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10 APRIL 2000

Titles discontinued

HELEN CLARK(/MINISTER/HELEN-CLARK)

[Prime Minister \(/portfolio/labouralliance-1999-2002/prime-minister\)](#)

Prime Minister Helen Clark today announced that the Queen has approved the recommendation of the government to discontinue in future the titles of Sir and Dame in the New Zealand honours system.

"This decision will bring our honours system fully into line with the main recommendations of the 1995 report of the Prime Minister's Honours Advisory Committee," Helen Clark said.

"I agree with the Advisory Committee that Knight and Damehoods overshadow not only our highest honour, the Order of New Zealand, but also a large number of other awards given for an extraordinary variety of services to a wide cross-section of the community."

The report of the Advisory Committee said the Committee "finally came to a consensus that though forgoing titles would be a break with a tradition many valued, our own developing traditions, the strengthening of our own cultural and national identity, and the argument for New Zealanders to be honoured in a distinctive New Zealand way, tipped the scales against titular honours in any of New Zealand's own orders".

The Prime Minister said that the review committee recommended that we have our own system.

"As a result, the use of British awards such as the Order of the British Empire was discontinued, and we now have our own structure of the Order of New Zealand, the New Zealand Order of Merit, the Queen's Service Order and Medal, and the recently instituted New Zealand Gallantry and Bravery Awards.

"Public submissions to the Advisory Committee showed overwhelming support for the continuation of an honours system, and were in favour of a New Zealand system, with its own distinctive character. The public wanted more awards based on merit rather than a recognition of office, and that there should be a more even spread of awards across the community.

"The removal of titles completes the work of the Committee in replacing a mixed honours system with a wholly New Zealand system."

The Prime Minister said the decision to discontinue knight and damehoods would be put into effect before the Queen's Birthday honours to be announced on 5 June. These changes will be applied to future recipients only; all current knights and dames, including those of the New Zealand Order of Merit, will retain their existing titles.

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