

Blunder reveals Australian lawmakers' private cell numbers

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Private cellphone numbers of most Australian federal lawmakers, their staff and several former prime ministers have been made public after a government department failed to properly remove them from a routine report.

The Department of Parliamentary Services on Monday confirmed the blunder in its latest [report](#) on lawmakers' cellphone and internet spending published on its website.

"Typically, the information displayed in those reports only displays the identity of the parliamentarian and aggregated total expenditure," a department statement said. "In the most recent report provided by the contractor, it became possible to view the official mobile phone [number](#) of parliamentarians and their staff, even though they appeared redacted from the published files."

Fairfax Media reported that the phone numbers had been colored white instead of being removed from the PDF documents, meaning they could be accessed using copy and paste.

The latest report, covering January to June 2016, was available on the Australian Parliament House website for three months before Fairfax alerted the department to the breach of privacy and the report was taken down, Fairfax said.

"The DPS removed the documents from the APH website shortly after it

was alerted to the issue and is working with the contractor to investigate the cause," the department statement said.

Among those who avoided having personal numbers published were current Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, the treasurer, the attorney general and a few other senior ministers.

But at least three former prime ministers' numbers were exposed.

The department said it would work with lawmakers to address privacy concerns and change phone numbers if required.

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