

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S PORTFOLIO

Program: 1.7 National Security and Criminal Justice

Question No. AE17/155

Senator Farrell asked the following question at the hearing on 24 March 2017:

On 23 February Tony Abbott stated in his interview on The Bolt Report that had he lived at his private residence at Forrestville while serving as Prime Minister, "it would have cost an extra million a year in security".

Was an estimate of security costs for the former Prime Minister to remain at his private residence in Forrestville undertaken?

1. If yes
 - a) Was a report prepared estimating the cost for the former Prime Minister to live at his home in Forrestville?
 - b) What was the estimated cost for the Former Prime Minister to live at his private residence in Forrestville?
 - c) Can you provide a copy of the report?
2. If no
 - a) On what authority did Tony Abbott assert the public cost for him to live at his private residence in Forrestville while Prime Minister would "cost an extra million a year in security?"
3. What is the cost of maintaining security at Kirribilli House, despite it being unoccupied?
4. Can the department confirm that the AFP and security agencies were required to undertake work at the Prime Minister's house at Point Piper to ensure it had the appropriate security?
5. Can you advise the cost of undertaking work at the Point Piper Residence to ensure it meets appropriate security standards for the Prime Minister?
6. Can you confirm whether the security upgrade the Prime Minister's Point Piper residence was at the taxpayer expense?

The President of the Australian Federal Police Association (AFPA) has stated that maintaining security at the Prime Minister's residences are a significant burden on the taxpayer and has urged the Prime Minister to rethink his decision to stay at his personal residence in Point Piper in Sydney.

7. Can you please advise whether there is an ongoing security cost for the Prime Minister to maintain his primary residence in Sydney at Point Piper?
8. Can you please advise whether this ongoing security cost is burdened by the taxpayer?
9. Can you please advise of the ongoing taxpayer cost for the Prime Minister to continue to live at his private residence at Point Piper?

During an interview on the 7:30 Report on 1 February 2017, the Prime Minister stated he "pay(s) the expenses" on his private residence at Point Piper in Sydney.

10. Can you confirm there is no public expense for the Prime Minister to live at his private residence at Point Piper?

The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

On security grounds, it is not appropriate for the Attorney-General's Department to comment on specific security matters including related costs.