



## EXECUTIVE COUNCIL CHAMBERS

21 March 2025



Ref: OIA-2024/25-0697

Tēnā koe 

**Official Information Act request:  Sir Robert Mahuta's knighthood**

Thank you for your Official Information Act (the Act) request received on 26 February 2025. You requested:

*I am working as a contractor for Waikato-Tainui writing a book covering the tribe's historic 1995 land claim settlement. Is it possible to obtain the notes/media notes which accompanied Sir Robert Mahuta's knighthood and to know officially who nominated him for the honour? I would also like to confirm that he was the first New Zealander to be appointed a Knight Companion of the NZ Order of Merit.*

**Response to your request**

I can confirm Sir Robert Mahuta was the first individual to be appointed as a Knight Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit (KNZM) on the Queen's Birthday 1996 Honours List. The list can be viewed at the following link <https://www.dpmc.govt.nz/publications/queens-birthday-honours-list-1996>. I note, concurrent to Sir Robert's appointment, Sir Michael Hardie-Boys was also appointed as an additional Knight Grand Companion (GNZM) on that list.

In terms of notes or media notes that accompanied the knighthood, there will have been a full citation sent to the media with an embargoed media list ahead of the announcement of the list. Unfortunately, we are not able to locate the Honours Unit file for Sir Robert, which would contain this full citation. Our investigations show it has been misplaced at offsite storage. I must therefore refuse your request for the notes/media notes that accompanied the citation, and the identity of the nominator under section 18(e) of the Act on the basis, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, the information cannot be found.

We are continuing to make further enquiries with our storage contractor and, if the information is retrieved, we will provide the citation to you notwithstanding this refusal.

I note that, if the file is located, I would consider withholding the identity of the nominator under sections 9(2)(a) (to protect the privacy of individuals) and 9(2)(ba)(ii) of the Act (to prevent damage to the public interest by making available information which is subject to an obligation of confidence). Protecting the confidentiality of material about Honours nominations and appointments is essential to maintaining the integrity of the New Zealand Royal Honours system. In particular, the protection of such information ensures

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that those engaging with the Honours system can rely on the confidentiality of the process. The DPMC website provides guidelines on the nomination process for prospective nominators. The guidelines highlight the confidential treatment of nominations. Nominators therefore have an expectation that nominations will be kept confidential.

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**