

15th August 2021

To: The Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal
Suite 1, Ground floor, 1 Treasury Place
Melbourne VIC 2000
By email: localgovernment@remunerationtribunal.vic.gov.au

Dear Chairperson and Tribunal members,

Re: Proposed determination of allowances for Mayors, Deputy Mayors and Councillors - submission

Thank-you for the opportunity to make a submission to this process.

As a resident of the City of Moreland, and having attempted to be involved in local council issues and consultations during the past few years, my opinion is that:

- Councillors allowances should be increased significantly
- Mayors and Deputy Mayors allowances should be decreased significantly

I note that elected parent members of Government School Councils are unpaid. They volunteer their time for free. In my opinion, children deserve better than that, and there should be consideration of the bigger picture, and redistributing funds more evenly across society.

Local Councillors are definitely paid too little, and my observation is that the administration takes advantage of that by writing long rambling reports and producing monthly meeting agenda that are sometimes over 1,000 pages long. Council staff are therefore able to hide numerous details in these long agenda that are rarely picked up by Councillors, who for \$31,000 per year could not be reasonably expected to read more than the Executive Summary of each item in the Agenda.

Actually even the Executive Summaries tend to be very badly written with numerous deliberate omissions, with Officer Recommendations that do not fulfil the requirements for properly constructed resolutions of Council (e.g. are not self-contained and self-explanatory, but instead are vague and open to mis-interpretation).

It is the salaries of the Council staff that need to be seriously reviewed, and drastically slashed.

The Mayors allowance is too high, [REDACTED], in an extremely embarrassing Special Meeting to elect the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

And then to make matters worse, the Mayor and a select group of Councillors elected themselves to a Committee to oversee the development of the 4 year Council Plan and other key Council strategies, and via that Committee they then delegated the responsibility for community engagement to consultants, at an extravagant and wasteful cost.

So instead of the Mayor fulfilling their role as per section 18(1)(c) of the LGA 2020, to "*lead engagement with the municipal community on the development of the Council Plan*", they have instead handed over that job to Council staff and consultants. I am aware that some of the deliberative engagement consultants charge \$400 per hour. I have noticed that there are 3-4 deliberative engagement consultant specialists who appear to be producing the Council Plan for many metro Councils this year.

[REDACTED]

I gave up submitting questions to public question time for quite a while after that, because I felt that I was knowing causing disinformation to be published in the governance report section of the monthly meeting agenda. And that was not my intention.

I have also noticed that the Mayor is not sufficiently familiar with the Governance Rules, and does not implement meeting procedures in a sufficiently reasonable manner compared to the allowance that they are paid.

I would also point out that Moreland Council has not yet even produced a Draft Council Plan or Draft Council Vision, even though it is the middle of August. There is no Council Action Plan for 2021-22 either.

My impression is that governance standards have dropped significantly under this new LGA.

Therefore for all the reasons mentioned above, I believe that the Mayoral allowance should be reduced significantly.

Thank-you for the opportunity to make this submission.

Yours faithfully,

Marion Attwater

[REDACTED]

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