.govt.nz Website: www.beehive.govt.nz
Private Bag 18041, Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6160, New Zealand

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

Sent: Tuesday, 24 March 2026 8:14 pm

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

Subject: Re: EPA Response to RNZ on Gigablue

Thanks heaps Anna - I've updated the meeting note with that further context. Will report back if any meaningful outcomes from the meeting. (And my apologies, I thought I'd sent this acknowledgment email way sooner but just saw it in my drafts!)

Nā
Jojo

From: Ministerials <Ministerials@epa.govt.nz>

Sent: Tuesday, March 24, 2026 2:19 PM

To: Ministerials <Ministerials@epa.govt.nz>; Environment Portfolio

<Environment.Portfolio@parliament.govt.nz>

Cc: Tiffany Vail <tiffany.vail@mfe.govt.nz>; Annie Williams <Annie.Williams@epa.govt.nz>

Subject: Re: EPA Response to RNZ on Gigablue

Hi again JoJo

Regarding the meeting today between the EPA and Gigablue - it was a general conversation where Gigablue talked through where they are currently at and their plans for 2026. There is nothing specific that the Minister should be aware of.

Ngā mihi
[Anna Richardson](#) (she/her)
Senior Advisor, Official Correspondence
Ph: +64 4 4745589

From: Ministerials <Ministerials@epa.govt.nz>
Sent: Tuesday, 24 March 2026 2:08 pm
To: Environment Portfolio <Environment.Portfolio@parliament.govt.nz>
Cc: Tiffany Vail <tiffany.vail@mfe.govt.nz>; Annie Williams <Annie.Williams@epa.govt.nz>
Subject: Re: EPA Response to RNZ on Gigablue

Hi Jojo

Out of scope

EPA met Gigablue today - I'll ask for a brief summary of it now and try get something to you as soon as I can! Noting the Minister is meeting them tomorrow.

Ngā mihi
[Anna Richardson](#) (she/her)
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Ph: +64 4 4745589