No. 6 of 2026

REPORT OF THE REMUNERATION TRIBUNAL

2026 Review of Allowances for Elected Members of Adelaide City Council and Elected Members of Local Government Councils

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Remuneration Tribunal (**Tribunal**) has conducted a review of the following Determinations:

    a. 2 of 2022 – Determination – Members of Local Government;
    b. 3 of 2022 – Determination – Allowances for Members of Adelaide City Council; and
    c. 5 of 2022 – Supplementary Determination – Members of Local Government (collectively the **Determinations**).

2. The Determinations provide for allowances payable to Elected Members of Local Government Councils and Elected Members of the Adelaide City Council, including allowances payable to those members in other offices or roles under the Determinations (collectively **2022 Allowances**). Those Elected Members are referred to collectively in this Report as **Councillors** unless differentiated otherwise.

3. As explained in this Report, the Tribunal has examined the basis of the 2022 Allowances for all Councillors and has determined that:

    a. There is a consistent core proficiency, including legislative and governance responsibilities, required for all Councillors to deal with the complexity and demands of being a Councillor, which is similar for all Councils;

    b. The lowest of the 2022 Allowances are inadequate to recognise this core proficiency. The quantum of these lower allowances was insufficient to sustainably attract and retain Councillors and simultaneously improve the diversity of the cohort. These lower allowances need to be substantially increased in percentage terms from a very low base position; and

    c. While there is a need to increase the higher allowances, as the quantum of the 2022 Allowances increase, less substantial adjustments are required.

4. The Tribunal has determined that the existing Council Groups and the resultant allowances are no longer an appropriate reflection of the relative complexity and demands of being a Councillor for each Council as compared to others.

5. Accordingly, the Tribunal has determined to re-group all Councils having had regard to the factors set out in this Report as well as set new allowance amounts for the new Council Groups. The Municipal Council of Roxby Downs remains excluded from the Determination and while the Determination applies to the District Council of Coober Pedy, the Council is

at liberty to apply for a differential determination to support its transition out of administration.

6. The Tribunal has maintained the City of Adelaide as a distinct Council Group with an individual allowance amount for the Lord Mayor of the City of Adelaide.

7. The Tribunal has increased the allowance for the Lord Mayor of the City of Adelaide to $233,506 per annum and has retained the existing and unique multiplier approach to set the allowance for the Deputy Lord Mayor of the City of Adelaide.

8. The Tribunal has also determined to retain the current multiplier approach to set the allowances for Mayors, Deputy Mayors and Presiding Members of Prescribed Committees of all Councils, so that these allowance amounts will increase based upon the relevant Annual Councillor Allowance for that Council.

9. The Tribunal has further determined new allowance amounts for the Presiding Members of Committees.

10. The Tribunal has retained the current eligibility requirements of the Travel Time Allowance and has determined new rates for the Travel Time Allowance.

11. The Tribunal is considering establishing a Major Emergency and Disaster Allowance for the Mayor of a Council where any part of their Council is subject to and for the duration of a Major Emergency or Disaster declaration and is seeking further submissions on this topic.

12. In conducting this review, the Tribunal has considered the allowance amounts that will likely be applicable in April 2027, being the 2022 Allowances as adjusted by the automatic indexation provisions of various legislative instruments and the potential inflationary estimates between November 2026 and April 2027.

13. The allowances determined by the Tribunal and explained in this Report will apply at the conclusion of the Deferred Local Government Elections in April 2027.

14. This Report and its accompanying Determination have been released well in advance of the Deferred Local Government Elections to assist persons who may decide to contest those elections to determine their positions.

15. Submissions put to the Tribunal have referred to Councillor behaviour. The Tribunal is aware of multiple concerns in this respect and notes the Local Government Association of South Australia's Model Behavioural Management Policy as well as the Behavioural Standards for Council Members which is enforced by the Behavioural Standards Panel. However, the Tribunal does not have the jurisdiction to make Allowances contingent on Councillor behaviour. In its 2022 Report the Tribunal noted similar concerns. It has adopted the same approach in that there is a legitimate community expectation that Councillors will be capable of fully comprehending the significance of their roles and will comply with the relevant behavioural expectations. The Tribunal does not have a behavioural performance monitoring role and has adopted the position that the appropriate behavioural standards will be met.

BACKGROUND

16. Section 14 of the *Remuneration Act 1990* (SA) (**Act**) provides that the Tribunal has jurisdiction to set the remuneration payable to office holders as conferred under any other legislation. Section 3 of the Act defines remuneration to include allowances.

17. Both sections 76 of the *Local Government Act 1999* (SA) (**LG Act**) and 24 of the *City of Adelaide Act 1998* (SA) (**City of Adelaide Act**) confer upon the Tribunal the jurisdiction to determine allowances for Councillors once every four years, from the date of the local government election to the conclusion of that term.

18. On 2 July 2026 the *Local Government (Elections) (Periodic Elections) Amendment Act 2026* (SA) (**Deferral Act**) came into force and postponed the November 2026 Local Government Elections to April 2027 (**Deferred Local Government Elections**).

19. The Deferral Act has extended the current term of the Councillors until the conclusion of the Deferred Local Government Elections. The Deferral Act has also extended the application of the 2022 Allowances made by the Tribunal under the Determinations until the conclusion of the Deferred Local Government Elections.

20. Since the 2022 Allowances were determined by the Tribunal, they have been automatically indexed by the Consumer Price Index (Adelaide) (**CPI**) three times according to the formula set out in sections 76(9) of the LG Act and 24(9) of the City of Adelaide Act. The Tribunal notes that the automatic indexation applies to all of the 2022 Allowances, including the Travel Time Allowance.

21. The LG Act and City of Adelaide Act provide for automatic indexation until November 2025. While the Deferral Act extends the term of the Councillors beyond the automatic CPI increase provided for in the LG Act and City of Adelaide Act, the Tribunal understands that a November 2026 CPI adjustment will be established by regulations made under the Deferral Act.

22. The Tribunal has taken an adjustment of this nature into account in this Report and has also had regard to potential inflationary estimates from November 2026 to April 2027.

23. The Tribunal has exercised its jurisdiction under section 76 of the LG Act and section 24 of the City of Adelaide Act to review the 2022 Allowances and has considered the inflationary estimates discussed above when determining the new allowance amounts.

24. It is important to note that the Act defines remuneration to include allowances. However, both the LG Act and City of Adelaide Act clarify a practical difference between remuneration and allowances and restrict the Tribunal to determining allowances for Councillors, rather than remuneration which incorporates salary.

25. Sections 76(3)(c) of the LG Act and 24(3)(d) of the City of Adelaide Act make it very clear "that an allowance under this section is not intended to amount to a salary for a member". Accordingly, submissions which ask the Tribunal to determine allowances which reflect the full work-value and time commitment required for a Councillor to perform their role, exceed the jurisdiction available to the Tribunal.

26. In determining the rate of allowances for Councillors, the Tribunal has adopted the approach it has taken in previous reviews. That approach was explained in 2022 and the Tribunal reaffirms the objective of the current review is to determine a fair rate of allowance, based on consideration of the legislative criteria. These allowances do not equate with salaries in the normal context in that they do not reflect a normal commercial or work value-based rate of remuneration that takes full account of the time, the commitment and the responsibility associated with these roles. The Tribunal recognises at the outset that there is a significant element of discretionary community commitment on the part of Councillors. What is clear from the LG Act and City of Adelaide Act is that allowances provide at least partial recognition of the time and expenses incurred by

members depending on the nature and structure of the Council and the functions they perform as Councillors.[1]

27. The Tribunal's jurisdiction to determine allowances for Councillors pursuant to the LG Act and City of Adelaide Act is strictly limited to the criteria set out in those Acts.

28. In some previous reviews the Tribunal has considered the allowances applicable to the City of Adelaide separately to South Australia's remaining 67 Councils. However, for this review, the Tribunal has determined to review the allowances for all Councils simultaneously to enable a broader review of the allowance setting approach.

THE REVIEW PROCESS

29. On 16 February 2026, in accordance with sections 10(2) and 10(4) of the Act, the Tribunal wrote to and invited submissions by 16 April 2026 in respect of this review from:

    a. the Honourable Premier of South Australia – as the Minister responsible for the Act who may make submissions or introduce evidence in the public interest;
    b. the Minister for Local Government, as Minister responsible for the LG Act;
    c. the Local Government Association of South Australia (**LGA**); and
    d. the elected members of each South Australian Local Government Council.

30. The Tribunal requested that details of the review be published in the LGA Circular inviting submissions by 16 April 2026.

31. The Tribunal also placed a notice on its website from 16 February 2026 inviting submissions from affected persons by 16 April 2026.

32. On 18 February, the Tribunal received correspondence from the Premier's representative advising that the invitation had been received in the caretaker period ahead of the 2026 State Election. The Premier's representative requested that the invitation be re-made after the election, and the Government had been sworn in.

33. Accordingly, on 26 March 2026, the Tribunal wrote to and invited submissions by 16 April 2026 in respect of this review from:

    a. the Honourable Premier of South Australia;
    b. the Minister for Local Government; and
    c. the Minister for the City of Adelaide, as Minister responsible for the City of Adelaide Act.

34. The Tribunal distributed the Submission Guideline with each invitation which set out the factors the Tribunal is permitted to consider when determining the allowances for Councillors pursuant to sections 76 of the LG Act and 24 of the City of Adelaide Act. The Submission Guideline was also published on the Tribunal's website.

35. The Submission Guideline invited submissions on the following factors and their impact on the role of Councillors:

    - Geographical size (area) of the Council;
    - Population (number of electors in the Council);
    - Population (number of electors in each ward);
    - Role of members of council as members of the council's governing body and as representatives of their area;

[1] Remuneration Tribunal – Report Relating to Determination 2 of 2022 [24] and Remuneration Tribunal – Report Relating to Determination 3 of 2022 [21].

- Revenue of the Council;
- Ratio of Councillors to Ratepayers;
- Proposed allowance amount (with evidence to support any change);
- Details of the council's capacity to pay the allowance amounts;
- Comments on the existing council groupings used to set allowance levels;
- Major growth and development;
- Significant social and economic issues;
- Significant demand to service and support non-resident needs;
- High impact environmental management issues and responsibilities;
- Greater diversity of services delivered than normally provided by similar sized local governments;
- Any other distinguishing features of the Council;
- Any additional matters the Council considers relevant; and
- Any other issues that you consider relevant.

36. Various requests were received by the Tribunal to extend the time within which to make submissions. On 14 April 2026 the Tribunal extended the deadline for making submissions to Friday, 1 May 2026 and on 29 April the Tribunal again extended the deadline for submissions to Friday, 8 May 2026. Each time the Tribunal advised the parties listed earlier in this Report of the extensions and updated the public notice on its website.

37. On 24 April 2026 the Premier's representative advised that no submission would be made.

38. No submissions were received from the Minister for Local Government or the Minister for the City of Adelaide.

39. The Tribunal received submissions from six Councillors, the LGA, the Australian Local Government Women's Association SA (**ALGWA SA**) and 20 Councils.

40. Each Council's submission included information relating to the following objective factors: geographic size, population (residents and electors), revenue and ratio of Councillors to Ratepayers. The Tribunal has considered this information but has decided not to reproduce these aspects of the submissions to improve the readability of this Report.

41. The submissions are summarised below:

Submitter	Issues Raised
ALGWA SA	• Councillors undertake governance, decision-making, community engagement and risk management responsibilities on behalf of Councils. • Mandatory superannuation should be introduced. • Allowances should be increased to reflect role and governance complexity, as well as interstate comparators. • The insurance and legal status of Councillors should be clarified with respect to Work Health and Safety legislation (**WHS**), insurance and the absence of employment related protections. • Addressing these issues would improve attraction and retention of diverse candidates.
Naracoorte Lucindale Council	• Mayor performs extensive leadership, advocacy, media, committee and regional representation functions beyond those of Councillors (including managing Councillor behaviour). • The Mayoral Allowance should be increased and the link with the Councillor's Allowance discontinued to recognise expanded Mayoral responsibilities and the impact on workforce participation.

Submitter	Issues Raised
District Council of Coober Pedy	• Councillors represent the community, determine Council's plans, policies and budgets, as well as fulfil governing body functions under the LG Act. • Increase allowances by CPI. • Reclassify from existing Group 5 to Group 4 to recognise remoteness and responsibility for town water and electricity supply, Community Wastewater Management System, airport and childcare services. • Low growth area but challenged by heavy tourism trade.
Campbelltown City Council	• Councillors undertake governance responsibilities and represent council on internal and external committees, subsidiaries, assessment panels and external organisations. • Support a modest increase in allowances. • Consider moving Campbelltown City Council to a higher existing grouping due to representation ratios and population which are nearing Group 1B arrangements. • Introduce mandatory superannuation. • No areas of major growth however strong population growth due to infill development. • Provision of a very broad variety of services and facilities to residents and non-residents heightens Councillor role complexity. • Multiple additional demands including climate change are causing higher demands on Councillors.
City of Victor Harbor	• Councillors provide strategic leadership, represent community interests, oversee Council assets and infrastructure, set the Council's strategic direction, support community capacity, support regional collaboration and service delivery and fulfil increasing governance and statutory responsibilities. • Increase Councillor allowances by 10% and then index by CPI on each anniversary to account for increased workload, complexity and time commitment. • Introduce Briefing Session Sitting Fees for Briefing sessions at similar rates to Committee Fees because Briefings require significant preparation and informed participation. • Increase the Deputy Mayor Allowance to two times the Councillor Allowance to reflect duties. • Reclassify the City of Victor Harbor from Group 3 to Group 2. • Recognise the City's tourism, growth and regional service hub functions. • Experiencing strong population growth, strong tourism and escalating environmental obligations which increase complexity of Councillor role.
City of Marion	• Councillors undertake strategic planning, financial oversight, risk management, governance and community representation functions. • Retain current allowances apart from CPI increases. • Provide additional allowance for Councillors on the Finance, Risk and Audit Committee at 1.25 the Councillor Allowance. • Retain current grouping methodology but any review should consider population growth, strategic planning obligations, financial capacity and governance workload of the Council.

Submitter	Issues Raised
	• Council is experiencing significant population growth, urban infill, strategic redevelopment and home to major State Infrastructure projects including Torrens to Darlington, as well as maintaining established residential, industrial and major activity centres. • Council has a socio-economically diverse community (an advantage and disadvantage). • Council manages regionally significant assets which experience significant demand from non-residents. • Council undertakes environmental management of coastline, conservation parks, biodiversity corridors, wetlands and hills face zones which place significant demand on Councillors.
Southern Limestone Coast Council *(submitted as District Council of Grant)*	• Councillors undertake governance and oversight of significant regional infrastructure, committees and external representative roles. • Increase Mayoral Allowance to five times the Councillor Allowance to reflect greater workload, scrutiny as well as statutory, leadership, representational and intergovernmental relations responsibilities. • Reclassify Council from existing Group 4 to Group 3 as it is similar to neighbouring Councils of Wattle Range, Tatiara and Naracoorte Lucindale Councils. • Recognise the complexity of managing the Mount Gambier Airport, saleyards, coastal infrastructure, the sink holes, bushfire resilience, cross-border governance and collaboration as well as challenges of encircling Mount Gambier. • Provides a broad range of services and facilities to residents including outreach, libraries, art gallery and meeting spaces, tourism and business growth. • Increased allowances are needed to attract quality candidates.
Lower Eyre Council	• Councillors represent dispersed and diverse rural and coastal communities, undertake governance, community engagement, regulatory oversight and extensive travel responsibilities. • Increases are required to attract and retain Councillors and improve diversity of representatives. • Increase Councillor allowances to $18,000 and increase by CPI annually to overcome financial and structural barriers to participation in local government and attract Councillors with diverse range of ages, skills, experience and socio-economic backgrounds. • Increase Travel Time Allowance by 50% to reflect the rural travel burden (lack of public transport causing Councillors to travel by private vehicle on Council business and Council reimbursement at Australian Taxation Office rates insufficient to cover current fuel and vehicle expenses). • Amend Council Grouping Framework to recognise geographic scale of rural Councils and regional travel burden. • Introduce a Councillor Travel Allowance for overnight forums and conferences related to professional development e.g. Roads and Works Conference, regional LGA meetings. • Council experiencing significant and multifaceted growth due to new township masterplans, new residential allotments and major foreshore redevelopments. • The capital works program has doubled, and current allowances do not reflect the responsibility, time commitment and

Submitter	Issues Raised
	governance risk Councillors bear in delivering projects of this scale and complexity. • Economy driven by agriculture, fishing, tourism and service industries which all deliver significant and fluctuating non-resident users of Council assets. • Manages 708 km of coastline with erosion and hazard management, climate change impact and adaptation, bushfire hazard reduction and preparedness, stormwater management and water quality, four Community Wastewater Management Systems, 1,199 km of unsealed roads, vegetation management, Port Lincoln Airport, commercial leases including the Airport.
Town of Walkerville	• Councillors undertake increasingly complex governance, compliance, planning, financial sustainability, integrity, long term planning, infrastructure prioritisation and community engagement and constituent responsibilities. And representing Council and ratepayers on four subsidiaries as well as providing oversight. • Council Community is highly engaged, well informed with strong expectations of transparency, responsiveness and service delivery which heightened by proximity to the Adelaide CBD. • Council seeks reclassification from Group 4 to Group 3 because despite its small size, the time commitment and complexity of Councillor role is aligned to other metropolitan Councils in higher groups. • Challenge of integrating the Buckingham Arms redevelopment which will change the character and demographics of the area and balance competing interests. • Council responsible for maintaining River Torrens and Linear Park within its boundaries. • Owns the Levi Caravan Park used almost exclusively by non-residents. Watson Art Series Hotel & Walkers Arms regularly used by non-residents. • Seeks to protect and enhance the environment, heritage and unique character of the district.
City of Tea Tree Gully	• Councillors make decisions across a broad and diverse range of services, programs, infrastructure and external bodies. • Review Council Grouping Framework to consider more data including better recognition of population, representation quotas and service complexity. • Council seeks reclassification to Group 1A or creation of a new category to recognise Councils of similar size and complexity like itself which sits between those in 1A and 1B. • Council delivers over 180 services and functions including wellbeing services, learn to ride and road rules safety sessions, Tea Tree Suites and Convention Centre, Art Gallery and Workshop spaces. • Delivering the New Golden Grove Master Planned Area (1300 homes, new employment zones), infill across the Council. Modbury Precinct revitalisation. • Align the timing of Councillor Allowance Reviews with Council budget processes (i.e. before April in election years).
Adelaide Hills Council	• Councillors undertake increasingly complex governance, planning, environmental management, emergency management, community engagement and statutory responsibilities.

Submitter	Issues Raised
	• Councillors are classified as 'Responsible Persons' under Aged Care legislation creating significant personal risk where Councils provide aged care support services. • Increase allowances with reference to the DPC Boards and Committees Framework. • Council seeks changes to the Council Grouping Framework to recognise peri-urban Councils and the fact that residents expect metropolitan level services from Councils that have limited growth opportunities limiting revenue growth, large geographies and asset and infrastructure burdens, as well as being disproportionately affected by natural disasters. • Align Councillor Allowance Framework to the CEO remuneration framework with amendments as both roles serve the same community and levels of complexity and responsibility would align. • Continue CPI indexation of allowances. • Moderate population growth spread across multiple townships (may be larger due to sale of Woodside Barracks), limited to infill and urban renewal with complex planning issues, growth restricted by Adelaide's Watershed, strong environmental, native vegetation & bushfire protection controls. • Adelaide Hills Council is geographically large and highly dispersed with 57 townships (rural, peri-urban, tourism and commuter focused). • Ageing population creating demand for age-friendly infrastructure, accessible facilities, aged care support. • Significant tourism demands and associated non-resident demands. • Manages high impact environmental areas including the Watershed and water catchment areas. • Services and facilities include 6 CWMS, Arts & Heritage Hub, emergency management and community resilience, biodiversity initiatives.
Light Regional Council	• Councillors undertake dual roles with significant work-value and responsibility covering governing body and regional representational roles involving planning, budgets, policies and regional collaboration. • Increase allowances by CPI. • Maintain a relative grouping with Councils of similar complexity and growth regions. • Current Allowance Framework reflect additional requirements of Mayor and Deputy Mayor. • Council is experiencing sustained population growth and development pressure within townships and growth corridors designated under the Greater Adelaide Regional Plan (**GARP**). • Councillors are required to guide and assess complex development proposals, long-term land use planning and infrastructure decisions, balancing huge residential growth with rural character, maintaining agricultural industry and respond to heightened community expectations. • Provides a broad and diversified range of services including libraries, community services, tourism economy development, community transport, public health support, cemeteries,

<table>
<tr><th>Submitter</th><th>Issues Raised</th></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>environmental programs, extensive infrastructure across a large geographic area including CWMS.
• Experiences large demands on assets and infrastructure from tourist populations which also drive economic growth.</td></tr>
<tr><td>District Council of Streaky Bay</td><td>• Councillors provide governance, advocacy (regional, state and federal levels) and community leadership, with high visibility and accessibility expectations in a regional setting.
• Governance, compliance and legislative requirements have increased the complexity of the Councillor’s role.
• Proposed increases to Councillor and Mayoral Allowances by:
o Increasing Existing Allowances by 30-50%; or
o Applying a Regional Loading Allowance of 25-40% for Regional Councils; or
o Applying a reclassification mechanism to move qualifying regional Councils to higher Council Groups.
• Current Council Groupings place over emphasis on population and revenue, failing to capture distance, travel burdens and service complexity and systematically disadvantages regional Councils.
• Demand from tourism increases complexity of Councillor role.
• Ongoing infrastructure demands and strategic development to support long term regional sustainability.
• Council manages extensive coastal, marine and land areas, including fisheries and aquaculture, while addressing climate and environmental risks.
• Low Allowance amounts discourage working age individuals from participating in Local Government, limits diversity and risks sustainable long-term leadership.</td></tr>
<tr><td>City of Playford</td><td>• Councillors undertake policy development, strategic planning, community leadership and engagement, oversight of resources, oversight of CEO performance, determine expenditure and service delivery in a rapidly growing Council.
• Mayor’s workload has increased due to greater civic and community commitments, media demands, government advocacy, collaboration with the CEO, and support for Councillors.
• Move of Playford from existing Group 1B to Group 1A to reflect increasingly complex decision making and governance responsibilities.
• Align Councillor Groups with CEO remuneration bands which would recognise the Council’s rapid growth (fastest in SA), high socio-economic complexity and governance demand.
• Council undergoing major residential, employment, health and urban-renewal developments which all require stronger flood, stormwater, waste, sustainability and biodiversity management.
• Provides facilities and social programs that serve residents and the wider northern Adelaide community.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Berri Barmera Council</td><td>• Allowances should reflect Councillors’ substantial governance, legal, financial and community leadership responsibilities.
• Role is growing in complexity due to legislative compliance, climate adaptation, cybersecurity, WHS, emergency response and financial sustainability.
• Increase allowances to reflect interstate comparators.</td></tr>
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Submitter	Issues Raised
	• Higher loadings should be applied for leadership roles and improved conditions. • The Travel Time Allowance does not recognise unpaid time commitment, increased fuel, accommodation and meal costs of regional Councillors, exacerbating geographic disadvantage. • Introduce a standardised Travel Expense Allowance for reasonable travel time, accommodation, meals and fuel costs. • Superannuation should be paid on allowances. • Create a Professional Development Allowance for Councillors. • Align Councillor Groups with those used for the CEO Remuneration Determination. • Index Allowances annually with public sector remuneration standards. • Cumulatively these will improve accessibility and diversity of candidates and Councillors.
LGA	• Councillors provide strategic leadership, oversee complex decisions, engage extensively with communities and governments, complete training, and respond to emergencies—often approaching full-time work, extending beyond just Council meetings. • The role carries significant personal, professional and opportunity costs, alongside constant accessibility and public scrutiny. • All Councillors share the same core legislative and governance responsibilities. Councillors for Council Groups 3–5 are considered underpaid. • Establish a sufficient sector-wide base allowance, with differential payments for factors materially affecting the nature of the role, while avoiding allowance reductions. • Clarify the application of superannuation for Councillors. • Inadequate allowances restrict candidacy to financially secure or flexible individuals, reducing candidate diversity and contributing to uncontested elections and vacancies. • Retain reimbursements for childcare and carer support.
City of Onkaparinga	• Councillors undertake governance responsibilities through council meetings, committees, training, briefings, community engagement and regional representation. Role is continuing to become more complex due growth pressures and governance complexity. • Retain Group 1A due to Onkaparinga's scale, diversity and governance complexity. • Council expects an additional 39,000 residents and 25,000 homes by 2051 (increasing planning and infrastructure demands). • Demands of disadvantage, an ageing population, housing stress and mental-health needs require expanded services and advocacy. • Tourism and being home to major regional facilities create substantial non-resident demand and complexity. • Councillors oversee a $243 million budget, $1.2 billion road network, managing climate risks and complex shared services. • Allowances should be tax-free.

Submitter	Issues Raised
	• Expand the eligibility criteria for the Travel Time Allowance to apply to Councillors who live more than 30 km from the Council's Principal Office. • Establish Professional Development Allowances.
District Council of Kimba	• Councillors are highly visible community leaders and advocates. They are often the first point of contact for local concerns and are expected to represent the community on issues such as GP access, childcare, housing, aged care, external funding, economic development, diversification and community wellbeing. • Their role also includes substantial regional, State and industry advocacy, major project oversight and stakeholder engagement. • Because of the small population and limited ratepayer base these responsibilities increase the time commitment, visibility and complexity of the Councillor role. • Raise Group 5 allowances by 20–30%, as current allowance amounts equate to below-minimum-wage hourly rates. But should reflect the actual work undertaken and provide fair recognition of the time commitment. • Allowances for Group 5 have not kept pace with increasing complexity in compliance and community representation, while higher Groups have. • The population-based Council Groups overlook Kimba's 3,500 km² area, extensive travel requirements and the complexity of service delivery in a rural and remote council. • Significant remoteness and travel requirements, including regular travel of 150-250 km for regional meetings and 470 km return trips to Adelaide, increase the time and cost burden on Councillors. • Workloads are higher on Councillors due to workforce shortages. • Demands on Councillors include maintaining healthcare access, addressing housing and workforce shortages, drought, major projects, tourism demands and non-resident use of infrastructure. • Council manages 1,700 km of roads plus waste, wastewater, emergency and climate-resilience responsibilities. • Inadequate allowances discourage working-age and skilled candidates, reducing diversity and threatening sustainable local leadership.
Mid Murray Council	• Councillors provide civic leadership, manage strategic issues affecting residents and businesses and the Council area, balance competing priorities, participate in numerous governance and advisory committees including Council subsidiaries and regional partnerships, foster economic development, and represent the Council in regional, State and Federal advocacy and develop social and cultural services to enhance wellbeing of residents and visitors. • Allowances shouldn't be considered a wage but should be increased to attract a diverse range of qualified and capable candidates. • Responsibilities of Councillors continue to grow and allowances should reflect that. • Allowances for the Mayor do not reflect the fulltime commitment and the complexity of the role which extends beyond formal

Submitter	Issues Raised
	meetings and includes significant community engagement, constituent matters, emergency response duties as well as training and travel across large geographies. • When compared to the allowances paid to members of other local government-related statutory bodies, Councillor Allowances show the role is severely undervalued relative to the responsibilities, time commitment and community expectations. • Retain current Group 3 classification. • Multiple projects which are contributing to growth and development including CWMS project, Marina Development, residential growth in four towns and many renewable energy projects. • Council faces significant Socio-Economic disadvantage. • Experiences heavy tourism trade and seasonal workforce. • Manages 440 km of River Murray frontage with significant costs (more than any other Council), 3,383 km of roads, 28 CWMS, landfill site, 10 waste transfer stations, four offices and three depots. • Council experienced the 2022/23 River Murray Flood – one of SA's worst floods and SA's second largest natural disaster, as well as being in Drought since 2023. Both have significant ongoing impacts on the Council and community. • Council has a large geographic area and asset base with a small rate base. • Superannuation should be mandatory.
Coorong District Council	• Councillors are expected to maintain knowledge of legislation, review extensive documentation and represent communities across a large regional area. • Increase the Allowances to recognise that Councillors must take unpaid time away from their work or business to be Councillors. • Allowances and the Travel Time Allowance should reflect all the factors of representing a large regional council including the time and distance spent travelling, mixed road networks, current fuel prices and number of meetings. While Coorong District Council utilises online meetings for workshops and committee meetings, Councillors must attend Ordinary & Special Council meetings in person – 2 to 4 trips a month to the Principal Office or Rural Centres which for Councillors can be 100 km from their home. • Review the Deputy Mayor's Allowance to recognise the increased expectations of the role, duties to mentor Councillors and remove limitation that the Deputy Mayor must act as Mayor for at least a month to receive higher allowance. • Wage Price Index (Adelaide) is a more appropriate measure for the annual indexation of Allowances. • Institute biannual reviews of the Allowances so they reflect external political and economic influences. • Council is South Australia's largest rural council, with a small population base, an economy dominated by agriculture, and 1,519 km of unsealed roads.
City of Charles Sturt	• Councillors undertake decision-making across a wide range of complex council functions including finance, infrastructure, environment, health, waste and economic development. • Current Council Group is appropriate as are Council Groupings overall.

Submitter	Issues Raised
	• Increases by CPI are appropriate, but if the Council's population continues to grow, the Allowances may be insufficient to support Councillor's increased community engagement. • Council will continue to experience significant population growth (9.42% from 2026-2036 and 19% beyond 2030 due to known development sites, urban renewal and infill) and diversity. • Challenges include housing affordability, social inclusion in culturally diverse community, an ageing population, creating local economic development and employment opportunities. • Visitors and commuters increase pressure on infrastructure, amenities and services. • Council manages flooding, heat, coastal resilience, stormwater, waste and biodiversity risks. • Diverse services require Councillors to understand infrastructure, finance, health, environmental management and economic development.
City of West Torrens	• Councillors undertake governance, strategic oversight, financial stewardship, infrastructure planning and community representation functions in a complex metropolitan environment in a Council with a billion-dollar property profile as well as SA's largest flood prevention project. • Increase allowances to reflect interstate comparators. • Refine the grouping methodology to better recognise governance complexity, major infrastructure and transient populations e.g. the 30-40,000 workers the city serves daily plus visitors. • Greater recognition should be given to financial oversight, growth pressures, strategic infrastructure projects, community engagement initiatives and community diversity. • Allowance structure should reflect the increased workload of all Committee members. • Recognition should be given to complexity created by being home of the Adelaide International Airport. • Councillor complexity increased due to significant development activity, urban infill, home to State Assets including Torrens to Darlington Project, Brown Hill Keswick Creek Flood Mitigation Project. • Superannuation should be paid on allowances.
Cr Harvey Jones	• Align Council Groupings with those applied to Councils for the CEO Remuneration Framework.
Cr Jo Harvey	• Councillors make substantial decisions which impact the community and carry significant responsibility, but Councillors are not treated consistently with Council employees for protections or entitlements. • Benchmark allowances against other jurisdictions. • Superannuation should be paid on the allowances. • Clarify application of WHS protections, the insurance and legal status of Councillors, and the absence of employment related protections.
Cr Di Wilkins	• Councillor role is increasingly demanding and involves liaison between residents and council, especially on planning and neighbourhood issues.

Submitter	Issues Raised
	• Recognise the role as increasingly close to a full-time commitment. • Pay superannuation on allowances as they are taxable income. • Extend WHS protections to Councillors. • Low value of the allowances, lack of superannuation, and lack of WHS protections discourage young people from participating in Local Government.
Cr Patrick Maher	• Role requires substantial time that displaces paid work, with Councillors needing to engage deeply with the content and community to be effective. • Current allowance amounts do not reflect the hours, workload, responsibility or opportunity cost of the role and should be increased substantially. • Increase the Allowances to reduce barriers for younger and working-age candidates.
Cr Eleanor Freeman	• Role is effectively full-time when meetings, preparation, briefings, training, stakeholder engagement, correspondence and constituent concerns are included. • Increase allowances to reflect actual workload. • Pay superannuation. • Increase allowances to improve accessibility of the role for younger people, women, carers and people without financial security.
Cr Peter Cornish	• Allowances should be at least doubled to recognise Councillors' civic responsibility for significant expenditure and assets and face increasing personal, governance (inc. personal liability under the Aged Care legislation) and behavioural risks. • Reform behavioural standards and Councillor obligations to address behavioural issues which are affecting attraction and retention.

42. On 8 July 2026 the Tribunal met with the ALGWA SA, the LGA and the Mayor of the Mid Murray Council. The Tribunal has taken all the information provided to it into account.

CONSIDERATION

43. The relevant legislative provisions which set out the strict criteria the Tribunal is permitted to consider when determining the Allowances for Councillors are set out below. There are slightly different factors for Councillors for the City of Adelaide and Councillors for all other Councils. Accordingly, these legislative provisions are set out separately.

Councillors for the City of Adelaide

44. When determining Allowances for Councillors for the City of Adelaide section 24(3) of the City of Adelaide Act requires that the Tribunal must have regard to the following factors:

> (a) the role of members of the Council as members of the Council's governing body and as representatives of their area;
>
> (b) the size, population and revenue of the Council, and any relevant economic and social factors in the council area;
>
> (c) the fact that an allowance under this section is not intended to amount to a salary for a member;

(d) the fact that an allowance under this section should reflect the nature of a member's office;

(e) the provisions of this Act providing for the reimbursement of expenses of members.

45. When considering the role of a Councillor for the City of Adelaide, the Tribunal is required to have regard to the role description provided by section 22 of the City of Adelaide Act:

(1) The role of a member of the Council is—

(a) as a member of the governing body of the Council—

(i) to act with integrity; and

(ii) to ensure positive and constructive working relationships within the Council; and

(iii) to recognise and support the role of the Lord Mayor under the Act; and

(iv) to develop skills relevant to the role of a member of the Council and the functions of the Council as a body; and

(v) to participate in the deliberations and activities of the Council; and

(vi) to provide community leadership and guidance to the City of Adelaide community and to participate in achieving a vision for the desired future of the City through the formulation of strategic plans and policies; and

(vii) to keep the Council's goals and policies under review to ensure that they are appropriate and effective; and

(viii) to keep the Council's resource allocation, expenditure and activities, and the efficiency and effectiveness of its service delivery, under review; and

(ix) to participate in the oversight of the chief executive officer's performance under the Council's contract with the chief executive officer; and

(x) to serve the overall public interest of the City of Adelaide; and

(b) as a person elected to the Council—to represent the interests of residents and ratepayers of the Council and to facilitate communication between the community and the Council.

(2) The Lord Mayor may authorise another member of the Council to act in place of, or to represent, the Lord Mayor in the performance of a particular function.

(3) An authorisation under subsection (2) cannot derogate from the role of a Deputy Lord Mayor under the *Local Government Act 1999*.

(4) A member of the Council has no direct authority over an employee of the Council with respect to the way in which the employee performs his or her duties.

Councillors, other than those for the City of Adelaide

46. When determining Allowances for Councillors of all Councils except the City of Adelaide, section 76(3) of the LG Act requires the Tribunal to have regard to the following factors:

> (a) the role of members of council as members of the council's governing body and as representatives of their area;
>
> (b) the size, population and revenue of the council, and any relevant economic, social, demographic and regional factors in the council area;
>
> (ba) the ratio of members to ratepayers;
>
> (c) the fact that an allowance under this section is not intended to amount to a salary for a member;
>
> (d) the fact that an allowance under this section should reflect the nature of a member's office;
>
> (e) the provisions of this Act providing for the reimbursement of expenses of members.

47. Section 76(3) of the LG Act requires that the Tribunal also have regard to the role description of a Councillor in section 59 of the LG Act:

> (1) The role of a member of a council is—
>
> (a) as a member of the governing body of the council—
>
> (i) to act with integrity; and
>
> (ii) to ensure positive and constructive working relationships within the council; and
>
> (iii) to recognise and support the role of the principal member under the Act; and
>
> (iv) to develop skills relevant to the role of a member of the council and the functions of the council as a body; and
>
> (v) to participate in the deliberations and activities of the council; and
>
> (vi) to keep the council's objectives and policies under review to ensure that they are appropriate and effective; and
>
> (vii) to keep the council's resource allocation, expenditure and activities, and the efficiency and effectiveness of its service delivery, under review; and
>
> (viii) to ensure, as far as is practicable, that the principles set out in section 8 are observed; and
>
> (ix) to participate in the oversight of the chief executive officer's performance under the council's contract with the chief executive officer; and
>
> (x) to serve the overall public interest; and
>
> (b) as a person elected to the council—to represent the interests of residents and ratepayers of the council, to provide community leadership and guidance, and to facilitate communication between the community and the council.
>
> (2) A member of a council may, with the principal member's authorisation, act in place of, or represent, the principal member.

> (3) A member of a council has no direct authority over an employee of the council with respect to the way in which the employee performs his or her duties.

48. The Tribunal is also required to consider section 8 of the LG Act, which sets out the principles a Council must uphold and promote when performing its roles and functions:

> (a) provide open, responsive and accountable government;
>
> (b) be responsive to the needs, interests and aspirations of individuals and groups within its community;
>
> (c) participate with other councils, and with State and national governments, in setting public policy and achieving regional, State and national objectives;
>
> (d) give due weight, in all its plans, policies and activities, to regional, State and national objectives and strategies concerning the economic, social, physical and environmental development and management of the community;
>
> (e) seek to co-ordinate with State and national government in the planning and delivery of services in which those governments have an interest;
>
> (ea) seek to collaborate, form partnerships and share resources with other councils and regional bodies for the purposes of delivering cost-effective services (while avoiding cost-shifting among councils), integrated planning, maintaining local representation of communities and facilitating community benefit;
>
> (f) seek to facilitate sustainable development and the protection of the environment and to ensure a proper balance within its community between economic, social, environmental and cultural considerations;
>
> (g) manage its operations and affairs in a manner that emphasises the importance of service to the community;
>
> (h) seek to ensure that council resources are used fairly, effectively and efficiently and council services, facilities and programs are provided effectively and efficiently;
>
> (i) seek to provide services, facilities and programs that are adequate and appropriate and seek to ensure equitable access to its services, facilities and programs;
>
> (ia) seek to balance the provision of services, facilities and programs with the financial impact of the provision of those services, facilities and programs on ratepayers;
>
> (j) achieve and maintain standards of good public administration;
>
> (k) ensure the sustainability of the council's long-term financial performance and position.

Council Groups

49. The Tribunal first determined the Council Groups in 2010. These Council Groups were determined based on population, total operating revenue and the number of electors per Councillor.[2]

50. In 2014 the Tribunal amended the Council Groups to increase their number from 5 to 7. This occurred by splitting Group 1 into Groups 1A and 1B in recognition of the larger

[2] Remuneration Tribunal – Report Relating to Determination 6 of 2010 [6.5.2].

income, expenditure and populations of Group 1A Councils. The Tribunal also allocated the City of Adelaide to its own Council Group.[3]

51. The Tribunal last reviewed the Council Groups in 2022 which are set out below alongside the Allowance amounts applying from November 2025:

Council Group	November 2025 Allowance Amounts
City of Adelaide	$32,110
Group 1 A	$28,916
Group 1B	$25,547
Group 2	$21,386
Group 3	$17,213
Group 4	$12,260
Group 5	$8,049

52. In addition, separate allowances apply to travel time, the Presiding Members of Committees and the Lord Mayor of the City of Adelaide. Proportionate payments apply for Mayors, Deputy Mayors, the Deputy Lord Mayor of the City of Adelaide and Presiding Members of Prescribed Committees.

53. In Report 2 of 2022 the Tribunal noted that the existing approach to grouping Councils failed to appropriately recognise the relative complexity of Councils compared to each other and the extent to which a change made to one Council's allocation within the Council Groups was likely to create anomalies with respect to the grouping of other Councils.

54. In this review, the Tribunal has determined a new Council Grouping model which seeks to appropriately recognise the relative complexity of Councils compared to each other. This is discussed later in the Report.

55. In Report 2 of 2022, the Tribunal forecast its expectation that this review would be evidence based and suggested that the sector consider an allowance setting approach based on a standard allowance for a "standard" or "benchmark" Council, with specific additions or deductions for all other Councils to recognise each of the criteria in section 76(3) of the LG Act[4].

56. The Tribunal indicated that it would consider whether this benchmarking approach would more fairly recognise the impact of the statutory criteria and encourage Councils to review the way in which they operate.[5] Having considered this approach, the Tribunal was unable to establish clear measures to fairly determine a Benchmark Council and then distinguish between Councils.

Grouping of Councils

57. It is neither practical, nor desirable that the Tribunal consider each Council individually to establish appropriate allowances. The Tribunal is not satisfied that the current grouping arrangement operates fairly in that the distinction between Councils in different groups does not adequately reflect similarities and differences in Councillor roles, demands and expectations.

58. The Tribunal has considered a broad range of Council grouping options, including that which was developed and adopted for the Local Government CEOs Remuneration

[3] Remuneration Tribunal – Report Relating to Determination 7 of 2014, 4.
[4] Remuneration Tribunal – Report Relating to Determination 2 of 2022 [32].
[5] Remuneration Tribunal – Report Relating to Determination 2 of 2022 [32].

Framework which sets the minimum and maximum remuneration for Local Government CEOs (**Council CEO Grouping Model**).[6]

59. The Tribunal's approach to the Council CEO Grouping Model was explained extensively in Report 3 of 2025 and Report 4 of 2026.

60. The Tribunal concluded that the Council CEO Grouping Model was not appropriate for grouping Councils for the purpose of determining councillor allowances as there are fundamental differences between the roles and responsibilities of Councillors and Local Government CEOs.

61. The Council CEO Grouping Model used the most recently available Local Government Grants Commission Total Operating Income (**TOI**) data as the primary determinant of a grouping, with four modifying factors. The Tribunal considers that the following factors used in the Council CEO Grouping Model are not as useful as other factors when considering the grouping of Councils for councillor allowances:

    a. Distance from Adelaide because Councillors generally come from within the Council area they are elected to represent. The legislation also provides for travel related reimbursements and Councillors are compensated for travel time through the Travel Time Allowance; and

    b. Population dispersion within the Council. The Travel Time Allowance is intended to expressly address the issue of dispersion by compensating for Councillor time spent travelling within their Council.

62. A further distinction from the Council CEO Grouping Model approach is that the current councillor allowances do not have any element of a market assessment, as they are the product of Determinations made by the Tribunal.

63. Conversely, the approach that the Tribunal has adopted in this review, with respect to councillor allowances, cannot be universally applied to the Local Government CEOs Remuneration Framework set out in Report 4 of 2026. The Tribunal's approaches in each Determination reflect and accept the fundamental differences between the role and responsibilities of Councillors and Chief Executive Officers.

64. Finally, the Tribunal has determined that the relatively small monetary values applicable to councillor allowances do not lend themselves to a more complex grouping structure for Councils like that adopted for the Local Government CEOs and instead encourage a more compact grouping arrangement.

65. The Tribunal considered adopting an allowance structure that provided for an attendance fee structure, where Councillors would be paid for each meeting attended. It did not adopt this approach and retained the annual allowances because the role of a Councillor requires time commitments which extend beyond meeting attendances.

66. The Tribunal also considered adopting minimum and maximum allowance ranges for each Council Group which would allow each Council to determine on their own assessment, the appropriate Councillor Allowance amount. This approach reflects the schemes operating in Western Australia and New South Wales and recognises the inherent uncertainty in specifying exact allowance amounts. It would give Councils the autonomy to consider their unique circumstances.

[6] For a detailed discussion of the Council CEO Grouping Model see Remuneration Tribunal – Report Relating to Determination 3 of 2025 and Remuneration Tribunal – Report Relating to Determination 4 of 2026.

67. However, this approach was not adopted because there were no submissions made in support of it and the Tribunal understands that individual Councils may not be able to agree on an amount within the range. The Tribunal suggests that this approach be given consideration as part of a future review.

68. There is a consistent core proficiency, including legislative and governance responsibilities, required for all Councillors to deal with the complexity and demands of being a Councillor, which is similar for all Councils.

69. The Tribunal has concluded that all Councillors must meet this base level of proficiency and responsibilities. The size of the respective Council’s TOI represents the most appropriate indicator of the progressive complexity of these duties. These complexities become apparent in the content, and size of the activities of Councils, the diversity of issues Councillors must address, the ratio of ratepayers to Councillors and the physical attributes of Councils.

70. Abnormal growth and socio-economic impediments also appear to the Tribunal to make the role of Councillors more complex.

71. Having considered those common and distinguishing features of Councillor roles, as well as the relatively small monetary amounts involved, the Tribunal has determined to reduce the number of Council Groups to six including City of Adelaide.

72. The Tribunal has retained the City of Adelaide as a separate group because it has sufficient differences to other Councils that include, but are not limited to, its ratepayer profile, its custodianship of State assets and the extent to which some of its functions are so closely entwined with those of the State Government. This broad range of functions which have State-wide impacts include funding responsibilities, public access obligations and asset management roles and mean that, while behavioural expectations are consistent, the demands on Councillors for the City of Adelaide differ from Councillors of other Councils.

73. As discussed above, the existing Council Groups were determined by reference to population, revenue and electors per Councillor. The Tribunal has concluded that these factors by themselves do not adequately recognise the workload or demands placed on Councillors.

74. The Tribunal has adopted the position that TOI represents the most consistent metric for consideration of the complexity of Councillor roles and the demands placed on them. To recognise annual fluctuations and the four yearly review cycle of councillor allowances prescribed by the legislation, a four-year average of TOI[7] has been adopted (**Average TOI**).

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[7] South Australian Local Government Grants Commission, *2024–25 Database Reports* (Report 2, August 2026 'Sources of Operating Income by Council for 2024-25 Financial Year' <https://www.dhud.sa.gov.au/our-department/local-govt/grants-commission/publications>; South Australian Local Government Grants Commission, 2023–24 Database Reports (Report 2, August 2025 'Sources of Operating Income by Council for 2023-24 Financial Year' <https://www.dhud.sa.gov.au/our-department/local-govt/grants-commission/publications>; South Australian Local Government Grants Commission, 2022–23 Database Reports (Report 2, August 2024 'Sources of Operating Income by Council for 2022-23 Financial Year' <https://www.dhud.sa.gov.au/our-department/local-govt/grants-commission/publications>; and South Australian Local Government Grants Commission, 2021–22 Database Reports (Report 2, August 2023 'Sources of Operating Income by Council for 2021-22 Financial Year' <https://www.dhud.sa.gov.au/our-department/local-govt/grants-commission/publications>.

75. The Average TOI has been complemented by consideration of the following factors:

   a. Ratio of ratepayers to Councillors may be a factor that potentially impacts on the demands on Councillors, particularly for Councils where each Councillor represents a comparatively high number of ratepayers;

   b. The Tribunal recognises that population growth, particularly in areas anticipating significant new housing developments with new infrastructure needs, can place significant additional demand on Councillors and may increase the complexity of their role;

   c. Socio-economic considerations are also relevant to the complexity of the Councillor role because Councils with low socio-economic circumstances may require Councillors to provide oversight of the delivery of community services with reduced financial resources in circumstances where community expectations for support are difficult to meet; and

   d. Council asset levels are also a relevant consideration to the complexity of the Councillor role because Councillors are the custodians of these assets. The more extensive the asset base, the likely greater the demands on Councillors. The Tribunal has recognised the inherent limitations of this metric because of uncertainty over asset planning decisions as well as recognition that asset development is not realistically available to some Councils because of factors outside of their control.

76. The consideration of the Council Groups has been undertaken using each Council's Average TOI in conjunction with the following potentially modifying criteria:

   a. The ratio of Councillors to ratepayers;[8]
   b. Projected Population Growth from 2021 to 2031;[9]
   c. Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (**SEIFA Index**);[10] and
   d. The value of Council assets.[11]

77. The approach to ranking Projected Population Growth and the SEIFA Index was consistent with the approach adopted for the Council CEO Grouping Model and is explained in Report 3 of 2025.[12]

78. Where a Council is close to a Council Group boundary, based on the thresholds explained below, the potential for these modifying criteria, to shift an individual Council into the adjacent higher Council Group has been considered.

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[8] The ratio of Councillors to ratepayers was calculated using the number of Councillors (including directly elected Mayors) that will apply from the conclusion of the Deferred Local Government Elections. Electoral Commission of South Australia, 'Local Government Election Results' (Web Page) <https://result.ecsa.sa.gov.au/lgeresults>; Electoral Commission of South Australia, 'Council Boundaries' (Web Page) <https://www.ecsa.sa.gov.au/electoral-districts/council-boundaries>; Electoral Commission of South Australia, 'Bi-Annual Enrolment Statistics by Council' (Statistics, 27 February 2026) <https://www.ecsa.sa.gov.au/enrolment/enrolment-statistics>.

[9] Annualised projected population growth from 2021 to 2031 based on Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure, *Population Projections for South Australian Local Government Areas, Medium Series 2021-41* (January 2024).

[10] Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA), Australia, 2021* (Catalogue No 2033.0, 27 April 2023) <https://www.abs.gov.au>.

[11] South Australian Local Government Grants Commission, *2024–25 Database Reports* (Report, August 2026 'Report 5: Summary Balance Sheet Information' <https://www.dhud.sa.gov.au/our-department/local-govt/grants-commission/publications>.

[12] For a detailed discussion of approach to ranking Projected Population Growth and SEIFA see Remuneration Tribunal – Report Relating to Determination 3 of 2025 [90], [101]-[104].

79. The approach set out below excludes the Average TOI for the City of Adelaide and the Municipal Council of Roxby Downs.

80. Due to its unique governance structure, the Municipal Council of Roxby Downs remains excluded from this Determination.

81. By adopting this approach, the Tribunal has established six revised Council Groups for Councillor Allowances which it considers best recognise the inherent similarities in Councillor roles for these groups of Councils, together with recognition of individual characteristics that impact on the role and functioning of them as Councillors.

82. The adoption of this approach has implications for a small number of Councils when the quantum of the allowances is considered.

83. The approach adopted by the Tribunal has not reduced the quantum of any Councillor allowances.

84. The Council Groups comprise:

Council Group	Thresholds for Council Groups
A	City of Adelaide
B	Councils with an Average TOI that is equal to or greater than $61 million but may include other Councils following the consideration of the modifying criteria
C	Councils with an Average TOI that is equal to or greater than $30 million, but less than $61 million but may include other Councils following the consideration of the modifying criteria
D	Councils with an Average TOI that is equal to or greater than $20 million, but less than $30 million but may include other Councils following the consideration of the modifying criteria
E	Councils with an Average TOI that is equal to or greater than $10 million but less than $20 million but may include other Councils following the consideration of the modifying criteria
F	Councils with an Average TOI that is less than $10 million but may include other Councils following the consideration of the modifying criteria

85. The Councils in each Council Group are listed in Appendix 1 of the Determination which accompanies this Report.

Quantum of Allowances

86. The Tribunal notes that the quantum of councillor allowances is generally a relatively small component of Council expenditure. Councillor allowances average less than 0.5% of employee expenditures across the local government sector and are under 5% at their maximum. The Tribunal's own conclusions and multiple submissions put to it indicate that a failure to attract and retain a diverse, competent and committed cohort of Councillors jeopardises the operation of any Council.

87. The Tribunal has concluded that the roles of Councillors have become more complex, demanding and visible since the 2022 Allowances were determined. It has also recognised

that the lower allowance amounts provided for by the Determinations may deter sustainable participation and diversity of involvement in local government.

88. The legislative criteria permit the Tribunal to consider the revenue of Councils as well as any relevant economic factors. Accordingly, the Tribunal has taken account of the financial and economic context in which Councils operate. It notes that any significant increase in allowances may impose additional costs on local communities, as Councils may need to recover the amounts through higher revenues, particularly where Councils are already operating at a deficit or with only marginal operating surpluses.

89. This consideration is most acute for smaller Councils, where the cost of administration can appear disproportionate to income and overall financial capacity. The Tribunal has therefore sought to balance appropriate recognition of the increased complexity of Councillor roles with the financial constraints under which those Councils operate.

90. If not for those constraints, the Tribunal would have considered substantially higher allowances for the lower Council Groups and a further reduction in the number of groups. Progression towards that approach may be considered in a future review.

91. While smaller and medium Councils do not have the inherent complexity of larger Councils, they still require significant Councillor time and expertise and often involve complex localised issues. The Tribunal considers it important that participation in these Councils is not discouraged by allowance amounts that fail to recognise the demands of the role.

92. The responsibilities of Councillors are broadly comparable across Councils, although their scale and context differ.

93. The Tribunal has concluded that increased demands, complexity and expectations on Councillors warrant allowance increases beyond inflationary movements, particularly for smaller and medium Councils. The lower amounts provided for in the 2022 Allowances no longer adequately recognise the baseline functions required of all Councillors under section 59 of the LG Act and section 22 of the City of Adelaide Act.

94. For the smaller Councils particularly, the Tribunal has determined that the appropriate allowance amounts require significant increases on what is currently a very low monetary amount.

95. The Tribunal has concluded that the allowance amounts for larger Councils, including the City of Adelaide, are progressively closer to appropriate levels and has applied proportionally smaller increases for these Councils.

96. In reaching its conclusions as to the quantum of the allowances, the Tribunal has considered the South Australian Government Boards and Committees Remuneration Framework. Given the substantial discretionary nature of local government participation, the Tribunal has not used the rates in that framework.

97. The Tribunal has reviewed the comparative arrangements and applicable allowances in other States and Territories. It considers Western Australia and New South Wales to be the most relevant comparator jurisdictions. While the role of local government elected members is broadly similar in all Australian jurisdictions, comparisons of allowance rates are of limited value because the legislative arrangements underpinning remuneration and duties differ substantially. Some jurisdictions treat local government elected member payments as allowances while others treat them as full-time wages, and the scope of responsibilities and personal liabilities also varies. These differences produce materially different remuneration outcomes.

98. The Tribunal has considered the submissions which sought a range of other allowances for professional development, accommodation and travel, attending and participating in Council briefings as well as additional loadings for certain committee memberships. The increased allowance amounts are intended to address these submissions.

99. Whilst the approach adopted by the Tribunal has provided for significant increases in historical terms for some Councils, the Tribunal has maintained its long-held position that the allowances cannot assume the character of remuneration and that there is a substantial component of discretionary time commitment inherent in undertaking the Councillor function.

100. The annual allowance amounts applicable from the conclusion of the Deferred Local Government Elections to each Council Group are as follows (**Annual Councillor Allowance**):

Council Group	Annual Councillor Allowance Amount
A	$34,394
B	$32,072
C	$25,242
D	$20,902
E	$16,751
F	$13,371

District Council of Coober Pedy

101. The District Council of Coober Pedy was placed into administration pursuant to the LG Act in 2019. It does not currently have an elected governing body.

102. In this review, the Tribunal has considered the circumstances of the District Council of Coober Pedy and the Administrators' intention to return the Council to elected representation in the future.

103. However, the Tribunal recognises that the Council Group and Allowance Amount determined in this review may not be appropriate for the District Council of Coober Pedy as it transitions out of administration. Accordingly, the Council may apply for a differential determination to address its unique circumstances.

Travel Time Allowance

104. The Tribunal has decided to continue to treat travel time as a separate issue because of the significant variability in travel time both between and within Council areas.

105. For clarity, the Tribunal notes that travel expenses for Councillors are separately covered by section 77 of the LG Act and regulation 5 of the *Local Government (Members Allowances and Benefits) Regulations 2025* (SA) as well as section 25 of the City of Adelaide Act and regulation 5 of the *City of Adelaide (Members Allowances and Benefits) Regulations 2025* (SA).

106. These provide for Councillors to be reimbursed for Council and duty related travel expenses. The Tribunal has noted the submissions that some Councillors have had

issues with these reimbursements. However, these reimbursements are outside the Tribunal's jurisdiction.

107. In their submissions, the ALGWA SA asserted that travel time for regional Councillors is not recognised within the Allowances determined by the Tribunal.

108. Since at least Report and Determination 6 of 2010, the Tribunal has expressly recognised the travel burden on non-metropolitan Councillors and has recognised travel time through the Travel Time Allowance.

109. Similarly, the Tribunal has excluded Mayors from receiving the Travel Time Allowance since at least 2010 because the Tribunal has been satisfied that the additional payments made to them covered their travel time.[13]

110. Currently, there is insufficient information regarding the impact of travel time on Mayors and Deputy Mayors for the Tribunal to change the scope of the Travel Time Allowance. The Tribunal invites Councils to address this issue at the next review.

111. The Travel Time Allowance is payable to Councillors in addition to any reimbursement of travel expenses they receive from the Council.

112. In Report and Determination 6 of 2018 the Tribunal reviewed the Travel Time Allowance and expanded it. The expanded terms with the November 2025 Allowance amounts are:[14]

   a. An allowance of $[508] per annum will be payable to Councillors, excluding Mayors, whose usual place of residence is within the relevant council area and is located at least 30 km but less than 50 km from that Council's principal office, via the most direct road route.

   b. An allowance of $[867] per annum will be payable to Councillors, excluding Mayors, whose usual place of residence is within the relevant council area and is located at least 50 km but less than 75 km from that Council's principal office, via the most direct road route.

   c. An allowance of $[1,300] per annum will be payable to Councillors, excluding Mayors, whose usual place of residence is within the relevant council area and is located at least 75 km but less than 100 km from that Council's principal office, via the most direct road route.

   d. An allowance of $[1,845] per annum will be payable to Councillors, excluding Mayors, whose usual place of residence is within the relevant council area and is located 100 km or more from that Council's principal office, via the most direct road route.

113. The Tribunal has noted the range of submissions on this issue but is satisfied that the general approach remains appropriate. It recognises that its approach means that Councillors of metropolitan Councils remain ineligible for the Travel Time Allowance.

114. The Tribunal has determined that the eligibility requirements of the Travel Time Allowance will remain unchanged and applies to Councillors of the Non-Metropolitan Councils listed in Appendix 2 of the Determination which accompanies this Report.

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[13] Remuneration Tribunal – Report relating to Determination 6 of 2010 [11.6].

[14] Updated to reflect legislative changes by replacing "principal members" with "Mayors" and "council members" with "Councillors" for consistency with this Report.

115. The Tribunal has further determined to increase the Travel Time Allowance to the following amounts:

Distance Qualification	Annual Travel Time Allowance Amount
At least 30 km but less than 50 km	$539
At least 50 km but less than 75 km	$920
At least 75 km but less than 100 km	$1,380
100 km or more	$1,957

Mayors, Deputy Mayors and Presiding Members of Prescribed Committees

116. The Tribunal received limited and sometimes conflicting submissions with respect to allowance arrangements applicable to Mayors, Deputy Mayors and Presiding Members of Prescribed Committees.

117. The Tribunal has noted the submissions that argue for higher allowance amounts for Mayors and Deputy Mayors because of greater statutory, leadership, conduct management, advocacy and representational responsibilities.

118. Having reviewed those submissions, the Tribunal has determined that the existing multipliers applicable to Mayors, Deputy Mayors and Presiding Members of Prescribed Committees[15] remain appropriate.

119. The multipliers for each role are:

a. Mayor: four times the Annual Councillor Allowance for that Council;
b. Deputy Mayor: 1.25 times the Annual Councillor Allowance for that Council; and
c. Presiding Members of Prescribed Committees: 1.25 times the Annual Councillor Allowance for that Council.

120. The Tribunal has maintained the eligibility requirements for the Mayoral Allowance, Deputy Mayoral Allowance and the allowance for Presiding Members of Prescribed Committees.

121. A Councillor is not eligible to receive more than one these allowances and will receive the highest allowance applicable to them. For example, a Mayor who is also the Presiding Member of a Prescribed Committee will only receive the Mayoral Allowance.

Presiding Member of a Committee

122. Limited information about changes in the demands on the Presiding Members of Committees is available to the Tribunal. Accordingly, the Tribunal has adjusted the Presiding Member of a Committee Allowance amounts to recognise the new Council Groups and anticipated inflationary movements.

123. The Tribunal is concerned that the current maximum annual allowance for the Presiding Member of a Committee appears to act as a disincentive for Presiding Members to

[15] Since Determinations 6 and 7 of 2014 the Tribunal has defined Prescribed Committees to be the Audit, Chief Executive Officer Performance Review, Corporate Services, Finance, Governance, Infrastructure and Works, Risk Management, and Strategic Planning and Development Committees.

remain in those roles for more than six months. To address this concern, the Tribunal has increased the maximum annual allowance amount accordingly.

124. The Tribunal invites more extensive submissions on this issue when the next review is undertaken.

125. Having considered the new Council Groups, the Tribunal has determined the following allowances applicable to the Presiding Member of a Committee:

Council Group	Presiding Member of a Committee Allowance Amount
A	$368 per meeting to an aggregate maximum of $3,680 per annum
B	$303 per meeting to an aggregate maximum of $3,030 per annum
C	$223 per meeting to an aggregate maximum of $2,230 per annum
D	$223 per meeting to an aggregate maximum of $2,230 per annum
E & F	$146 per meeting to an aggregate maximum of $1,460 per annum

126. These allowances are payable per meeting, up to the maximum annual amount specified for the relevant Council Group.

127. The Tribunal has maintained the eligibility requirements for the Presiding Member of a Committee Allowance. Councillors cannot receive the Presiding Member of a Committee Allowance in addition to the allowance for a Mayor, Deputy Mayor or Presiding Member of a Prescribed Committee.

Relieving arrangements for Councillors acting as Mayor, Presiding Member of a Prescribed Committee, or Presiding Member of a Committee

128. The Tribunal has retained the current arrangements for relieving roles for Mayor, Presiding Members of Prescribed Committees and Presiding Member of a Committee.

129. Where the Deputy Mayor of a Council acts as Mayor for one month or more, they will be paid the Mayoral Allowance for the entirety of the time they undertake those expanded duties.

130. Where a Deputy Presiding Member of a Prescribed Committee acts as the Presiding Member of that committee for one month or more, they will be paid the allowance for Presiding Members of Prescribed Committees for the entirety of the time they undertake those expanded duties.

131. Where a Deputy Presiding Member of a Committee acts as Presiding Member of that Committee for one month or more, they will be paid the Presiding Member of a Committee Allowance for the entirety of the time they undertake those expanded duties.

132. However, where the Councillor acting in the role would ordinarily receive a higher allowance amount, they will not receive the allowance applicable to the acting duties.

133. These acting arrangements do not apply to the Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor of the City of Adelaide.

The Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor of the City of Adelaide

134. The Tribunal recognises the unique role of the Lord Mayor of the City of Adelaide. It has reviewed payments applicable to the Lord Mayors of other Capital Cities and the functions undertaken in the context of the legislative criteria.

135. The Tribunal has determined that the allowance applicable to the Lord Mayor of the City of Adelaide should increase in line with the increase to Councillors for the City of Adelaide to $233,506 per annum.

136. The Tribunal has determined to maintain the current multiplier for the Deputy Lord Mayor of the City of Adelaide, being 1.5 times the annual allowance for Councillors of the City of Adelaide.

137. No submissions were received about whether to extend the acting arrangements principles to the Deputy Lord Mayor acting as the Lord Mayor of the City of Adelaide. Accordingly, the Tribunal has not made any changes. This matter may be considered at the next review if relevant submissions are received.

Major Emergency and Disaster Allowance

138. The Tribunal has noted submissions relating to emergency circumstances and recognises that, where a major emergency or disaster declaration has been made covering a Council area, the demands on Mayors may be significantly increased.

139. Accordingly, the Tribunal is considering establishing a Major Emergency and Disaster Allowance which is payable to the Mayor of a Council directly impacted by a Major Emergency[16] or a Disaster[17] declaration pursuant to the *Emergency Management Act 2004* (SA) (**Emergency Management Act**).

140. Before determining a position on this issue, the Tribunal is inviting submissions and information on the following:

    a. The impact and effect on Councils and Mayors of different forms of declarations made under the Emergency Management Act;

    b. The impact of different types of major emergencies in terms of their impact on Councils and Mayors; and

    c. The impact and effect of additional demands on Mayors if the major disaster or emergency extends over a significant time.

141. The Tribunal invites submissions on the overall principle of whether there should be such an additional payment, together with the considerations listed above within six weeks from the date of this Report.

Superannuation

142. The LGA, some Councils and Councillors, as well as ALGWA SA have requested that the Tribunal address superannuation for Councillors.

143. On 11 June 2026, the Tribunal wrote to the LGA confirming the Tribunal's position that since at least 2014, it did not have the jurisdiction to make a determination providing for superannuation payments or including a superannuation benefit within the allowance amount.

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[16] *Emergency Management Act 2004* (SA) s 23.
[17] *Emergency Management Act 2004* (SA) s 24.

144. The Tribunal reminded the LGA that in 2010, the LGA had provided the Tribunal with legal advice which indicated that each Council may resolve to become an “eligible governing body”[18] which would establish an entitlement to superannuation for that Council’s Councillors. The Tribunal invited the LGA to review its position and make further submissions.

145. The LGA agreed with the Tribunal’s assessment that its jurisdiction does not permit a determination prescribing superannuation.

146. The LGA also acknowledged that each Council could resolve to become an “eligible local governing body” but advised that it was unlikely that there would be a consistent approach to this issue within the local government sector. The LGA requested that the Tribunal advocate for legislative changes towards a nationally consistent approach to the recognition of superannuation for Councillors.

147. The Tribunal recognises that the request for superannuation entitlements for Councillors is not universal. As superannuation is not within its jurisdiction, the Tribunal has not expressed a position on the superannuation issue.

Other issues and Submissions

148. Throughout this review, the Tribunal has received submissions seeking determinations on topics which fall outside the Tribunal’s jurisdiction.

149. For the avoidance of doubt, the Tribunal does not have jurisdiction to make determinations which would address the work health and safety, insurance and employment protection issues raised in the submissions.

150. Further, the Tribunal does not have jurisdiction to vary the indices which apply to the automatic indexation of the Allowances or to vary the timing of its reviews of the Allowances. These matters are governed by the LG Act and City of Adelaide Act.

CONCLUSION

151. A Determination giving effect to this Report has been issued and will operate from the conclusion of the Deferred Local Government Elections.

152. While the Deferred Local Government Elections will not occur until April 2027, the early release of this Report and Determination may assist ratepayers to consider participating in the elections and may also assist Councils to assess commensurate cost increases.

Matthew O’Callaghan **PRESIDENT**	Donny Walford **MEMBER**	Mark Young **MEMBER**

Dated: 18 September 2026

[18] *Taxation Administration Act 1953* (Cth) vol 3 sch 1 div 446.