



EXECUTIVE COUNCIL CHAMBERS

24 August 2018

Reference: OIA-2018/19-0056

Oliver Sanderson
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Dear Oliver

Inquiry: Recognition of Knighthood conferred by a Roman Catholic Bishop

Thank you for your inquiry, received on 3 August 2018, regarding the recognition of 'knighthoods' conferred by a Roman Catholic Bishop.

I have responded to each of your queries below.

If a knighthood is granted by an ordained Catholic bishop in New Zealand for services to the Church, is this recognised as a knighthood in the same sense that knighthoods granted to New Zealanders for service to the community are?

No. Papal honours are not recognised as part of the New Zealand Royal Honours system.

No approval is required for New Zealand citizens to accept and wear Papal honours or those honours under the protection of the Holy See, for services to the Holy See or Roman Catholic Church, or both.

In terms of the order of wear, Papal honours are worn as a foreign honour. However, the insignia may not be worn on an official uniform of the Crown.

Does a New Zealander who has been Knighted by a Catholic Bishop for services to the Church inherit the right to be called 'sir' and could they use this title when say for example booking an airline ticket or creating a bank account? Would they be afforded the same privileges of their secular equivalent?

A Papal knighthood or damehood does not entitle the holder to use the appellation of "Sir" or "Dame" which are distinctive or exclusive to the system followed in New Zealand and several other Realms.

Papal knighthoods do not involve a dubbing or conferral of the accolade. Papal honours are usually conferred by the Bishop of the diocese in which the recipient resides.

Also, what privileges does a recognised Knighthood in New Zealand actually bestow on the recipient?

In New Zealand when an individual is appointed either as a Knight/Dame Grand Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit (GNZM) or as a Knight/Dame Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit (KNZM or DNZM) the recipient is entitled to use appellation "Sir" or "Dame" before their name and the appropriate post-nominal letters after their name – for example, Sir John Smith, KNZM. There are no other 'privileges' extended to a recipient of such New Zealand Royal honours.

Yours sincerely



Michael Webster
Clerk of the Executive Council