

7 August 2023

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OIA 28665

Tēnā koe Melanie Petrowski

I refer to your email of 23 May 2023, which was partially transferred from the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade on 6 June 2023. Your requests with reference to the vessel *Laura Bassi* have been responded to under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

On 23 June 2023, the time limits for responding to your request were extended by an additional 30 working days because the consultations necessary to make a decision on your request are such that a proper response couldn't reasonably be made within the original time frame (section 15A(1)(b) of the OIA refers). Thank you for your patience.

You asked:

*Why was this ship in our waters?
Researching and observing Cyclone Gabrielle?*

During Cyclone Gabrielle the *Laura Bassi* was travelling from Antarctica to New Zealand. It arrived in March 2023, and made a port call to Lyttelton. As an Antarctic scientific vessel, the *Laura Bassi* makes regular port calls to Lyttelton when conducting research voyages around Antarctica for the Italian Antarctic Programme.

*Was it also researching and observing frequencies (High-frequency Active Auroral Research) from the Christchurch earthquake?
If so, what else has this vessel researched in New Zealand?*

No, the *Laura Bassi* was not *researching and observing frequencies (High-frequency Active Auroral Research) from the Christchurch earthquake*.

During the voyage from Antarctica to New Zealand for the March 2023 port call to Lyttelton, the *Laura Bassi* conducted a bathymetric survey of the seabed. This survey took place in New Zealand waters, in the sub-Antarctic area.

Please note that we may publish this letter (with your personal details redacted) on the Ministry's website.

If you have any questions about this decision, you can contact us by email at: DM-ESD@mfat.govt.nz. You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision by contacting www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'SC', written in a cursive style.

Sarah Corbett
for Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade