



PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

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The Queen has given formal approval to various amendments to the Constitution of the Order of Australia. The amendments relate to the removal of the provision to appoint Knights and Dames, provide for representation of the Northern Territory and an additional four non-government members on the Council for the Order of Australia as well as an increase in the number of Order of Australia awards available each year from about 400 to 700. (The removal of the provision concerning Knights and Dames does not affect existing appointees at this level.)

The Queen's in principle agreement to these amendments was announced on Australia Day with several other important Government initiatives to enhance and develop the Australian honours system. The Queen's formal approval to the remaining matters will be announced progressively following the submission of the appropriate documentation to Her Majesty.

The changes to the Order's Constitution follow an extensive review of the Australian honours system and the increase in non-government Council members from three to seven will increase community participation in recommending recipients of honours, while the additional allocation of awards will allow for wider recognition of those who have given outstanding service to Australia through their skills, dedication and community activities.