



## Proactive Release

The following documents have been proactively released by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC), on behalf of Rt Hon Chris Hipkins, Prime Minister:

### **[Proactive Release] Proposal to Rename The Queen's Service Order 'The King's Service Order'**

The following documents have been included in this release:

**Title of paper:** Proposal to Rename The Queen's Service Order 'The King's Service Order' (CAB-23-SUB-0161)

**Title of minute:** Proposal to Rename The Queen's Service Order 'The King's Service Order' (CAB-23-MIN-0161)

Some parts of this information release would not be appropriate to release and, if requested, would be withheld under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Where this is the case, the relevant section of the Act that would apply has been identified. Where information has been withheld, no public interest has been identified that would outweigh the reasons for withholding it.

#### **Key to redaction code:**

- section 9(2)(f)(i), to protect the confidentiality of Sovereign communications

**[In Confidence]**

Office of the Prime Minister

Cabinet

**Proposal to rename The Queen's Service Order 'The King's Service Order'**

**Proposal**

- 1 This paper seeks agreement to rename The Queen's Service Order 'The King's Service Order'.

**Relation to government priorities**

- 2 This matter is not directly related to government priorities but requires consideration following the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on 8 September 2022 and the accession of His Majesty King Charles III ('The King').

**Background**

*History of the Order*

- 3 The Queen's Service Order (the Order) and its accompanying medal, The Queen's Service Medal, were established by Royal Warrant on 13 March 1975. While the Order was the first distinctively New Zealand Order, the title recognises Queen Elizabeth II as the first 'Queen of New Zealand'. The reference to the Queen emphasised the royal nature of the honour, as there was a concern that a new, New Zealand honour might be regarded as inferior (compared to The Order of the British Empire).
- 4 In 1981, following a review of the Order after its first five years of operation, the Cabinet Committee on Honours agreed that on the death of the Sovereign, the title of the Order should be 'The Queen Elizabeth II Service Order' (CM 81/36/8 refers). In a 2006 review of the Order, after 30 years of operation, it was noted that the other option was to rename it 'The King's Service Order'.
- 5 Today, the Order is a mainstay of the honours system alongside The New Zealand Order of Merit and The Order of New Zealand. The QSO and QSM are both reasonably well-known, and these postnominals (especially the QSM, given the number awarded) are seen regularly.
- 6 The title of The Queen's Service Order does not automatically change following the death of Queen Elizabeth II. Existing appointments as a Companion of The Queen's Service Order (QSO) and related awards of The Queen's Service Medal (QSM) remain valid and may continue to be made. Four QSO appointments and 49 QSM awards were announced on The New Year's Honours List 2023. More appointments will be included on The King's Birthday and Coronation Honours List 2023 (the KB2023 Honours List).

## Analysis

- 7 Now that New Zealand has a King, it is inappropriate to continue with the current title indefinitely and not acknowledge the change of Sovereign.
- 8 There are two options for renaming, either of which would serve to acknowledge the change of Sovereign: 'The King's Service Order', or 'The Queen Elizabeth II Service Order'. Both options will take time to implement due to approval, insignia design and related matters. I am advised by the Cabinet Office that the earliest the change could be implemented to ensure a smooth transition would be for The King's Birthday Honours List 2024.
- 9 My preference is the first option - 'The King's Service Order' - as this approach would honour and acknowledge His Majesty as The King of New Zealand. As the Head of State of New Zealand, The King is the Sovereign of the three New Zealand Orders, and the Sovereign head of the New Zealand Royal Honours system.
- 10 The title would also remain valid for The King's heir, Prince William, and for his heir, Prince George.
- 11 The main issue associated with this option will be that the postnominals will change – to KSO for the Order, and KSM for the Medal – and this will take some time to bed in. There will be no change for those with existing QSO/QSM postnominals, which might cause confusion. A clear communication strategy would be employed to mitigate this risk.
- 12 This option will require rescinding the 1981 Cabinet Committee on Honours' decision. I am comfortable with this given the passage of time, New Zealand's ability to make its own decisions on honours matters, and the need for New Zealand to have regard to the relationship with the current Sovereign.

## Precedents

- 13 The UK, Canada and Australia do not have existing Orders with 'Queen' in the title, so these countries are not in the same position as New Zealand in considering this issue. Some high-level UK Orders and decorations retain reference to former Kings and Queens, such as the Royal Victorian Order (personal to the Sovereign), the Victoria Cross, and the George Cross.
- 14 In the UK and across the Commonwealth, it is likely that some 'Queen's' medals will change over to 'King's' following the demise. Following the death of King George VI, the King's Police Medal became the Queen's Police Medal. It is more common for medals to be renamed than Orders.
- 15 Notwithstanding this, there is no reason why the title of the Order cannot be changed. Under the Statutes of the Order, which fall within New Zealand's secondary legislation, the Sovereign may amend any aspect of the Royal Warrant (by convention, this is on the recommendation of the Prime Minister).

## Financial Implications

- 16 The financial implications of the proposal are minimal. There will be costs associated with updating the insignia of the Order, and the database which the Cabinet Office uses to administer the New Zealand Royal Honours system. Any financial costs will be minor and met from baseline.

## Legislative Implications

- 17 To implement the proposal, secondary legislation - the Statutes of the Queen's Service Order (SR 1975/200) - will need to be amended. Drafting instructions will be issued to the Parliamentary Counsel Office (agreement is not sought to issue drafting instructions as it relates to a prerogative instrument). I will ask The King to signal his informal, then formal approval of an amending Royal Warrant. The Royal Warrant will be notified in the *New Zealand Gazette* then published on the New Zealand Legislation website.

## Impact Analysis

- 18 A Regulatory Impact Statement is not required.

## Population Implications

- 19 This proposal is not expected to have any impacts on population groups. All New Zealanders are eligible to be nominated for New Zealand Royal Honours. The Cabinet Office continues to work with population ministries to encourage nominations from all population groups.

## Human Rights

- 20 This proposal does not contain any potential inconsistencies with the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 and the Human Rights Act 1993.

## Consultation

- 21 It is convention for honours matters not to be consulted on with government agencies. s9(2)(f)(i)

## Communications

- 22 I plan to announce the title change when the KB2023 Honours List is published on Monday 5 June 2023. Information on the title change will be included as part of the embargoed Honours List which is circulated to selected media in advance in the strictest confidence. The Cabinet Office will inform the Palace and Government House.

## Proactive Release

- 23 This Cabinet paper will be proactively released in part following the publication of the KB2023 Honours List, subject to redaction as appropriate under the Official Information Act 1982, particularly to maintain the constitutional conventions for the

time being which protect the confidentiality of communications by or with the Sovereign or their representative.

## Recommendations

The Prime Minister recommends that Cabinet:

- 1 note that The Queen's Service Order [the Order] was established in 1975 and named after Queen Elizabeth II, the first 'Queen of New Zealand';
- 2 note that the title of the Order needs to be reviewed following the death of Queen Elizabeth II on 8 September 2022 and the accession of King Charles III;
- 3 note that in 1981, the Cabinet Committee on Honours agreed that on the death of The Queen, the title of The Queen's Service Order should be 'The Queen Elizabeth II Service Order' [CM 81/36/8];
- 4 agree to recommend that Cabinet rescind the decision referred to in recommendation three, and instead agree to rename the Order 'The King's Service Order';
- 5 invite the Prime Minister to announce the title change when The King's Birthday and Coronation Honours List 2023 is published on Monday 5 June 2023.

Authorised for lodgement

Rt Hon Chris Hipkins

Prime Minister



# Cabinet

## Minute of Decision

---

*This document contains information for the New Zealand Cabinet. It must be treated in confidence and handled in accordance with any security classification, or other endorsement. The information can only be released, including under the Official Information Act 1982, by persons with the appropriate authority.*

---

### Proposal to Rename The Queen's Service Order 'The King's Service Order'

Portfolio                      Prime Minister

On 8 May 2023, the Cabinet:

- 1        **noted** that The Queen's Service Order (the Order) was established in 1975 and named after Queen Elizabeth II, the first 'Queen of New Zealand';
- 2        **noted** that the title of the Order needs to be reviewed following the death of Queen Elizabeth II on 8 September 2022 and the accession of King Charles III;
- 3        **noted** that in 1981, the Cabinet Committee on Honours agreed that on the death of The Queen, the title of The Queen's Service Order should be 'The Queen Elizabeth II Service Order' [CM 81/36/8];
- 4        4.1        **rescinded** the decision referred to in paragraph 3 above, and instead;  
          4.2        **agreed** to rename the Order 'The King's Service Order';
- 5        **invited** the Prime Minister to announce the title change when The King's Birthday and Coronation Honours List 2023 is published on Monday 5 June 2023.

Rachel Hayward  
Secretary of the Cabinet

---