

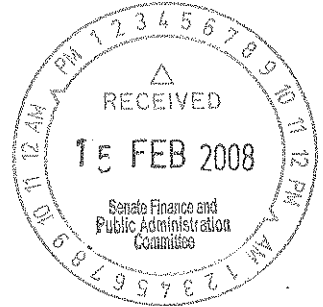
Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Budget Estimates Hearings 2007-2008, 21-22 May 2007



Question: PM 69 & PM 70

Outcome 1, Output 4.5

Topic: Reimbursements

Hansard: F&PA 82 & 86

Senator Evans asked:

[PM 69] Are you able to tell me on how many occasions the Prime Minister has provided reimbursement for functions which were essentially of a private or family nature?

Ms Hazell—I do not have that information with me, but we could provide it...

Senator CHRIS EVANS—Can I just make clear that you are going to take on notice for me the occasions on which the Prime Minister has made reimbursement for private functions—the dates and the costs—in recent years. Is that our common understanding?

Ms Hazell—We will agree to take on notice how many times he has reimbursed for costs of a private nature relating to functions. I would need to check further, but I am not entirely sure that we would disclose how much he has reimbursed.

Senator CHRIS EVANS—Why not?

Ms Hazell—It is a private personal cost of the Prime Minister's if he has met the full cost of the activity.

Dr Morauta—Let us take it away and find out about how we should handle this. I am not sure myself.

[PM 70] Senator CHRIS EVANS—As I understand it, there are guidelines around these things. I do not know where one finds them. I know in answers to a few of the questions on notice you have referred to guidelines. Where are these sorts of guidelines contained? Are they just internal PM&C type things?

Dr Morauta—I am sorry; I am not in an area in which I have a lot of knowledge. We will take it on notice.

Ms Hazell—I think we will take it on notice.

Senator CHRIS EVANS—As to whether there are guidelines or not?

Dr Morauta—Yes, on the reimbursement matter.

Senator CHRIS EVANS—I was not particularly talking about guidelines in relation to the entertainment cost. In one of your answers it says that the functions are held in accordance with entitlements, and the Prime Minister personally meets the cost of any significant hospitality at the residence which is essentially of a private or family nature. It seems to me, therefore, that you would have to have a definition of entitlements to find out what falls outside entitlements. I take it from that that there is some sort of guideline as to what the Prime Minister's entitlements are in terms of official entertainment at his two residences. While we are on the subject, although you will take those questions on notice for me, I would appreciate knowing the costs, if you are able to provide them.

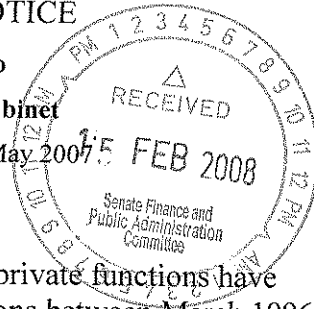
Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

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Answer:

The department's records indicate that reimbursements for private functions have been received from the former Prime Minister on 30 occasions between March 1996 and 21 May 2007. It was a long standing practice of the Howard government, and previous governments not to release the costs of functions held at the residences (although, in a few cases, release of this information did occur).