

PM wants Mara Melbourne scandal probed
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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak has ordered an investigation into a report that Majlis Amanah Rakyat (Mara) **overpaid by RM13.7 million** for the purchase of an apartment block in Melbourne, Australia, as hostel for its students there.

"In relation to the allegation that a few individuals are involved in corruption in the Melbourne property deal, the authorities here will investigate in depth," Najib said in a Facebook posting last night.

"If there is any wrongdoing and abuse of funds, action will be taken," he said.

Australian newspaper *The Age* reported said that a group of super-rich Mara officers, using the Malaysian government's investment funds, bid up the price for the Melbourne apartment block from A\$17.8 million (RM51.5 million) to A\$22.5 million (RM65 million).

The extra A\$4.75 million (RM13.7 million) kickback was sent back to Malaysia, the daily reported.

Following an eight-month investigation by Australian media organisation Fairfax Media, two Mara officers were named as being behind the deal.

They are former Umno assemblyperson Mohammad Lan Allani, who is now Mara Investment chairperson and Mara's chief executive officer Halim Rahman.

The apartment block, Dudley International House, was purchased by Mara Inc, a subsidiary of Mara, in 2013 as a hostel for its scholarship students.

The five-storey building in the suburb of East Caulfield accommodates up to 115 Mara students attending Monash University.

Meanwhile, *Bernama* reported that the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) will investigate the allegations made in the Australian news report.

It said MACC would scrutinise and respond to the report that named the senior officers of Mara involved in the Melbourne property scam.

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