

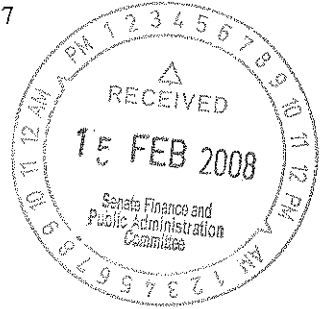
**Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration**

**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 68**

**Outcome 1, Output 4.5**

**Topic: Guest lists**

**Hansard: F&PA 82**

**Senator Faulkner asked:**

As I said, it is not longstanding practice. This information was provided in 2003, and I would request that it be provided for the Christmas party held at Kirribilli House in 2006.

Senator Minchin—The general rule is that that is not provided, but we will take note of your request.

Senator FAULKNER—Why can the number of guests who attended the function not be provided for the information of the public? What is so secret about the number of guests who attend these functions?

Ms Hazell—It has not been the practice to release that information either.

Senator FAULKNER—I am asking the minister: why the lack of transparency in relation to the number of guests?

Senator Minchin—All I can do is repeat what has been said to you: the general practice is not to provide details of these particular functions, either the cost or the number of guests, but we note your interest in obtaining that information.

Senator FAULKNER—We know who some of them were because we read about it in the newspaper, as you would appreciate.

Senator Minchin—I cannot add to the answer, but I note your interest.

Senator FAULKNER—Why not front up with this information? What is the reason for not providing it?

Senator Minchin—Longstanding practice not to do so. We will take note of your interest in a particular reason and see if we can supply you with an answer.

Senator FAULKNER—I would be interested in how many people went, which I am surprised cannot be provided, who in fact they were and how much wine and champagne was consumed. Most importantly, what was the cost to the taxpayer? Why cannot that information be provided in the interests of accountability and transparency?

**Answer:**

It was a long-standing practice of the former Howard and previous governments not to release the guest lists and costs of functions held at the residences.

**Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee**

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Exceptions were the costs for the function held for the President of the United States in 2003 and costs for two functions held at Kirribilli House during December 2003.