

The little-known bureaucrats who are cashing in multi-million-dollar pay cheques

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They are the high-powered bureaucrats most Australians wouldn't even know exist. But given their taxpayer-funded pay packets, perhaps they should.

In one case, Australia's highest-paid public employee earns more than Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and all state and territory leaders combined, with a salary dwarfing the pay of leaders of the US, Britain, Canada and New Zealand.

So, how much do Australia's highest-paid government officials really make? Here are some of the best pay packets in government circles:

Photo: Daniel Munoz

NBN Co chief executive Bill Morrow

Pay and bonuses of \$3.6 million in 2015-16

Last financial year, the man in charge of the national broadband roll-out took home \$3.6 million, with his bonus payment tripling from \$480,000 to \$1.2 million. Mr Morrow, the American-born former chief executive of Vodafone, joined NBN in 2014.

Photo: Paul Jeffers

Australia Post managing director Ahmed Fahour

A base salary of \$2.1 million with bonuses of up to \$2 million

Mr Fahour, the group managing director and chief executive of the government-owned business, receives a base salary of about \$2.1 million each year. Australia Post doesn't release exactly how much Mr Fahour receives, since reports of his 2014 salary and bonuses of \$4.8 million sparked controversy. A Fairfax Media freedom of information request for his salary last year was refused. He declined a bonus in 2015 but has previously received about \$2 million in incentives, including in 2014 when he asked for it to be donated to charity.

Future Fund employees

Senate F&PA Committee

Tabled Document

Inquiry: Budget Estimates 2017-18

Date/Time: 25/5/17

Witness Name: Senator Farrell

Organisation:

Senior staff earned as much as \$1.235 million

Recent data from the Australian Public Service Commission showed three unnamed Future Fund employees earned salaries of between \$1.058 million and \$1.235 million in 2015-16, more than twice Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull's salary of \$517,338. The sovereign wealth fund paid out about \$10 million in performance bonuses for staff in 2015-16.

Photo: Pat Scala

Reserve Bank Governor Philip Lowe

A base salary of \$1.03 million

Dr Lowe's \$1 million-plus pay is set by the Commonwealth Remuneration Tribunal, which awarded Deputy Governor Guy Debelle a salary of \$771,120 last year. The Reserve Bank says its pay rates are designed to attract "high-calibre employees". Appointed in September 2016 for a seven-year term, Dr Lowe has worked at the RBA since 1980 and got his PhD at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Photo: Andrew Meares

ABC managing director Michelle Guthrie

Salary of \$900,000

Former News Corp and Google executive Michelle Guthrie succeeded Mark Scott as the broadcaster's managing director in May 2016, benefiting from a pay boost to take home \$900,000 a year. Mr Scott was paid \$823,613 in the role, but ABC chairman James Spigelman sought a pay increase for the new boss, with the Remuneration tribunal allowing for a salary of between \$900,000 and \$1.4 million.

Photo: Alex Ellinghausen

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet Secretary Martin Parkinson

Salary of \$861,000

The federal government's chief public servant and Turnbull-confidant, Dr Parkinson is paid \$861,000 with generous superannuation and other perks. A veteran of some of Canberra's biggest government departments, he was sacked as Treasury secretary by Tony Abbott and previously led the Rudd government's Climate Change Department. Pay for the job has grown by 71 per cent since early 2008.

Photo: Andrew Meares

Secretary to the Treasury John Fraser

Salary of \$840,810

A former UBS investment banker, Mr Fraser was appointed by the Abbott government in 2014 and has advocated for allowing senior Treasury officials to be based outside Canberra, to improve the calibre of applicants. Mr Fraser is paid about \$240,000 more than Ken Henry received in the position during the global financial crisis. Treasury has about 800 bureaucrats.

Photo: AAP

High Court Chief Justice Susan Kiefel

Salary and allowances of \$818,642

Australia's first female High Court Chief Justice received a \$50,000 boost to her base salary when she moved into the top job last month. Justice Kiefel left school at 15 and began her working life as a legal secretary before studying law part-time. She has more than 20 years experience as a judge and was a barrister for 16 years.

Defence bosses Dennis Richardson and Air Chief Marshall Mark Binskin, Department of Foreign Affairs boss Frances Adamson and Finance Secretary Rosemary Huxtable

Salaries of \$814,700

Some of Canberra's most respected operators, the group are veterans of the bureaucracy and Australia's political and defence establishment. Mr Richardson was tapped to lead Defence in 2012, having served as the boss of Foreign Affairs, ambassador to Washington and as ASIO boss. He and Air Chief Marshall Binskin receive \$814,700, set by the Remuneration Tribunal. Ms Adamson is a former international affairs adviser to Mr Turnbull and ambassador to China, while Ms Huxtable has helped lead the federal budget process and worked in health policy and administration.

How much do other bureaucrats and politicians get paid?

- Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull: \$517,338
- Opposition Leader Bill Shorten: \$368,224
- Mr Turnbull's chief of staff Drew Clarke: \$691,200
- NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian: \$377,780
- Queensland Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk: \$385,719

- Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews: \$380,000
- ACT Chief Minister Andrew Barr: \$299,000
- Commissioner of Taxation Chris Jordan: \$772,920
- Australian Statistician David Kalisch: \$705,030
- Australian Border Force Commissioner Roman Quaedvlieg: \$731,000
- Australian Electoral Commissioner Tom Rogers: \$522,240
- Human Rights Commissioner Gillian Triggs: \$417,800 Follow us on Facebook

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