

REINSTATEMENT OF TITLES IN THE NEW ZEALAND HONOURS SYSTEM QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q1. Why are titles being reinstated in the New Zealand honours system?

- A. Titles more visibly recognise the contribution of the most outstanding New Zealanders.

Q2. How are titles to be reinstated into the New Zealand honours system?

- A. We are returning to the situation that existed when the New Zealand Honours system was first established in 1996. That is, the first two levels of the New Zealand Order of Merit were titular; the honours being:

Knight and Dame Grand Companion (GNZM)
Knight and Dame Companion (KNZM/DNZM)

These titles will replace the appointments of “Principal” and “Distinguished Companion” of the Order, which were instituted when titles were discontinued in May 2000.

Q3. Is it intended to introduce titles to the Order of New Zealand or The Queen’s Service Order?

- A. Both these Orders were designed to be non-titular and they will remain so.

Q4. When will titles be officially reinstated in the New Zealand Order of Merit?

- A. The Queen has already given her informal approval to the Amending Royal Warrant, which will be signed shortly.

The first knights and dames to be appointed under the new Warrant will be announced in the forthcoming Queen’s Birthday Honours List on Monday 1 June 2009.

Q5. What is the process for reinstating titles to the New Zealand royal honours system?

- A. The Queen acts on the advice on the Prime Minister in relation to the New Zealand honours system. First he seeks her informal approval for the change (informal approval has already occurred in this case). Then the formal amending Warrant is sent to The Queen for formal approval. That step will be completed in time for the Queen’s Birthday honours in June this year.

Q6. Will those who were appointed Principal and Distinguished Companions between 2000 and 2008 be given the opportunity to accept a title?

- A. The Royal Warrant that gives effect to the reinstatement of titular honours allows these members of the Order to elect to retain their present non-titular status, or to be redesignated as a knight or dame of the Order at the appropriate level. Every member of the Order who is affected by this provision will be written to by the Honours Secretariat in the next few days.

Q7. Is there a time by which they must indicate their wishes?

- A. For administrative reasons, we have requested a reply by Tuesday 30 June 2009.

Q8. Could a Principal or Distinguished Companion elect to accept a title after 30 June 2009?

- A. There is no election cut-off date specified in the Royal Warrant, so it is possible, subject to approval from The Queen.

Q9. Once a person has accepted a title, can they change their mind?

- A. There is a short window of opportunity, from the time the offer of an honour is accepted until the Queen grants approval, during which a person can change their mind. Once The Queen has approved an honour, in this case one with a title, it cannot be cancelled or rescinded.

Q10. How many will be given the opportunity to elect to redesignate?

- A. There are seven Principal Companions and 78 Distinguished Companions (excluding the Governor-General, whose redesignation is being dealt with separately – see question 16). Four of these people already have knighthoods or damehoods.

Q11. Where can I see a list of those who will be asked to make an election?

- A. This Information is in the Media Pack and is also available on the Honours Secretariat's website; www.honours.govt.nz/honours/lists/nzom.html.nz.

Q12. When can those Principal and Distinguished Companions who elect to accept a title start using it?

- A. The names of those who wish to accept a title will be sent to The Queen for approval. Once this is received, the names will be announced by the Governor-General and notified in the *New Zealand Gazette*. Titles may be used from the date of announcement by the Governor-General.

Q13. What happens to those who decide not to accept a title?

- A. They will retain their present status as Principal and Distinguished Companions of the Order, along with their associated postnominal letters. Their names will not be announced or notified in the *Gazette* because there is no change to their status.

Q14. What will these changes cost?

- A. There are no additional costs involved in these changes.

Q15. Will future appointees to the top two levels of The New Zealand Order of Merit be able to accept the honour without a title?

- A. From now on, the top two levels of The New Zealand Order of Merit will be solely titular and there will be no more appointments to the former styles of Principal or Distinguished Companion.

Q16. How do these changes affect the Governor-General?

- A. The Governor-General is, ex officio, the Chancellor and Principal Companion of The New Zealand Order of Merit. Under the provisions of the new Royal Warrant he retains the office of Chancellor. His redesignation as Principal Knight Grand Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit will be effected by The Queen when she signs the Royal Warrant approving the reinstatement of titles.

From the time the changes are made, the Governor-General will be styled the Hon Sir Anand Satyanand, GNZM, QSO.

Q17. How do I address a knight or dame?

- A. This Information is in the Media Pack. It will also be available shortly on the Honours Secretariat's website: www.honours.govt.nz

Q18. If someone accepts an honour with a title, do they have to use it?

- A. The use of a title is not compulsory.

Q19. Does the wife of a knight have to use the courtesy title of "Lady"?

- A. The use of the courtesy title of "Lady" is not compulsory and some women choose not to use it. The title may only be used if the wife of a knight uses her husband's surname. Information on the use of titles is in the Media Pack and also will be available shortly on the Honours Secretariat's website: www.honours.govt.nz

Q20. Does the husband of a dame have a courtesy title?

A. There is no courtesy title for the husband of a dame.

Q21. Will those Principal and Distinguished Companions who accept a title have to attend an investiture?

A. Everyone involved has already attended an investiture at which they received their insignia. New knights receive the “accolade of knighthood”, which is the ancient ceremony of touching each shoulder with the point of a sword, also known as “dubbing”. This can be carried out by the Governor-General at a regular investiture, or on any other convenient occasion. There is no timeframe within which this ceremony must be completed.

Q22. Is it possible for deceased Principal and Distinguished Companions to receive a title posthumously?

A. No. An Order is a society of honour and the appointment process requires the proposed member to personally accept the offer of membership or change of status, as the case may be. Deceased persons cannot do this. Also, a person’s name is removed from the roll of an Order on their death.

Q23. Why is there provision in the Amending Royal Warrant for the widows of deceased Principal and Distinguished Companions to elect to use the courtesy title of “Lady”?

A. When the reinstatement of titles was being considered it was noted that there were a small number of widows of deceased Principal and Distinguished Companions who would be unable to use the courtesy title of “Lady”. To ensure the widows of deceased Principal and Distinguished Companions are not disadvantaged, approval was sought for them to be able to elect to use the courtesy title if they wish to do so.

Q24. Does the reinstatement of titles to the New Zealand Honours System affect appointments to the Privy Council?

A. Members of the Privy Council are appointed for life and are entitled to use the title “The Right Honourable”.

The Prime Minister has decided not to make any further recommendations to the British Prime Minister for appointments to the Council.

Those New Zealanders who are members of the Council will remain so and may continue to use the title “The Right Honourable”.

Contact

If you have any further questions, please contact:

David Baguley, Director Honours Secretariat
Ph: (04) 817–9349 david.baguley@dpmc.govt.nz