

Shafie says no knowledge of non-Mara officials' involvement in Aussie property deal

The Malaysian Insider

July 6, 2015

By Ram Anand

Rural and Regional Development Minister Datuk Seri Shafie Apdal today said that he had no knowledge of non-Mara officials, allegedly those with ties to Umno Youth, being involved and profiting from Mara Inc's purchase of properties in Melbourne.

National Oversight and Whistleblowers (NOW) said earlier today that two individuals who were not involved with Mara had signed off on documents for Mara's RM138 million purchase of 746 Swanston Street in late 2012.

The individuals also overstated the purchase price by RM63 million, the watchdog said, suggesting that they, along with some Umno Youth leaders they were allegedly linked to, had profited from the deal.

"Not to my knowledge," Shafie said of the allegation during a press conference in Bangi today.

"As far as I know, all our deals were based on property valuation and were done using bodies owned by Mara Inc."

He said he did not have any knowledge of people signing deals before Mara Inc officially owned the properties, or of previous purchase prices.

"What happened before or behind these deals, we do not know. All we know is the deal we entered into," Shafie said.

He also said that Mara would not respond to every allegation made by NOW, led by PKR secretary-general Rafizi Ramli, until investigations were complete.

"At the moment, these are just allegations. I cannot say if they are true or not true. That is why we are investigating and cooperating with all the authorities," he said.

"Give the authorities due time to make their findings and then we will know."

Meanwhile, Mara chairman Tan Sri Annuar Musa said that his meeting with Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Khalid Abu Bakar was a "normal visit" meant to show cooperation over the property purchase controversy.

"It's the same way like how we met the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) before," he said.

Mara Inc is currently the subject of controversy after allegedly overpaying for four Australian properties, with the differences for one of them, The Dudley, pocketed as

alleged kickbacks for some senior Mara officials. – July 6, 2015.

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