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To whom it may concern,

RE: Written submission to the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal regarding the determination of local council allowances with specific consideration to changes within the last year

I would ask that the Tribunal take into consideration the worsening financial position of young family households (cost of living pressures) in relation to the time contributed by councillors to local council commitments.

1. The performance of local councils generally combines poor public perception, a high reliance on state and federal government funding, a widening service offering across a rapidly growing population base.
2. The councillor base is largely made up of political activists and retirees.

The combination of these two items makes for a very uninviting theatre for younger, career driven, bright, leaders to take up councillor positions. And this situation is currently being exaggerated by the poor performance of the councils themselves (which leads to more workload for councillors), and the worsening financial position of Australian families (councillors are even less available to contribute to the household).

Amongst our newly elected councillors, all four of the councillors with whom children still reside at home or are relatively younger, each have needed to take alternative employment, and make significant financial sacrifice to balance their family and councillor obligations.

The Tribunal needs to consider ways to attract and retain high calibre councillors to instil public confidence, better manage council performance and generally oversee local government operations. These may include (but not be limited to), superannuation contributions for younger councillors, further childcare support, a greater allowance payable for family-committed councillors in line with the true level of sacrifice, allowances consistent with levels of formal qualification (as would apply in the private sector), allowances comparable to other sources of income of individual councillors (to level out the amount of sacrifice), or other forms of career development or qualifications.

Simple percentage adjustments to the councillor allowances lacks the innovation required to fundamentally adjust councillor quality, as is required. I strongly encourage the Tribunal to adjust (or at least flag future adjustments to) the manner in which councillor remuneration occurs.

Regards,

Cr. Ned Jeffery (Mitchell Shire Councillor)

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