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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEW YEAR, NEW HONOURS, NEW CHANGES

Monarchy New Zealand wishes to congratulate all recipients of awards in the Queen's New Year Honours List. These remarkable citizens are a credit to their communities and their recognition is a way for all New Zealanders to celebrate their accomplishments.

Monarchy New Zealand continues its call for the New Zealand Royal Honours to be handled by the Office of the Governor-General.

The correct place for the Honours Secretariat is under the jurisdiction of the Governor-General. The current Secretariat, within the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, creates an unnecessary perception of bias or political control. Having honours managed by the Governor-General would reinforce the neutrality of the system and separate it from the world of professional politics.

The Honours systems of Canada and Australia are already managed by their respective Governors-General. The United Kingdom has also, recently, taken steps to make their Honours system more overtly apolitical.

Other changes Monarchy New Zealand proposes for consideration in the future include:

- That to further recognise Maori culture and language, Monarchy New Zealand encourages the Government to consider creating an optional Maori title for those who would prefer to use that.
- That people should hold titles in their own right, and their partners should not have a companion title. Currently, the wife of a Knight is called a Lady but the husband of a "Dame" has no title. This imbalance can be corrected by discontinuing any future companion titles.

- That the title of "Dame" could be replaced by "Lady". Some consider that "Dame" is not a titled universally welcomed by women. There is precedent for a change. Women who are admitted to the Order of the Garter, which is the oldest surviving Order of Chivalry in the world, carry the title "Lady" not "Dame", a title which only dates from the foundation of the Order of the British Empire, in 1917.

Monarchy New Zealand applauds the work and dedication of all those on this New Year Honours List, and wishes everyone a happy and safe start to 2010.

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