

**Subject:** Submission to Annual Adjustment to allowances payable to Mayors, Deputy Mayors and Councillors

24 April 2024

To: Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal

I am writing to make a submission to the Annual Adjustment of allowances payable to Mayors, Deputy Mayors and Councillors.

I made a submission to the first determination by the Tribunal in 2021, and in that submission suggested that:

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

Unfortunately the Tribunal chose to increase the Mayoral allowance significantly over a 5-year period, and to increase the Councillors allowances only slightly over a 3-year period.

The result being that Mayors of Category 3 Councils are currently receiving an allowance of \$130,390 and Councillors only \$39,390

In my view, the Councillor allowance should be adjusted by the maximum percentage possible. The Mayoral allowance should have no adjustment at all.

Councillors are underpaid, whilst the Mayoral allowance is more than sufficient remuneration for the actual amount of work/representation done, and gives an unfair advantage in the year of local government elections. The Mayoral allowance is more like a gift, than remuneration.

It is unreasonable and unfair to expect Councillors to be able to make good decisions and represent the whole municipal community in those decisions, on an annual allowance of \$26-39,000 per year (not including the one and only Category 4 Council). Especially now with the cost of living crisis for which there is no end in sight.

The Annual Community Satisfaction Survey results show declining community satisfaction with local government. There have been numerous Municipal Monitors appointed to numerous local councils, and numerous internal arbitration decisions under the Councillor Conduct framework. The recommendations of the IBAC Operation Sandon Special Report have not begun to be implemented. The State Government recently announced that they have not yet even assembled an inter-departmental taskforce to implement recommendations 2, 4, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14 and 33 of the Special Report .... "The government is giving further consideration to the appropriate composition of the Taskforce, including the recommended role of independent and regulatory bodies", says the media release of 19/3/24!

There is no evidence that the significant increase to the Mayoral allowance (and creation of a Deputy Mayoral allowance) has improved governance or community satisfaction with local government.

During the 2023 elections of the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria, the candidate material stated that successful candidates will be remunerated with a minimum stipend of \$82,000 per year, with an expectation that they commit 1-2 days per week to Assembly work.

That stipend is not determined by the Tribunal. But if it were, would the Tribunal really make a determination of only \$26,000-\$39,000 per year for Assembly members? I doubt it. Local Councillors are just as important as members of the First Peoples' Assembly, and should be remunerated at a similar rate.

The Mayoral allowance, on the other hand, is overly generous. There is no evidence that the Mayoral allowance has resulted in section 18 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, for the role of the Mayor, being complied with or enhanced.

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[Redacted]

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

Kind Regards,

[Redacted]

(if my submission is accepted and published, can it please be from "anonymous")

[Redacted]