



## COVERSHEET

<b>Minister</b>	Hon Simon Watts	<b>Portfolio</b>	Energy
<b>Title of Cabinet paper</b>	Retrospective Overseas Travel: Hon Simon Watts – March 2026	<b>Date to be published</b>	22 May 2026

### List of documents that have been proactively released

<b>Date</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Author</b>
March 2026	Retrospective Overseas Travel: Hon Simon Watts – March 2026	Office of the Minister for Energy
23 March 2026	Retrospective Overseas Travel: Hon Simon Watts – March 2026 CAB-25-MIN-0083 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

### **Retrospective Overseas Travel: Hon Simon Watts – March 2026**

- 1 I seek retrospective approval from Cabinet for my travel to Tokyo, Japan from 13 to 16 March 2026, where I participated in the Indo-Pacific Energy Security Ministerial and Business Forum (IPEM) in my capacity as the Minister for Energy.
- 2 The Prime Minister approved the travel in-principle, and the House was not sitting during my absence.

### **Purpose of Travel**

- 3 The primary purpose of my travel to Japan was to participate in the IPEM. IPEM was an invitation-only ministerial and industry forum co-hosted by the governments of Japan and the United States. It was attended by ministers and heads of delegations from key Indo-Pacific economies as well as senior industry leaders.
- 4 The IPEM coincided with the ongoing conflict in the Middle East which is impacting global energy markets, in particular crude oil and refined oil products.
- 5 New Zealand is reliant on imported petroleum, diesel, and jet fuel (liquid fuels) from the Indo-Pacific region, and the conflict is causing higher prices and uncertainty in New Zealand.
- 6 My participation in the event was a timely opportunity for New Zealand to:
  - 6.1 Engage directly with partner countries to express and emphasise the importance of secure and open global supply chains, particularly for liquid fuels.
  - 6.2 Highlight New Zealand's energy sector as an attractive destination for foreign investment, and opportunities for international supply of LNG.
  - 6.3 Promote New Zealand's approach to energy security, how we are supporting the rapid growth in renewable energy while ensuring energy security and affordability.
- 7 During my visit to Japan, I had bilateral meetings with my international counterparts from Korea, Singapore and Australia (as countries that supply New Zealand's imported liquid fuels, along with Malaysia). I also held pull-asides with counterparts, including from the United States and Japan.

## Ministerial Party

8 I was accompanied by one staff member from my office (private secretary).

## Travel Costs

9 The estimated costs of the travel (as at February 2026) were:

Airfares:	\$20,000
Accommodation:	\$6,600
Meals:	\$900
Gifts:	\$200
Contingency (5%)	\$2,770
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$30,470</b>

## Acting Ministers

10 In my absence, the following Ministers acted for me:

- 10.1 Hon Simeon Brown as Minister for Energy;
- 10.2 Hon Scott Simpson as Minister of Climate Change;
- 10.3 Hon Simeon Brown as Minister of Local Government;
- 10.4 Hon Scott Simpson Minister of Revenue.

## Proactive release

11 This paper will be proactively released within 30 business days of decisions being confirmed by Cabinet. All redactions will be made in line with the *Official Information Act 1982*.

## Recommendations

12 I recommend that Cabinet retrospectively:

- 12.1 **authorise** my absence from New Zealand, from 13 to 16 March 2026 when I travelled to Tokyo, Japan to participate in the Indo-Pacific Energy Security Ministerial and Business forum;
- 12.2 **note** that I was accompanied by one member of staff from my office (private secretary);
- 12.3 **approve** the estimated expenditure of \$30,470 for the travel expenses the Ministerial party, as a charge to Vote: Internal Affairs [Members of the Executive – Travel];

12.4 **note** that in my absence:

12.4.1 Hon Simeon Brown acted as Minister for Energy;

12.4.2 Hon Scott Simpson acted as Minister of Climate Change;

12.4.3 Hon Simeon Brown acted as Minister of Local Government;

12.4.4 Hon Scott Simpson acted as Minister of Revenue;

12.5 **note** that the House was not sitting during my absence.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Simon Watts

Minister for Energy