

Submission to the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal 2025 Annual Adjustment Determination

Due to the amount and nature of the allowance, along with the tenure of the role, Councillors face a range of challenges which are financially impactful that should be addressed as part of this adjustment.

- Councillor allowance and workload
 - The Councillor allowance is not commensurate with the amount of work associated with the role, which is increasingly becoming more complex and protracted. Councillor commitments and responsibilities span business hours, evenings and weekends, and include compulsory and ongoing training, reviewing extensive agendas with technical reports, attending and participating in Councillor Briefings, Council Meetings, internal and external committees, community engagement both at forums and informally, and Council events.
 - The current Category system insinuates that the workload and expectation of a Councillor varies proportionally dependent on the Category of the Council.
 - Conversely, Members of the Parliament of Victoria receive a base salary of \$205,798, and Councillors at the City of Brisbane receive a base salary of \$136,649, with both provided staff and a stand alone office; for an annual workload and that's not too dissimilar to that of a Victorian Councillor.
- Lack of super
 - There is no super associated with the allowance. Councillors must deduct super contributions from their allowance.
- Tax implications
 - Tax is not automatically deducted from the allowance, resulting in complexities for completing tax returns.
- Lack of institutional recognition
 - Councillors are not provided with an official form of documentation stipulating the role, term, or allowance as is standard with other roles, making it difficult for third parties to recognise the role.
- Home loans and credit cards
 - Tenure and allowance is not recognised by several lenders, impacting the ability of Councillors to secure a home loan, or a competitive interest rate.
 - Tenure and allowance is not recognised by several credit card providers, impacting the ability of Councillors to secure a credit card.

These matters outlined are particularly impactful to young people, women, socially and culturally diverse people, and ultimately act as a deterrent to attracting and retaining

diverse Local Government representatives; with several of these matters reflected in the recent VLGA Victorian Councillor Census.

In response the following is encouraged:

- Transition the allowance to a salary.
- That the Category system be reviewed or abolished, and at a minimum, the base allowance/ salary for a Councillor at what are currently Category 1, 2, and 3 Councils be matched to that of a Category 4 Councillor allowance/ salary.
- That at a minimum, the base allowance/ salary for Mayors and Deputy Mayors at what are currently Category 1 and 2 Councils be matched to that of a Category 3 allowance/ salary.
- That super is provided in addition to the Councillor allowance/ salary.
- That tax is automatically deducted from the allowance/ salary.
- That Councillors be provided an official document stipulating the role, term, and base allowance/ salary as is standard with other roles.
- Address the restrictive nature in which Councillor tenure and allowance is currently recognised by lenders and financial institutions.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission.