



PO Box 44
Woodside SA 5244
Phone: 08 8408 0400
Fax: 08 8389 7440
mail@ahc.sa.gov.au
www.ahc.sa.gov.au

Direct line: 8408 0400
File Ref:

4 April 2022

The Executive Officer
Remuneration Tribunal
GPO Box 2343
ADELAIDE SA 5001

By email: RemunerationTribunal@sa.gov.au

Dear Executive Officer

2022 Review of Local Government Elected Member Allowances for – Adelaide Hills Council

I refer to the Remuneration Tribunal's (the Tribunal) call for submissions in relation to the 2022 Review of Local Government Elected Member Allowances.

The following submission is made on behalf of the Adelaide Hills Council with the information contained herein collected through both workshop discussion and individual feedback from Council Members.

Adelaide Hills Council's submission in the requested format is:

Name of Council: Adelaide Hills Council

Size (Elected Members): Mayor and 12 Councillors

Geographic Area: 795km²

Population (ABS ERP 2020): 40,162

Revenue (2021-22 ABP): \$50.3m

Ratio of members to ratepayers: 1:3,089

Ordinary Council Meetings and Attendance (2020-21): 12 meetings and 95.8% attendance

Special Council Meetings and Attendance (2020-21): 3 meetings and 100.0% attendance

Audit Committee (s41) Meetings and Attendance (2020-21): 6 meetings and 94.3% attendance

CEO Performance Review Panel (s41) Meetings and Attendance (2020-21): 5 meetings and 89.5% attendance

Amount of Allowance Deemed Appropriate:

Council Groupings

Council considers the current groupings, which appear to be based predominantly on council revenue and therefore 'capacity to pay', to be a poor proxy for the drivers of the workloads of Council Members, which is discussed below. Nevertheless for the Adelaide Hills, the s76 allowances form 0.6% of the Council's revenue. As such, there is a similar capacity for most councils to increase the allowances to a more appropriate level without placing undue pressure on operating budgets. For this reason a restructuring of the groupings is sought to include additional factors such as population density and ward size.

Allowances

Members advocated that the increasing complexity, significant responsibilities and legislative obligations associated with the Council Member role were not adequately reflected in the allowances. The views of Council Members varied however the majority who provided feedback advised that the allowance was insufficient. While a quantum was not generally agreed, suggestions of a doubling of the applicable allowance were made by some Members.

Another common factor put forward for this view of allowance insufficiency was that the low population density of the Council area (AHC - 50.5 persons/km²) and therefore relative difficulty in communicating and consulting with constituents, resulted in a perceived larger workload relative to metropolitan councils of the same or higher grouping.

A number of councillors proposed an activity-based component (either fully or partially) to the calculation of allowances. One such proposed scheme consisted of a per meeting allowance for attendance at council and prescribed committee meetings (with or without an aggregate amount ceiling per annum).

Travel Time Payment

Allied to the above point was a view that the travel time payment was insufficient given the significant time impost of travel throughout the Council area to attend meetings. Adelaide Hills Council has two wards: Valleys Ward (5 councillors – 569km²) and Ranges Ward (7 councillors – 225km²). Further, the basis of the travel time payment, which appears to be based only on council meeting attendance significantly undervalues the considerable travel time undertaken by Council Members in the course of undertaking council duties (acknowledging that travel costs are reimbursed under s77).

Council believes that this payment needs to be restructured to include both a meeting attendance and a 'ward duties' component to adequately recognise the time taken by Council Members in travelling on council business. These 'ward duties' should also recognise that Council Members attend many non-prescribed meetings both at the council (i.e. advisory and working groups), regional subsidiaries and within the community.

Deputy Mayor Allowance

While the workloads of Deputy Mayors can vary widely, for those who are required to deputise for the principal member regularly (i.e. to cover holidays, illness or inability to attend functions, or for casual vacancies) the payment of one and a quarter times the councillor allowance is perceived to be insufficient. A payment of two times the councillor allowance may be more reflective of this workload and/or a per presiding meeting basis as proposed above.

I wish to thank the Tribunal for the opportunity to make a written submission. The Council would welcome the opportunity to make an oral submission to the Tribunal to provide clarity and elaborate on the discussion if it is considered beneficial.

If you have any queries in the interim, please contact Lachlan Miller, Executive Manager Governance & Performance on 8408 0400.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Aitken', is displayed on a light grey rectangular background.

Andrew Aitken
Chief Executive Officer