

# Hon Chris Bishop

Minister of Housing  
Minister for Infrastructure  
Minister Responsible for RMA Reform  
Minister of Transport  
Leader of the House  
Associate Minister of Finance  
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Daran Ponter  
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Dear Daran and Nadine,

Thank you for your letter of 5 February 2026 about maritime emergency response in the Cook Strait. The decision to cease further work on emergency ocean response capabilities (EORC), and the cancellation of the contract for the *MMA Vision*, was not taken lightly.

Following recent high-profile incidents, the Government commissioned independent advice on the procurement of EORC with a focus on the Cook Strait. We took the opportunity presented by the immediate availability of the *MMA Vision* to enter an agreement for it to be stationed in the Cook Strait on a part time basis. This was only intended to be an interim option while the advice was completed.

When I considered the full business case it was clear that the costs would outweigh the benefits, and that there was no comprehensive solution that would assist matters in a cost-effective way. I acknowledge that there is a heightened risk in the Cook Strait compared to other coastal waters, however the business case states that the overall risk in the Cook Strait is very small and does not justify the procurement of EORC.

The Government is committed to ensure there is discipline in public spending. During the development of the business case, costs escalated from \$80 million over ten years to \$259.6 million over ten years. The proposal to defray costs to the Crown through maritime levies still presents an untenable position in the current fiscal climate.

You suggested that two local firms could provide a first-strike solution for the Cook Strait and have asked the Crown to engage with these firms. Maritime New Zealand contracted international maritime consultants ABL to develop the EORC technical requirements in the business case. ABL conducted a Request for Information (RFI) process with industry to seek detailed information on

technical specifications, commercial arrangements, and potential cost ranges. CentrePort, Port Marlborough, Port Taranaki, Seaworks, and NZ Offshore all responded to the RFI process.

Some respondents expressed interest in providing a slightly smaller first-strike capability than what ABL recommended is necessary in the technical specifications. The business case states the initial cost estimates indicate that *there is not a significant cost difference between the smaller and larger first-strike capabilities based on the information provided in the RFI.*

I am satisfied that industry engaged in the process to develop the independent expert advice, which informed Cabinet's decision to cease further work on EORC.

Thank you again for writing.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris Bishop', is positioned above the typed name.

Hon Chris Bishop  
**Minister of Transport**