

Practice Note 7– Sovereign Citizens

You may be asked to notarise distinctly unusual documents presented by people who call themselves “Sovereign Citizens”. These people are firmly of the view that they do not have to comply with New Zealand Law, and that they are governed by their own parallel form of “pseudolaw” which sets them apart from everybody else in New Zealand.

Such documents may take various forms but are conspicuous by their use of:

- references to archaic legislation (sometimes in Latin);
- the use of phrases such as, “living men and women in our natural state” “sovereign man”, “the living sentient flesh and blood man”, “the living lineal descendant of the house of XXX”, “living sovereign of Aoteroa”;
- signature by use of a single name only; and
- a seal purporting to be a “sovereign seal” from a particular “house”.

These people generally seek notarisation so as to legitimise or add weight to the document. These are not legal documents, they have no legal function and in no circumstances should they be notarised.

Notaries in the past who have refused to notarise such documents have faced threats and intimidation, but declining to notarise these documents has the full support of the New Zealand Society of Notaries. Requesting that copies of documents and identification are emailed in advance of any notarial appointment/disclosure of address, is the best way to ascertain exactly what is being sought.

For more information on vexatious documents, please see the article by Justin Betar in the [March 2023 issue of Notary World](#).