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Malcolm Turnbull defends his chief of staff's salary

RACHEL BAXENDALE

@rachelbaxendale

Malcolm Turnbull has defended his decision to pay his chief of staff Drew Clarke almost \$200,000 more than he earns as Prime Minister, saying Mr Clarke's salary of \$691,200 matches the pay in his previous role as secretary of the Department of Communications.

Mr Turnbull earns \$507,338, while Mr Clarke's predecessor, Peta Credlin, earned \$394,487 as chief of staff to Tony Abbott when he was prime minister.

Responding to criticism from Ms Credlin, Mr Turnbull yesterday said Mr Clarke's remuneration had been a matter of public record. "Drew Clarke, who is my outstanding chief of staff, came from his position as secretary of the Department of Communications," he said. "He's one of the most experienced public servants in the city and that's obviously been reflected in his ongoing remuneration."

On Monday, Ms Credlin told Sky News that staff on both sides of politics were upset about what they saw as excessively generous pay rates for their counterparts in the Prime Minister's Office: "Both sides are upset that the staff in the Prime Minister's office ... are better paid and higher paid ... than anywhere else, and they are exempt from the normalised EBA rules because a prime minister can pay people above and beyond the band. Everyone else is stuck with the band."

Mr Turnbull's office said there was the same number of variations to pay rates of PMO staff as there was when Ms Credlin was chief of staff.

Senate F&PA Committee

Tabled Document

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