



28 February 2023

Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal
Suite 1, Ground Floor
1 Treasury Place
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

By email: enquiries@remunerationtribunal.vic.gov.au

Dear Tribunal,

Submission on the Members of Parliament 2023 Determination

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Tribunal's Members of Parliament 2023 Determination. We also welcome the consultation paper that the Tribunal has circulated for consideration. Our submission relates to two areas which have been raised with us by regional Members of Parliament (MPs).

Parliamentary Accommodation Sitting Allowance (PASA)

We note that the Tribunal has referenced potential reforms to the PASA in its consultation paper including considering removing or phasing out the PASA. Whilst the travel allowance has provided an alternative way for all MPs to claim accommodation expenses related to their parliamentary business, there are unique challenges faced by regional MPs which favour maintaining the PASA.

The PASA applies specifically to regional MPs and allows them to maintain a second residence in metropolitan Melbourne to assist them in carrying out their public duties (provided all eligibility criteria are met). This is distinct from the travel allowance which operates on a reimbursement basis for overnight stays. And MPs who claim the PASA are not eligible to claim the travel allowance.

Whilst on the surface these two allowances appear similar, we respectfully submit that there remains a need for the PASA to be available for regional MPs.

The PASA allows regional MPs with significant metropolitan-based commitments (for example, ministers, shadow ministers or committee members) the certainty of having accommodation which they can utilise when the need arises for them to be in Melbourne. An example could be given of a regional-based shadow minister who receives notification late in the day of a requirement to be at a press conference in Melbourne early the next morning. The reality is that MPs can have very unpredictable workflows.

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The PASA also imposes less of an administrative burden than the travel allowance which would require regional MPs to submit individual claims and associated paperwork for reimbursements for their numerous trips to Melbourne.

We believe that as much as possible, regional MPs should not be disadvantaged or discouraged from taking on the often onerous and time-consuming responsibilities that are required in their roles. This includes attracting potential future candidates to run for office in regional areas.

We therefore submit that the tribunal consider maintaining and strengthening the PASA. One option the Tribunal could consider is merging the PASA and the travel allowance so that the actual costs incurred by MPs are accounted for but that also allows regional MPs the certainty of an ongoing residence in Melbourne to ensure they can diligently carry out their public duties.

Commercial Transport Allowance

The Tribunal will be aware that prior to the introduction of the current salary and allowances scheme, regional MPs were able to claim the cost of commercial transport for driving to the city for parliamentary sittings. This is no longer available to regional MPs who must drive themselves to and from Melbourne for parliamentary sittings.

Parliamentary sitting weeks can sometimes be demanding of MPs with a range of commitments inside and outside their respective chambers. Additionally, the hours which Parliament sits can often be unpredictable, particularly for the Legislative Council, and may include unexpected late-night sittings.

For regional MPs required to drive long hours back to their electorates at the end of the sittings, this presents a potentially significant health and safety risk. Moreover, the time spent driving to and from Parliament results in a less equitable ability to manage their workloads as compared with their metropolitan counterparts.

We submit that the Parliament, the communities represented by regional MPs, and the Victorian community more broadly has strong an interest in regional MPs being able to represent their electorates to the best of their abilities, with as few barriers to participation as possible.

We therefore request that the Tribunal give strong consideration to extending the commercial transport allowance to allow regional MPs to cover the cost of motor vehicle transport to and from Melbourne for parliamentary sitting weeks.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this submission. We would be happy to discuss any aspect of this submission further or provide further detail should the Tribunal request it.

Yours sincerely,



Hon Maree Edwards MP
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly



Hon Shaun Leane MLC
President of the Legislative Council