Item 4.1

Council Submission - Local Government Remuneration Tribunal - 2027 Annual Review - Stage 1

File No: S095194.009

Memorandum by the Chief Executive Officer

To Council:

The Local Government Remuneration Tribunal (the Tribunal) is required to make an annual determination, on the fees payable to Councillors and Mayors in accordance with section 241 of the Local Government Act 1993 (the Act).

Under the Act, the Tribunal's role is to determine the categories of councils and mayoral offices in NSW, place each council and mayoral office into one of the categories it has determined (at least once every 3 years), and on an annual basis set the minimum and maximum fees payable to councillors and mayors in each category.

The City of Sydney is currently the only council in NSW categorised as a Principal CBD (the highest category) by the Tribunal. As a matter of standing policy, Council has resolved that having regard to the Tribunal's determination of a fee range for Councillors and the Lord Mayor, Council shall always pay the maximum fees as determined by the Tribunal.

The 2027 review is being undertaken in 2 stages. In Stage 1, the Tribunal will review the categories and criteria specified in the Determination: ss 239 and 240 of the Local Government Act 1993 (NSW).

In the second stage, the Tribunal will finalise appropriate fees for each category adopted, having taken into account changes which have been established to have occurred over time, as well as other relevant data: s241. It will also then determine each Councils' allocation to the new category structure.

The 2027 Stage 1 submission is supported by the 2026 submission and 2025 submission, both endorsed by Council and a further representation made to the Tribunal by City of Sydney Councillors in early 2026.

Note that the Tribunal has advised that submissions are to be endorsed by their respective council.

The City has received an extension of time for this submission, with the Council endorsed submission to be provided by 27 October 2026.

Recommendation

It is resolved that Council endorse the submission to the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal as shown at Attachment A to the subject memorandum.

MONICA BARONE PSM

Chief Executive Officer

Attachment A. Council Submission - Local Government Remuneration Tribunal - 2027 Annual Review - Stage 1

Attachment A

Council Submission - Local Government Remuneration Tribunal - 2027 Annual Review - Stage 1

CITY OF SYDNEY

Submission by the Council of the City of Sydney to the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal – 2027 Annual Review Stage 1



Submission
October 2026

The City of Sydney acknowledges the Gadigal of the Eora Nation as the Traditional Custodians of our local area.

We request that the Tribunal:

1. Revert to the term “Principal City” as the unique category for the City of Sydney, to recognise that the City’s regional, national and international significance and contribution extends beyond the Sydney CBD.
2. Give detailed consideration to the significant increase in the roles and responsibilities of City of Sydney Councillors as members of the governing body of Australia’s only global city and in recognition of its more appropriate status as “Principal City”, as set out in this submission.
3. Provide a comprehensive response to the specific matters raised in this submission.
4. Request a reference from the Minister for Local Government to undertake a comprehensive review of the remuneration framework for Councillors and Mayors, taking into account the issues raised in this submission.
5. Make a specific determination to appropriately increase the fees for City of Sydney Councillors to ensure that these fees appropriately recognises their roles and responsibilities as members of the governing body of Australia’s only global city.

Introduction

The Local Government Remuneration Tribunal is undertaking the 2027 annual review in 2 stages.

The first stage will first review the categories and criteria specified in the 2026 Determination and in sections 239 and 240 of the Local Government Act 1993 (NSW).

Section 239 of the LG Act requires the Tribunal to determine the category of councils and mayoral offices at least once every three years.

This submission therefore requests the Tribunal to:

1. recategorise the City of Sydney as "Principal City"
2. make a determination setting fees for City of Sydney Councillors which appropriately recognises their roles and responsibilities as members of the governing body of Sydney as both a "Principal City" and as Australia’s only global city and which address the issues raised in this submission.

In making this request, the City of Sydney is not seeking any increase in the fees payable to the Lord Mayor of Sydney.

s240 (1) of the Local Government Act 1993 requires the Remuneration Tribunal to determine categories for councils and mayoral offices according to the following matters including:

- the population of areas and the distribution of the population
- the nature and volume of business dealt with by each council
- the nature and extent of the development of areas
- the diversity of communities served
- the regional, national and international significance of the council
- such matters as the Remuneration Tribunal considers relevant to the provision of efficient and effective local government

Recategorising the City of Sydney as “Principal City”

The City’s unique category

The City of Sydney has enjoyed its own unique category since the Tribunal’s first determination was published on 22 April 1994. Over time the category name has changed: Initially “S1” in 1994, changed to “Principal City” in 2009, and to “Principal CBD” in 2017.

Regardless of the category name, the Tribunal has consistently recognised the City of Sydney for “its role as the commercial, cultural, entertainment and ceremonial centre of the City and State”.[1]

This recognition reflects submissions to the Tribunal made by the City of Sydney in 1994, 1995, 1997 and 2000. As such, they reflect the City as it was between 1 January 1989 and 8 May 2003.

As the map below shows, the City then covered the Sydney CBD, Haymarket, The Rocks, Millers Point, Dawes Point, Pyrmont, Ultimo and the edges of Potts Point and Darlinghurst, an area totalling 6.19km^2. The City’s residential population at the 1991 census was 13,501, increasing to 24,883 at the 1996 census.



On 8 May 2003, the NSW Government expanded the City by transferring Darlinghurst and the 2011 Postcode area from the former South Sydney Council and Glebe and Forest Lodge from the former Leichardt Council. On 6 February 2004, the remaining areas of South Sydney were forcibly amalgamated with the City of Sydney. This increased the City’s area to 25km^2 (see map on the following page).

[1] Report and Determination of the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal under sections 239 and 241 of the Local Government Act 1993, 29 April 2009 p21. Other reports have provided more detailed statements.

In its 1994 determination the Tribunal drew on the City's submission to note that the City was:

> "… the seat of Government and the focus for the judiciary of the State's Legal System; the centre for the major financial and commercial institutions of the State and the financial centre of the Pacific; the cultural and entertainment centre of the State and a mirror of Australian culture and tradition; the gateway to Australia for overseas tourists and visitors and the main centre for tourism in Australia; the focus for the major civic, ceremonial and religious activities of the City … a principal centre of intellectual activity, media and communications … through its Universities an educational centre of excellence; a principal centre for the provision of higher order, specialised medical services …"[2]



City of Sydney from 2004

This continued to be the case following the 2004 amalgamation. The expanded boundaries included within them the University of Sydney, Notre Dame University, St Vincent's Hospital, Taylor Square Law Courts, the North and South Eveleigh precincts, Belvoir Theatre, Carriageworks (from 2007), the Kings Cross and Oxford Street entertainment districts and the site for major events such as Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras. The City of Sydney's role as "the commercial, cultural, entertainment and ceremonial centre of the City and State" was no longer confined to the CBD.

Moreover, while the primary focus of the former City was on central Sydney business activity (as acknowledged in its submissions to the Tribunal) the expanded City includes village centres such as Glebe, Newtown, Erskineville, Darlinghurst, Surry Hills and East Sydney, along with the Green Square urban renewal area.

[2] Report and Determination of the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal under sections 239 and 241 of the Local Government Act 1993, p12 22 April 1994

In addition to these village centres, the City has eight distinct economic precincts. As shown in the map below, four are in the area added to the City in 2004:



Data from the City's most recent Floorspace and Employment Survey shows that 27.9% of businesses within the City of Sydney are located in the Tech Central West, Eastern Creative, Economic and Recreation and Southern Enterprise Precincts.

While the amalgamation enhanced Sydney's position as Australia's only global city it also required Councillors to extend their focus beyond the city centre. Sydney City Councillors must also devote their attention, policy deliberation and time to the needs of the wider local government area in the interests of residents and the city, NSW and Australian economy. Thus their role is more complex and demanding than that of city Councillors in the 1990s.

Impact on representation

Between 1985 and 2003, the former City was served by a directly elected Lord Mayor and six other Councillors. After the amalgamation, the expanded city was served by a directly elected Lord Mayor and nine other Councillors. Between 1989 and 2004, the former South Sydney Council was served by nine Councillors including a Mayor elected by the council.

At the 2006 census, the residential population for the expanded City was 164,597

ABS census data shows six Sydney City Councillors represented 24,883 residents in 1996, or one Councillor for every 4,147 residents. In 2021, nine Councillors represented 214,703 residents, that is one Councillor for every 23,856 residents. In 2021 each Councillor notionally represented almost 6 times as many residents as former City Councillors were required to represent in 1996.

The challenges of representing residents will only increase. Over the past decade the population has increased almost 20% to an estimated 237,238 as at 30 June 2024. This is one Councillor for 26,600 residents, compared to six Councillors representing 24,883 residents in 1996.

Recognising the increasingly complex role of City of Sydney Councillors

s240 (1) of the Local Government Act 1993 requires the Remuneration Tribunal to determine categories for councils and mayoral offices according to the following matters including:

- the population of areas and the distribution of the population
- the nature and volume of business dealt with by each council
- the nature and extent of the development of areas
- the diversity of communities served
- the regional, national and international significance of the council
- such matters as the Remuneration Tribunal considers relevant to the provision of efficient and effective local government

Over the past 20 years, the Tribunal has recognised the important role played by the Lord Mayor of Sydney. In doing so, it has reflected the regional, national and international significance of the City of Sydney and set commensurate Lord Mayoral fees.

It has however not similarly recognised the important and increasingly demanding and complex role and responsibilities of City of Sydney Councillors. This is demonstrated by the maximum fees for City Councillors being only 18.22 % of the maximum Mayoral fee. For all other NSW councils, the maximum fee ranges from 30.95% to 46.61%.

Increased responsibilities and obligations

Between 1994 and 2003, the Act required former City Councillors to represent the collective interests of residents, ratepayers and the local community and to facilitate communication between the community and the council. This remains part of the Councillor's role. Successive amendments to the Local Government Act 1993 have increased the statutory role and responsibilities of Sydney City Councillors which they must fulfil while actively and collectively ensuring Sydney builds on its position as Australia's only global city.

These include amendments in 2016 which require Councillors to be active and contributing members of council, and to make considered and well informed decisions.

Strategic Planning – the Councillor's role and responsibilities

For example, since 2009, Councils have been required to prepare a community strategic plan which:

- addresses civic leadership, social, environmental and economic issues in an integrated manner, and
- is based on social justice principles of equity, access, participation and rights, and
- is adequately informed by relevant information relating to civic leadership, social, environmental and economic issues, and
- is developed having due regard to the State government's State Plan and other relevant State and regional plans of the State government.[3]

Councils are required to review this plan by 30 June following each Council election.

Councillors also have a statutory role to represent the "collective interests of residents, ratepayers and the local community". Given that the community strategic plan should reflect the aspirations, needs and "collective interests of residents, ratepayers and the local community",

[3] Local Government Act 1993 s402 (3) (a)

Councillors have a statutory role relation to the community strategic plan. This statutory role requires Councillors to collectively:

- identify and prioritise key local community needs in developing the community strategic plan
- develop and endorse the community strategic plan, delivery program and other strategic plans, programs, strategies and policies of the council
- regularly review implementation of the community strategic plan and its delivery program
- review and if required, amend the community strategic plan following each Council election.

During the last term, City Councillors collectively developed and adopted Sustainable Sydney 2030 to 2050, the successor to our initial long term strategic plan, Sustainable Sydney 2030. This Plan is unique in that it in additional to providing for the immediate local government area, it reflects the City's regional, national and international economic, social and cultural significance.

Current City Councillors are responsible for overseeing the implementation of this plan, along with the operational plan, delivery program and many strategies which sit under it. These include our detailed Economic Development Strategy, Environmental Strategy, Social Sustainability Strategy and Cultural Strategy.

Implementing these strategies also require our Councillors to make significant financial and budgetary decisions. The finances for which Councillors are now ultimately responsible are significantly greater than those than City Councillors in the 1990s, or indeed when the first Councillors of the expanded City took office.

(Note: All amounts referred to below have been taken from City of Sydney Annual Reports and Financial Statements for the relevant financial years and have been adjusted for inflation using the Reserve Bank of Australia's inflation calculator).

At the end of the 1998-1999 financial year the total assets* of the then City of Sydney were valued at $4.3 billion At the end of the 2004-2005 financial year (the first complete financial year for the expanded City), the City's total assets* were valued at $5.4 billion. At the end of the 2024/25 financial year the City's total assets* were valued at $16.1 billion. This is an increase of 198% since 2005.

Included in the City's assets are infrastructure, property, plant and equipment. In 2005 their combined value was $5.4 billion. By 2025 this value had risen to $15.2 billion, an increase of 181%.

In 1999, six Councillors and a directly elected Lord Mayor had $291** million in operating revenue to allocate. In 2025 nine Councillors and a directly elected Lord Mayor were responsible for allocating $798*** million.

The above demonstrates the extent to which the "nature and volume of business" they are required to deal with under the Act has changed over the past 20 years. Their fees must reflect this.

*excluding cash and investments

** City of Sydney only - excludes $167 million South Sydney revenue

*** excluding capital grants

Training and Professional Development

Since 2016, s232 (g) of the Act has required Councillors "to make all reasonable efforts to acquire and maintain the skills necessary to perform the role of a Councillor".

This section is reinforced by s183 of the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021. This section requires the general manager to ensure each new and re-elected Councillor receives induction training courses or refresher induction courses within six months of an election. These courses must provide Councillors with information about the functions and obligations of councils and Councillors and the administrative procedures and operations of the council. Councillors must make all reasonable efforts to participate in these inductions.

The general manager must also ensure Councillors receive ongoing professional development during the course of their term of office. This must provide support and assistance in the development of the skills necessary to perform the role of Councillor and ensure that these skills are maintained.

Councillors must make all reasonable efforts to participate in the induction training and ongoing professional development. The regulation requires participation by Councillors (and implicitly non-participation) in this training and professional development to be included in the Council's annual report.

These near mandatory requirements have imposed a significant additional time burden on Councillors in carrying out their statutory roles. The Tribunal has yet to consider this in determining Councillor remuneration. It must now do so.

Ensuring Councillors are representative of our diverse communities

The 2023 Tribunal Report acknowledged the detailed submission by Associate Professor Tanya Jakimow of the Australian National University, which outlined the negative impacts of inadequate Councillor and Mayoral remuneration, and observed that:

"… inadequate pay has significant negative consequences: low quality local democracy, an unacceptable burden on Councillors and their families, and poor Councillor diversity."[7]

Professor Jakimow's submission also argued that remuneration levels did not adequately reflect the hours and complexity of the work of Councillors and Mayors.

Her submission reflected the extensive research she had undertaken in conjunction with others. This included a 2021 survey of NSW Councillors which examined whether the impact of low pay and high workloads determined who could become a Councillor. It received 389 responses. In a subsequent article[8] she wrote:

"The complexity of the role, which requires understanding of changing legislation and knowledge of operational and strategic matters, all while being responsive to constituents, has increased the demands on Councillors, leading to workloads in excess of 40 hours a week for some. Councillors frequently described their work as 'full-time' for part-time pay and outlined the financial sacrifices they bore in order to undertake their council activities to a satisfactory level. This juggling is intensified for Councillors with significant caring responsibilities. As one Councillor said, women's underrepresentation 'reflects the demands on women in employment and also looking after the family, which together does not leave a lot of room for council'.

"'Role-strain' of juggling family, paid employment and council work more accurately captures the reason for the missing cohort in councils. One answer to the enduring problem of women's underrepresentation is then to increase Councillor pay so that women (and men) do not need to balance it with full-time employment."

Professor Jakimow also observed that in addition to the impact on women's underrepresentation on councils, there were also impacts for men without an independent source of income, and for cultural and ethnic diversity.

"Being a Councillor 'is not a full-time job, and this puts a lot of people off', as migrant families are often aspirational and want their children to have decent jobs."

Submission by the Council of the City of Sydney to the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal – 2027 Annual Review Stage 1

The Tribunal should consider the impact of the levels of Councillor remuneration on the diversity of Councillor representation, and thus effective local government.

On 3 April, 2023 Jess Scully resigned as a City of Sydney Councillor after becoming pregnant with her second child. During her approximately five years and six months on Council. Ms Scully made a significant contribution, including serving as Deputy Lord Mayor for three years. This extensive contribution was set out in the Lord Mayoral Minute which informed Council of her resignation. The Minute also observed:

“I think that in 2023, it is appalling that Councillors aren't eligible for parental leave, sick leave, compassionate leave, or carer's leave, or even payment beyond a minor stipend when they have to make important decisions for their communities and spend serious time on their council responsibilities. Because of that, there are fundamental barriers to public service for many in our community, because it's necessary to earn a living and contribute to family needs.

“If we want diverse representation in local government -- to have younger people, people in caring stages of their lives, parents, people from diverse backgrounds, people with disabilities -- we have to ensure that structures are in place to support people like Councillor Scully with caring responsibilities.”

Another Councillor discovered after being elected that their role and responsibilities effectively required a full-time commitment observing:

"In order for me to service community, ratepayers and businesses I am required to do council work seven days a week. We have 10 Committee meetings per year and 10 Council meetings per year. The papers alone for this might be anywhere between 800 and 3,000 pages; all to be read over the weekend. That’s 20 weekends per year I spend reading and preparing for my ‘part-time’ job. My evenings are now filled with community obligations, additional briefings and inductions, the list goes on. Weekends, meanwhile, see me attending park openings and other events and one on one meetings with residents. While I love being a Councillor, I am left with little time for my actual day job, which has resulted in my experiencing significant loss of income.”

While these challenges are widespread, those faced by the City of Sydney are particularly acute and need to be addressed.

This must not be allowed to continue.

Recognising the increasing demands of "civic service".

In its 2025 Report, the Tribunal stated that "people enter local government representation do so from a sense of civic service, rather than remuneration".

This is certainly the primary motivation of City of Sydney Councillors. However, the current level of remuneration does not reflect the civic service they have provided.

The Tribunal has, in the past, rejected submissions suggesting any relationship between Councillor remuneration and the willingness of "quality candidates" to seek election[4]. We note however, the following observation in a recent report of the Parliamentary Remuneration Tribunal:

"Not only should Members of Parliament be fairly remunerated for their important and challenging work, within the State's means, but it must also be remembered that such ***remuneration and the other conditions and entitlements*** provided by the Determination ***play a real role in attracting people of high intellect, integrity and vigour to stand for election to the Parliament*** (our emphasis). People who have the necessary skills to perform such work well and who are prepared to devote their time to serving the public interest, rather than only their own interests. Appropriate salary and conditions also help to ensure that such people are also prepared to continue seeking re-election in order to continue performing the important work of their offices"[5].

The same must surely apply for local government Councillors. We note there is no legislation which sets out the statutory roles and responsibilities of Members of Parliament. In contrast, and has been demonstrated above, the statutory roles and responsibilities of Mayors and Councillors are extensive, as are the obligations imposed on them.

[4] See, for example, Report and Determination of the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal under Sections 239 and 241 of the Local Government Act 1993, 28 April 2011 p7

[5] Annual Determination Report and Determination of additional entitlements for Members of the Parliament of New South Wales pursuant to the Parliamentary Remuneration Act 1989, 24 May 2024 p12.

The 1993 Act introduced the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal and categorisation of Councils

The Local Government Act 1993 introduced a new approach to Councillor and Mayoral remuneration. It enabled Mayors and Councillors to be paid fees and established a Local Government Remuneration Tribunal to determine the minimum and maximum amount of fees to be paid.

This was a significant departure from the arrangements set out in the former Local Government Act 1919. As the 1994 Report of the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal explained (pages 6-7):

“Allowance is a generic term for any payment for which any member of council may be eligible. This refers in essence to recompense for authorised expenditure incurred in the conduct of council business.

“3. Previous arrangements concerning allowances.

“The 1919 Act provided for the payment of an allowance to mayors and councillors (s.29).

s.29(1) The Council may pay to its mayor or president an allowance. in any mayoral or presidential term.

“This allowance was based on payment for attendance at meetings at the rate of $60.00 per meeting. Expenses incurred by members of councils were paid pursuant to Ordinance 3.

“As to the payment of fees to members of councils, s.29A prescribed:

“(1) except as provided by this section, the council shall pay a member of the council for each day on which he -

a) attends a meeting of the council or a meeting of any committee of the council;

(b) carries out an inspection within the area in compliance with a resolution of the council; or

(c) undertakes the business of the council outside the area in compliance with the resolution of the council,

such fee, not exceeding $60 (or, where some other amount is prescribed above that amount) as the council may determine.

(2) The fees paid or payable pursuant to s.1 to any member of the council shall not exceed $3,000 (or, where some other amount is prescribed, such other amount) in the aggregate for any period of 12 months from the second Saturday in September in any year.

“These payments applied to all councils.”

The 1993 Act does not define “fee” or “fees”, nor does the Minister’s second reading speech provide any guidance to the Tribunal on what it should take into account when setting fees.

Instead, s239 (1) of the 1993 Act requires the Remuneration Tribunal to at least once every 3 years:

- determine categories for councils and mayoral offices, and
- place each council and mayoral office into one of the categories it has determined.

S239 (2) of the Act requires the Tribunal to use these categories to determine the maximum and minimum amounts of fees to be paid to mayors and councillors in each categories.

s240 (1) requires the Tribunal to determine categories for councils and mayoral offices according to the following matters:

- the size of areas
- the physical terrain of areas
- the population of areas and the distribution of the population

- the nature and volume of business dealt with by each council
- the nature and extent of the development of areas
- the diversity of communities served
- the regional, national and international significance of the council
- such matters as the Remuneration Tribunal considers relevant to the provision of efficient and effective local government
- such other matters as may be prescribed by the regulations.

Failure to apply s240 (1) in the case of the City of Sydney

The 2024 and 2025 submissions by the City of Sydney to the Tribunal, the first from the City since 2000, set out the impact of the 2003 boundary changes and the 2004 amalgamation of the then City of Sydney with the former South Sydney Council. These submissions also set out the significant impact on Councillors' workload and the increase in service and democratic community representation they were, and still are required to provide.

Indeed, while the 2003 boundary changes and the 2004 amalgamation dramatically expanded the size, population and responsibilities of the City of Sydney, it also significantly reduced democratic community representation.

In May 2003, part of the former South Sydney Council and part of the former Municipality of Leichhardt. The part of Leichhardt transferred was the suburbs of Glebe and Forest Lodge, just over half of Leichhardt's Annandale/Glebe Ward, based on the number of people who voted in the 1999 council election. At that time, the ward was represented by four Councillors, with Glebe and Forst Lodge notionally and proportionally represented by two Councillors.

Following the 2004 amalgamation with South Sydney Council, the City of Sydney was reconstituted with nine Councillors and a directly elected Lord Mayor. Thus, nine Councillors were required to required community representation and service that had previously been provided by 17 Councillors as follows:

Former City of Sydney: 6 Councillors

Former South Sydney: 9 Councillors

Former Leichardt (part): 2 Councillors

Total Councillors 17 Councillors

Thus the 2003 and 2004 changes almost halved democratic community representation.

Tribunal determinations in 2004 failed to take into account the significant impact of these changes. This was despite the then Minister directing the Tribunal to determine the categories for new and reconstituted Councils in May 2004.

In its 9 June 2004 Report, the Tribunal stated:

"With the exception of the amalgamation of Sydney City Council with South Sydney City Council the Tribunal had insufficient information to be able to determine categories for the other new or reconstituted Councils."

Despite apparently having sufficient information, the Tribunal continued to designate the City of Sydney as S1 and proposed no significant increase in Councillor fees. The S1 category was set when the City comprised the City Centre peninsula, Pyrmont and Ultimo and some streets on the edges of Potts Point, Darlinghurst and Surry Hills.

It was open to Tribunal to create a new unique category which recognised the expanded City in 2004. It is a matter of great regret that it failed to do so. Indeed, it was not until 2009 that the Tribunal designated the City of Sydney more appropriately as "Principal City", albeit with no corresponding change to Councillor renumeration. Regrettably, a subsequent Tribunal changed the category to "Principal CBD" in 2017, which unfortunately reinforces an undesirable tendency to view the City of Sydney as just the Sydney CBD.

This failure has resulted in successive Tribunals effectively adjusting City of Sydney Councillor fees, using the fees set by the Tribunal on 30 April 2003 (prior to any changes) as its base.

Correcting the failures of the past

It is now time for the Tribunal to correct the failures of past Tribunals. This requires retrospectively setting a notional new fee for 2004 and then recalculating annual adjustments in line with Tribunal determinations. There is a precedent for making exceptions in the case of the City of Sydney based on particular circumstances. In 2000, the Tribunal increased the Lord Mayoral fee by 47.49 per cent (from $84,750 to 125,000). One consequence of this determination was to reduce Councillor fees as a percentage of Lord Mayoral fees from 25.96 per cent to 18.21 or 18.22 per cent (from 2003 onwards) and 18.83 per cent (in 2001 and 2002).

A new base fee for 2004 could be calculated using the 2003 Councillor fees for the former City of Sydney, South Sydney and Leichardt Councils. The following table shows the total fees that would have been paid if the level of democratic community representation had remained the same:

Council	**2003 Max Fee**	**No of Councillors**	**Total fees payable**
City of Sydney	$25,095	6	$150,570
South Sydney	$18,250	9	$164,250
Leichhardt	$12,550	2	$25,100
Total all Councils		**$339,920**	

Following the 2004 amalgamation, nine Councillors were required to provide the service and democratic community representation previously provided by 17 Councillors across the same area. Accordingly, the total fees payable for service and democratic community representation across this area should have been maintained. The total fees for all 17 Councillors set in 2003 should have been divided equally between the nine Councillors resulting in notional fee of $37,769. Applying the percentage increase awarded in 2004, this would have resulted in a more appropriate City of Sydney Councillor fee of $38,926 for the greatly expanded area.

Applying the same percentage adjustments for the period 2005-2025, the Tribunal would have set the maximum City of Sydney Councillor fee at $69,901 in the 2025 Determination. Significantly, it would also mean Councillor fees would be 27.43 per cent of Lord Mayor fees, effectively restoring the relationship between Councillor and Lord Mayor fees that existed prior to 2002, and is more similar to the relationship between Mayor and Councillor fees in all other NSW Councils.

Position description and pay rates for Councillor support staff of City of Sydney Councillors

Councillor Support Officers, are employed on a full-time basis to support each of the City of Sydney Councillors.

A Councillor Support Officer's primary purpose is

"… to work closely with the Councillor to provide with high quality evidence-based advice which assists in decision making.

Maintains effective communication and collaboration with Chief Executive Officer and City Executive to ensure that advice is fit for purpose, and develops strong relationships and engagement with the Lord Mayor, other Councillors, and members of the community and other key stakeholders."

Their key accountabilities are:

- Review relevant meeting documentation to provide the Councillor with high quality evidence-based advice and recommendations to assist in decision making
- Manage the responses to Councillor correspondence
- Demonstrate a strong practical knowledge of the Code of Conduct by maintaining a high degree of discretion, maturity, judgment and integrity while working with a range of complex and sensitive matters.
- Ensure the development effective systems and procedures within the Councillor office, and work collaboratively to ensure systems and procedures are fit for purpose.
- Manage enquiries and problems effectively, accurately and in a timely manner, with periods of high-work volumes.
- Attend relevant meetings as required to support the Councillor and collate and follow up on arising matters.
- Assist in speechwriting and communications for the Councillor, including drafting, providing accurate research, and monitoring engagement with communications.
- Manage all record keeping within the Councillor office, to ensure adherence to the requirements of the State Records Act 1988, the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 and other record keeping related legislation and policies.

Councillor Support Officers are paid at Grade 5 in the City of Sydney Award which is a salary band between $112,968 and $126,774.

It is acknowledged that Councillor fees are determined differently to Council staff wages, and City of Sydney Councillors are in the unique position of having the City provide personal administrative staff, which is not provided to Councillors on other Councils.

Elected decision makers are responsible for major strategic planning, setting the direction for the provision of key City of Sydney community services like waste collection, local roads, parks and pools, as well as being responsive to community members for a budget of over $800 million annually.

The City of Sydney also holds a leadership position within Local Governments in NSW and more broadly throughout Australia. Councillors are often sought out for guidance and advice from other Councillors across Australia. Yet current Councillor remuneration is only between 36.61% and 41% of the salaries paid to Councillor Support Officers employed to assist Councillors.

The need for structural reform

The City's 2024 and 2025 submissions to the Tribunal presented a comprehensive case for a comprehensive review of the framework for Mayoral and Councillor remuneration arguing there was an urgent need for structural reform. This submission further reiterates the need for structural reform.

We request that the Tribunal:

1. Revert to the term "Principal City" as the unique category for the City of Sydney, to recognise that the City's regional, national and international significance and contribution extends beyond the Sydney CBD.
2. Give detailed consideration to the significant increase in the roles and responsibilities of City of Sydney Councillors as members of the governing body of Australia's only global city and in recognition of its more appropriate status as "Principal City", as set out in this submission.
3. Provide a comprehensive response to the specific matters raised in this submission.
4. Request a reference from the Minister for Local Government to undertake a comprehensive review of the remuneration framework for Councillors and Mayors, taking into account the issues raised in this submission.
5. Make a specific determination to appropriately increase the fees for City of Sydney Councillors to ensure that these fees appropriately recognises their roles and responsibilities as members of the governing body of Australia's only global city.