



EXECUTIVE COUNCIL CHAMBERS

19 June 2017

Suzanne Newton
by email fyi-request-5965-353debe1@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Suzanne Newton

Information request: GNZM: Rt Hon Sir John Key
Our reference: MOIA OIA-2016/17-0453

- 1 On 6 June 2017 the Prime Minister received a request from you under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) for :

“copies of all correspondence, including notes, phone call logs, emails, letters and other such methods of correspondence from any source both to and from your office regarding the application for and acceptance of application for a Knighthood for John Phillip Key. Dated between 1 December 2016 and 5 June 2017. This should include any correspondence with John Phillip Key, the office of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II or herself, or any of her representatives, and any other party, including yourself, other members of Parliament that has corresponded by any means with you, your office regarding this matter. Included in this correspondence should be the original application/s giving reasons etc.”
- 2 The Honours Unit in the Cabinet Office is responsible for administering the Royal New Zealand Honours system. Your request was therefore transferred to the Cabinet Office on 13 June 2017, as the information sought is more closely connected with the functions of this office.
- 3 I can confirm that Rt Hon Sir John Key was made a Knight Grand Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit (GNZM) for services to the State as part of the Queen’s Birthday Honours 2017.
- 4 The reasons for this honour being awarded are set out in the citation, which is available here: <http://www.dpmc.govt.nz/honours/lists/qb2017-gnzm#keyj>. People do not apply for a Royal New Zealand honour, nor can they nominate themselves – they must be nominated by someone else.
- 5 This office holds information that relates to the award of the GNZM to Rt Hon Sir John Key. I am however withholding this information under the following provisions of the OIA:

- 5.1 s 9(2)(a) to protect the privacy of natural persons;
 - 5.2 s 9(2)(ba)(i) to protect information which is subject to an obligation of confidence, where the making available of the information would be likely to prejudice the supply of similar information, or information from the same source, and it is in the public interest that such information should continue to be supplied;
 - 5.3 s 9(2)(f)(i) to maintain the constitutional conventions for the time being which protect the confidentiality of communications by or with the Sovereign or her representative;
 - 5.4 s 9(2)(f)(iv) to maintain the constitutional conventions for the time being which protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials; and
 - 5.5 s 9(2)(g)(i) to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions by or between or to Ministers or officials in the course of their duty.
- 6 Protecting the confidentiality of material about honours nominations and appointments is essential to maintaining the integrity of the New Zealand Royal Honours system. In particular, the protection of such information ensures that those engaging with the honours system can rely on the confidentiality of the process.
 - 7 I do not think there are public interest considerations that would outweigh the reasons for withholding the information you have requested.
 - 8 Please note that you have the right to complain about this decision to the Office of the Ombudsmen under s 28(3) of the OIA.

Yours sincerely



Michael Webster
Clerk of the Executive Council