EXECUTIVE COUNCIL CHAMBERS

10 August 2026

[redacted]

Ref: OIA-2026/27-0043

Tēnā koe [redacted]

Official Information Act request:Correspondence to Peter Bruce Churchman, Forrest Miller and process for The Honourable.

Thank you for your Official Information Act (the Act) request received on 16 July 2026. You requested:

> *I noted, Retention of the Title "The Honourable" https://gazette.govt.nz/notice/id/2026-vr3413*
>
> *I would like to understand whether the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet received any documentation before announcing or confirming this retention.*
>
> *If any correspondence or confirmation letters were issued to Peter Bruce Churchman and Forrest Miller regarding the retention of the title, I would like to request to view those documents.*
>
> *Additionally, could you please explain the process and criteria used to assess and confirm the retention of the title "The Honourable"?*

Response to your request

Former members of the Executive Council and judges of the High Court, including the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal, may be recommended to retain the title "The Honourable" for life after leaving office.

The Governor-General may approve retention under authority delegated by The King and on the Prime Minister's recommendation. Retention is at the Prime Minister's discretion; it is an ex officio rather than merit-based honour. The applicable rules are published on the DPMC website: Rules for the grant, use and retention of the title "The Honourable" in New Zealand.

The Honours Unit may be notified of an eligible person by the Prime Minister or the Prime Minister's Office, or, for judges, through correspondence from the Chief Justice. The Cabinet Office may also prepare proactive advice when a minister is expected to retire or following a general election. In this case, the Honours Unit received letters from the Chief Justice recommending that Hon Justice Miller and Hon Justice Churchman be permitted to retain the title "The Honourable" following their retirement from the judiciary.

DEPARTMENT OF THE PRIME MINISTER AND CABINET
Te Tari o te Pirimia me te Komiti Matua
Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6011, New Zealand. Telephone: +64 (4) 830 5010.
Email: CabinetOffice@dpmc.govt.nz www.dpmc.govt.nz

The Honours Unit prepares a memo for the Prime Minister outlining the person's eligibility and seeking agreement to recommend retention. If the Prime Minister agrees, they sign an advice sheet for the Governor-General and a letter for the person concerned.

The Governor-General signs the advice sheet to approve the retention, which is returned to the Cabinet Office. The Cabinet Office then sends the Prime Minister's letter to the person confirming the retention, arranges publication of a notice in the New Zealand Gazette, and updates the Roll of "The Honourables" on the DPMC website.

Information being released

I have decided to release the documents listed below, subject to information being withheld as noted. The relevant grounds under which information has been withheld are:

1. section 9(2)(a), to protect the privacy of individuals

Item	Date	Document Description/Subject
1.	19 June 2026	Letter from the Prime Minister to Hon Peter Churchman
2.	19 June 2026	Letter from the Prime Minister to Hon Forrest Miller

In making my decision, in accordance with section 9(1) of the Act I have considered whether the public interest in disclosure outweighs the need to withhold the information, and I have concluded that it does not.

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

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RT HON CHRISTOPHER LUXON
PRIME MINISTER

The Honourable Peter Bruce Churchman
s9(2)(a)

Dear Justice Churchman

I am writing to advise you that Her Excellency the Governor-General, under delegated authority from His Majesty The King, has approved your retention of the title "The Honourable" following your retirement as a Judge of the High Court of New Zealand.

Thank you for your contribution to the judiciary.

Yours sincerely

Rt Hon Christopher Luxon
Prime Minister

Cc The Rt Hon Dame Helen Winkelmann, GNZM
Chief Justice of New Zealand, Office of the Chief Justice, DX SX 10084, Wellington

Released under the Official Information Act 1982

RT HON CHRISTOPHER LUXON
PRIME MINISTER

The Honourable Forrest Miller
s9(2)(a)

Dear Justice Miller

I am writing to advise you that Her Excellency the Governor-General, under delegated authority from His Majesty The King, has approved your retention of the title "The Honourable" following your retirement as a Judge of the Supreme Court of New Zealand.

Thank you for your contribution to the judiciary.

Yours sincerely

Rt Hon Christopher Luxon
Prime Minister

Cc The Rt Hon Dame Helen Winkelmann, GNZM
Chief Justice of New Zealand, Office of the Chief Justice, DX SX 10084, Wellington

Released under the Official Information Act 1982