



**Australian Association of the Order of Malta Limited**  
**(ABN 37 142 209 121)**  
**Recognition of Achievement and Meritorious Service Policy as**  
**approved at April 2026**  
**(Policy Number: AAOML\_P\_016)**

## **1 Purpose**

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This Policy outlines the options open to acknowledging service by way of an honour or an award to appropriately recognise Members and supporters of the Australian Association for their service to the Sovereign Order of Malta.

This Policy establishes a framework for nominations, and the consideration of nominations, to the Sovereign Order of Malta's honours and award system within the Australian Association.

## **2 Objectives**

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The Australian Association can utilise the Sovereign Order of Malta's own structured, multi-level honours and awards system to appropriately recognise leadership, outstanding achievement and meritorious service, including services by non-members.

Recognition for leadership, outstanding achievement and meritorious service can be made in three ways:

1. **Honours:**  
for members and non-members, the honour of an appointment to or promotion in the Sovereign Order of Malta's order of merit, the Order *pro Merito Melitensi* (Grand Cross, Grand Officer, Commander, Officer and Cross) – see section 4.
2. **Awards:**  
for members and non-members, an award of a medal (Gold, Silver or Bronze) of the Order *pro Merito Melitensi* – see section 4.
3. **Promotions:**  
for members, promotion within the Sovereign Order of Malta – see section 5.

## **3 Background**

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Both within the Sovereign Order of Malta and the Order *pro Merito Melitensi*, a number of grades exist to acknowledge different levels of achievement. Promotion within the Sovereign Order of Malta, or appointment to an honour or an award of the Order *pro Merito Melitensi* is based exclusively on merit.

Honours and awards are to be made on the basis of a candidate's past contribution to the aims and objectives of the Sovereign Order of Malta of *Tuitio fidei et obsequium pauperum*, the

quantity and quality of work, volunteer service, and contribution of time, skills and expertise, as well as their sustained involvement and commitment to the Order and/or its works.

## **4 PRO MERITO MELITENSI HONOURS AND AWARDS**

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### **4.1 The Role of the Executive Committee**

The Executive Committee of the Australian Association (Executive Committee) is the review body tasked with the administration of the *pro Merito Melitensi* honours and awards system within the Australian Association.

### **4.2 Honours and awards in the Order *pro Merito Melitensi***

The categories of honours and awards are outlined in Annexure A.

### **4.3 Nominations Procedure**

The following principles apply to nominations of individuals for an honour or an award in the Order *pro Merito Melitensi*:

- (a) Nominations can be made by any member of the Australian Association
- (b) Nominations may be made at any time
- (c) A general call to members for nominations may be made from time to time as determined by the Executive Council of the Australian Association (Executive Council)
- (d) Nominations must be completed on the nomination form provided by the Australian Association (see Attachment 1)
- (e) Nominations must be submitted directly to the Chancellor of the Australian Association (the Chancellor)
- (f) Nominations require only 1 nominator and 1 referee
- (g) Nominations must highlight the consequences of the work being recognised and demonstrate the impact the service being recognised has had in support of the Australian Association, and
- (h) Each nomination must include the following duly signed by the person being nominated:
  - (i) a CV of the person being nominated signed by that person to confirm the accuracy of the CV, and
  - (ii) the Privacy Policy in respect of personal data processing (see C.4 – Attachment 2 to the Awards Handbook).

### **4.4 Review Procedure**

The following principles apply to nominations under section 4.3:

- (a) The Chancellor must review all nomination forms for completeness, seek further information if a nomination is not complete, and distribute the completed nominations to the members of the Executive Committee

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- (b) The Executive Committee must review all nominations received from the Chancellor
- (c) The Executive Committee may seek a recommendation by the relevant Regional Hospitaller on each nomination submitted from their region
- (d) On review the Executive Committee, at their discretion, may remove any nomination not recommended for further progression and refer it back to the Chancellor in which case section 4.5 will apply
- (e) For remaining nominations, after consideration, the Executive Committee must recommend whether the nominee should receive an honour or award and, if an honour or award is recommended, the appropriate grade to be awarded
- (f) Nominations, as recommended by the Executive Committee, must be forwarded by the Chancellor to the President of the Australian Association who, after consideration, will obtain the endorsement of those recommendations by the Executive Council
- (g) The Chancellor then will contact each successful nominee to seek their consent to receive an honour or award within the Order *pro Merito Melitensi*. The nominator will also be contacted with a request to sign the endorsed Grand Magistry nomination
- (h) The President will send nominations endorsed by the Executive Council and consented to by the nominees to the Grand Magistry with a request that the nominations be recommended to the Grand Master and the Sovereign Council for approval and announcement in an honours or awards list, and
- (i) Following the approval of the Grand Master and the Sovereign Council, the Chancellor will:
  - (i) inform the nominee and their nominator of the success of their nomination, and
  - (ii) confirm to each relevant Regional Hospitaller the details of individuals in their region receiving honours and/or awards before the Grand Magistry publicly releases an Honours List.

**4.5 Unsuccessful nominations**

The Chancellor must inform each nominator of an unsuccessful nomination.

Unsuccessful nominations may be considered for a subsequent honours list, subject to re-nomination. When reconsidering a prior unsuccessful nomination, the Executive Committee must review the new nomination against the original nomination and seek out what is additional or new information that might strengthen the re-nomination.

**4.6 Posthumous awards**

There is no provision for promotion within the Sovereign Order of Malta posthumously or within the Statutes of the Order *pro Merito Melitensi* to posthumously appoint a person to an honour of the Order or to award a medal, except in the case of awarding the Gold Medal *pro Merito Melitensi*.

However, in the event of the death of a member after having been nominated for an honour or award within the Order *pro Merito Melitensi*, provided that the nomination has been received by

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the Chancellor in fully completed form, the nomination is to continue to be processed with all other nominations.

If the nomination is recommended for endorsement the Chancellor will sound out the nominee's next-of-kin and, if the offer of the award is accepted, the President will submit the name of the deceased nominee with other endorsed nominations to the Grand Magistry. If the nomination is approved by the Grand Master and the Sovereign Council, the next-of-kin will be presented with the award on behalf of the deceased award recipient.

**4.7 Confidentiality**

Nominations are to remain generally honours-in-confidence except that nominees are to be notified that they are being considered for appointment to an honour or an award within the Order *pro Merito Melitensi* so they can provide the CV referred to in section 4.3(h).

**5 PROMOTIONS WITHIN THE SOVEREIGN ORDER OF MALTA**

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**The procedure for promotions within the Sovereign Order of Malta is set out in**

5.1 Annexure B.

5.2 Recommendations to the Grand Master and the Sovereign Council for promotion in these grades of membership are the decision of the President after seeking the advice of the Executive Committee, the Regent and the Regional Hospitaliers, and not by process of open nomination by members of the Australian Association.

**6 Related Policies and Documents**

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1. Handbook for Membership, Awards "Pro Merito Melitensi" and Other Main Topics, Grand Magistry February 2025, as amended from time to time ("the Handbook")
2. Promotions within the Sovereign Order of Malta nomination form (President use only)
3. The Order *pro Merito Melitensi* nomination form
4. The Order *pro Merito Melitensi* referee form
5. Honours and Awards submission form

**7 Review**

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This Policy will be reviewed periodically and updated when required.

The Chancellor is responsible for overseeing the review of this Policy and recommending changes to this Policy to the Executive Council.

This Policy has been approved by the Executive Council.

## Annexure A

### **HONOURS AND AWARDS WITHIN THE ORDER *PRO MERITO MELITENSI***

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Note: the information in this Schedule must be read subject to the contents of the Awards Handbook.

#### A.1 Introduction

The Order *pro Merito Melitensi* is the order of merit of the Sovereign Order of Malta established under Art. 105 of the Constitution and Code. It is awarded to men and women who have brought honour and prestige to the Sovereign Order of Malta or actively promoted Christian values or works of charity in the Christian tradition as defined by the Roman Catholic Church. The grade and division, general (civil), military or clerical, of the honours and awards of the Order *pro Merito Melitensi* are regulated by decrees issued by the Grand Master, on the advice of the Sovereign Council.

Although, strictly speaking, recipients of honours and awards within the Order *pro Merito Melitensi* become members of this order of merit, they are not invested in a religious ceremony as knights and dames of the Sovereign Order of Malta itself. The Order *pro Merito Melitensi* may be bestowed upon non-Catholics.

#### A.2 Honours and awards within the Order *pro Merito Melitensi*

The Order *pro Merito Melitensi* has the following three classes:

- the Collar
- the Cross
- the Medal

Membership of the Order *pro Merito Melitensi* consists of appointments to the Collar and Cross of the Order, as well as recipients of a Medal of the Order.

##### **The Collar “*pro Merito Melitensi*”**

The Collar is a single grade usually reserved for Heads of State.

##### **The Cross “*pro Merito Melitensi*”**

The Cross can be awarded upon both civilians and military personnel, and includes six grades:

- Grand Cross *pro Merito Melitensi* – Special Class (reserved for Heads of Government)
- Grand Cross *pro Merito Melitensi*
- Grand Officer *pro Merito Melitensi* \*(with Badge for women)
- Commander *pro Merito Melitensi* \*(with Crown for women)
- Officer *pro Merito Melitensi* \*(with Shield for women)
- Cross *pro Merito Melitensi*

NB: The grade for a female recipient is denoted within the Statute by a description of the insignia, however the honour is equal to that of a male recipient.

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**The Cross “pro piis meritis”**

When awarded to priests and religious, the decoration utilises the same cross as awarded to civilians and military personnel. However, the ribbon is black crossed with two thin red lines and there are only two grades:

- Grand Cross “*pro piis meritis*” pro Merito Melitensi
- Cross “*pro piis meritis*” pro Merito Melitensi

**The Medal “pro Merito Melitensi”**

This class, also known as the Medals of the Order, has three grades:

- Gold Medal
- Silver Medal
- Bronze Medal

The Gold Medal is reserved to those who have put their lives at risk while assisted in the work of the Sovereign Order of Malta or in memory of people who have been killed while in the service of the Sovereign Order of Malta.

The Silver and Bronze Medals may be awarded as a mark of recognition to individuals in service of the Sovereign Order of Malta, both civil and military, lay and clerical alike. The medals may be awarded for continuous service to the Sovereign Order of Malta, however recipients can only be awarded one medal of each grade.

**A.3 Criteria for Honours and Awards**

The Executive Committee will apply the following broad guidelines as to the criteria for appointment to the following grades:

**Grand Cross**

- A pre-eminent and sustained contribution and service over an extended period of time to the highest degree who have brought honour and prestige to the Sovereign Order of Malta or actively promoted Christian values or works of charity in the Christian tradition.

**Grand Officer**

- A pre-eminent contribution, usually, but not exclusively at national level, or in a capacity which will be recognised by peers as inspirational and significant nationally, and which demonstrates sustained commitment.

**Commander**

- A prominent national role of a lesser degree, or a conspicuous leading role in regional affairs through achievement or service or a highly distinguished, innovative contribution in his or her area of activity.

**Officer**

- A distinguished national or regional role through achievement or service including notable activities known and recognised nationally.

**Cross**

- Achievement or service which is outstanding in its field and has delivered sustained and real impact which stands out as an example to others.

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**Gold Medal**

- Awarded to those who have put their lives at risk while assisted in the work of the Sovereign Order of Malta or in memory of people who have been killed while in the service of the Sovereign Order of Malta
  
- Recommendations are to take account of:
  - degree of risk
  - how aware the nominee was of the danger
  - persistence

**Silver and Bronze Medals**

- Achievement or contribution of a very “hands-on” service in a local geographical area. This might take the form of sustained commitment in support of a specific regional project and/or voluntary activity; or
  
- Innovative work that has delivered real impact but that is relatively short (three to four years) in duration.

NB: Considerations relating to the Collar *pro Merito Melitensi* and Grand Cross *pro Merito Melitensi* – Special Class are outside of the scope of the Executive Committee.

**A.4 Promotion within the Order**

Promotion within the Order *pro Merito Melitensi* is not normally considered within five years of initial appointment or previous promotion. Should a person be nominated for promotion within the five-year period, additional justification for the nominee’s promotion must be provided by the nominating party or local Regional Hospitaller.

**A.5 General (Civil), Military and Clerical Divisions of the Order *pro Merito Melitensi***

The Order *pro Merito Melitensi* was instituted with a General (Civil) Division, a Military Division and a Clerical Division. Decorations of the Order are struck “with Swords” for serving military personnel and without swords for civilians, priests and religious.

The three divisions are also distinguished by a different ribbon. All three classes are available in the first two divisions and the eligibility criteria for the equivalent classes in the two divisions require similar levels of achievement, but those for the Military Division are designed to reflect military service.

An individual may hold awards in both divisions, however is entitled only to wear the insignia of senior award. Appointments in the General Division take precedence over the equivalent appointment in the Military Division.

## **Annexure B**

### **PROMOTIONS WITHIN THE SOVEREIGN ORDER OF MALTA**

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**Note:** the information in this Schedule must be read subject to the contents of the Awards Handbook.

#### **B.1 Introduction**

Promotions within the Sovereign Order of Malta are regulated by Article 103 of the Code of the Order which provides for the promotion of Members and Chaplains.

Members of the Sovereign Order of Malta may be promoted to a higher grade within their class and category of membership.

#### **B.2 Promotions may be made to the following grades:**

##### *Chaplains*

- Bailiff Grand Cross of Honour and Devotion (reserved for Cardinals)
- Conventual Chaplain Grand Cross ad honorem
- Conventual Chaplain ad honorem

##### *Justice*

- Bailiff Grand Cross of Justice
- Grand Cross of Justice

##### *Honour and Devotion*

- Bailiff Grand Cross of Honour and Devotion
- Knight/Dame Grand Cross of Honour and Devotion

##### *Grace and Devotion*

- Knight/Dame Grand Cross of Grace and Devotion with Riband
- Knight/Dame Grand Cross of Grace and Devotion

##### *Magistral Grace*

- Knight/Dame Grand Cross with Riband of Magistral Grace
- Knight/Dame Grand Cross of Magistral Grace

#### **B.3 Criteria for Promotion**

The Executive Committee will apply the following broad guidelines as to the criteria for promotions to the following grades:

##### *Bailiff Grand Cross*

- life time dedication to the activities of the Order
- assignment of important duties and Offices both in the Grand Magistry and/or in the local Entities

##### *Knight/Dame Grand Cross with Riband*

- very important merits and deep involvement in the activities of the Order
- assignment of important duties and/or Offices in the local Entities
- a period of at least 15 years dating from admission as a Knight or Dame

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*Knight/Dame Grand Cross*

- very important merits and deep involvement in the activities of the Order
- a period of at least 15 years dating from admission as a Knight or Dame

*Conventual Chaplain ad honorem*

- particular involvement in the spiritual life of the local Entities
- a distinguished position in the Church