

Theo Zographos

15/08/2021

By email: localgovernment@remunerationtribunal.vic.gov.au

Dear Mr McCann

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal.

For me the key question your tribunal needs to answer is should Victorian local councillors be treated as amateur or professional.

Currently the role is treated as amateur. However, for the majority of councillors, the time invested is commensurate to a professional position.

Unlike the VFL, which has had a large following in the community, there is no natural constituency to cause the political groundswell to transform the role of councillor from amateur to professional.

You now have a historic opportunity to use a granular method of looking at the hours worked by councillors, how it compares to similar positions, such as a Victorian state member of parliament, then recommend a dramatic yet appropriate increase to the remuneration of Victorian councillors.

This can be done by shifting the remuneration method from paying an allowance to paying a salary.

In my mind, this would in due course attract more professionals to stand for local government office. As an elected position, Victorians deserve to get value for what they contribute through their council rates.

When compared to a Victorian state member of parliament, the disparity is indeed stark.

This is even after accommodating for the separate office building afforded for use, as well as between two and three full time equivalent employees. Yet the MP is treated as professional, and paid a salary between three to five times more than a councillor allowance.

You may know that this wasn't always the case. The role of MP has evolved as so too should the role of councillor.

The individual financial circumstances of current councillors is one factor you may consider however in my mind remuneration is directly linked to productivity and the best governance results for councils.

Finally, you may also investigate what penalty rates and overtime may apply in this scenario.

I welcome the opportunity to discuss this submission further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Theo Zographos". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Theo Zographos