

**Question on notice no. 7**

**Portfolio question number: AE25-007**

**2024-25 Additional estimates**

**Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee, Attorney-General's Portfolio**

**Senator the Hon. Michaelia Cash:** asked the Attorney-General's Department on 25 February 2025—

Senator CASH: That's fine. In terms of the Prime Minister's statement, on 11 December 2024, he stated:

On Friday morning, very early, I got a briefing of the AFP Commissioner.

.....

On Monday, we had the National Security Committee to hear a briefing ...

Were you in attendance at the National Security Committee briefing?

Ms Jones: I would need to check that. I'd need to check the date of that meeting. I know you mentioned the day of the week. I just need to check the date of that.

Senator CASH: Are you able to check that for me? I would have thought you'd remember being at a briefing in relation to the Adass synagogue firebombing. Are you able to check that?

Ms Jones: We can take it on notice. Obviously, I acknowledge the public comments of the Prime Minister, but matters that are discussed at the national security cabinet are subject to cabinet confidentiality. I would not normally comment on that.

Senator CASH: I didn't ask about anything that was discussed there. The Prime Minister has made it public. He stood up and told the Australian people—he was very happy to in this regard:

On Friday morning, very early, I got a briefing of the AFP Commissioner.

.....

On Monday, we had the National Security Committee to hear a briefing and, you know, I know more about the events there.

I'm not asking what happened at the National Security Committee. What I'm asking is: were you in attendance?

Ms Jones: I will seek to confirm that for you shortly.

Senator CASH: Did the Attorney-General attend the NSC meeting on 9 December 2024, at which the Adass synagogue firebombing was discussed, given that the Prime Minister has made that information public himself?

Ms Jones: I'd need to take that on notice.

....

Senator CASH: Did the Attorney-General attend the NSC meeting on 16 April 2024, at which the live-streamed stabbing of the bishop in the Christ the Good Shepherd Church in Wakeley was discussed?

Ms Jones: I'd need to take that on notice. Matters going to the Attorney-General's participation in cabinet meetings is a matter for the Attorney-General to answer.

Senator CASH: Yes, and you are secretary of the department. If I recall, you would be aware of when the Attorney-General attends either a National Security Committee meeting or a cabinet meeting. And you would often be there with the Attorney-General.

Ms Jones: That is often the common practice, yes.

Senator CASH: Yes, it is. So let's go back. Did the Attorney-General attend the NSC meeting on 16 April 2024 at which the live-streamed stabbing of the bishop in the Christ the Good Shepherd Church in Wakeley was discussed?

Ms Jones: I'd have to take that on notice.

Senator CASH: Okay. Do you recall if you attended the National Security Committee meeting on that date?

Ms Jones: I will take that on notice.

Senator CASH: Okay. Do you recall briefing the Attorney-General or his office prior to the NSC at which the Adass synagogue attack was discussed and then made public by both the Prime Minister and the Attorney-General?

Ms Jones: I'd have to take that on notice.

....

Senator CASH: Okay. Can I also just be clear that you're also taking on notice whether you remember going to the NSC meetings at which the Adass Israel Synagogue firebombing was discussed and the Wakeley church terrorist attack was discussed.

Ms Jones: I can take that on notice.

Senator CASH: That is not within your knowledge sitting here at this point in time?

Ms Jones: Not specifically, no.

Senator CASH: When you say 'not specifically', what do you mean?

Ms Jones: You're talking about meetings in April and December. I need to check to be accurate.

Senator CASH: I'm talking about National Security Committee meetings, which, as you know, do not occur every other day of the week. And normally when a national security meeting is held in relation to such significant events you would, I would put to you, recall attending them. Are you able to check your Outlook calendar for me?

Ms Jones: I've taken that on notice and I will check that for you.

Senator CASH: Again, I just want to confirm you are taking on notice whether or not you recall attending two National Security Committee meetings in relation to two significant events, one of which is being investigated as a terrorist incident. Can I just get you to confirm that for the Hansard record.

Ms Jones: I confirm I am taking that on notice.

**Answer** —

Please see the attached answer.

**SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS**

**ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES 2024-2025**

**Attorney-General's Department**

**AE25-007 - Attendance at NSC meetings**

**Senator Michaelia Cash asked the following question on 24 February 2025:**

Senator CASH: That's fine. In terms of the Prime Minister's statement, on 11 December 2024, he stated:

On Friday morning, very early, I got a briefing of the AFP Commissioner.

... ..

On Monday, we had the National Security Committee to hear a briefing ...

Were you in attendance at the National Security Committee briefing?

Ms Jones: I would need to check that. I'd need to check the date of that meeting. I know you mentioned the day of the week. I just need to check the date of that.

Senator CASH: Are you able to check that for me? I would have thought you'd remember being at a briefing in relation to the Adass synagogue firebombing. Are you able to check that?

Ms Jones: We can take it on notice. Obviously, I acknowledge the public comments of the Prime Minister, but matters that are discussed at the national security cabinet are subject to cabinet confidentiality. I would not normally comment on that.

Senator CASH: I didn't ask about anything that was discussed there. The Prime Minister has made it public. He stood up and told the Australian people—he was very happy to in this regard:

On Friday morning, very early, I got a briefing of the AFP Commissioner.

... ..

On Monday, we had the National Security Committee to hear a briefing and, you know, I know more about the events there.

I'm not asking what happened at the National Security Committee. What I'm asking is: were you in attendance?

Ms Jones: I will seek to confirm that for you shortly.

Senator CASH: Did the Attorney-General attend the NSC meeting on 9 December 2024, at which the Adass synagogue firebombing was discussed, given that the Prime Minister has made that information public himself?

Ms Jones: I'd need to take that on notice.

....

Senator CASH: Did the Attorney-General attend the NSC meeting on 16 April 2024, at which the live-streamed stabbing of the bishop in the Christ the Good Shepherd Church in Wakeley was discussed?

Ms Jones: I'd need to take that on notice. Matters going to the Attorney-General's participation in cabinet meetings is a matter for the Attorney-General to answer.

Senator CASH: Yes, and you are secretary of the department. If I recall, you would be aware of when the Attorney-General attends either a National Security Committee meeting or a cabinet meeting. And you would often be there with the Attorney-General.

Ms Jones: That is often the common practice, yes.

Senator CASH: Yes, it is. So let's go back. Did the Attorney-General attend the NSC meeting on 16 April 2024 at which the live-streamed stabbing of the bishop in the Christ the Good Shepherd Church in Wakeley was discussed?

Ms Jones: I'd have to take that on notice.

Senator CASH: Okay. Do you recall if you attended the National Security Committee meeting on that date?

Ms Jones: I will take that on notice.

Senator CASH: Okay. Do you recall briefing the Attorney-General or his office prior to the NSC at which the Adass synagogue attack was discussed and then made public by both the Prime Minister and the Attorney-General?

Ms Jones: I'd have to take that on notice.

....

Senator CASH: Okay. Can I also just be clear that you're also taking on notice whether you remember going to the NSC meetings at which the Adass Israel Synagogue firebombing was discussed and the Wakeley church terrorist attack was discussed.

Ms Jones: I can take that on notice.

Senator CASH: That is not within your knowledge sitting here at this point in time?

Ms Jones: Not specifically, no.

Senator CASH: When you say 'not specifically', what do you mean?

Ms Jones: You're talking about meetings in April and December. I need to check to be accurate.

Senator CASH: I'm talking about National Security Committee meetings, which, as you know, do not occur every other day of the week. And normally when a national security meeting is held in relation to such significant events you would, I would put to you, recall attending them. Are you able to check your Outlook calendar for me?

Ms Jones: I've taken that on notice and I will check that for you.

Senator CASH: Again, I just want to confirm you are taking on notice whether or not you recall attending two National Security Committee meetings in relation to two significant events, one of which is being investigated as a terrorist incident. Can I just get you to confirm that for the Hansard record.

Ms Jones: I confirm I am taking that on notice.

**The response to the senator's question is as follows:**

It is long standing practice of successive governments not to disclose information on the business or operations of the Cabinet and its committees, beyond what has been officially disclosed. This includes attendance at specific meetings.