

# Submission to the Independent Remuneration Tribunal from Leader of the Victorian Greens, on behalf of all Victorian Greens MPs

18<sup>th</sup> March 2025

## Salary and wages policy

- MPs should not receive pay increases that outweigh those of nurses, teachers, and other public sector workers, therefore MP salary indexation should never exceed the public sector wage cap.
- Any decision on MP salaries should also factor in that the Government's public sector wage cap has been at very low levels (1.5%) for a long time, and therefore MPs should not receive salary increases when other public sector workers have not received fair increases over this time.
- This is particularly pertinent in a time when the Victorian Government seeks to significantly reduce public service jobs in Victoria through their recently announced review, leaving many Victorians out of work.

## Electorate office and communications budget and resourcing for crossbench MPs

- Crossbench MPs face significant challenges in terms of staffing and resources. Each MP receives 2.5 full-time equivalent staff, which is insufficient given the role of crossbench MPs is similar to those of shadow ministers. The staffing allocation is also insufficient to manage the increased demands of an Electorate Office in today's 24/7 media cycle and the additional responsibilities (including compliance with relatively new legal requirements) of managing multiple social media platforms which are accessible to the public 24/7.
- To compensate, crossbench MPs often use their Electorate Office and Communications (EO&C) Budget to supplement existing employees' days on a casual basis. However, this affects staff entitlements, such as full parental leave, because being partly employed on a casual basis does not provide full coverage. This is unfair on employees of the Parliament and needs to be fixed.
- Allowing for extra Electorate Officers to be employed, and/or allowing the EO&C Budget to be used for non-casual staff (for example, on a fixed-term basis) could help address these issues.
- The cost of communication, particularly via Australia Post, has significantly increased, limiting MPs' ability to communicate effectively and regularly with constituents. Costs of communications over the past few years have risen significantly more than the increase in the EO&C. Constituents expect to hear news from their elected MP, but MPs are not afforded the resources to do this communication.
- All MPs are allocated Parliamentary Advisers, with the number of staff determined by a formula set in legislation. However, smaller parties with fewer Parliamentary Advisers face significant challenges in staff management due to the fact that leave replacement is not available for these staff in the same way it is for Electorate Officers. This means that staff are reticent to take the leave they're entitled to, and offices with only a few staff are left significantly under-staffed due to necessary staff leave absences.
- Crossbench MPs do not receive the extra resources or allowances that shadow cabinet members receive, despite having very similar responsibilities (for example, the role of Leader, Whip, etc are similar in crossbench parties to those in Opposition parties). This lack of recognition and resources is inequitable and hampers our ability to perform our roles effectively, as elected by our constituents. Parties with significant numbers in the Parliament, but who do not yet qualify for official 'Party Status' under legislation, are not afforded the same resources as parties with relatively similar influence and numbers in the Parliament. This is a hangover from the outdated 'two party' system that locks in more resources for the two major parties and prevents new entrants into our political system and hampers our democracy. This is not equitable in today's Parliament where more parties are now present and should be treated equitably.