



EVENT BRIEFING

Meeting with Starboard Maritime Intelligence on 21 April 2026

Date:	20 April 2026	Priority:	High
Security classification:	Restricted	Tracking number:	REQ-0031495

Action sought		
	Action sought	Deadline
Hon Nicola Willis Minister of Finance	Note the contents of this briefing	20 April 2026

Contact for telephone discussion (if required)			
Name	Position	Telephone	1st contact
Eric Chapman	Acting Fuel Response Data and Intelligence Cell Lead	Privacy of natural persons	✓
Tim Shepherd	Principal Advisor to General Manager		

The following departments/agencies have been consulted

Minister's office to complete:

☐ Approved

☐ Declined

☐ Noted

☐ Needs change

☐ Seen

☐ Overtaken by Events

☐ See Minister's Notes

☐ Withdrawn

Comments



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Purpose

You are meeting with Christopher Laing from Starboard Maritime Intelligence (Starboard) at 4pm on Tuesday 21 April 2026. This briefing provides background information ahead of the meeting.

Recommendations

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) recommends that you:

- a **Note** the contents of this briefing.

Noted

Privacy of natural persons

Eric Chapman
**Acting Fuel Response Data and Intelligence
Cell Lead**
MBIE

Hon Nicola Willis
Minister of Finance

20 / 04 / 2026

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Background

1. Starboard is a New Zealand-based company that was founded in 2019 and develops cloud-based maritime intelligence tools used by governments and infrastructure operators.
2. The company's flagship Starboard platform combines multiple layers of satellite data, sensor inputs, and other publicly available contextual information to provide visibility of vessel activity and offshore operations in real time.
3. MBIE is working with Starboard to investigate opportunities for integrating further Starboard intelligence into our internal and public-facing reporting, including for real time shipment tracking and upstream supply analysis. Officials met with Starboard twice last week.

MBIE uses Starboard to monitor incoming fuel shipments in real time

4. MBIE uses the Starboard platform to track incoming fuel shipments by monitoring vessel movements against commercially sensitive, fuel company-provided plans, confirming departures, routes and expected delivery to New Zealand ports.
5. This combination of data sets and monitoring tools provides early warning of potential disruptions and a more complete picture of fuel shipments bound for New Zealand than what is offered by public sources alone.
6. MBIE's key reporting output from Starboard currently is the vessel status snapshot used in the twice-weekly fuel monitoring pack. The snapshots are a compilation of information sourced from Starboard and fuel company-provided information.

MBIE also monitors New Zealand's upstream fuel supply chains

7. In addition to monitoring incoming fuel shipments, MBIE uses a range of information to monitor how upstream fuel supply chains for New Zealand importers are functioning and how they have evolved since the war began, including:
 - Regular reporting from New Zealand importers, including conversations with the importers and their offshore trading entities about their confidence in forward orders and understanding of the market. An update from last week's meetings was provided on 16 April 2026 [BRIEFING-REQ-0031185 refers].
 - Bespoke analysis from Kpler from energy advisory Envisory to track the feedstock to the Asian refineries that supply New Zealand and other operational adaptations [Overview of refineries supplying New Zealand, 10 April 2026 refers].

MBIE is working with Starboard to investigate opportunities for additional reporting

8. MBIE officials met twice with Starboard on 15 and 17 April 2026, with a focus on how we may be able to use Starboard's offerings to bolster our Fuel Response reporting.
9. As a result of our discussions, we are investigating two key opportunities for integrating further Starboard intelligence into our internal and public-facing reporting.
 - **Starboard product on the MBIE website** – If Ministers decide to publish ship names, this could potentially include an integration of the Starboard product on the MBIE website to allow tracking of incoming fuel shipments in real time. This would provide more information for the public and would look like a more sophisticated output. We would need to confirm any technical requirements to be worked through.

- **Historic upstream analysis** – Historic upstream analysis of shipping into our refineries, including previous baselines, could support the development lead indicators. We first need to confirm whether Starboard would allow for some additional analysis that would complement Envisory's Kpler-based reporting. If so, leveraging Starboard could enable MBIE's Fuel Response Data and Intelligence Cell to produce this analytical output efficiently.
10. From here, our technical leads will continue to work with Starboard to scope the nature of any arrangements needed to deliver against the opportunities that have been identified.
 11. Beyond the considerations noted above, an update to MBIE's current Starboard licence will likely be required for us to make use of the analytical capability attached to Starboard's mapping and the full range of data feeds available. Starboard have also suggested that a bespoke arrangement could be looked at to provide the required capability or service for the opportunities identified.
 12. We will provide you with an update on progress in due course.

Logistics

13. The meeting with Starboard is scheduled for 4.30pm on Tuesday 21 April 2026 and will take place in your office, EW 7.2.
14. You will be meeting with Christopher Laing, Chief Technology and Innovation Officer. A short biography for Christopher Laing is attached as **Annex 1**.
15. McLeish Martin, Acting Head of Fuel Response Data Cell, will be in attendance on behalf of MBIE.

Communications/Media

16. Some suggested talking points for the meeting are attached as **Annex 2**.

Contacts

Name	Position / organisation	Telephone	Will meet you on arrival
McLeish Martin	Acting Head of Fuel Response Data Cell	Privacy of natural persons	✓

Annexes

Annex One: Biography for Christopher Laing

Annex Two: Talking points

Annex One: Biography for Christopher Laing

Christopher Laing is a Wellington-based technology leader and innovator, currently Chief Technology and Innovation Officer at Starboard Maritime Intelligence, where he directs AI, data strategy, and product innovation for sustainable growth.

He holds a PhD in Applied Mathematics and a Bachelor of Laws from the University of Otago, a combination that blends rigorous quantitative thinking with governance and regulatory insight to drive responsible, scalable technology programs. Over the past decade he has shaped AI and data initiatives across New Zealand, including leading Qrious' product and technology portfolio and guiding Xero's AI initiatives and data science teams.

He also contributes to academia and industry governance through roles such as Adjunct Senior Fellow at the University of Canterbury, Director at ingenum, and board positions with NZTech and AI Forum NZ.

Annex Two: Talking points

- I'm very grateful for Starboard's proactive engagement with Ministers and intent to support the Government on this critical issue for New Zealand.
- Starboard plays a key role in MBIE's current suite of Fuel Response reporting for Ministers, and your platform has been extremely valuable in assisting MBIE to monitor incoming fuel shipments.
- I'm advised that the meetings last week between Starboard and MBIE officials were productive. Thank you for making time to connect with officials at short notice.
- I'm looking forward to hearing about how work progresses on the two opportunities identified to integrate further Starboard intelligence into MBIE's reporting.
- It's extremely important to this Government that we provide transparency and reassurance to New Zealanders by making available as much information as possible, as the situation in the Middle East evolves.
- Thank you again for your willingness to support MBIE and the Government on this matter.