

Scott Morrison stands by energy minister Angus Taylor, who faces police probe

Written by Michelle Grattan, Professorial Fellow, University of Canberra

Scott Morrison has resisted calls for Angus Taylor to stand aside while NSW Police investigate an allegedly doctored document the energy minister used in making false claims about Sydney City Council's travel costs.

The long-simmering affair re-ignited on Tuesday when the NSW Police said it was "in the early stages of investigating information into the reported creation of fraudulent documentation".

"Detectives from the State Crime Command's Financial Crimes Squad have launched Strike Force Garrad to investigate the matters and determine if any criminal offences have been committed," NSW Police said.

The affair started when Taylor wrote to Sydney Lord Mayor Clover Moore after the City of Sydney declared a climate emergency.

Seeking to score a political point, Taylor suggested the City of Sydney should look at its own carbon footprint, alleging its councillors' travel costs had been \$1.7 million on international travel and \$14.2 million on domestic travel. The letter was given to the Daily Telegraph.

Moore immediately pointed out the figures were wrong.

The correct figures for 2017-18 were \$1727.77 for international travel and \$4206.32 for domestic travel.

Taylor has repeatedly claimed the figures he used were downloaded from the council website. But the council provided metadata showing the website information had not been changed, and this was confirmed by other searches.

The ALP referred the matter to the NSW Police.

Scott Morrison stands by energy minister Angus Taylor, who faces police probe

Written by Michelle Grattan, Professorial Fellow, University of Canberra

Labor on Tuesday seized on the police statement, demanding that Taylor go immediately.

Questioned about the police statement Morrison told parliament the matters hadn't been presented to him by the NSW Police.

Answering a subsequent question he said: "I will be taking advice from the New South Wales Police on any matter that they are currently looking at." He would then "form a view ...based on taking that advice".

In a statement to the house later, Morrison said he had spoken to the NSW police commissioner (Mick Fuller) about "the nature and substance" of the police inquiries.

The commissioner had advised him these were "based only on the allegations referred to by the shadow attorney-general [Mark Dreyfus]".

"Based on the information provided to me by the commissioner, I consider there is no action required by me."

Opposition leader Anthony Albanese said he was "astounded that the prime minister has shown such contempt to come into this parliament and to stonewall again further for this minister.

"This minister must go. This minister must go."

Albanese told a news conference Taylor had deliberately misled parliament by claiming the document was downloaded from the council website. "This document did not come from the website. We don't know where it came from," he said.

"The prime minister, if his ministerial standards mean anything at all, should have stood aside

Scott Morrison stands by energy minister Angus Taylor, who faces police probe

Written by Michelle Grattan, Professorial Fellow, University of Canberra

this minister well before now.”

Taylor again on Tuesday rejected any suggestion that he or his staff altered the document. Taylor has not yet heard from the police.

Michelle Grattan ne travaille pas, ne conseille pas, ne possède pas de parts, ne reçoit pas de fonds d'une organisation qui pourrait tirer profit de cet article, et n'a déclaré aucune autre affiliation que son poste universitaire.

Authors: Michelle Grattan, Professorial Fellow, University of Canberra

Read more <http://theconversation.com/scott-morrison-stands-by-energy-minister-angus-taylor-who-faces-police-probe-127818>