

# Privacy Statement – Australian Honours and Awards System

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The Office of the Official Secretary to the Governor-General (the Office) assists the Governor-General to administer the Australian honours system. This statement sets out how the Office complies with the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) in the *Privacy Act 1988* (Privacy Act) when requesting, collecting and managing personal information required to administer the Australian honours system.

## **The Australian honours system**

Nominations and recommendations for Honours and Awards are made by members of the public, organisations or Government bodies for individuals to be recognised within the Australian honours system. These nominations and recommendations are received by the Office and contain personal information about those individuals.

The Australian Honours and Awards Secretariat (the Secretariat) is responsible for researching and verifying the information by contacting referees supplied, or identified by the Secretariat, and other external agencies or organisations. The recommendations are presented, either directly or through an advisory body, to the Governor-General for consideration and approval.

The integrity of the Australian honours system relies on the principle of confidentiality and the Office requires personal information that is reasonably necessary to identify individuals to ensure awards are appropriately considered and awarded.

## **Personal information collected for the Australian honours system**

The Office collects personal information to administer the Australian honours system. The personal information collected may also be used to contact persons in relation to events hosted by the Office in connection with the honour or award received.

The nature of the personal information collected may include, but is not limited to: names, date and place of birth, occupation, gender, nationality, contact details (including telephone, email and residential or postal address), biographical information (including sensitive information about ethnicity and details of ongoing disabilities), and referee reports.

The Office only collects sensitive information about nominators, referees and nominees (as part of the sounding process) with consent. The collection of sensitive information about nominees is necessary in order to support the Governor-General in administering the honours system in line with the governing regulations.

Accounts created within the Australian Honours and Awards Portal are required to gather the first name, surname and email of the account owner. Additional data used for the purpose of identifying and contacting the account owner, such as telephone numbers, are also requested.

**How does the Office collect personal information?** The Office collects personal information through:

- nominations for Australian honours and awards
- comments and information from referees and nominators, by phone or in writing,
- independent research of open-source information including social media,
- the Australian Electoral Roll to identify or locate individuals who:
  - are nominated, or are being considered for nomination, for an honour or award within the Australian honours system, or
  - have been selected to provide a reference connected with such a nomination; or
- information provided by Australian honours and awards recipients or others on their behalf.

Personal information about some nominees and referees may be collected without their knowledge.

- If the nominee is not recommended for an award, or a referee is not approached for comment, they will not be advised that their information has been collected.
- If the nominee is recommended for an award, they will not be advised of all the information that has been collected, such as referee reports. However, their consent will be sought regarding what information is published and provided to other agencies for announcement, presentation or other purposes.

### **What happens if you don't give us your personal information?**

When you are making a general enquiry regarding awards administered by the Australian Honours and Awards Secretariat, generally, you have the option of dealing with the Office anonymously or using a pseudonym.

However, to maintain the integrity of the Australian honours system we need to positively identify nominees and referees. If a nominee or referee chooses not to provide the Office with their personal information, then the Secretariat may not be able to administer the particular award/s.

### **How does the Office use and disclose personal information?**

The Office uses and discloses limited personal information for the purposes of administering the Australian honours system and related activities. Examples of who the Office discloses limited personal information to include:

- the Council for the Order of Australia, the Australian Bravery Decorations Council and the National Emergency Medal Committee as appropriate to consider nominations and make recommendations to the Governor-General or Administrator,
- individuals who are requested by the Australian Honours and Awards Secretariat to provide a referee report,
- the Governor-General, or Administrator as the responsible authority to approve awards within the Australian honours system and send congratulatory messages,
- external government agencies and private organisations for the purpose of verifying details of service as appropriate,
- State and Territory Government Houses for the purposes of hosting investiture ceremonies,
- Members of Parliament and other organisations for the purpose of congratulatory messages,
- Media organisations to promote details of recipients of honours and awards,
- The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) in order to include details of the honour or award in the [Australian honours database](#), and

- PM&C when the Secretariat is required to seek permission from another country regarding the acceptance of an Australian award by a non-Australian citizen, and, on occasion, may contact foreign governments in connection with foreign awards offered to Australian citizens.

The Office may use or disclose personal information for another purpose with your consent, where authorised or required by or under law, or where there is an exception under APP6 of the Privacy Act.

The Office may disclose personal information overseas when:

- the Secretariat approaches an individual overseas to provide a referee report,
- an investiture ceremony for a recipient of an award within the Australian honours system is hosted outside of Australia,
- notifying Buckingham Palace of upcoming appointments and awards within the Australian honours system, or
- information about recipients is shared with overseas media organisations.

### **Storage of information**

Any data submitted through the Australian Honours and Awards Portal is stored in the Australian Honours and Awards Cloud Awards system, a customer relationship management application powered by Microsoft Dynamics 365 and used to administer the Australian honours system.

### **Cookies**

The Australian Honours and Awards Portal uses cookies to store information for various purposes. A table describing the types of cookies used by the Portal can be found on the [Microsoft website](#). Most cookies are only stored for the period in which a user is logged in to and using the Portal. The website administered by the Office and using the gg.gov.au URL does not use cookies. Sites linked from this website are not subject to this privacy statement and you are encouraged to review their statements.

### **Further information**

More information about how the Office handles personal information, including how to make a complaint and seek access to and correction of personal information can be found in our main [Privacy Policy](#) and [Privacy Policy summary](#).