

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearing – October 2009
ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Prime Minister and Cabinet portfolio

Department/Agency: Office of the Official Secretary to the Governor-General

Program 1: Support for the Governor-General and Official Activities

Outcome 1: The performance of the Governor-General's role is facilitated through the organisation and management of official duties, management and maintenance of the official household and property and administration of the Australian Honours and Awards system.

Topic: Investitures

Senator: RONALDSON

Question reference number: PM30 (a-e)

Type of Question: (*Hansard F&PA page 28-29, 19 October 2009*)

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 4 December 2009

Number of Pages: 2

Senator RONALDSON—Mr Brady, [a] how many investitures have there been at Government House since the beginning of 2009? [b] Are these only held at Yarralumla or are they also held at Admiralty House?

Senator RONALDSON—Please take that on notice. [c] Could you also provide me with details as to the costs of all these investitures, perhaps from the date that the new Governor-General took office up until today's date, if you would not mind.

Senator RONALDSON—[d] [Do you know] whether there has been a breach of [the] custom or protocol [to the invite the Leader of the Opposition or his representative to these investitures] over the last two years.

Mr Brady—I can only speak of the last year that I have been there. I will find out. But, from memory, at each of the investitures there has been someone representing the Leader of the Opposition.

Senator RONALDSON—[e] Since the start of 2009, at how many investitures has the government not been represented, and, indeed, were there three investitures in a row where the government was not represented?

Answer:

- (a) The Governor-General has presided over eight investitures since the beginning of 2009 of which five were held at Government House (since being sworn in on 5 September 2008 she also presided at one other investiture ceremony).
- (b) Most investitures, and certainly those which involve multiple award recipients, are held at Government House. Investitures are occasionally held at Admiralty House or other locations, in Australia or abroad, if award recipients are unable to travel to Canberra to be invested.
- (c) Calculating the exact cost of each investiture would involve an unreasonable diversion of resources. We estimate that major investitures held at Government House cost

approximately \$29 per head, taking into account the costs of catering, photography and program printing. This figure does not include other incidental expenses, or the cost of insignia (the medal, warrant and accompanying information book on the award), which are given regardless of whether recipients attend an investiture ceremony. Approximately 170 to 200 recipients and guests typically attend each major investiture.

- (d) It is customary to invite the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition to the major investitures held at Government House. Our records indicate there has been no variation in this practice in the last two years. Both the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition were invited to investiture ceremonies held on 16 January, 4 and 5 May and 7 and 8 September 2009.
- (e) The Government was not represented at investitures held on 5 May, 7 and 8 September 2009.