



SALARIES AND ALLOWANCES TRIBUNAL

Statement

Determination of Fees, Allowances and Expenses for Local Government Elected Council Members

The Salaries and Allowances Tribunal has completed its review of fees, allowances and expenses for elected council members of Local Governments throughout Western Australia.

The determination which will operate from 1 July 2013 establishes a scale of payments and provisions for reimbursement of expenses in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1995* and the *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996*.

This is the first independent determination of fees, allowances and expenses which were set in 1996 and last adjusted in 2005. It brings levels of remuneration for elected council members into line with other States and also with the fees paid to Government Board and Committee members in Western Australia.

At the forefront of the Tribunal's deliberations has been the recognition of the important role local government plays in the community.

There are 138 Local Governments and 11 Regional Local Councils in Western Australia. In 2011-12 local governments accounted for operating and capital expenditure exceeding \$4.25 billion. There are 15,000 full time equivalent employees in the sector and 1245 elected council members. Local governments vary in size from 1.5 square kilometres suburban precincts to 371,693 square kilometre remote areas. Local governments are responsible for the planning and delivery of a broad range of services affecting the everyday lives of the community.

The Tribunal noted that it is vital that local governments attract capable and committed elected council members to provide leadership, expertise and good government at a community level.

After extensive consultation the Tribunal concluded that the 1996 framework of fees, allowances and expenses did not take into account the significant weight of responsibilities shouldered by elected council members, particularly in the large and most populated local governments.

In establishing a new framework for the payment of fees, allowances and expenses, the Tribunal has adopted a banding model to differentiate between the responsibilities carried by Councillors, Mayors, Presidents and their deputies in local governments throughout the State. Provision has been made for reimbursement of expenses properly incurred in enabling elected council members to properly fulfil their duties.

The levels of remuneration for attending meetings and allowances for elected council members are not intended to be salaries but do take into account the responsibilities and commitments of elected council members serving as representatives of the community.

Community service continues to be the cornerstone of a commitment to local government.

Under the existing structure of fees, allowances and expenses, Councillors could claim up to \$7000pa for Council and Committee meetings and Mayors and Presidents up to \$14,000pa.

The annual allowance payable to Mayors and Presidents is from \$600pa up to \$12,000pa or 0.002 of the operating revenue of the local government, whichever is the greater amount, but in any case not more than \$60,000pa.

Deputies could receive up to 25% of this allowance. Expense allowances of \$2,400pa for telecommunications costs and \$1,000pa for Information Technology services are currently provided for under the *Local Government Act 1995* and the *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996*.

From 1 July 2013 under the Tribunal's determination the banding structure for local governments provides for meeting fees within a range of \$3,500pa to \$30,000pa for Councillors and \$3,500pa to \$45,000pa for Mayors and Presidents.

The Annual Allowance for Mayors and Presidents will extend from \$500pa to \$85,000pa within the four band structure. The same limit with respect to 0.2% of operating revenue and the entitlement to Deputies still applies. The Office of the Lord Mayor has been given special consideration.

Provision has been made to increase the Childcare allowance from \$20 to \$25 per hour and to combine the allowance for Information and Communication Technology costs up to \$3,500pa. There is a continuing provision for the reimbursement of expenses incurred in fulfilling the duties of an elected council member under Regulation 32.

The fees which may be claimed under the four band structure under which each local government is designated enables local governments to exercise the discretion vested in them by the *Local Government Act 1995* and the *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996*.

The full determination can be found on the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal's website at: www.sat.wa.gov.au/LOCALGOVERNMENTELECTEDMEMBERS