



EXECUTIVE COUNCIL CHAMBERS

12 July 2023



Ref: OIA-2022/23-1034

Tēnā koe



Official Information Act request: Concerns regarding NZ's Honours system

Thank you for your Official Information Act request received on 14 June 2023. You requested:

"...I would like to request that you provide me with statistics on the number of Knighthoods and Dame(hoods) you have awarded to sports people this century as opposed to how many have gone to Conservationists and Environmentalists?..."

I would like to ask another question: your website states the numbers received outnumbers the numbers of honours available and numbers are strictly limited, why? Surely if a person is worthy the number is unimportant?"

See the attached document for the full request.

In relation to your first request, for statistics as to the number of Knighthoods and Damehoods awarded for services to sports and the number of the same awarded for services to conservation and/ or the environment, each for this century, those statistics are as follows:

- In the period 2000 to June 2023, there were eight knights or dames appointed for services to conservation or the environment:
 - 1 Knight Grand Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit;
 - 3 Dames Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit;
 - 1 Knight Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit;
 - 3 Distinguished Companions of the New Zealand Order of Merit.

- For the period 2000 to June 2023, there were 34 knights or dames appointed for services to sport:
 - 9 Dames Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit;
 - 17 Knights Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit;
 - 8 Distinguished Companions of the New Zealand Order of Merit.

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Please note, in compiling these statistics, the Honours Unit used the short citation for each recipient (“for services to...”), to determine the services for which the knight or dame was recognised. For the conservation/ environment category the Honours Unit counted any appointments where the short citation referred to conservation, the environment or related terms. For the sport category the Honours Unit counted any appointment where the short citation referred to a specific sporting code, sports governance or sport administration.

During the period 2000 to 2009 the New Zealand Royal Honours System did not have titular honours. The non-titular equivalent to the Knight or Dame Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit, being the Distinguished Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit, has been included in the statistics provided.

In relation to your second question regarding the number of honours conferred on each list, each year and why there are limits, the maximum allocations are set out in the relevant Royal warrants for New Zealand’s various honours. The number of honours allocated is based on the traditional formula of 1 honour for every 10,000 of population. For levels 1 and 2 (Knight and Dame Grand Companion and Knight and Dame Companion), this formula is 1 for every 500,000. These allocations are for each New Year and King’s Birthday honours lists across one year i.e., the allocations are for the New Year 2023 Honours and the King’s Birthday 2023 Honours lists for the year 2023. These are the allocations at each level:

- Knights and Dames Grand Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit shall not exceed 30 in number at any one time;
- Knights and Dames Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit shall not exceed 15 per annum;
- Companions of the New Zealand Order of Merit shall not exceed 40 per annum;
- Officers of the New Zealand Order of Merit shall not exceed 80 per annum;
- Members of the New Zealand Order of Merit shall not exceed 140 per annum.
- No more than 50 Ordinary Companions of the Queen’s Service Order may be appointed in any one year. Extra, Additional, and Honorary Companions shall be additional to the Ordinary membership of the Order.
- There are no limits on the number of Queen’s Service Medals awarded.

You can find more on the specific allocations here

<https://www.legislation.govt.nz/regulation/public/1996/0205/latest/DLM216686.html>
https://www.legislation.govt.nz/regulation/public/1975/0200/latest/DLM47521.html?search=qs_act%40bill%40regulation%40deemedreg_statutes+of+the+queen%27s+service+order+resel+25+h&p=1&sr=1

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
Secretary of the Cabinet