



EXECUTIVE COUNCIL CHAMBERS

11 February 2025

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Ref: OIA-2024/25-0547

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Official Information Act request: [REDACTED] King's honor decision making process

Thank you for your Official Information Act request received on 3 January 2025. You requested:

“Under the official information act, I would like to know the process and people involved with deciding if someone gets the King's honour or not. I'd like to know who vets the thousands of nominations to whittle them down to a few hundred. Does staff within the Cabinet office shortlist people to pass on to the approved Cabinet committee members as listed here <https://www.dPMC.govt.nz/cabinet-committees/aph-cabinet-appointments-and-honours-committee> Do the Cabinet committee members get a full list of all the people nominated, or just a short list so they don't know if someone was nominated and then unsuccessful? If people within the honours unit of the Cabinet office do the shortlisting, could you please advise me of whom exactly they are..... If this task of selecting kings honour nominees for Cabinet to consider ever contracted out or outsiders brought in to help with that process.. ”

We have interpreted your request relating to ‘the King’s honours’ as those regular New Zealand Royal Honours announced on the New Year and King’s Birthday Honours lists. I have decided to release the information below to you.

The Honours consideration process

The New Zealand Royal Honours system is administered by the Honours Unit, which is part of the Cabinet Office, a business unit of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. The Prime Minister has formal responsibility for making recommendations to The King for the grant of honours.

All nominations for honours are considered by the Cabinet Appointments and Honours Committee (the Committee), which is made up of a group of Cabinet Ministers and chaired by the Prime Minister. You have asked if that task is ever “contracted out” or outsiders brought in to help with it – the answer is no. The current membership of the Committee can be found on the DPMC website at <https://www.dPMC.govt.nz/cabinet-committees/aph-cabinet-appointments-and-honours-committee>

4980367

CABINET OFFICE, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS, WELLINGTON 6011, NEW ZEALAND

Telephone: +64 (4) 830 5010. Email: CabinetOffice@dPMC.govt.nz

www.dPMC.govt.nz

The Honours Unit supports the Committee in its consideration of honours nominations. The Honours Unit receives honours nominations throughout the year. Each nomination is processed and put before the Committee for consideration for an honours list – either the New Year or King’s Birthday list. Approximately 800 to 1000 nominations are considered by the Committee for possible appointment to New Zealand Royal Honours each year. There are many more nominations received than there are honours available, so not all nominations will be successful.

When the Honours Unit receives a nomination, it prepares a draft citation based on the information in the nomination. The Committee meets twice yearly to consider nominations for New Year and King’s Birthday honours. All the draft citations and a list of all nominations are provided to the Committee for its consideration at these meetings.

A number of factors are taken into account by the Committee in considering nominations – length of service, level of achievement, whether the contribution is of local, regional, national or international significance, and precedent from past recipients of Royal Honours in similar areas of contribution. The Committee decides which nominations should be included on a provisional list. The Prime Minister then recommends that the Governor-General give what is known as “informal approval” to the provisional list.

Once informal approval is given, the nominees on the provisional list are contacted by the Clerk of the Executive Council on behalf of the Governor-General and asked to advise whether they wish to accept the proposed honour. This part of the process is known as “sounding”.

Once sounding is complete, the Prime Minister then submits the final honours list (comprising those on the provisional list who have agreed to accept the proposed honour) to The King for his formal approval.

Guidance on the requirements for submitting an honours nomination can be found on the DPMC website here: <https://dpmc.govt.nz/our-programmes/new-zealand-royal-honours/make-nomination/new-zealand-royal-honours-nomination>

You have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review my decision under section 28(3) of the Act.

This response will be published on the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet’s website during our regular publication cycle. Typically, information is released monthly, or as otherwise determined. Your personal information including name and contact details will be removed for publication.

Nāku noa, nā



Rachel Hayward
Clerk of the Executive Council