

New Zealand Order of Merit (Titular Titles) Bill

Member's Bill

Explanatory Note

In 2000 the New Zealand Order of Merit was changed to remove titular titles, that is, the recipients of the highest honours were no longer entitled to use the appellations of "Sir" and "Dame" before their names.

The previous Knight or Dame Grand Companions of the New Zealand Order of Merit were refashioned to be Principal Companions of the New Zealand Order of Merit. Knight or Dame Companions of the New Zealand Order of Merit were refashioned to be Distinguished Companions of the New Zealand Order of Merit.

This change has led to confusion about the honours and fails to honour the members of the Order in a manner readily understood by the public.

This Bill restores the previous position. This Bill converts honours awarded since the change, but allows individual members of the Order to decline the conversion.

It also makes one further change, allowing Knights and Dames to also use a Te Reo Māori form of appellation, "Tā" and "Kahurangi". This reinforces the indigenous nature of the Order.

[Member of Parliament]

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The Parliament of New Zealand enacts as follows:

1 Title

This Act is the New Zealand Order of Merit (Titular Titles) Bill 2007.

2 Commencement

- (1) This Act, except for section 5, comes into force on the day after the date on which it receives the Royal assent.
- (2) Section 5 of this Act comes into force 60 days after the date on which the Act receives the Royal assent

3 Purpose

The purpose of this Act is:

- (a) to reinstate titular titles, namely "Sir" and "Dame", for the highest honours awarded under the New Zealand Order of Merit; and
- (b) to amend the Statutes of the New Zealand Order of Merit to provide for titular titles in Te Reo Māori, namely "Tā" and "Kahurangi".

Conversion of honours

4 Reinstatement of titular titles

The Additional Statutes of the New Zealand Order of Merit 2000 are hereby revoked.

5 Conversion of honours awarded under the Additional Statutes of the New Zealand Order of Merit

- (1) A person admitted to the membership of the Order between 18 May 2000 and the commencement of this section shall have their membership altered as follows:
 - (a) A Chancellor of the Order shall be styled Chancellor of the Order or Chancellor and Principal Knight or Dame Grand Companion of the Order.
 - (b) A person admitted into the first level of the Order shall be designated a Knight or Dame Grand Companion of the Order.
 - (c) A person admitted into the second level of the Order shall be designated a Knight or Dame Companion of the Order.
- (2) To avoid any doubt, any person referred to in subsection (1) may use the post-nominal letters and appellations set out in the Statutes of the New Zealand Order of Merit.
- (3) The Chancellor may perform, in relation to any person referred to in subsection (1), the ceremony of investiture referred to in clause 16 of the Statutes of the New Zealand Order of Merit and confer the Accolade of Knighthood on Knight Grand Companions and Knight Companions to recognise the conversion of their membership.

6 Exceptions to conversion

- (1) A member referred to in section 5 may decline to have their membership converted by giving written notice accordingly to the Chancellor before the commencement of section 5.
- (2) The provisions of the Additional Statutes of the New Zealand Order of Merit continue to apply to any person who gives notice in accordance with subsection 1.

Te Reo Māori Titular Titles

7 Te Reo Māori Titular Titles

Clause 20 of the Statutes of the New Zealand Order of Merit is revoked and the following clause is substituted:

"20. Ordinary and Additional members of the first and second levels of this Order may use the following appellations before their forenames from the date of their appointment:

(a) in the case of a man of, "Sir" or "Tā"; and

(b) in the case of a woman, "Dame" or "Kahurangi"."