



14 April 2026

Ref: OIA-2025/26-0593

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act request relating to advice to current or earlier Prime Minister about consequences of accepting a Matai title

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request, which was received by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) on 18 March 2026. You requested:

With recent news coverage of the Prime Minister's visit to Samoa, and the honouring of him by the granting of a Matai title, I learned that several Prime Ministers had been similarly awarded Matai titles.

Given Samoan law on Matai titles (see eg https://www.pacii.org/ws/legis/consol_act_2024/ssa1963172/), including predecessor legislation that arises from New Zealand's time administering the then Western Samoa, I wondered if DPMC has provided any advice (either in relation to the current Prime Minister, or in relation to earlier Prime Ministers) about the possible consequences of a Prime Minister accepting a Matai title, particularly in light of section 55(1)(c) of the Electoral Act (or potentially section 55(1)(b)).

If you have, could you please provide a copy of such advice. If you consider there are grounds to withhold such advice, I would ask you to consider providing a summary instead, but obviously this request is for the advice itself, if such advice exists.

Searches have been completed of our Information Management Systems for anything relevant to your request, as it relates to advice (either in relation to the Rt Hon Christopher Luxon or in relation to previous Prime Ministers), given Samoan law, about the possible consequences of a Prime Minister accepting a Matai title and nothing has been identified. Therefore your request is refused under section 18(e) of the Act, as the information requested does not exist.

You might also be interested to know that a Matai title is not a foreign honour (to which the *Rules relating to the acceptance and wearing of Commonwealth, foreign and international Honours by New Zealand citizens* would apply). Under the *Rules*, a foreign honour is one conferred by a Head of State, head of government or recognised international organisation.

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



Lisa Daniell
Acting Deputy Chief Executive
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