

Council for the Order of Australia

**Statement on termination or cancellation of honours
where the recipient is no longer living**

The Council for the Order of Australia (the Council) is an independent body that considers nominations for appointments and awards in the General Division of the Order of Australia. The Council makes recommendations to the Governor-General.

The Council's responsibilities include considering whether an appointment or award should be terminated or cancelled in accordance with the Constitution of the Order of Australia and the Terminations and Cancellations Ordinance.

The Council is not an investigative body and is unable to make a determination of guilt or innocence.

Following reports and findings of investigative bodies such as the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, cases of individuals with honours, about whom there have been adverse findings, have been raised with the Council.

The Council is conscious that the impact of such heinous acts on individuals can never be fully extinguished.

Had the Council known of serious adverse findings at the time of considering a nomination, an appointment may not have been recommended to the Governor-General.

Where recipients are still alive, consistent with long standing practice, the Council may decide to commence proceedings for cancellation and termination, most often after a recipient has been convicted in a court of law, receives a penalty under the law, or is subject to adverse findings.

Where recipients are no longer living, different circumstances apply. The Order of Australia is a living society of honour. As such, upon death, individuals are no longer members.

Furthermore, upon death, individuals cannot be afforded a right of reply as required by the Terminations and Cancellation Ordinance. Therefore, the Council is not able to consider cases of termination or cancellation when the recipient is no longer living. The Council acknowledges that the hurtful legacy of such awards cannot be taken away.

The Council's recommendations to the Governor-General aim, at all times, to be a reflection of the best attributes of Australians.

Honours and awards recognise and celebrate exceptional achievement and selflessness across Australia through a living society that evolves over time.