



## COVERSHEET

<b>Minister</b>	Hon Simon Watts	<b>Portfolio</b>	Energy
<b>Title of Cabinet paper</b>	Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Simon Watts – February 2026	<b>Date to be published</b>	18 March 2026

### List of documents that have been proactively released

<b>Date</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Author</b>
August 2025	Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Simon Watts – February 2026	Office of the Minister for Energy
11 August 2025	Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Simon Watts – February 2026 CAB-25-MIN-0268 Minute	Cabinet Office

### Information redacted

**YES / NO** (please select)

Any information redacted in this document is redacted in accordance with MBIE's policy on Proactive Release and is labelled with the reason for redaction. This may include information that would be redacted if this information was requested under Official Information Act 1982. Where this is the case, the reasons for withholding information are listed below. Where information has been withheld, no public interest has been identified that would outweigh the reasons for withholding it.

## **In Confidence**

Office of the Minister for Energy

Chair, Cabinet

### **Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Simon Watts – February 2026**

- 1 I seek Cabinet approval to travel to Paris, France to attend the 2026 International Energy Agency Ministerial from 16 - 20 February in my capacity as Minister for Energy.
- 2 The Prime Minister has approved the travel in-principle, and House leave has been approved from the Party Whip.

### **Purpose of Travel**

- 3 The primary purpose of overseas travel is to attend the 2026 International Energy Agency (IEA) Ministerial Meeting in my capacity as the Minister for Energy.
- 4 The IEA was established around 50 years ago and has evolved to be an all-fuels, all-technology agency with 32 members and 17 accession and associate countries (accounting for around 80 per cent of the world's energy consumption).
- 5 IEA Ministerial Meetings are held every two years to set direction and make or endorse major decisions. The 2026 Ministerial Meeting provides an opportunity to take stock of global energy market developments and how we can advance international cooperation on energy security and energy transitions. Energy security is a key priority for this Government.
- 6 Participation in the IEA Ministerial Meeting will be an opportunity to:
  - 6.1 influence the direction of the IEA's agenda for the next two years;
  - 6.2 engage directly with ministerial counterparts to learn about their progress and policies to deploying clean energy and innovation, including critical minerals;
  - 6.3 engage directly with the IEA on global liquefied natural gas (LNG) markets, as the Government considers procuring an LNG import terminal facility;
  - 6.4 engage on how we can advance international cooperation on energy security, which is particularly important given current global economic uncertainty, geopolitical risks and risks of fuel supply shocks.

### *Bilateral engagements during my visit to Paris*

- 7 During my visit to Paris, I intend to have bilateral meetings with my international counterparts, prioritising the United States, Japan, Germany and Canada. I will also meet with the Head of Gas and Chief Energy Economist at the IEA. A key purpose of these meetings will be to establish Ministerial level connections with key LNG producers to bolster New Zealand's energy security.

### **Ministerial Party**

- 8 I will be accompanied by one member of staff from my office.
- 9 For the Energy Portfolio aspects of my visit, one senior official from the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) will travel with me. This will be funded by the agency.

### **Travel Costs**

- 10 List the estimated costs of the travel:

Airfares:	\$26,000
Accommodation:	\$1,200
Ground Transport	\$1,110
Meals	\$400
Contingency (5%)	\$1,436
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$30,146</b>

### **Acting Ministers**

- 11 The following Ministers will be acting in my portfolios for the duration of the travel:
- 11.1 Hon Simeon Brown – Acting Minister for Energy
- 11.2 Hon Chris Bishop – Acting Minister of Local Government
- 11.3 Hon Scott Simpson – Acting Minister of Revenue and Climate Change

### **Proactive release**

- 12 I propose to release the paper proactively in part within 30 business days. All redactions will be made in line with the *Official Information Act 1982*.

### **Recommendations**

- 13 I recommend that Cabinet:
- 13.1 authorise my absence from New Zealand, subject to leave from Parliament being secured (if the House is sitting), from 16 to 20

February to travel to Paris, France to attend the 2026 International Energy Agency Ministerial Meeting;

- 13.2 agree that I be accompanied by one member of staff from my office;
- 13.3 approve the estimated expenditure of \$30,146 for the travel expenses of the Ministerial party, as a charge to Vote: Internal Affairs [Members of the Executive – Travel];
- 13.4 note that I will be accompanied by an official from MBIE whose travel costs will be met by the department;
- 13.5 agree that in my absence the following Ministers will be acting in my portfolios:
  - 13.5.1 Hon Simeon Brown – Acting Minister for Energy
  - 13.5.2 Hon Chris Bishop – Acting Minister of Local Government
  - 13.5.3 Hon Scott Simpson – Acting Minister of Revenue and Climate Change
- 13.6 note that leave from Parliament has been approved by the Party Whip.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Simon Watts

Minister for Energy