Attachment B

Local Government NSW Submission
Local Government Renumeration Tribunal
2027 Annual Review – Stage 1

LOCAL GOVERNMENT NSW

Submission to the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal

16 October 2026

ONE VOICE FOR COUNCILS



Local Government NSW (LGNSW) is the peak body for local government in NSW, representing NSW general purpose councils and related entities. LGNSW facilitates the development of an effective community-based system of local government in the State.

OVERVIEW OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT SECTOR

- Employ nearly **50,000 people**
- Maintain more than **168,000km of roads & bridges**
- Recycle **1.75 million tonnes of waste**
- Operate more than **380 libraries that attract tens of millions of visits each year**
- Manage an estimated **4 million tonnes of waste each year**
- Manage more than **1,800 community & public centres**
- Manage more than **$220 billion of community assets**
- Spend more than **$2.5 billion each year on caring for the environment**
- Make kerbside waste collections for more than **3.1 million households**
- Spend more than **$2.4 billion on culture and recreation**

Local Government NSW acknowledges and pays respect to the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we work, and the lands we travel through. We also acknowledge our Elders – past, present and emerging.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents

Opening *5*

Executive Summary *5*

Tribunal's Functions and Scope *7*

Legislative background 7

Scope and limitations 9

The erosion of the value of fees 11

2025 Special Determination (Central Darling Shire Council) and the precedent with respect to the range between minimum and maximum annual fees 13

Fee range *14*

Local government in Victoria – a comparison *17*

Work Value of Councillors and Mayors *20*

2006 survey (Attachment LG-1) 20

2018 survey (Attachment LG-2) 22

2026 survey (Attachment LG-3). 23

Consideration of quantitative data 25

Consideration of witness evidence 28

Data from the Office of Local Government Councillor Diversity Report 30

Proposal for the remuneration framework and fee structure *31*

Proposal for New South Wales 31

Number of categories 31

Criteria for categories 32

The size of areas 33

The physical terrain of areas 33

The population of areas and the distribution of the population 34

The nature and volume of business dealt with by each council 34

The nature and extent of the development of areas 35

The diversity of communities served 36

The regional, national and international significance of the council 37

Category I (Principal City) 39

Category II 39

Category III 39

Category IV 39

Category V 39
Category VI 39
Consideration of revenue and other matters 40
Literature review and the state of councillor and mayoral representation in New South Wales. 41
Conference Motions 43
Summary 46
Annexures 47
LG-1 2006 Mastertek Pty Ltd Survey
LG-2 2018 Mastertek Pty Ltd Survey
LG-3 2026 Local Government NSW Survey
LG-4 Witness Statement of Mayor Todd Carney
LG-5 Witness Statement of Mayor Robert Bell
LG-6 Witness Statement of Mayor Sarah Ndiaye
LG-7 Witness Statement of Mayor Kenrick Winchester
LG-8 Witness Statement of Mayor Bradley Bunting
LG-9 Witness Statement of Councillor Jody Williams

Opening

Local Government NSW ("LGNSW") welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal ("Tribunal") as part of Stage 1 of the Tribunal's Annual Review of the fees payable to councillors and mayors in New South Wales.

LGNSW urges the Tribunal to simplify and streamline the council categories and increase the fees payable within them. This submission draws on recent economic data, LGNSW's work value survey of NSW mayors and councillors, and academic literature identifying structural problems in the NSW fee system, and comparative data from Victoria. Together, this material supports reform of the current framework.

LGNSW acknowledges the Tribunal's comments in its 2026 Annual Determination. Although some outcomes require legislative reform, LGNSW submits that the existing legislative framework authorises the substantive reforms proposed in this submission.

This submission is made pursuant to s 243(2)(b) of the *Local Government Act 1993* (NSW) ("LG Act") and is informed by the policy position and conference resolutions of LGNSW.

This submission was endorsed by the LGNSW Board on 16 October 2026.

Executive Summary

LGNSW submits that the current framework and fees applied to councillors and mayors in New South Wales does not and cannot provide just fee outcomes in its current form. The framework does not, at present, address the inadequacy of the base fees which apply to mayors and councillors and is replete with overlapping and imprecise categories which place artificial barriers around the fees which elected representatives are paid.

Recent economic data clearly sets out that New South Wales is facing increasing and sustained cost of living pressure, which State and Federal employment tribunals are attempting to ameliorate through the wage increases which are afforded to public and private sector workers. This is not so for mayors and councillors in NSW. The base fee which was set in 1995 is not fit for purpose and increases which have historically been applied by the Tribunal cannot resolve the

core issue that the base fee which applies is simply too low. The urgency of this problem is compounded now by the broader economic pressures facing the state of New South Wales.

Moreover, quantitative and qualitative data collected by LGNSW from New South Wales councillors and mayors in the form of a work value survey and witness interviews suggest that the nature of these roles has changed with the proliferation of social media, increasing social disharmony and public mistrust of government authorities, as well as the expanding roles of councils in planning, managing the housing crisis, and state and federal infrastructure projects.

In the 2026 LGNSW work values survey (which polled 191 respondents, being 140 councillors, 29 mayors and 22 deputy mayors), mayors reported that they spend an average of 42.5 hours per week on mayoral duties, and councillors reported that they spend an average of 26.7 hours per week on councillor duties. Furthermore, 80% of respondents responded that the current fee arrangements have had a negative effect on balancing their family and caring responsibilities. This demonstrates overwhelmingly that the framework by which categories and fees are established must change in order to ensure that local government candidates are not penalised financially for undertaking an act of civic service.

The NSW data reveals similar patterns to those which were discussed by the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal in its 2026 Determination, and comparisons can be drawn between this Determination and the evolution of the roles of mayors and councillors in New South Wales which requires appropriate compensation in order to maintain, if not increase, diversity in councils across New South Wales. In particular, an increase in the fees payable is necessary to encourage gender parity and the continued participation of women and young people in local government. The hours required of councillors and mayors in 2026 does not allow for individuals who are not retired or financially independent to maintain full-time employment in addition to serving on council. Consequently, there is an overrepresentation of men aged 55 or older on councils across NSW which limits the diversity of voices and perspectives in local government.

The framework that the Tribunal sets should encourage wide participation in local government by quality candidates with an enthusiasm for civic service. Communities and councils are not served if swathes of the community are excluded directly or indirectly by their financial circumstances.

Whilst the Tribunal is statutorily limited by the *LG Act*, LGNSW is of the view that the Tribunal is not prohibited from reducing the range of the minimum and maximum fees which is currently too wide and exposes councils and councillors to an unnecessary level of public critique. This is especially true for those councils who are seeking Special Rate Variations.

Further, LGNSW proposes that the Tribunal consider the Victorian remuneration model in the reconsideration of the fee categories to ensure appropriate weight is given to each criterion within section 240 of the *Local Government Act*. Such reconsideration should include reducing the number of fee categories to six (Categories I-VI) including a separate category for the City of Sydney Council and for County Councils.

Additionally, the review of the current legislative framework should include the creation of a numerical points system to assess each criterion within section 240, similar to that which is used by the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal. The current framework calls for imprecise value judgements based on inexact factors. Defining further parameters to assist with the consistent application of each criterion established by a points-based scale, with the total score determining each council's category, would be preferable to the current framework which is mistakenly founded on the assumption that civic office is the equivalent of a part-time volunteer commitment, and that councils in NSW are limited to issues of "roads, rates and rubbish."

Tribunal's Functions and Scope

Legislative background

The Tribunal has functions conferred or imposed on it by the Act and may have additional functions conferred or imposed on it by the Minister.[1]

The *LG Act* requires the Tribunal, at least once every three years, to determine categories for councils and mayoral offices and assign each council and mayoral office to a category. These categories provide the basis for determining the minimum and maximum fees payable to mayors and councillors.[2]

[1] *Local Government Act 1993* (NSW) s 238 ('*LG Act*').
[2] Ibid s 239(1)-(2).

The *LG Act* also prescribes the matters to be considered in determining the categories for councils and mayoral offices. In particular, the following matters are listed:[3]

- *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.*

In its 2026 Determination, the Tribunal reviewed the history of council categories used to determine minimum and maximum fees. It noted that the category criteria were adjusted in 2017 to accommodate council amalgamations around that time. Several categories have since been added, creating significant and unnecessary overlap.

The Tribunal has also identified that the statutory criteria in s 240 of the *LG Act* are not applied consistently across categories. For example, the 'Rural' category is assessed solely by whether a council's population is below 10,000. This approach is inconsistent with s 240(1), which specifies the matters the Tribunal must consider when determining categories for councils and mayoral offices.

LGNSW considers that s 240(1) permits the Tribunal to account for the increasing economic and social complexity of communities across New South Wales. While there is no specific provision in this regard, LGNSW submits that point (8) of s 240(1) permits the Tribunal to consider matters relevant to the provision of effective and efficient local government. This ought to include the complex economic character of particular local government areas, by reference to new and emerging social and economic infrastructure, including infrastructure planned for or implemented at a state or federal government level.

[3] Ibid s 240(1).

Scope and limitations

Section 146C of the *Industrial Relations Act 1996* (NSW) ("IR Act") was repealed in December 2023, effectively removing the NSW Public Sector Wages Policy ("Wages Policy"). That policy had restricted the Tribunal's discretion to award increases above those prescribed for the NSW State Public Sector.

The Tribunal has acknowledged that since 2024 it has not been constrained by the Wages Policy. It now has broad discretion to determine the minimum and maximum fees payable within each council category.[4]

Section 241 of the *LG Act* provides that:

241 Determination of Fees

The Remuneration Tribunal must not later than 1 May in each year, determine, in each of the categories determined under section 239, the maximum and minimum amounts of fees to be paid during the following year to councillors (other than mayors) and mayors.

Consistent with the position adopted in the 2026 Determination, LGNSW submits that s 241 does not constrain the Tribunal to merely applying an increase to the existing fees. Given The Tribunal intends to undertake a comprehensive category review in the 2027 Annual Determination, including deleting or amalgamating categories, it is possible, therefore, for the Tribunal to determine a new base fee for each category that reflects the criteria in s 240(1) of the *LG Act* and fairly values the current responsibilities and demands of councillors and mayor While it is ostensibly a matter for Stage 2 Submissions, LGNSW would not be supportive of councils being categorised into categories that would result in a reduction from the fee that is presently payable.

Economic Indices and Wage Data

The following data can assist the Tribunal in determining appropriate fee increases:

- The Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose 3.5% in the 12 months to June 2026.[5]

[4] Ibid s 241.
[5] Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Consumer Price Index, Australia July 2026* (26 August 2026) <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/economy/price-indexes-and-inflation/consumer-price-index-australia/latest-release>.

- The Wage Price Index (WPI) rose by 3.4% in the twelve months to the June quarter 2026.[6]
- The average weekly ordinary time earnings for full-time adults increased by 3.7% annually in May 2026.
- The NSW Public Sector received a 3% salary increase from the first full pay period on or after 1 July 2026. In addition, eligible public sector employees also received a $1,000 Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) payment.[7]
- The increase to the rates of pay pursuant to the *Local Government (State) Award 2026* is 4% from the first full pay period on or after 1 July 2026.[8]
- The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) Rate Peg base cost change for 2026 – 2027 was 3%.[9]
- The Statutory and Other Offices Remuneration Tribunal determined that a 3% increase would apply to the minimum and maximum remuneration ranges for Public Sector Senior Executive Bands 1 to 4.[10]
- The Parliamentary Remuneration Tribunal determined that Members of Parliament would receive an initial 3.7% increase in basic salary, followed by an increase of $34,775 after the 2027 election.[11]
- The Fair Work Commission ("FWC") determined in the Annual Wage Review 2026 that a 4.75% increase to modern award minimum wages and the National Minimum Wage would apply.[12]
- In the State Wage Case 2026, the Industrial Relations Commission of New South Wales determined that the 4.75% increase awarded in the FWC's Annual Wage Review 2026 would apply to workers covered by the Industrial Relations Act.[13]

[6] Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Wage Price Index, Australia June 2026* (19 August 2026) <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/economy/price-indexes-and-inflation/wage-price-index-australia/latest-release>.
[7] NSW Government Department of Premier and Cabinet, *NSW Government Fair Pay and Bargaining Policy 2024-25* (Premier's Memorandum, 1 May 2025) <https://arp.nsw.gov.au/m2025-04-nsw-government-fair-pay-and-bargaining-policy-2024-25>.
[8] *State Wage Case 2026* [2026] NSWIRComm 16 [13] ('*State Wage Case 2026*).
[9] Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal, *Rate Pegs for NSW Councils* (Information Paper, 30 September 2025) <https://www.ipart.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/cm9_documents/Information-Paper-Rate-pegs-for-NSW-councils-for-2026-27-30-September-2025-%282%29.PDF>.
[10] Statutory and Other Offices Remuneration Tribunal, *2026 Annual Determination* (Report, 14 July 2026) <https://www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/noindex/2026-07/2026-annual-determination-public-service-senior-executives.pdf>.
[11] Parliamentary Remuneration Tribunal, *2026 Annual Determination* (Report 28 July 2026) <https://www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2026-07/prt-2026-annual-determination.pdf>.
[12] *Annual Wage Review 2026* [2026] FWCFB 3500.
[13] *State Wage Case 2026* (n 8).

The indices above demonstrate that tribunals and expert bodies have assessed remuneration increases between 3% and 4.75% as appropriate where the baseline remuneration has been properly set.

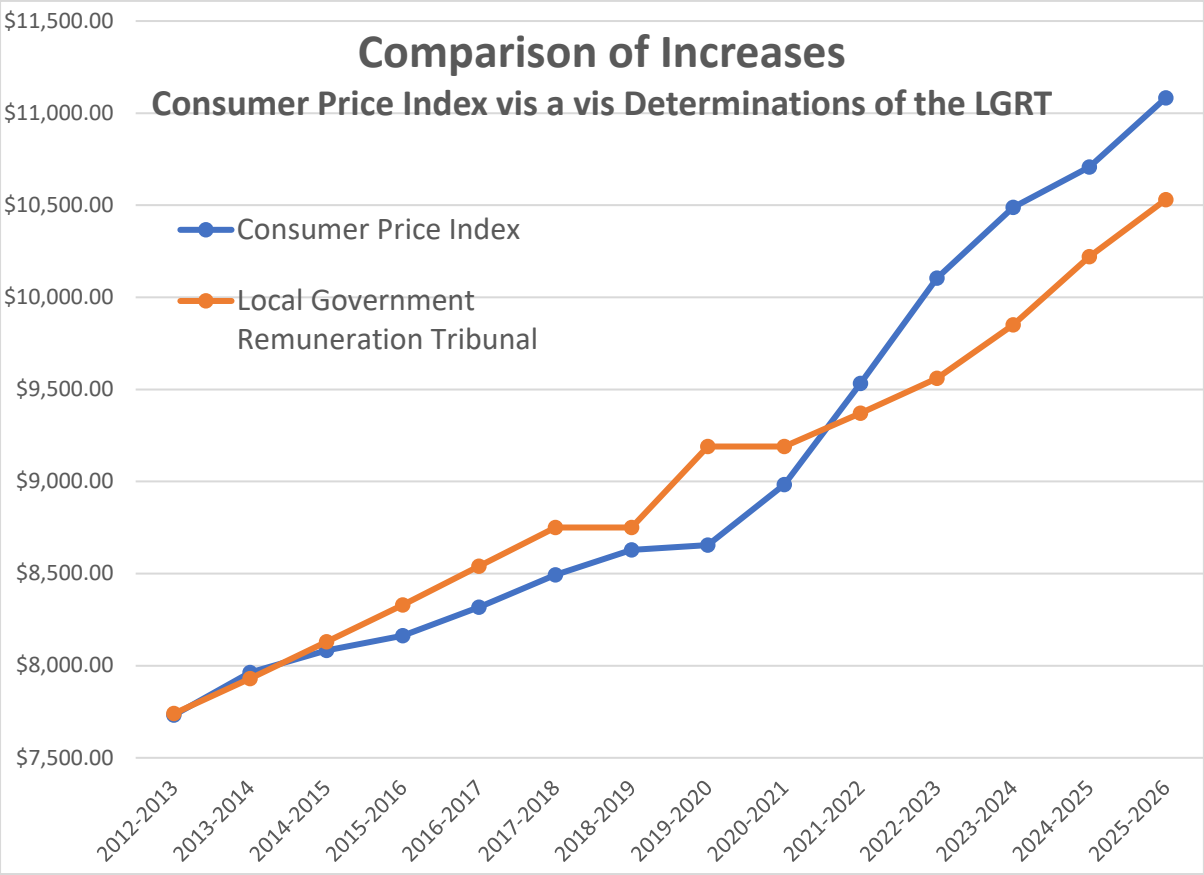
LGNSW does not suggest that the Tribunal simply adopt a percentage increase to the existing minimum and maximum fee ranges which apply to the various categories. The increases above, particularly the increases to wages and allowances (4.75%), suggest that a significant increase was warranted for the 2026-2027 year to offset costs and inflationary pressures across Australia for employees earning wages or salaries which have already been appropriately set.

The Tribunal must address both the historical, compounding erosion of councillor and mayoral fees and whether the 'base fee' set in the 1995 Determination remains appropriate for the complexity and time demands of these roles.

The erosion of the value of fees

As indicated in LGNSW's 2026 submission, there is a significant difference between the increases to fees payable to councillors and mayors and the consumer price index increases tracked over the corresponding period. **Figure A** below sets out the data arising from Tribunal decisions tracked from 2012 – 2026 applied to the minimum fee for Councillors at Metropolitan Small or Regional Rural councils.

Figure A: Comparison based on minimum fee for Metro Small and Regional Rural Councillors



This demonstrates that the value of the fees payable to councillors and mayors has eroded, particularly since 2020-21. In part, this erosion is attributable to the artificial constraints placed upon the discretion of the Tribunal arising from the operation of the Wages Policy. The repeal of section 146C of the *IR Act* means that the Tribunal is no longer constrained by this policy and is now at large to determine the appropriate minimum and maximum fees having regard to the relevant provisions of the *LG Act* only.[14]

Even if the roles and responsibilities of elected local government representatives had remained unchanged— a proposition LGNSW disputes— the data above shows a significant decline in the real value of the base fee for mayors and councillors. The Tribunal should therefore consider setting a new base fee.

LGNSW also notes the continued instability in the Middle East and Eastern Europe and the consequent uncertainty over basic commodity and resource prices, including fuel, which continue to drive up the cost of living pressures.

[14] *Industrial Relations Act 1996* (NSW) s 146C.

Any review of the category framework and fees should account for the continuing cost pressures on councillors, mayors and the communities they serve.

2025 Special Determination (Central Darling Shire Council) and the precedent with respect to the range between minimum and maximum annual fees

LGNSW observes that the 2025 Special Determination relating to the minimum and maximum fees payable to the appointed councillors and chairperson of Central Darling Shire Council departed significantly from the reasoning applied to elected representatives across the State.[15]

The chairperson of that Council, who has statutory functions equivalent to that of a mayor, receives an annual fee of between $74,750 and $74,850. The range between the minimum and maximum fee payable to the chairperson is $100. By comparison, an elected mayor of a council categorised as a 'Rural' council can expect to receive a councillor fee of between $10,920 and $14,450 and a mayoral fee of between $11,620 and $35,510.

The difference between the 'Special Determination' fees and those payable to a democratically elected rural mayor is significant. Assuming the mayor receives the maximum fee, the chairperson of Central Darling Shire Council can receive an additional $24,790 or $24,890.

A reference to this anomaly was made in the 2026 LGNSW submission and additional commentary was provided by the Tribunal in its 2026 Determination. LGNSW accepts that the Tribunal's determination under s 241 does not apply to the appointed councillors of Central Darling Shire Council.[16] However, the incongruity between the fee identified as appropriate for the appointed chairperson cannot easily be reconciled. If the Tribunal has identified that the chairperson of the council rightly attracts a fee in the order set out above, it must follow that an elected mayor from the community, who has undertaken the democratic process of standing for election, should be remunerated in the same manner.

While clause 9(2) of Schedule 11 of the *LG Act* requires that the Minister must, as far as is reasonably practical, ensure that the appointed councillors collectively have experience in local

[15] Local Government Remuneration Tribunal, *Report and Determination – Appointed Councillors and Chairperson for Central Darling Shire Council* (Report, 17 September 2025) <https://www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2026-06/2025%20special%20determination%20-%20Appointed%20Councillors%20and%20Chairperson%20for%20Central%20Darling%20Shire%20Council.pdf>.
[16] *LG Act* (n 1) s 242(3).

government administration, financial management, the ability to represent the interests of the Aboriginal population of the area, experience in emergency management and experience in conservation and environmental sustainability, clause 10(6) of Schedule 11 sets out that their functions will be identical to that of a mayor in New South Wales.[17]

Importantly, the $100.00 difference between the minimum and maximum fee payable suggests that the Tribunal is empowered to reduce the fee range associated with the categories of councils pursuant to s 241.[18] As outlined below, LGNSW considers that a fee range of 5% should apply. Such a range complies with the legislative requirement for the Tribunal to identify and set a fee range and is appropriately narrow so as not to produce significant discrepancies of fees payable for like councils. Such a decision would also assist in depoliticising the issues arising with councils awarding themselves fee increases.

Fee range

As was observed in its 2026 Determination, LGNSW and its members continue to advocate for a change to the legislation which permits the Tribunal to adopt a fixed fee which is payable to all councils within a particular category. It is accepted that the current language of the LG Act does not permit such an outcome, noting the comments of the Tribunal and the Court of Appeal's decision in *Director of Public Prosecutions (NSW) v President of the Legislative Council of New South Wales* [2026].[19] While the Court of Appeal directs that the Tribunal cannot do implicitly what it is not permitted to do explicitly, the language of s 241 does not restrain the Tribunal from determining that the range minimum and maximum fees should be reduced. While it requires a *range* to be determined, the language of the *LG Act* offers no further guidance as to what that range may be.

Referring to **Figures B** and **C** below, LGNSW submits that the current fee ranges are too wide. Unless the applicable fee has already been set, a council must resolve to increase the fees payable to its own members. Councillors must therefore make a political judgment and publicly approve an increase that some constituents may oppose. This process can also allow councillors to use fee adjustments to advance their own political objectives.

[17] Ibid cl 9(2), 10(6) Sch 1.
[18] Ibid s 241.
[19] NSWCA 20 at [57].

LGNSW is not suggesting that the Tribunal can remedy the requirement for councils to resolve for councillors to attract a fee increase in the current wording of the legislation. However, the Tribunal can limit the necessity of such a task by reducing the gap between the minimum and maximum fees in the new framework. Such an approach is permitted by the legislation and was expressly taken by the Tribunal in the 2025 Special Determination. LGNSW submits that there is little value in setting a range of up to $84,490 for some categories of mayors and up to $18,650 for councillors.

On the current range, it is conceivable that the Mayor of City of Parramatta Council (the only council in the Major CBD category) can expect to receive remuneration between $68,400 and $171,540. A range of $103,140 exceeds the minimum payment which the Mayor may attract, inclusive of the base councillor fee. There is no cogent reason for such an outcome to continue to be permitted. A reduction in the range which is applicable to a particular category also limits the requirement for councillors and mayors to be the object of political criticism as they seek to increase their fees to match cost of living pressures. While the word 'range' is an express feature of the *LG Act*,[20] there is no logical reason why that range must be as wide as it is presently.

The current ranges for councillor and mayoral fees are as follows:

Figure B (Councillor):

Category	Minimum	Maximum	Range
Principal City	$32,810	$48,140	$14,330
Major CBD	$21,900	$40,550	$18,650
Metropolitan Major	$21,900	$38,340	$16,440
Metropolitan Large	$21,900	$36,110	$14,210
Metropolitan Medium	$16,420	$30,640	$14,220
Metropolitan Small	$10,920	$24,080	$13,160
Major Regional City	$21,900	$38,050	$16,150
Major Strategic Area	$21,900	$38,050	$16,150
Regional Strategic Area	$21,900	$36,110	$14,219
Regional Centre	$16,420	$28,890	$12,470

[20] s 242A(3).

Regional Rural	$10,920	$24,080	$13,160
Rural Large	$10,920	$19,590	$8,670
Rural	$10,920	$14,450	$3,530
Water County	$2,170	$12,050	$9,880
Other County	$2,170	$7,190	$5,020

Figure C (Mayor/Chairperson Additional Fee):

Category	Minimum	Maximum	Range
Principal City	$200,820	$264,240	$63,420
Major CBD	$46,500	$130,990	$84,490
Metropolitan Major	$46,500	$118,530	$72,030
Metropolitan Large	$46,500	$105,220	$58,720
Metropolitan Medium	$34,870	$81,380	$46,510
Metropolitan Small	$23,250	$52,250	$29,000
Major Regional City	$46,500	$118,530	$72,030
Major Strategic Area	$46,500	$118,530	$72,030
Regional Strategic Area	$46,500	$105,220	$58,720
Regional Centre	$34,160	$71,350	$37,190
Regional Rural	$23,250	$52,560	$29,310
Rural Large	$17,440	$42,030	$24,590
Rural	$11,620	$31,510	$19,890
Water County	$4,660	$19,790	$15,130
Other County	$4,660	$13,140	$8,480

LGNSW urges the Tribunal to narrow the fee ranges in the revised framework. To this end, LGNSW proposes that the Tribunal identify a revised minimum fee and prescribe a 5% uplift from that new minimum fee to constitute the applicable range. This would produce a uniform range of 5% while meeting the *LG Act's* substantive requirement to set a range.

Local government in Victoria – a comparison

The *Local Government Act 2020* (Vic) provides that mayors, deputy mayors and councillors are entitled to receive an *allowance* from Council in accordance with the Determination of the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal ("VIRT").[21] The VIRT is empowered to make such a determination pursuant to the *Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal and Improving Parliamentary Standards Act 2019* ("VIRTIPS Act").

The *VIRTIPS Act* requires the VIRT to make Determinations providing for an annual adjustment to the value of the allowances payable to mayors, deputy mayors and councillors.[22] The VIRT is also required to provide for the annual indexation of allowance categories and consider any other matters it considers relevant when making a new Determination.[23] The VIRT was also required to undertake a comprehensive review of the allowance categories under the *Local Government Act 2020* (Vic) in its first Determination.[24]

The VIRT is required to consider the following matters in making its Determination:[25]

- Any statement or policy issued by the Government of Victoria which is in force with respect to its wages policy (or equivalent) and the remuneration and allowances of any specified occupational group
- The financial position and fiscal strategy of the State of Victoria
- Current and projected economic conditions and trends
- Submissions received in relation to the proposed Determination
- Any other prescribed matter.

This is distinct from the *LG Act* of New South Wales which prescribes the criteria for assessing and defining council categories.[26]

The VIRT made its first Determination in 2022 with the previously payable annual allowance and payment in lieu of superannuation available to mayors, deputy mayors and councillors combined to form one amount referred to as a 'base allowance'. This was introduced, in part, to

[21] *Local Government Act 2020* (Vic) s 39.
[22] *Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal and Improving Parliamentary Standards Act 2019* s 23B ('*VIRTIPS Act*').
[23] Ibid s 23A(5)(b), 23A(7)(b)
[24] Ibid s 23A(5)(a).
[25] Ibid s 24(2).
[26] *LG Act* (n 1) s 240(1).

'simplify arrangements, increase transparency and ensure equal treatment of all Council members, irrespective of their status and treatment under Commonwealth superannuation law'.[27]

In its 2022 Determination, the VIRT allocated all Victorian local councils into one of three allowance categories – either Category 1, 2 or 3. Melbourne City Council was allocated to its own category (Category 4). Councils were placed into the respective categories having regard to the council's annual revenue and population size. The VIRT then created a formula to calculate council allowance '*category points*' based on the total recurrent revenue and resident population numbers published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

The application of this formula set out that Category 1 councils were allocated between 0 and 65 points, Category 2 councils were allocated between 66 and 280 points and Category 3 councils were allocated over 281 points.

The 2022 Determination also set out that the previous allowance payable to councillors in Victoria was not sufficient and did not appropriately recognise the contribution of councillors to local government.[28] In forming this view, the VIRT had regard to the following matters:[29]

- The increase in scope and complexity of Council members' roles;
- The high levels of community expectations placed on Council members to represent and respond to the interests of community members
- Evidence which indicated that the role of a Council member is more akin to a 'job' than volunteer work;
- Prior allowance increases failing to keep pace with wage increases;
- Comparisons with the remuneration for roles that have similar responsibilities to those of a Council member; and
- Evidence which indicated that higher allowances would likely have a positive impact on the diversity of Council members, including for the representation of women in local leadership positions.

[27] Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal, *Allowance payable to Mayors, Deputy Mayors and Councillors (Victoria) Determination No. 01/2022,* (Determination, 7 March 2022) 116 <https://www.remunerationtribunal.vic.gov.au/allowances-mayors-deputy-mayors-and-councillors-2022-determination#2022-determination>.
[28] Ibid 118.
[29] Ibid.

In 2025, the VIRT found that there was a strong case to review councillor allowances in 2026 rather than after the next general local council elections in October 2028.[30] This was based on feedback regarding the changes to the nature, complexity and workload of councillors, the time required to perform the role, challenges in retaining capable and skilled councillors and challenges in attracting councillors who represent the diversity of Victorian communities. The proposed changes sought to amend the structure and value of allowance categories and allowance quantum.

The 2026 Determination created a new allowance framework 'designed to recognise the contemporary role of councillors'.[31] This involved establishing a fourth allowance category for "growth councils". The VIRT reasoned that 'rapid growth can materially increase councillor workload and complexity' and represents a continued challenge to social cohesion.[32] The VIRT also noted that council members of growth councils were required to commit to elevated time commitments. The categories were also renamed to Categories A-D and Category E (City of Melbourne Council). The 2026 Determination provided that the following allowances were to be paid to each category of council:

Figure D (2026 VIRT Determination):

	Councillor	Deputy Mayor	Mayor
Category A	$35, 000	$45,807	$103,400
Category B	$38,500	$50,388	$124,080
Category C	$45,500	$59,549	$146,640
Category D	$49,000	$64,130	$157,920
Category E	$65,193	$151,441	$302,881

Of note is the introduction of a '*complexity factor'* to adjust the minimum base allowance for gradations in work requirements for councillors across various councils. Determined by reference to the base allowance (Category A), the complexity factor was set at 10% for Category B, 30% for Category C and 40% for Category D. Additionally, a 'responsibility loading' was

[30] Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal, *Allowance payable to Mayors, Deputy Mayors and Councillors (Victoria) Statement of Reasons,* (Report, 30 June 2025) 4 <https://www.remunerationtribunal.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2025-07/Allowance-payable-to-Mayors%2C-Deputy-Mayors-and-Councillors-%28Victoria%29-Annual-Adjustment-Determination-2025.pdf>.
[31] Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal, *Allowance payable to Mayors, Deputy Mayors and Councillors (Victoria) Determination No. 01/2026,* (Determination, 18 August 2026) 7 <https://www.remunerationtribunal.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2026-08/FOR-PUBLICATION-Consolidated-2026-LG-Determination.pdf>.
[32] Ibid 9.

created for mayors in recognition of the supplementary functions and largely full-time nature of the role. This was set at 10% for mayors in Category A and 20% for mayors in Categories B – D. LGNSW considers that the complexity of the work performed by councillors should be considered by the Tribunal in setting a new and more appropriate base fee from which subsequent increases can be applied.

Work Value of Councillors and Mayors

The work value and time demands of councillors and mayors have increased significantly since the 1995 Determination. Although minor adjustments have been made, no substantive analysis of elected representatives' work requirements has occurred in the 31 years since that Determination.

LGNSW has conducted a work value survey to assess the current workload of councillors and mayors across the state. Together with surveys from 2006 and 2018, the data show a marked increase in the demands on elected local government representatives.

2006 survey (Attachment LG-1)

Mastertek Pty Ltd was appointed by the Local Government and Shires Association of NSW (as LGNSW then was) to independently review the adequacy of NSW mayoral and councillor fees. It interviewed individual councillors and surveyed all councillors and mayors to identify changes since the original 1995 Determination.

466 councillors responded to the survey (30.26% response rate). Some of the key findings of this survey were:

- 81.1% of councillors chose to become a councillor to perform a civic duty
- 43% of councillors did not intend to stand for election again
- Of these:
    - 21% indicated that it was due to financial hardship
    - A further 15% indicated that it was due to the time commitment required

The survey also noted that on average, councillors spent 40 hours per week in other employment and the following time on council business:

- Mayor: 35.1 hours per week
- Deputy Mayor: 18.8 hours per week

- Councillor: 20 hours per week

This suggests that from as early as 2006, the office of mayor was reported to require the equivalent to full-time hours (noting that full-time professional staff employed pursuant to the *Local Government (State) Award* work 35 ordinary hours per week). The survey showed that the following tasks or activities accounted for the majority of the time spent by councillors and mayors on council business:

- Formal council meetings
- Committees & task forces
- Research & preparation
- Constituent matters, within jurisdiction
- Constituent phone calls
- Council policy & management
- Ceremonial
- Administration
- Media liaison
- Training
- Constituent matters, outside jurisdiction
- Charities or community groups as council representative
- Other

67% of respondents to that survey indicated that they considered that the office of mayor should be considered 'full-time' and 74% considered that the office of councillor should be considered 'part-time'.

Participating councillors were also surveyed on which of the criteria set out in s 240 of the *LG Act* was, in their view, most relevant for the purposes of setting minimum and maximum fees. The nature and volume of the business dealt with by each council; the nature and extent of the development of areas; the population of the areas and the distribution of the population; and annual income, were the four most significant factors identified by participants. This accords generally with the approach taken by the Tribunal in previous years, particularly with respect to the nature and extent of the development of particular areas. LGNSW proposes that the Tribunal retain its thinking with respect to the development of local government areas, but take into account the balance of the criteria set out in the LG Act in order to form a more comprehensive view about the character of a council.

The 2006 survey made the following recommendations:

> 7.1 Mastertek recommends that the Tribunal provide an appropriate increase in the fees for mayors and councillors in NSW to reduce the impact of financial hardship and assist in the retention of knowledge and experience within councils, along with being able to attract aspiring candidates with appropriate capabilities
>
> 7.2 Mastertek recommends that the fees payable to mayors and councillors in NSW be increased to reflect:
>
> a. The time commitment of mayors and councillors
> b. The increasing complexity of council activities and the expectation that council activities will continue to become more complex in the future as a greater number of services are delivered by local government
> c. Factors such as loss of business, lost time at work, and superannuation contributions
> d. Councils' ability to attract and retain high calibre and experienced candidates form the community to fulfil the important role of councillor
>
> 7.3 Mastertek recommends that a mechanism be established to ensure that future determinations of fees for mayors and councillors are adjusted regularly and on an equitable basis. Further, we recommend that the determination of fees for mayors and councillors be based on a consistent benchmark, such as a State Member of Parliament and are set at a level which would facilitate a full-time role for mayors of larger councils ...

As early as 2006, it was identified that the nominal fees discouraged councillors and mayors from seeking re-election. This concern was most pronounced among respondents under 56 years of age. The mayoral workload also suggests that mayors have had to relinquish private employment or work well beyond full-time hours to maintain their financial position.

2018 survey (Attachment LG-2)

In 2018, LGNSW again appointed Mastertek to conduct an independent review on the appropriateness of the levels of Councillor Remuneration by way of one-on-one interviews with selected councillors, and an online survey. In the 2018 report, Mastertek observed significant

changes to the local government landscape since the 2006 survey. In particular, the survey observed that the introduction of the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) Framework and Council amalgamations were significant developments and concluded that no meaningful additional remuneration was provided to elected officials navigating these additional complexities.

In 2018 there were 256 responses collected from more than 100 councils. Of these respondents, 86.9% reported that their role had become more complex over time. The average respondent had served 6.24 years as a councillor. A further 87.8% believed that the time commitment had increased since their first election. The 2018 survey recorded a median councillor workload of 41 hours per week.

The report further observed that 'the pool of candidates for the role [of councillor] appears to be skewed towards retired, semi-retired, or independently wealthy. This creates a serious impact on a fundamental element of Local Government and Councils – to represent the community.'

Of the 256 respondents to the 2018 survey, 85.5% were aged 45 years or older, and in five out of the six age categories, there was an underrepresentation of females with an 11.7% dominant gender gap reported within all survey respondents. For example, in the 65+ age bracket, in which 28.5% of respondents fell, 67.1% of respondents were male and 32.9% were female. In the 25-34 age bracket, which represented only 4.7% of respondents, 75% of participants were male and 25% were female.

Of the respondents asked whether Tribunal fees adequately reflected a councillor's roles and duties, 83.9% disagreed and considered their fees inadequate.

2026 survey (Attachment LG-3).

In 2026, LGNSW surveyed NSW councillors and mayors on the nature and complexity of their work. The survey was completed by 191 respondents: 140 councillors, 29 mayors and 22 deputy mayors. LGNSW also interviewed metropolitan and regional/rural mayors and councillors to better understand how their work had changed.

Key insights arising from this survey are as follows:

- 66% of respondents were aged 55 or above

- 50% of respondents were male, 47% were female and 3% preferred not to respond or identified as neither male or female.
- The majority of respondents (74%) were from Regional/Rural/Remote councils.
- Mayors report that they spend an average of 42.5 hours per week on mayoral duties
- Deputy mayors report that they spend an average of 24.1 hours per week on councillor duties
- Councillors report that they spend an average of 26.7 hours per week on councillor duties
- 22% of councillors travel between 6 – 20+ hours per week, particularly those from regional, rural or remote councils
- 81% of respondents agreed that social media, email and online communication have increased their workload
- Approximately 80% of respondents reported a growth in skill (81%), complexity (82%) and volume (78%) of responsibilities.
- 89% of total respondents consider that the mayor should be identified as a full-time equivalent role.
- 94% of respondents indicated that the current fees do not adequately reflect the time commitment, workload and complexity of their role
- 80% of respondents answered that the current fee arrangements have had a negative effect on balancing their family and caring responsibilities, while 73% indicated that it was difficult to remain in paid employment
- 126 respondents commented that:
    - Additional complexity has arisen due to changing legislative and governance requirements
    - Travel over vast geographic areas was a significant factor which required an elevated time commitment.
    - The current fees discouraged young people, people with caring responsibilities and people from diverse backgrounds from standing for council.

LGNSW also obtained evidence from councillors and mayors. The following witness statements are attached:

- Witness Statement of Todd Carney (Mayor Penrith City Council) (LG-4)
- Witness Statement of Robert Bell (Mayor Uralla Shire Council) (LG-5)
- Witness Statement of Sarah Ndiaye (Mayor Byron Shire Council) (LG-6)

- Witness Statement of Kenrick Winchester (Mayor Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council) (LG-7)
- Witness Statement of Bradley Bunting (Mayor Blacktown City Council) (LG-8)
- Witness Statement of Jody Williams (Councillor Northern Beaches Council) (LG-9)

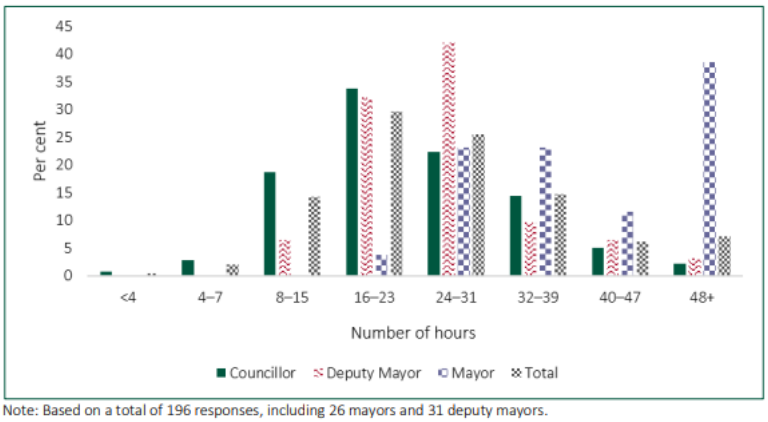
Consideration of quantitative data

The 2006, 2018 and 2026 surveys show consistent trends. Councillors and mayors devote substantial time to serving their communities. The 2018 and 2026 surveys recorded similarly high levels of agreement (86.9% and 80% respectively) that the councillor role had become more complex. In the 2026 survey, 94% agreed that fees did not reflect the role's time demands, workload and complexity.

The 2026 survey required councillors to report, on average, the hours per week spent on councillor duties. Over half of the respondents reported that they undertook between 20 and 39 hours per week. The VIRT conducted a similar survey of Victorian councillors in 2021 and reported that over half of the councillors who responded reported spending between 16 and 31 hours on their role in a typical week. The VIRT survey also revealed that half of all mayors in Victoria worked at least 40 hours per week. This figure is extracted below and marked **Figure E.**

Figure E:

Figure 4.1: Councillor questionnaire — responses to 'During a typical week, how many hours (not including travel time) do you personally dedicate to your role?'



Note: Based on a total of 196 responses, including 26 mayors and 31 deputy mayors.
Source: Tribunal analysis of questionnaire responses.

The Victorian Local Governance Association also undertook a councillor census in 2024, which was completed by 301 respondent councillors. Those respondents reported an average time commitment of 29 hours per week during the 2020 – 2024 council term.[33]

The same census was undertaken again in 2025 in which the 329 respondents reported an average of 39 hours per week over the first year of the current council term.[34] It is notable that in 2025, respondents were asked to include advocacy efforts and attendance at councillor briefings within their estimation of time spent on council activities.

This data is consistent with the 2026 LGNSW survey. Across all surveys (including those undertaken in the Victorian jurisdiction), councillors report an elevated time commitment to undertake both core council business, including preparing for council and committee meetings and ancillary councillor activities such as community engagement and attendance at ceremonies and events. LGNSW submits that both streams of activity are indispensable functions of local government and councillor commitment to these tasks is desirable. The data in the 2026 survey also indicates that social media use has proliferated in local government and is now considered a standard tool of engagement by councillors.

[33] Victorian Local Governance Association, *The Victorian Councillor Census: Insights into the 2020-2024 councillor journey* (Report, 4 March 2025) 8 <https://www.vlga.org.au/sites/default/files/Victorian%20Councillor%20Census%20Report_Final.pdf>.
[34] Victorian Local Governance Association, *2025 VLGA Victorian Councillor Census* (Report, 30 March 2026) 4 <https://www.vlga.org.au/sites/default/files/Census%20Report%202026_final.pdf>.

This accords with the general shift towards social media as a tool of engagement and information sharing which is used by business, public institutions and the society more generally. LGNSW submits that the role of councillor in the modern day necessarily requires engagement on social media platforms by way of video and text content in the same manner that councillors are required to attend school award ceremonies, citizenship ceremonies, or local sporting or charity events. These tasks are inextricable from the office of councillor, and while they are adjunct to official council business, they nonetheless form part of the community role for which councillors are elected. Engagement of this kind is desirable and assists in keeping communities informed of local events, news, and matters of significance in an accessible way and should be encouraged.

Much emphasis was also placed on the additional requirements imposed by legislation and regulation to ensure the continued good governance of councils in New South Wales. Councillors are required to attend inductions and participate in training of various kinds to facilitate success in the role. While these requirements are a positive step in assisting to ensure that council business runs smoothly, it represents an additional impost which was not initially contemplated when the base fee for councillors and mayors was set in 1995. Further, there has been an increase in the complexity of the matters brought before councils. As will be explained in more detail below, many councillors and mayors report that a wide remit of matters are brought to council meetings. The breadth of those matters include environmental matters, infrastructure, energy, strategic and statutory planning, community services, emergency management, disaster recovery and water and waste services. Increasingly, councillors report that councils are becoming responsible for or involved in matters typically held within the remit of the NSW Government, which has expanded the breadth of knowledge and expertise required of councillors so as to ensure that sound and defensible decisions are made.

Respondents to the 2026 survey reported spending a mean of 12.4 hours per week preparing for and attending council and committee meetings. Responding to community enquiries, attending events, managing social media and public communications, and strategic planning accounted for most other weekly tasks. These demands reflect the expanding scope and complexity of council business.

Consideration of witness evidence

The witnesses provide further insight into the weekly workload of councillors and mayors. They report that preparing for council meetings requires a substantial and increasing time commitment. Business papers have grown in length and complexity, requiring more reading and research. The witnesses also report that regulations prohibiting briefings on council meeting agenda items increased preparation time by requiring councillors to undertake their own research.

The mayoral witnesses consistently report working full-time equivalent hours in office. Cr Winchester also holds private employment to support his family, while Cr Carney is seeking private employment because his mayoral fees are insufficient. Both report that their spouses undertake paid employment as well as most domestic and childcare duties.

Cr Ndiaye reports that continuing as Mayor would not be financially viable if her children were not adults or if her weekly rent were not relatively modest. She also reports that a councillor at her council was reluctant to seek the deputy mayor position because the additional workload would require her to leave financially necessary private employment.

Cr Williams' sets out that he was required to reduce the number of days he worked at his paid employment to accommodate the necessary time commitment to the duties of a councillor. Cr Williams further reports that his other employment is financially necessary and that he would not be able to rely solely on the fee payable in connection with his role as a councillor at Northern Beaches Council. Cr Williams, like many of the other witnesses interviewed in connection with this submission, held the strong view that the 2025 Model Code of Meeting Practice which banned councillor briefings on items that featured on the council meeting agenda created significantly more work for councillors across the state. LGNSW notes that on 22 September 2026, the New South Wales Legislative Council disallowed the Local Government (General) Amendment (Meetings) Regulation 2026 which had the effect of banning pre-meeting briefings.[35] Many of the councillors who held other employment reported that they were regularly required to take annual leave or other paid leave entitlements from their private employment to facilitate their engagement with councillor duties.

Cr Bell opines that in his experience as the mayor of a Rural council, a minimum commitment of 40 hours per week is required to discharge the functions of the mayor. Cr Bell further notes that

[35] Local Government (General) Amendment (Meetings) Regulation 2026 (NSW) reg 236A.

regular travel is required, not only by car to parts of the local government area (which spans some 3,600km in the case of Uralla Shire Council) but also to Sydney to engage with stakeholders. Cr Bell's statement also highlights the difficulty that councillors face in determining whether to apply an increase to their positions. Where a council is seeking a Special Rate Variation or where the cost-of-living pressures facing a community are persistently high, it is difficult for councillors to publicly seek to provide themselves with a fee increase, notwithstanding that the increase is also intended to offset those pressures for the representatives. Such a situation is enabled by the broad range of fees which is presently attached to each category of council, requiring councillors to make a political calculation as to whether any increase is applied.

The witnesses report that social media and online engagement play an increasingly prominent role alongside attendance at community events, ceremonies and functions. Cr Bunting reports that short-form video is now expected for effective constituent communication, particularly with young people.

LGNSW submits that creating and editing video content, responding to social media comments and communicating with stakeholders by email add complexity that the 1995 Determination did not contemplate. At that time, constituent contact could have involved events, other face-to-face interactions or letters. Residents now have greater access to councillors and expect responses through social media, making online engagement part of the role.

The councillor role can no longer be characterised as part-time voluntary oversight of roads, rates and rubbish. It requires substantial time and an understanding of complex legal, financial, planning and regulatory matters. Although almost all respondents to the 2026 LGNSW survey stood for council out of civic service or responsibility, that motivation should not preclude the payment of appropriate fees. The public interest requires capable councillors and mayors who can devote the necessary time and effort to making the decisions that serve their communities. A system that requires all but the wealthiest representatives to maintain full-time private employment does not support that objective. Nor does a system that excludes candidates other than retirees or the independently wealthy. Requiring representatives, including mayors, to balance council duties with other employment necessarily diminishes the quality of representation communities can expect, and underpayment can of course introduce an increased risk of corruption.

LGNSW submits that a candidate's decision to stand for council should turn on their commitment to civic service, rather than their capacity to bear the financial pressures of the role.

Data from the Office of Local Government Councillor Diversity Report

In March 2026, the Office of Local Government ("OLG") released the 'Candidate and Councillor Diversity Report' which reported that 41 out of the 128 mayors in New South Wales (for the period of October 2024-September 2026) are women.[36] Further key data regarding female participation and representation in this Report includes:[37]

- Despite less women standing for election in the 2024 local government elections (1,592) compared to the 2021 election (1,622), the former represented 42.21% of all candidates compared to the latter representing 42.1% of all candidates in 2021;
- 516 women were elected to councils in 2024 compared to 490 in 2021, representing a 1.22% increase in overall representation (39.0% and 40.22% in 2021 and 2024 respectively);
- Out of the 128 councils in New South Wales, 29 have a majority female representation and 5 have gender parity. This is compared to 25 majority female councils in 2021 and 5 councils with gender parity.
- 34.88% of female councillors have a professional occupation and approximately 10% of female councillors are self-employed, managers, or retired;
- Metropolitan fringe councils have the highest representation of female councillors at 42% and rural councils have the lowest representation at 34.24%; and
- Female mayors make up 14.0% of the 14 rural council mayors, despite the percentage of women mayors increasing 'significantly' between the 2021 and 2024 elections from 27% to 32% respectively.[38]

This OLG report also details that the majority of mayors are aged between 50 and 69-years-old (57.81%) with the largest demographic (30.47%) being 50–59-year-olds.[39] Over half of all councillors are 50 years or older with the highest percentage of elected councillors being aged 50-59 at 25.10%.[40] Additionally, the OLG found that '*males make up the majority of all age groups*

[36] Office of Local Government, *Candidate and Councillor Diversity Report* (Report, March 2026) 1 <Candidate and Councillor Diversity Report>.
[37] Ibid 7-8.
[38] Ibid 9.
[39] Ibid 10.
[40] Ibid 15.

of candidates and councillors.'[41] Only 3.98% of councillors identify as having a disability, with large rural councils having the highest percentage of councillors who identify as having a disability at 1.48%.[42] As at the time of the OLG report, only one mayor was aged between 25-29, three mayors identified as being Aboriginal persons, and two mayors had a first-language learned other than English.[43] Collectively, self-employment and retirement make up 30.04% of the reported occupations of councillors.[44]

Proposal for the remuneration framework and fee structure

Proposal for New South Wales

Although the Victorian system differs from New South Wales, including in what the relevant *LG Act* permits, LGNSW submits that the VIRT model should guide the Tribunal's consideration of category reform.

Number of categories

The Tribunal has rightly identified that councils in New South Wales can be placed into 15 categories. Two of these categories, being 'County Councils – Water' and 'County Councils – Other' capture special purpose councils only. Of note is that whilst the minimum fee for each of these categories is identical, the maximum fee for a County Council – Water, is greater than that which applies to County Councils – Other. This is incongruous with the fact that each category of council is empowered by legislation to provide a particular service to the community which is not otherwise vested in the relevant general-purpose council.

Another of these categories, being 'Principal CBD' operates to capture the City of Sydney Council only. This means that the balance of general-purpose councils in New South Wales are categorised into the remaining 12 categories.

Aside from various population thresholds, which appear to be the defining feature of most of the remaining 12 categories (excepting Major Regional City) the balance of the criteria associated with each category calls for imprecise value judgments based on inexact factors that are difficult to identify and differentiate. The current phrasing of the categories also indicates that not all factors need to be present for a Council to attract a particular category.

[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid 16.
[43] Ibid 10.
[44] Ibid 17.

For example, Major Strategic Area suggests that councils of this category *may* have features which include:

- Health services, tertiary education services and major regional airports which service the surrounding and wider regional community
- A full range of high-order services including business, office and retail uses with arts, culture, recreation and entertainment centres
- Significant visitor numbers to established tourism ventures and major events that attract state and national attention
- A proximity to Sydney which generates economic opportunities

Regional Strategic Area includes precisely the same criteria, save for a population threshold of 100,000. There is no logical reason for this overlap and the slight disparity in fees.

Although other criteria distinguish rural and metropolitan categories in various ways, LGNSW proposes fewer, broader categories to create a more objective and streamlined framework.

Criteria for categories

The Tribunal has identified that most of the categories currently applicable to councils fail to account for all of the criteria required by s 240 of the *LG Act*. County Councils are also subject to s 240(2), which requires the Tribunal to consider the functions of county councils in addition to the criteria set out at s 240(1).[45]

The criteria in s 240 *LG Act* must be considered, but their wording does not explain how each criterion should determine council categories and the fees payable within them.

LGNSW advocates that the Tribunal should define further parameters to support consistent interpretation of each criterion. A points scale should then be applied to each council, with the total score determining its category.

[45] *LG Act* (n 1) s 240(1)-(2).

To this end, LGNSW proposes the following:

The size of areas

NSW local government areas vary substantially in size. Central Darling Shire Council covers 53,511 square kilometres, while Hunters Hill Council covers 6 square kilometres. Larger areas create significant travel and community engagement challenges, yet these councils are typically classified as rural and attract some of the lowest councillor fees. The criterion should therefore award more points to councils with larger areas.

POINTS	CRITERIA
1	Councils with an area size typically of 100 square kilometres or less
2	Councils with an area size typically of between 101 and 1000 square kilometres
3	Councils with an area size of between 1001 and 3000 square kilometres
4	Councils with an area size of between 3001 and 10,000 square kilometres
5	Councils with an area size exceeding 10,000 square kilometres

The physical terrain of areas

The application of this criterion is less clear. LGNSW submits that the Tribunal should consider accessibility, limited transport options and the risks of travelling between communities. Councils with more difficult terrain should receive more points.

POINTS	CRITERIA
1	Councils with highly sophisticated and easily accessible transport infrastructure, including roads, buses, airports, trains and ferries. The local government area is developed and there are no significant barriers to movement.
2	Councils with sophisticated transport infrastructure with most types of public transport available. May apply to fringe metropolitan councils with some distance to travel between suburbs and not insignificant undeveloped natural areas
3	Councils with adequate transport infrastructure and well-established townships. Areas outside of townships may be agricultural or undeveloped but may be readily accessed by roads.

4	Councils with some transport infrastructure and few townships spread across the local government area. Large parts of the local government area are undeveloped and may be difficult to access.
5	Councils with limited transport infrastructure and two or three townships spread across the local government area. Significant parts of the local government area are undeveloped and may be difficult to access.

The population of areas and the distribution of the population

Population is one of the most significant criteria in the Tribunal's assessment. The current framework reflects this importance, although in at least one category it inappropriately treats population as the sole criterion. Population density is also relevant, particularly to the complexity of metropolitan councils.

The population of an area should therefore receive additional weight when determining its category.

POINTS	CRITERIA
1 – 2	Typically councils with a low population density and a total population of 25,000 or less.
3 - 4	Typically councils with a low or medium-low population density and/or a population of 25,001 and 50,000
4 - 5	Typically councils with a medium population density and/or a population of 50,001 to 100,000
6 – 7	Typically councils with a medium-high population density and/or population of 100,001 to 200,000.
8 - 10	Typically councils with a medium or high population density and a population of at least 200,000.

The nature and volume of business dealt with by each council

The Tribunal should assess this criterion by reference to council annual revenue and the complexity and sophistication of its services and functions. As with population, LGNSW submits that this criterion should receive additional weight in allocating points. The table below is not exhaustive but is an indicative range of the functions that may be undertaken by a council in NSW. Broadly speaking the functions range in complexity from core and essential

services such as the collection of rates through to specialised and discretionary services such as the provision of aquatic centres or airports.

Rates and revenue administration	Road design and construction
Road maintenance and repair	Waste collection
Waste disposal	Water treatment and reticulation
Wastewater treatment and reticulation	Libraries
Community services	Parks and gardens maintenance
Management and maintenance of sporting and community facilities	Children's services
Aged care services	Art galleries and Museums
Theatres	Planning
Development and certification	Regulatory compliance
Environmental compliance	Companion animal management, pounds and shelters
Saleyards	Parking and Regulatory services
Aquatic and leisure centre services	Cemeteries
Tourism and visitor services	Council operated airports and aerodromes

POINTS	CRITERIA
1 – 2	Typically, councils with an annual total revenue of $50 million or less. Providing **Core and Essential Services** with basic infrastructure stewardship and regulatory services.
3 - 4	Typically, councils with an annual total revenue of between $50 million and $150 million that offer core services supplemented by **Enhanced Community Services**.
4 - 5	Typically councils with an annual total revenue of between $150 million and $300 million that in addition to community and social services provide **Integrated Service and Growth Services**.
6 – 7	Typically, councils with an annual total revenue of $300 million to $500 million providing **Strategic and Complex Services**.
8 - 10	Typically, councils with annual total revenue in excess of $500 million that provide **Specialised and Discretionary Commercial Services**.

The nature and extent of the development of areas

The nature and extent of development includes the scale of residential, commercial and industrial development within a local government area. Possible measures include the number

and complexity of development applications and strategic planning matters, and the presence of major economic precincts, business centres and industrial estates.

Possible measures include development application numbers, the value of approved developments, the number of planning proposals, housing growth targets and the value of construction activity.

POINTS	CRITERIA
1 – 2	**Minimal development** activity being Councils that have approved less than 50 development applications per annum or where the value of the development applications is less than $10 million.
3 - 4	**Moderate development** activity being Councils that have approved between 50 and 500 development applications per annum or where the value of those development applications is between $10 million and $150 million.
4 - 5	**Significant development** activity being Councils approving between 500 and 700 development applications per annum or infrastructure investment of between $150 million and $1 billion.
6 – 7	**Major strategic development** activity being a growth area of regional or metropolitan significance would be a Council approving between 700 and 1000 development applications per annum or infrastructure investment of between $1 billion and $5 billion.
8 - 10	**Transformational development** activity being a Council that approves in excess of 1000 development applications per annum or where the value of those developments is in excess of $5 billion.

The diversity of communities served

This criterion is generally understood to account for the breadth and complexity of communities and the extent to which council officials are required to account for differing cultural, linguistic, socio-economic, and demographic characteristics.

The diversity of communities can be assessed against a range of data that may include:

- The age distribution of constituents across a local government area;
- The percentage of individuals in a local government area that identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders;
- The percentage of constituents who speak a language other than English;

- The level of unemployment within the local government area; and
- The socio-economic index rating for a council

The appropriate criteria is determined through a composite assessment of the data referred to in the dot points above that are accessed through the Time Series Data published by the Office of Local Government.

POINTS	CRITERIA
1 – 2	**Limited Diversity** in councils that exhibit relatively homogenous demographic characteristics – with a narrow age profile, low cultural and linguistic diversity, low representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations, and low unemployment.
3 - 4	**Moderate Diversity** is reflected in councils that demonstrate a degree of demographic and socio-economic variation, and diversity indicators are broadly aligned with state averages.
4 - 5	**High Diversity** is present where a council contains a broad mix of age cohorts, serve multiple demographic groups, and require more sophisticated approaches to accommodating a spread of cultural backgrounds and languages.
6 – 7	**Complex Diversity** is exhibited in councils that experience significant demographic, cultural and socio-economic variation, with high levels of linguistic diversity, substantial Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations, elevated social disadvantage and/or unemployment and a wide range of community service needs.
8 - 10	**Exceptional Diversity** represents the most diverse and complex LGAs required to provide highly tailored, multifaceted approaches to governance, community engagement, service delivery to meet the needs of a uniquely diverse population.

The regional, national and international significance of the council

This criterion invites the Tribunal to look beyond the size and population of a local government area and consider the significance of the council beyond its borders. This may be reflected because the council for example:

- Serves as a major centre for surrounding local government areas;
- Serves as a major tourism destination;

- Contains major hospitals, universities or regional government services;
- Contains a major port, airport, or transport corridor;
- Functions as a regional transport or logistics hub; or
- Provides employment opportunities for a broad region.

This criterion cannot be assessed against objective data and it will be incumbent upon individual councils to demonstrate the strategic significance and influence of a council beyond its own boundaries to reflect the extent to which it performs regional, state, national or international functions.

POINTS	CRITERIA
1	**Local Significance** being councils that primarily serve the needs of their own communities with limited influence beyond their municipal boundaries. Infrastructure and employment opportunities are predominantly directed towards the local population.
2	**Regional Significance** would be a council that provides services, infrastructure, employment and economic opportunities that serve surrounding communities and contribute to the broader development of a regions through issues such as education, healthcare, transport or administrative services.
3	**State Significance** refers to councils that contain infrastructure, institutions or destinations that play a role in supporting stet-wide economic, social or government objectives. Such councils may host hospitals, universities, transport destinations or transport corridors.
4	**National Significance** refers to councils that perform functions or contain assets critical to Australia's economy, tourism industry, transport network, commonly realised in ports, airports, freight and logistic facilities, and tourism attractions.
5	**International Significance** is a reference to councils that contribute directly to Australia's international connectivity, reputation and economic competitiveness.

Such matters as the Remuneration Tribunal considers relevant to the provision of efficient and effective local government

In considering matters relevant to the provision of efficient and effective local government, the Tribunal may have regard to factors that indicate the complexity, scale and sophistication of a council's operations. The broad discretion of this criterion provides the Tribunal with flexibility to also consider issues and factors that are otherwise not contemplated by s 240(1) such as remoteness, seasonal population fluctuations, new and emerging social and economic infrastructure or other unique local circumstances.

Category I (Principal City)

LGNSW submits that Category I should continue to apply only to the City of Sydney Council, consistent with the current treatment of Sydney and Melbourne in their respective jurisdictions. This recognises the council's unique economic and social character and its domestic and international significance.

Category II

Councils that score between 36 – 50 points

Category III

Councils that score 26 – 35 points

Category IV

Councils that score 11 – 25 points

Category V

Councils that score 1 – 10 points

Category VI

Category VI would comprise designated special purpose councils, such as Weeds Authorities or Water County Councils.

Category fees:

Category	Minimum additional mayoral fee	Maximum additional mayoral fee	Minimum councillor fee	Maximum councillor fee
Category I	$200,000	$210,000	$140,000	$147,000
Category II	$150,000	$157,500	$98,000	$102,900
Category III	$120,000	$126,000	$84,000	$88,200
Category IV	$90,000	$94,500	$63,000	$66,150
Category V	$75,000	$78,750	$52,500	$55,125
Category VI	$50,000	$52,500	$35,000	$36,750

The metropolitan/rural distinction no longer accurately reflects the nature and complexity of councillor work. Councillors in both settings report significant increases in the time required. Regional councillors spend up to 20 hours per week travelling and visiting communities. Metropolitan councillors, and increasingly regional councillors, report that population growth and greater complexity require additional hours. The VIRT endorsed this approach in its 2026 Annual Determination.[46]

The VIRT also provided an additional 'allowance' for regional councillors, styled as the 'remote area travel allowance' which compensates councillors for the additional time taken to travel to constituents in remote communities.[47] This allowance is payable to select councillors who reside more than 50km from the location of a specified council activity.[48] While the *LG Act* may not permit the payment of such an allowance in that form, LGNSW suggests that the categories set out above should take this and other work value data into account in determining the appropriate fees to be set.

Consideration of revenue and other matters

Moreover, LGNSW considers that in addition to population, the revenue or operating budget of the relevant council should be considered as one of the salient criterion in informing the Tribunal's assessment. Section 240(1) of the *LG Act* sets out that the Tribunal is to take into

[46] Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal, *Allowance payable to Mayors, Deputy Mayors and Councillors (Victoria) Determination No. 01/2026,* (Determination, 18 August 2026) 58, 62, 65-6 <https://www.remunerationtribunal.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2026-08/FOR-PUBLICATION-Consolidated-2026-LG-Determination.pdf>.
[47] Ibid 13.
[48] Ibid 74-5, 139.

account the nature and volume of business dealt with by each council'. LGNSW considers that this permits the Tribunal to account for the services and operations of each council, including the provision of services by regional councils which would not otherwise be present in the community, when making its Determination. It also permits the Tribunal to contemplate the complexity of services provided by metropolitan councils which have expanded significantly beyond the adage of "roads, rates and rubbish".

Furthermore, LGNSW considers that the work value of councillors and mayors should be regarded in the formulation of the new framework. Section 240(1) provides that the Tribunal is to consider 'such matters as the Remuneration Tribunal considers relevant to the provision of efficient and effective local government'.[49] The increasing complexity of the role of councillors and mayors must be contemplated by the Tribunal in setting the appropriate categories and the appropriate fees for such categories. As noted in the Tribunal's 2026 Determination, the 1995 Determination was made on the understanding that election to the office of mayor or councillor was inherently, a 'part-time' commitment, and that most mayors and councillors held other employment external to their community service roles.

The work value survey data above show that this assumption no longer holds.

The councillor role, particularly the mayoral role, is increasingly a full-time commitment. Requiring elected representatives to maintain external employment while fully performing their civic duties does not serve the public interest. It can reduce meaningful community engagement and make it harder to attract and retain capable candidates from diverse backgrounds.

Literature review and the state of councillor and mayoral representation in New South Wales

Academics Tanya Jakimow and Andrea Carson are leaders in the research on rates of female participation in local government in Australia. LGNSW notes that in its previous Determinations, the Tribunal has referenced the work and submissions of Professor Jakimow. In a 2022 report, Jakimow, Sophie Dewis and Kelly-Ann D'Sylva reported that in New South Wales and Victoria, female councillors believe that the remuneration is incommensurate with the hours dedicated

[49] *LG Act* (n 1).

to council work, the complexity of their role, the pressures and responsibilities of councillors.[50] Amongst those surveyed in 2021, 23.59% of councillors and 44.73% of aspirants indicated that they were less likely to stand for election or re-election due to low remuneration.[51] Additionally, 72.3% of those surveyed either agreed or strongly agreed that remuneration has an impact on the diversity of people who stand for council, with young people and women being the two groups identified as most disadvantaged.[52]

Jakimow's 2022 report also concluded that the efforts in New South Wales by the State government and other stakeholders to increase diversity in local government are flawed in their failure to address questions around remuneration. Such efforts, according to Jakimow, "cannot be based on encouragement of aspirants alone without attending to the impact of low councillor pay on who can feasibly become a councillor."[53] The attitudes, experiences and opinions of those with independent financial means are overrepresented in local government, with the interests of other community groups, namely women, being overlooked or "improperly understood" due to a lack of representation on council.[54] At the current rate of remuneration, many female aspirants or councillors feel that they cannot fully devote themselves to serving their communities or performing their roles adequately.[55]

In 2021, Carson, Gosia Mikolajczak and Leah Ruppanner used Victoria as a case study to understand women's equality in local politics through quantitative survey data (men and women candidates and elected councillors) with qualitative interviews with women who had previously run for office or were interested in running for office but decided against it.[56] The underrepresentation of women in local government contributes to the "continued lack of parity in state and national parliaments."[57] Ergo, equalising gender participation in local government may subsequently improve gender representation in state and federal government to redress issues related to Parliament being a "gendered workplace."[58]

[50] Tanya Jakimow, Sophie Dewis and Kelly-Ann D'Sylva, *The costs of (inadequate) councillor remuneration: impacts on wellbeing, diversity and quality of representation* (Report, The Australian National University and Politics in Colour, 2022) 3 <https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/b45bd10e-7998-46c0-aa1b-c4e355ca98a8/Councillor%20Remuneration%20Report%202022-0001.pdf>.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid 25.
[54] Ibid 27.
[55] Ibid 27.
[56] Andrea Carson, Gosia Mikolajczak, and Leah Ruppanner 'The Missing Cohort: Women in Local Government' (2021) 36(2) *Australian Parliamentary Review* 70.
[57] Ibid 74.
[58] Ibid 75.

Evidence collated from the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia reveal that young female councillors report spending more time on child-care and unpaid housework than their male counterparts, and these women often must sacrifice full-time work to accommodate political activity.[59] Hence, women, more than men, are likely to be earning less, therefore reducing their discretionary funding in the absence of familial support to meet the demands of both civic office and care-taking responsibilities. This causes what Carson describes as the 'missing cohort' with weak economic compensation intensifying the need for full-time work and limiting the ability to outsource domestic labour.[60] Women are, consequently, more likely to run for local government at a later age when child-rearing responsibilities have eased.[61] Carson's study found that despite being less likely to nominate for election and often serving less time in elected office, women generally have a higher success rate in local government elections than their male counterparts.[62]

Carson has also reported in more recent studies that there is public goodwill for additional financial and practical solutions to advance women's representation in government, including paying women more money or providing childcare allowances.[63] According to academic research, increasing councillor remuneration could benefit Australian communities by increasing the diversification of councils and counter the "dominance of a male business elite" in local government.[64]

Conference Motions

LGNSW Annual Conferences are the supreme policy-making body of LGNSW where councillors across the state come together to share ideas and debate issues that affect the local government sector in New South Wales.

At the 2025 LGNSW Annual Conference, members of LGNSW resolved the following (Resolution 74):

[59] Ibid 85-87.
[60] Ibid 88.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid 80.
[63] Andrea Carson, Timothy B Gravelle, Lia Acosta Rueda, Leah Ruppanner 'Understanding Public Support for Policies Aimed at Gender Parity in Politics: A Cross-National Experimental Study' (2024) 57(1) *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 83, 99.
[64] Tanya Jakimow 'Roadblocks to diversity in local government in New South Wales: changing narratives and confronting absences in diversity strategies' (2022) 26 (May) *Commonwealth Journal of Local Governance* 74, 86.

"That Local Government NSW advocates to the NSW Government and the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal to ensure that the 2026 comprehensive review of council categories:

1. *Fully reflects the diversity of council contexts across NSW*
2. *Incorporates measures that recognise the scale and complexity of services delivered by councils, particularly where councils undertake functions beyond traditional local government roles e.g. aged care and disability services*
3. *Accounts for the influence of demographic change, industry investment, and economic growth on the workload and strategy responsibilities of mayors, deputy mayors, and councillors, including consideration of pathways toward full-time councillor roles where appropriate*
4. *Acknowledges the evolving role of mayors – especially in rural and regional areas – as full-time civic leaders, and ensures remuneration supports sustainable, effective and inclusive local governance*
5. *Ensures recognition of deputy mayoral duties through dedicated remuneration arrangements, including when acting in the capacity of mayor, without depriving the mayor of their allowance, and*
6. *Recommends, where necessary, legislative change to the NSW Government in order to address current issues.*

In passing the above resolution the Conference noted the Tribunal's 2025 Determination which acknowledged that demographic and economic shifts – including growth from State-led programs such as Transport Oriented Development and Renewable Energy Zones – are substantially increasing the complexity and scope of council operations. LGNSW has also analysed work value data both in New South Wales and Victorian contexts to advance the submission that the roles of councillors and mayors have evolved significantly since the initial fee was set in 1995 and require an uplift in fees to reflect this complexity.

The 2025 LGNSW Annual Conference also resolved the following (Resolution 75):

1. *That Local Government NSW calls on the NSW Government to:*
   a. *Release the Candidate and Councillor Diversity Report for the 2024 NSW Local Government election, with the inclusion of statistics for candidates and councillors who are parents, guardians and/or carers;*

b. *Develop a program for paid parental leave for councillors, inclusive of adoption leave and leave for supporting parents and ensure entitlement timeframes are aligned with the Australian Government Paid Parental Leave scheme administered by Services Australia;*
c. *Amend s 234(d) of the Local Government Act 1993 (NSW) to provide that a councillor may not be removed from their office due to an absence from 3 or more consecutive meetings of the council where the absence is due to caring for a newborn child or immediately following the adoption of a child;*
d. *Amend s 254A of the Local Government Act 1993 (NSW) to provide that councillors who are absent from council business due to caring for a newborn child or immediately following the adoption of a child are entitled to receive their full annual fee for the duration of any such absence from council business and ensure these provisions align with the parental leave timeframes provided by Services Australia;*
e. *Consider a framework for leave arrangements for councillors with other caring responsibilities;*
f. *Consider how council representation might be maintained to represent election outcomes, such as through mechanisms including proxies or pairing, to accommodate the needs of councillors to meet caring responsibilities.*

2. *That Local Government NSW calls on the President of the Australian Local Government Association requesting the adoption of a policy position in favour of paid parental leave for councillors; and*
3. *That Local Government NSW calls on the Australian Government to review and implement a scheme that allows councillors across NSW and Australia to access the Australian Government Parental Leave Pay program, managed by Services Australia.*

At the 2024 Annual Conference, the following resolutions were passed:

Resolution 31:
"That Local Government NSW lobbies the NSW Office of Local Government to amend section 249(5) of the Local Government Act 1993 to reflect that during periods that a mayor takes planned leave, or extended periods of unplanned leave, deputy mayors may act in the role of the mayor and receive the mayoral allowance (including superannuation) whilst not depriving the mayor of the mayoral allowance".

Resolution 32:

"Consistent councillor remuneration – That Local Government NSW calls on the Australian and NSW Governments to implement councillor remuneration that is set at a level that enables elected councillors to devote a substantial amount of time on council matters."

LGNSW acknowledges the difficulties which arise from the current drafting of the LG Act with respect to the proposal advanced in 2025's Resolution 75 and 2024's Resolution 31. However, the substance of Resolution 32 seeks that the Tribunal acknowledges, by way of its fee determination, that the role of a councillor and/or a mayor is not simply that of a local community volunteer. These representatives are responsible for significant finances, and for making decisions which impact their local communities in a substantial way. The increasingly prominent role of local government in decisions of this nature has not yet been taken into account in setting councillor fees and, consistent with the motion, LGNSW strongly submits that the Tribunal should adopt its proposed framework in order to provide fair remuneration for local representatives.

Summary

LGNSW's submission advances the following propositions:

- The current framework does not apply the legislative criteria faithfully to each of the categories.
- The current framework does not adequately capture the complexity of councils and the requirements of councillors and mayors
- The Victorian local government remuneration scheme should be considered as a viable alternative to the present model adopted in New South Wales.
- Points should be assigned to each criteria, and councils should be assessed against a particular criterion and awarded points depending on the nature of the council.
- The points should then be added and the council placed into a category, which will determine the applicable fee.
- The categories of councils are presently convoluted and repetitive. The Tribunal should consider reducing the categories to six in total (inclusive of two special categories for County Councils and the City of Sydney Council, based on their unique circumstances).
- These categories should not be divisible based on a metropolitan/rural label and should be assessed based on the nature of the particular council, assessed against the criteria.

- The present fee determination applicable to each category of council fails to consider the increasingly complex and demanding role of a councillor and/or mayor.
- Work value survey data collected by LGNSW in 2026 (and earlier in 2006 and 2018) is consistent with data published in the Victorian local government context which suggests that councillors are performing on average, over 20 hours of work per week and mayors are consistently required to perform more than 40 hours of work to satisfactorily discharge their duties.
- Mayors and councillors who have provided statements in support of LGNSW's submission report that time required to perform official duties and attend to official business has increased dramatically as the level of complexity and volume of matters dealt with at council matters has increased markedly. They also report significant travel and community commitments account for much more of their time outside of official business.
- Witnesses and survey respondents universally report that social media and online engagement has become an essential component of the duties of a councillor or mayor. Digital platforms have quickly replaced traditional media as one of the prevailing ways that community members engage with their representatives. This must be accounted for in the Tribunal's assessment.
- The survey data and academic scholarship suggests that the current fee arrangements do little to encourage diversity in representation among councillors and mayors. The data has consistently borne out that local government office is beyond the reach of many individuals who are not retired, independently wealthy or self-funded. Such a state of affairs does not attract quality candidates to stand for local government and therefore adversely affects communities and the quality of representation they receive.

LGNSW considers that the proposed categories and the criteria by which councils are assessed will assist the Tribunal in undertaking a fair and reasoned assessment as part of its Annual Determination. Similarly, the proposed fee structure will reduce inequity between like councils and adequately remunerate councillors and mayors for the duties they perform in service to their community.

LGNSW thanks the Tribunal for the opportunity to provide a submission.

ANNEXURE LG-1

MASTERTEK
MAKING STRATEGY WORK

Mayor and Councillors Remuneration and Classification Review

Incorporating a Survey of NSW Mayors and Councillors

November 2006

Mastertek Pty Ltd
Level 11, 15-19 bent Street
Sydney NSW 2001
Phone: 02 8224 8400
Email: *graham.childs@mastertek.com.au*



Table of Contents

Table of Contents 2
1. *Introduction* 3
2. *Background* 4
3. *Project Methodology* 5
4. *Survey Findings* 7
5. *Comparative analysis of growth in remuneration* 26
6. *Comparative analysis of Councillor fees* 30
7. *Conclusions & Recommendations* 35

Appendix: References 39



1. Introduction

Mastertek was appointed by the Local Government and Shires Associations of NSW (LSGA) to conduct an independent review of the appropriateness of the current level of fees paid to mayors and councillors in NSW. The LGSA was of the view that the current fees do not adequately reflect the elected members' statutory responsibilities and the volume of the work that mayors and councillors undertake on behalf of their communities.

Mastertek interviewed eight councillors identified by the LGSA, representing a range of rural, regional and metropolitan councils; developed a survey questionnaire (which was piloted by members of the LGSA Executive); and conducted the survey of all NSW mayors and councillors using a combination of electronic and hard copy data collection methods.

In total, 466 councillors completed a questionnaire, representing an overall response rate of **30.26%**. The key findings from this survey and our analysis of comparable roles are explored in detail in Sections 4, 5 and 6 of this report, and our conclusions and recommendations arising from these analyses are presented in Section 7.

This report is prepared in confidence for the Local Government & Shires Associations of New South Wales (LGSA). It may not be copied or distributed to third parties without the consent of MasterTEK Pty Ltd. © MasterTEK Pty Ltd, October 2006.

2. Background

The Local Government and Shires Associations of NSW (LSGA) appointed Mastertek to conduct an independent review of the appropriateness of the current level of fees paid to mayors and councillors in NSW. The LGSA was of the view that the current fees do not adequately reflect the elected members' statutory responsibilities and the volume of the work that mayors and councillors undertake on behalf of their communities.

2.1 Terms of reference

The tasks to be undertaken as part of the review were to:

- Review and analyse the decisions of the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal;
- Compare mayor and councillor remuneration against that of comparable roles;
- Review and comment on the current categorisation of councils as determined by the Tribunal with regard to the matters set out in section 240 of the Local Government Act (NSW) 1993 (The Act); and
- Present a report detailing a comparative analysis of the current fee structures.

2.2 LGSA concerns

Since the introduction of mayor and councillor fees in 1994, the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal has provided for increases to the maximum fees payable to a councillor of around 2.8% per annum for most council categories (see section 6.1 of this report). The LGSA considers that these increases are at best, modest and do not reflect the elected members' statutory responsibilities and the volume of the work they undertake on behalf of their communities.

Further, the LGSA considers that the fees set by the Tribunal are not adequate.

Mastertek interviewed a selection of metropolitan, regional and rural councillors identified by the LGSA. The outcome of these interviews was the identification of issues impacting on the time commitment and the financial burden of councillors, and the identification of other factors that may be relevant for this review. These issues were incorporated into the design of a detailed questionnaire which was then distributed to all mayors and councillors in New South Wales.



3. Project Methodology

Mastertek undertook the following activities:

3.1 Stakeholder interviews

Interviews were held with eight councillors identified by the LGSA, representing a range of rural, regional and metropolitan councils.

The purpose of these interviews was to:

- Obtain an understanding of the key functions, including responsibilities and key accountabilities of the roles of mayor and councillor;
- Obtain their views on the current demands of mayors and councillors, including but not limited to on-call duties, preparation, expectations etc;
- Obtain their views on the fairness of the current level of rewards & classification of councils;
- Determine their views on the outcomes of the review; and
- Define a list of comparable roles in other like organisations.

3.2 Questionnaire design

Mastertek drafted a questionnaire for the purpose of surveying all mayors and councillors, with input from LGSA Workplace Solutions staff. The questionnaire was specifically designed to obtain information from mayors and councillors about their role on council and the remuneration they receive for the time they spend.

The survey was designed to collect information from mayors and councillors in four sections:

- Section 1: Background information (covering questions about the respondent, their council, and their council office);
- Section 2: Councillor responsibilities (including questions about the respondent's motivation for becoming a councillor and the requirements of their role in terms of time commitment and required travel);
- Section 3: Resources and rewards (covering questions about the support and resources provided by council, out of pocket costs and expenses incurred by the councillor, remuneration received, and jobs that are seen as comparable to council offices);
- Section 4: Additional comments

These topics covered the issues identified during interviews with key stakeholders and were considered by the Project Team to be of relevance to the issue of councillor remuneration.

In designing the questionnaire, consideration was given to the order of questions; provision of clear and concise instructions; provision of relevant examples where



necessary; construction of questions to minimise leading or biased wording; response options for closed questions; and space to respond for open-ended questions.

The survey questionnaire was tested by members of the LGSA Executive, and feedback from the pilot program was incorporated into the final questionnaire.

3.3 Data Collection

All NSW councillors were invited to participate in the survey by completing a questionnaire. Councillors were provided with the following options for survey participation:

- Electronic via an online survey tool; or
- Hard copy (each questionnaire was supplied with a reply paid envelope for participants to return their survey directly to Mastertek for analysis).

Mayors and councillors from all general purpose councils were invited to participate in the survey. Councils that were under administration at the time the survey was carried out were excluded, including:

-
- Liverpool
- Mid West Regional
- Tweed
- Walgett
- Warringah

In total, 1,540 hard-copy questionnaires were distributed. Data collection occurred over an eight week period concluding on 3 July 2006.

A small number of councils requested additional hard copies. Reasons given included not receiving the original package or receiving insufficient quantity for the number of councillors.

This report details the findings of the review, and in particular, the results from the survey of mayors and councillors.



4. Survey Findings

4.1 Survey Participation

Councillors were encouraged to participate in the survey but not required to do so. Voluntary participation can result in a skewed sample that is not necessarily representative of the total population of councillors. However, a high level of participation in the survey would minimise any skew in the sample due to participation in the survey being voluntary.

The time frame for survey completion was extended several times in order to maximise participation. In total, 466 councillors completed a questionnaire, representing an overall response rate of **30.26%**. There were also significant differences in response rates based on council location, with metropolitan based councillors achieving the lowest level of participation and rural councillors achieving the highest.

Response Rates by council location			
Location	**# of responses**	**Response rate**	**# of Councils**
Metropolitan	100	22%	30
Regional	126	29%	38
Rural	237	40%	57
Total	466	30.26%	125

Mastertek are of the view that although the response rate was lower than expected, a response rate of over 30% is significant. The results do highlight the concerns of councillors and provide a picture of the different views of these elected representatives. In our view, the survey provides a representative sample of councillors from which valid conclusions may be drawn.

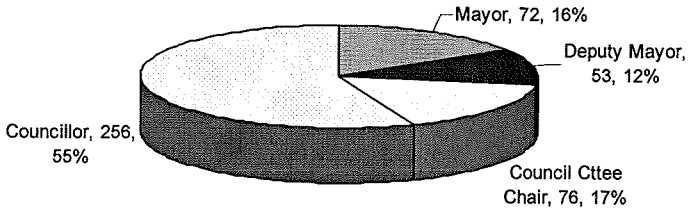
4.2 Participant Profile

Participants were asked a number of questions about themselves, their council and their council office. This section provides a profile of survey respondents and can be used to assess whether the sample of survey respondents has a similar profile to that of all NSW councillors and that of the wider community that they are elected to represent.

The number of survey participants in each **council category** is shown below.

Distribution by council category		
Council category	**# of responses**	**% of responses**
Category 1A	9	2.1%
Category 1	37	8.4%
Category 2	56	12.8%
Category 3	99	22.6%
Category 4	210	47.8%
S1	3	0.7%
S2	12	2.7%
S3	9	2.1%
S4	4	0.9%

The distribution of survey participants (showing both number and percentage of responses) by **council office** is illustrated below.



Survey respondents were asked to specify the year in which they first became a councillor (Q02). Overall, there was a range of years between 1959 and 2006 and an average length of service of 8.3 years as a councillor. The average number of years as a councillor is summarised below for the different council offices and council locations.

Average number of years as a councillor by council office	
Mayor	13.5
Deputy Mayor	8.2
Council Cttee Chair	7.4
Councillor	7.0
Average	8.3

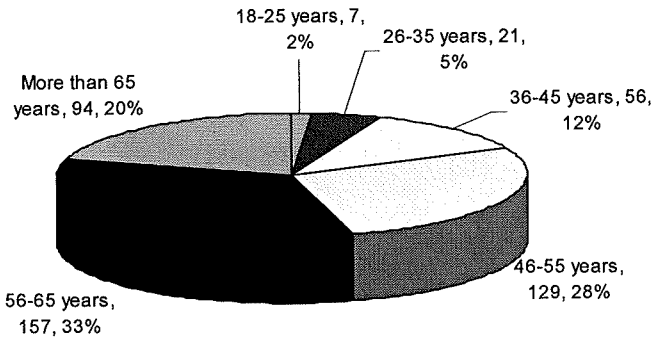
On average, respondents who currently fulfil the office of mayor have been a councillor for a greater length of time than other respondents, suggesting that it is generally the councillors with more experience who are elected to the office of mayor. However, there is not a significant difference in length of service based on council location. Metropolitan councillors have on average, 7.8 years service whereas regional councillors have 8.1 years and rural councillors 8.7 years.

The distribution of survey participants by **gender** highlights the under-representation of females on councils compared to the communities that councillors are elected to represent. 74% of councillors are male and 26% are female. The gender distribution by council office is also shown – while 70% of councillors are male, 90% of mayors and 81% of deputy mayors are male.

Gender distribution by council office						
	Mayor	Deputy Mayor	Council Committee Chair	Councillor	Office not specified	Overall
Male	90%	81%	70%	70%	75%	74%
Female	10%	19%	30%	30%	25%	26%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

The distribution of survey participants (showing both number and percentage of responses) by **age** is shown in the following graph. A very high proportion of

respondents (81.9%) are more than 45 years of age, and 54.1% are aged 56 years and over.



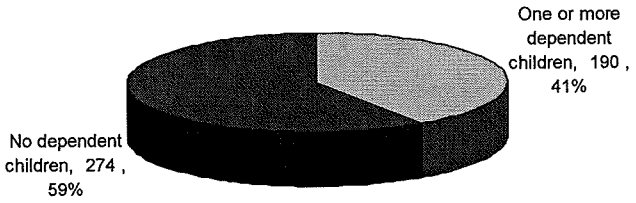
Although exact comparisons are not possible due to slightly different age brackets, comparisons against the 2001 census results suggest that our sample of participating councillors is older than that of the NSW population, even when those under the age of 15 are excluded from the census results.

The age profile of councillors is due to a number of factors, some of which may include:

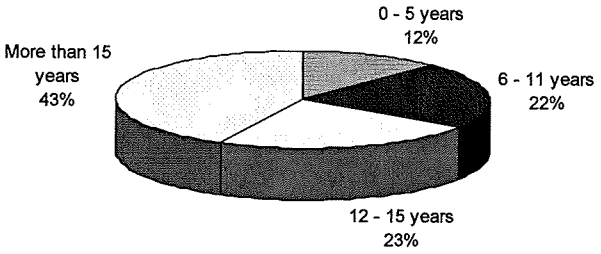
- Persons under the age of 18 cannot be elected representatives
- Older persons generally have more time for voluntary or part-time work
- Older persons with a variety of life experiences may be more likely to be elected by the community than a younger person.

Participants were asked whether or not they have **dependent children**, and if so, their ages. Given the age profile of councillors shown above, well over half of the survey sample have no dependent children and of those that do, 66% are aged 12 years and over.

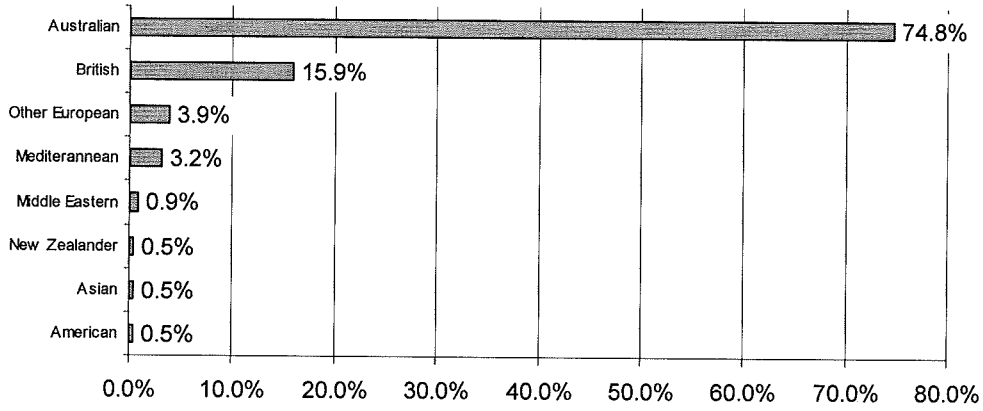
Q09: Do you have dependent children?



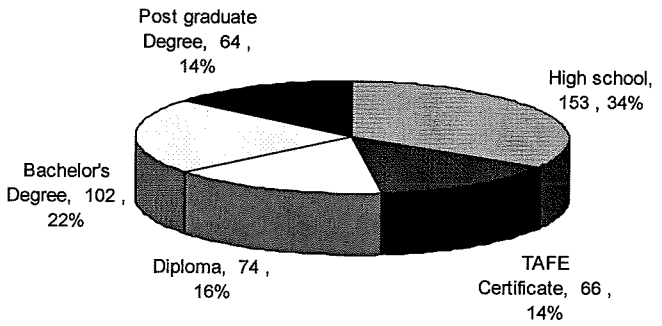
Q10: If yes, what ages?



The following graph highlights the predominance of councillors who consider their **ethnic origin** to be Australian, representing 75% of all responses. British (including English, Irish, Scottish, Celtic, UK, Anglo Saxon, Cornish and Welsh) is the next most common, representing 16% of the survey sample[1]. These results are not inconsistent with the 2001 census results which showed that 70.5% of NSW residents were born in Australia and 3.5% were born in England.



More than one-third of participating councillors identified high school as their highest level of **completed education**._

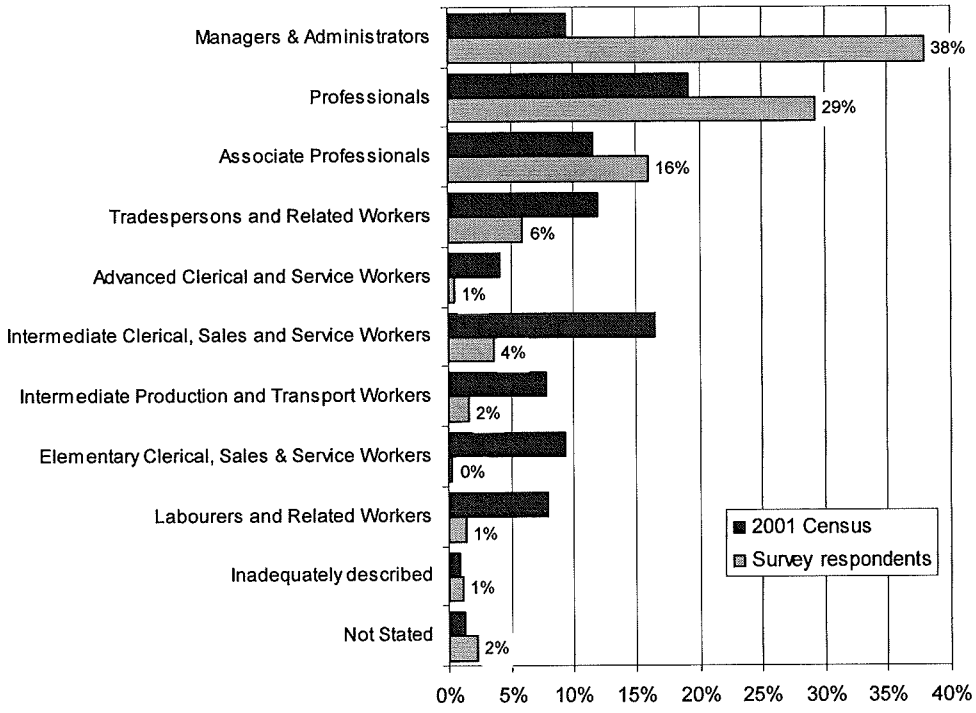


[1] No response scale was provided for this question – respondents were invited to state their ethnic origin. These responses were grouped into categories for the purpose of analysis. Asian includes Korean and Loatian; Australian includes Aboriginal (2 responses); British includes English, Irish, Scottish, Celtic, United Kingdom, Anglo Saxon, Cornish, Welsh; Mediterranean includes Greek, Italian and Maltese; Middle Eastern includes Armenian, Lebanese, Palestinian; Other European includes German, Dutch, Polish, French, European.

The report of the Independent Inquiry into the Financial Sustainability of NSW Local Government (LGI) (2006) suggests that many councillors believe they are ill-equipped to perform some of the roles and responsibilities that are expected of them (such as understanding detailed internal processes and interpreting financial reports and performance information). This may be partly due to the level of formal education completed and partly due to the complexity and diversity of services offered by councils in NSW. In any case, the findings from the inquiry support the need for further training and professional development of councillors.

The majority of respondents specified an **occupation** (grouped according to the ASCO classifications) that is managerial / administrative or professional in nature, and these occupational classifications are significantly over-represented amongst councillors when compared to the general NSW population (refer 2001 census).

The distribution of respondents by ASCO classification is compared to the results from the 2001 census in the following graph. The graph excludes those who are retired (20.8%) or not otherwise in paid employment (2.8%).



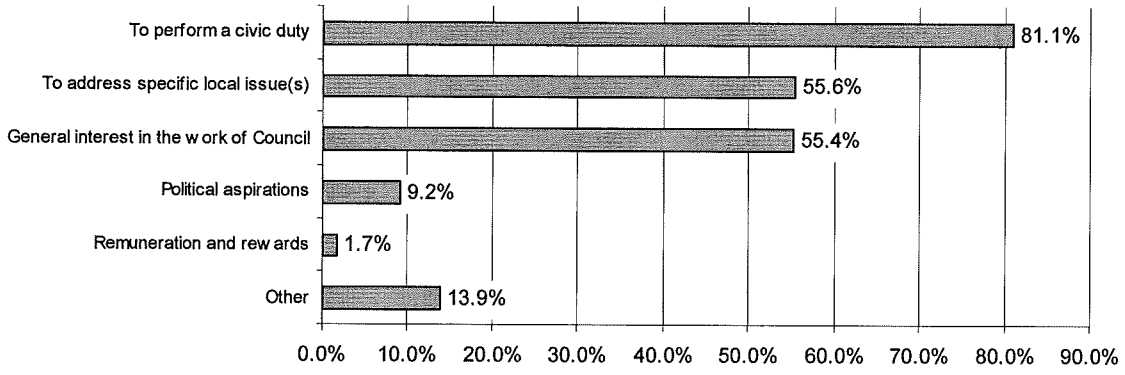
A survey conducted by the NSW Department of Local Government in 2000 found that 64% of metropolitan councillors listed their occupation as professional or managerial, versus 41% in regional councils.

The results from this survey showed that 54% of respondents in metropolitan councils listed their occupation as professional or managerial (using the top two ASCO groupings shown above), compared to 48% in regional councils and 52% in rural councils. (These percentages include councillors who have retired and those who are not in paid employment.)

Occupation / Profession (ASCO classifications) by council location	Metro	Regional	Rural
Managers & Administrators	15.0%	22.2%	38.8%
Professionals	39.0%	26.2%	13.1%
Associate Professionals	15.0%	14.3%	10.1%
Tradespersons and Related Workers	4.0%	7.1%	3.4%
Advanced Clerical and Service Workers	1.0%	0.0%	0.4%
Intermediate Clerical, Sales and Service Workers	5.0%	1.6%	2.5%
Intermediate Production and Transport Workers	0.0%	0.8%	2.1%
Elementary Clerical, Sales & Service Workers	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%
Labourers and Related Workers	1.0%	0.0%	1.7%
Inadequately described	0.0%	1.6%	0.8%
Not Stated	1.0%	2.4%	0.8%
Retired	15.0%	22.2%	22.8%
Not in paid employment *(eg unemployed, pensioner, home duties etc)*	4.0%	1.6%	3.0%

4.3 Councillor motivation

Participants were asked about their **reasons for becoming a councillor**. The majority of respondents indicated that their motivation for becoming a councillor was a combination of factors – this is illustrated in the following graph which shows the distribution of responses received.



67% of respondents indicated that the role has **met their expectations**, although 43% are not intending to **stand for election again**.

Respondents who stated that the role has not met their expectations were asked to indicate how it is different to what they had expected. The responses are summarised in the following table by length of service on council.

How the role of councillor is different to expectations by total number of years as a councillor										
	Overall		0-3 years		4-6 years		7-9 years		>9 years	
More complex	7	9%	5	11%	0	0%	0	0%	2	13%
More diverse range of activities	2	3%	1	2%	0	0%	0	0%	1	7%
More bureaucracy	20	26%	10	21%	4	36%	2	40%	4	27%
More time consuming	18	23%	12	26%	2	18%	1	20%	3	20%
more interference, constraints, pressure from state government	14	18%	6	13%	2	18%	3	60%	3	20%
Less strategic	6	8%	6	13%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
More self-interested colleagues and politicking	23	29%	14	30%	3	27%	1	20%	5	33%
Less support (eg training, admin)	1	1%	1	2%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
More rewarding	1	1%	0	0%	1	9%	0	0%	0	0%

Respondents were also asked to indicate their reason(s) for not standing for election again, and the responses include reasons for those who are still undecided. 32% of survey respondents (151 councillors) gave one or more reasons. The main reasons given for not intending to stand at the next election include age, financial hardship, and frustration with bureaucracy.

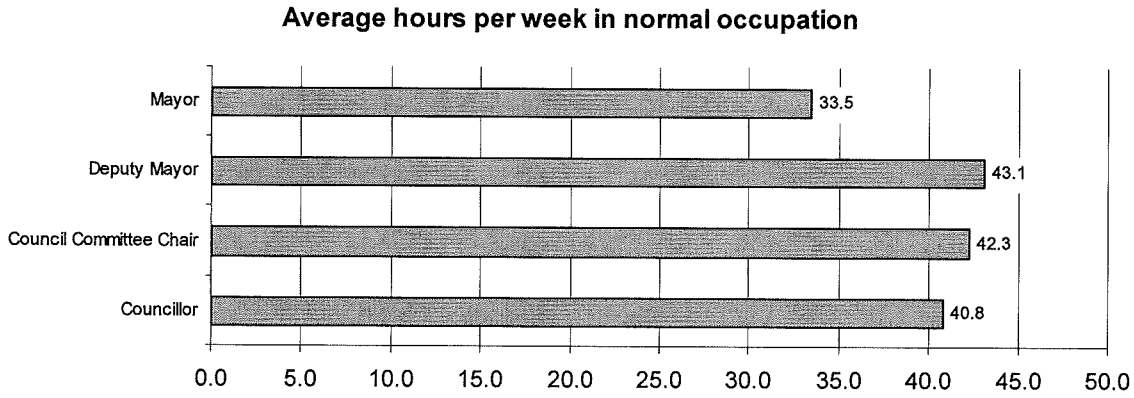
Age is the most significant factor for respondents aged more than 65 years, whereas financial hardship is of greatest concern to councillors aged below 56 years. Councillors experiencing the most frustration with bureaucracy are aged 56-65 years. An analysis of the reasons given by the age of the respondent is shown in the following table.

Reasons for not standing for election again by age														
	Overall		18-25 years		26 – 35 years		36 – 45 years		46 – 55 years		56 – 65 years		>65 years	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Age *(too old, want to retire)*	36	24%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	3%	8	18%	26	62%
Financial hardship	35	23%	1	50%	3	43%	8	50%	15	39%	5	11%	2	5%
Frustration with bureaucracy *(including hard to make a difference)*	31	21%	0	0%	1	14%	3	19%	6	16%	14	31%	7	17%
Time commitment	23	15%	0	0%	2	29%	6	38%	9	24%	3	7%	2	5%
Time to leave the role, give others a turn	20	13%	0	0%	0	0%	1	6%	7	18%	8	18%	4	10%
Length of Service *(long enough on council)*	18	12%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	3	8%	10	22%	5	12%
Personal reasons *(family, health etc)*	15	10%	0	0%	1	14%	3	19%	3	8%	4	9%	4	10%
Political aspirations *(State or Federal)*	4	3%	0	0%	1	14%	1	6%	1	3%	0	0%	1	2%
Relocating outside council area	4	3%	1	50%	0	0%	0	0%	2	5%	1	2%	0	0%

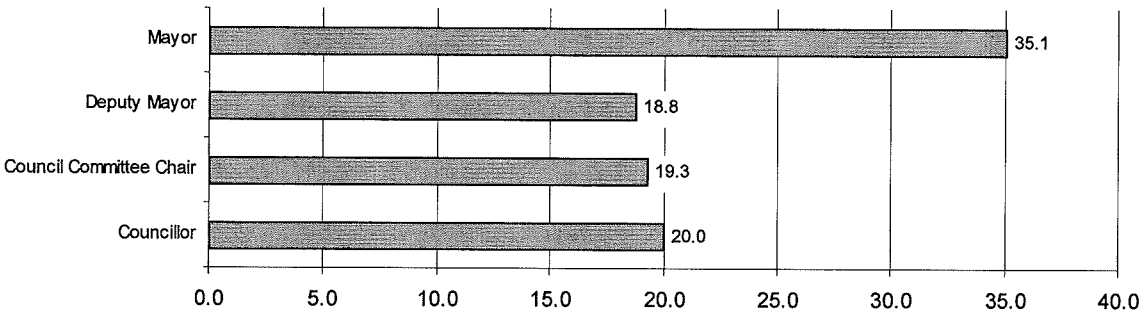
4.4 Time commitment of councillors

On average, councillors spend 40 **hours per week in their normal occupation / profession** in addition to their council duties. In 1995, the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal stated that "the value of the contribution of councillors and mayors is enhanced by their involvement in other occupations ... [which] enables them to remain in touch with the community and adds to their value in evaluating competing community needs". Possibly because of the additional council duties incumbent on

mayors, the survey results show that these respondents spend significantly less time than other councillors in their normal occupation. This is illustrated in the following graph.



Participants were also asked questions about their time commitment as a councillor, including an estimate of the average hours they spend on a variety of council activities. The **average hours per week on council business** is summarised by council office in the following graph. Consistent with the findings from the previous question which showed that mayors spend less time than other councillors in their normal occupation, the time commitment of mayors is significantly greater than that of other council offices and represents a full-time workload. On the other hand, the current workload of councillors (including deputy mayor and council committee chair) clearly suggests that the office of councillor is a part-time role.



On average, survey respondents spend the greatest amounts of time each week on committees and task forces, and research and preparation, followed by constituent matters and formal council meetings.

Average hours per week on a variety of council activities by council office					
	Mayor	Deputy Mayor	Council Cttee Chair	Councillor	Overall
Formal council meetings	2.7	2.4	2.2	2.4	1.8
Committees & task forces	4.2	3.5	3.7	4.1	3.9
Research & preparation	3.8	3.8	3.3	3.9	1.9
Constituent matters, within jurisdiction	4.7	2.0	2.7	3.0	1.1
Constituent phone calls	2.3	1.3	1.5	1.7	1.7
Council policy & management	3.4	1.4	1.5	1.5	1.2
Ceremonial	3.8	1.1	1.0	1.0	0.3
Administration	5.6	1.3	1.4	1.3	2.2
Media Liaison	1.8	0.6	0.7	0.8	1.0
Training	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.8	0.2
Constituent matters, outside jurisdiction	1.5	1.0	0.9	0.9	1.0
Charities or community groups as council representative	2.6	1.5	1.6	1.5	1.7
Other	5.5	3.5	2.2	2.6	3.3
Total average hours per week	**35.1**	**18.8**	**19.3**	**20.0**	**21.9**

The average total hours spent each week on council business is summarised by council office and council location in the following table.

Average hours per week on council business by council office and council location		
	Mayor	Councillor
Metropolitan	40	22
Regional	53	25
Rural	30	14
Overall Average	**35**	**19**

The hours that councillors currently spend on council business have also been categorised into groupings. For each council office, the percentage of respondents within each grouping is detailed below. 50% of respondents in the office of councillor spend up to fifteen hours per week on council business. In comparison, almost 34% of mayors spend 40 or more hours per week on council business suggesting that in a large number of councils, the office of mayor entails a full-time workload.

Average hours per week on council business by council office					
Hours per week	Mayor	Deputy Mayor	Council Committee Chair	Councillor	Total Sample
Below 15 hours	14.1%	45.3%	44.7%	54.4%	46.1%
16-24 hours	28.2%	35.8%	30.3%	23.8%	26.8%
25-34 hours	16.9%	9.4%	15.8%	9.7%	11.6%
35-39 hours	7.0%	3.8%	2.6%	3.6%	3.9%
40 or more hours	33.8%	5.7%	6.5%	8.4%	11.6%

One of the common themes from the stakeholder interviews was the variability in hours



spent. The role of councillor does not have standard or even minimum expected working hours that exist in many other occupations, and the degree of involvement varies widely from council to council and from councillor to councillor. The dynamics of each elected council, its structures and policies will result in variations between councils, and several of the interviewees stated that the variation between councillors within a council is largely due to the motivation and personal commitment of individual councillors.

Many councillors are also expected to **travel on council business**, and the survey questionnaire asked respondents to indicate the total number of days per year on which they are required to travel. On average, councillors travel on 118 days per year on council business, with the majority of this travel occurring within the boundaries of the local government area. These results are summarised in the following table.

Travel on council business, days per annum on which travel is required				
	Average	25th percentile	50th percentile	75th percentile
Local travel within council area	100	20	52	158
Local travel outside council area	16	5	10	20
Non-local travel, within NSW	9	4	6	10
Interstate travel	6	3	4	8
Overseas travel	8	3	7	11
Total days per annum	**118**	**28**	**71**	**190**

Overall, 78% of survey respondents indicated that their **time commitment since becoming a councillor** has increased. An analysis of the time commitment of survey participants by council office is shown in the following table.

Change in time commitment since becoming a councillor by council office				
	Mayor	Deputy Mayor	Council Committee Chair	Councillor
Increased	94.4%	83.0%	76.3%	73.7%
Remained about the same	4.2%	15.1%	21.1%	23.5%
Decreased	1.4%	1.9%	2.6%	2.8%

These results are consistent with the **change in complexity of council activities**, where 81% of respondents indicated that council's current activities are more complex than when they first became a councillor. These results are shown by council office in the following table.

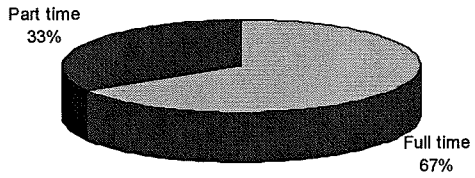
Change in complexity of council activities by council office				
	Mayor	Deputy Mayor	Council Committee Chair	Councillor
Significantly more complex	81.7%	71.2%	55.3%	48.8%
Slightly more complex	12.7%	17.3%	19.7%	28.9%
Remained about the same	2.8%	9.6%	18.4%	19.9%
Less complex	2.8%	1.9%	6.6%	2.4%

Feedback from participants in the stakeholder interviews suggest that the complexity of council activities has increased because of the expectation that councils will deliver more

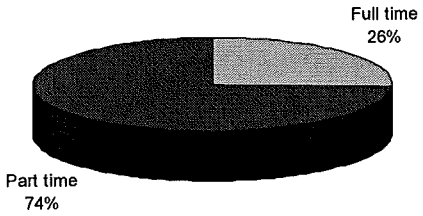
diverse services to the community on behalf of state and federal government agencies. Specifically, this relates to "cost-shifting" which has been addressed in some depth by the LGI (2006).

Participants were asked whether the offices of mayor and councillor should be **full-time or part-time**, and whether there should be an office of Deputy Mayor. The majority of survey respondents believe that the office of councillor should be part-time but that the office of major should be full time. This is illustrated in the following graph.

Should the Office of Mayor be Full-time of Part-time?



Should the office of councillor be Full-time of Part-time?



These results are consistent with the survey findings in relation to the time commitment of councillors, which noted that more than one-third of mayors commit more than 40 hours per week on council business.

4.4 Councillor fees

The maximum annual fees set by the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal in 2006 are as follows:

Maximum Annual Fees for mayors and councillors by council category		
	Mayor[2]	Councillor
Category 4	26,680	8,380
Category 3	44,500	13,980
Category 2	44,500	13,980
Category 1	65,070	17,795
Category 1A	82,080	20,965
S4	18,470	6,990
S3	11,820	4,190
S2	82,080	20,965
S1	181,440	19,065

Source: The Local Government Remuneration Tribunal (2006)

Participants were also asked to state the annual dollar value of fees they receive for their office on council. The average annual amount was $13,082.

An hourly rate was calculated for participants who provided information on both the hours they spend each month on council business and the annual dollar value of the fees they receive. This is summarised below.

Councillor fees as an hourly rate based on hours worked by council office		
	Mayor	Councillor
Average	$18.49	$15.18
25th percentile	$9.39	$8.45
50th percentile	$14.81	$12.61
75th percentile	$23.86	$19.62

Participants were asked to provide their view on whether the **fees set by the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal are adequate** for the roles and duties they undertake as a councillor. Over 60% of the councillors participating in the survey stated that the fees are **not** adequate.

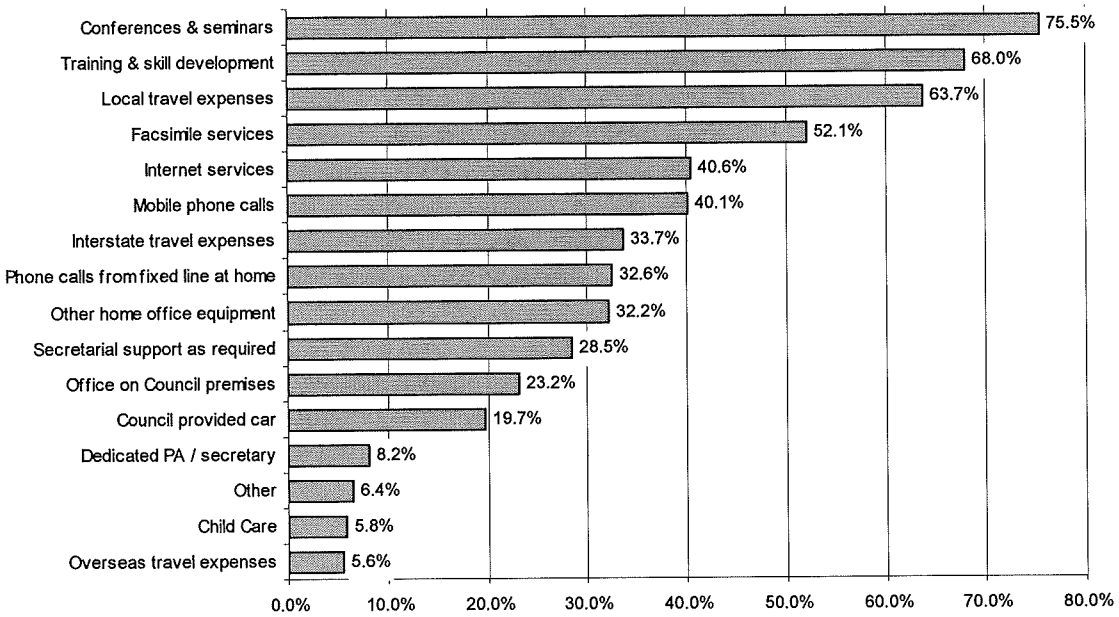
[2] Includes councillor fee

The results are summarised in the following table, which shows the percentage of respondents who believe the fees are inadequate by council office, council location, and council category.

Percentage of respondents who believe the fees are inadequate for the roles and duties undertaken by council office, council location, and council category	
All respondents	***62.4%***
Analysis by council office	
Mayor	80.0%
Deputy Mayor	52.0%
Council Committee Chair	63.9%
Councillor	58.6%
Analysis by council location	
Metropolitan	66.7%
Regional	56.4%
Rural	64.1%

4.5 Expenses reimbursed and out of pocket expenses

Councils provide, pay for, or reimburse a range of councillor expenses, and the most commonly identified selected items are shown in the following graph.



Other includes Meals or refreshments at council meetings; Stationery; Cabcharge; Laptop computer; Printer; Phone line rental; corporate credit card; travel to conferences; clothing; local newspaper; Accommodation; Phone line installation; and Travel expenses within NSW.



58% of survey respondents indicated that there are costs (either direct or indirect) that they are not currently able to claim as an expense and receive reimbursement from council. Types of costs specified and the median cost of each (if available) are summarised in the following table.

Type and estimated cost of out-of-pocket expenses		
Type	**# of cases**	**Median Cost ($ per annum)**
Travel (over and above amounts reimbursed by Council)	110	$1,000
Phone costs (home &/or mobile phone)	100	$610
Clothing	53	$800
Stationery & postage	38	$225
Donations, raffles, gifts	38	$300
Internet costs	32	$360
Home office	25	$1,000
Functions, tickets	24	$400
Dry Cleaning	22	$300
Computer or laptop	19	$493
Lost hours at work or direct cost to own business	54	$7,000
Functions, tickets for spouse	14	$1,000
Printing & clerical	12	$650
Meals	12	$525
Child care & babysitting	10	NA
Entertaining	9	$375
Personal grooming	6	NA
Research costs (including newspapers, magazines, books etc)	6	$1,200
Other	9	$3,000

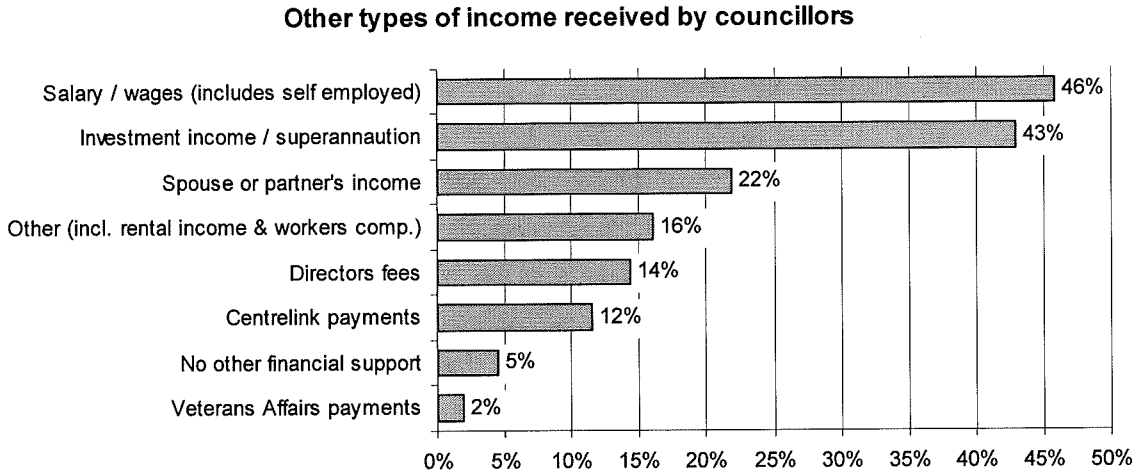
There were a number of comments from councillors who have chosen not to claim some out of pocket expenses incurred, and in general these respondents did not provide an estimate of the cost. Of those respondents who were able to estimate the cost of out-of-pocket expenses that they are not currently able to receive reimbursement, the average is $5,671 per annum (median cost = $2,000 per annum). In addition, a surprisingly large number of respondents identified clothing as an expense that is directly attributable to their role on council but that they are unable to claim (with a median annual cost of $800). In particular, this item related to a greater volume and more formal style of clothing than they would otherwise require.

The Department of Local Government (2006) has recently issued guidelines as to the payment of expenses and the provision of facilities for mayors and councillors in NSW which allows councils to establish an expense policy that addresses many of the out of pocket expenses identified in the table above.

There are, however, some items that cannot be addressed via a council's expense policy. The most significant of these is the cost of time (including lost hours at work, loss of business, or a direct cost to the councillor's own business) with a median annual cost of $7,000 and the additional clothing requirements discussed above.

4.6 Other types of income received by councillors

Typically, councillors receive income in the form of salary or wages from their normal occupation or investment income / superannuation pension[3].



The **income** that councillors receive in addition to the fees they receive from council is widely distributed, with 32% currently receiving a gross amount of between $500 and $999 per week.

	Mayor	Deputy Mayor	Council Committee Chair	Councillor	Overall
$1500 or more per week	22.1%	20.8%	29.7%	18.2%	20.9%
$1000-$1499 per week	10.3%	15.1%	23.0%	19.0%	17.6%
$500-$999 per week	33.8%	32.1%	25.7%	33.6%	32.2%
$200-$499 per week	11.8%	22.6%	12.2%	17.8%	16.9%
Less than $200 per week	22.1%	9.4%	9.5%	11.3%	12.4%

Participants were asked to provide details of any **decrease in income since becoming a councillor**. 36.5% of respondents indicated that their income has decreased. On average, the income received by councillors has decreased by $25,680 per annum.

Decrease in annual income since becoming a councillor	
Average	$25,680
25th percentile	$10,000
50th percentile	$20,000
75th percentile	$30,000

[3] Councillors could select more than one form of income received. Therefore percentages do not add to 100%.

Notwithstanding the fees they receive for their work on council, councillors are generally "worse off" financially since becoming a councillor. There has been an increase in the time commitment of councillors, the role of councillor is more complex than ever before, there are out of pocket costs for which reimbursement cannot be claimed, and many councillors have experienced a significant decrease in annual income. These results are consistent with the 23% of councillors who indicated that they are not intending to stand for election again because of financial hardship.

In addition to any decline in income, a significant proportion of councillors are also **self funding the following benefits**.

	% of councillors self funding	Average annual cost
Superannuation	52.9%	$10,346
Life insurance	54.0%	$2,040
Salary continuance insurance	44.2%	$2,434
Health insurance	62.5%	$2,185

Possibly because of a decrease in annual income, 42% of survey respondents indicated that they were **actively looking for additional sources of income**.

4.7 Training and skill development

The LGI (2006) report stated that:

> *"Councillors have little or no corporate experience, and there is a high turnover of councillors at elections. They are required to understand detailed internal processes and interpret financial reports and performance information. These are roles and responsibilities that many councillors in Inquiry workshops acknowledged they are ill equipped to perform effectively."*

The LGSA provide a number of training courses for councillors as part of their Councillor Professional Development Program (CPDP) and survey participants were asked to specify the training that they have undertaken as a councillor within the last two terms. Participating mayors and councillors recognise the need for training and have actively engaged in professional development programs offered by the LGSA. Over 80% of respondents indicated that they have undertaken one or more of the LGSA's CPDP modules (the number and types of modules undertaken within the last two terms is shown below).

Number of CPDP modules undertaken in last 2 terms

None
18.9%

1 module
14.6%

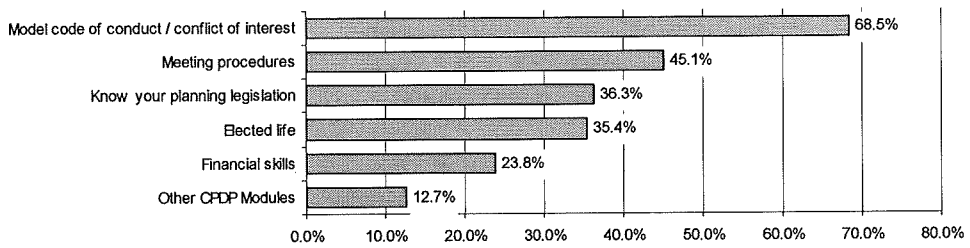
2 modules
23.6%

3 modules
22.1%

4 modules
13.1%

5 modules
5.2%

6 or more modules
2.6%



Participants were also asked to identify **additional training that they require** in their role as a councillor. The most commonly identified training needs are legislation updates (including planning legislation) and financial skills.

Additional training needs		
	Count	%
Legislation updates (including Planning)	49	19.8%
Financial skills	44	17.8%
Media skills	21	8.5%
Meeting procedures or chairing meetings	21	8.5%
Computer skills	11	4.4%
Time management	11	4.4%
LG Act (including roles of councillor and staff)	10	4.0%
Conflict resolution & mediation	9	3.7%
Other (e.g. public speaking, negotiation skills)	39	15.9%
No additional training required	32	12.9%

4.8 Comparable roles

When asked to identify jobs in the wider community that are comparable to council office, around 10% of survey respondents stated that there was no comparable or similar position, and a number of participants did not answer the questions in this section of the survey.

The responses we received, as they relate to each council office, are shown in the following tables.

Comparable Role to Office of Mayor	Number of Responses	%
Chief Executive Officer	100	29.5%



Chair of a Board	88	26.0%
State Member of Parliament / Local MP	36	10.6%
No similar position	34	10.0%
Company Director / Board member	26	7.7%
Business Manager	22	6.5%
School Principal	13	3.8%
Senior Public Servant (SES) / Administrator	5	1.5%
Federal Member of Parliament	5	1.5%
Other	10	3.0%
Total Count	339	100.0%

The most commonly identified roles as being comparable to the office of mayor are a Chief Executive Officer, Chairman of a Board, or a State Member of Parliament.

Comparable Role to Office of Deputy Mayor	Number of Responses	%
Deputy Chair of a Board	37	16.2%
Acting/Assistant CEO	36	15.8%
Company Director	33	14.5%
No similar position	28	12.3%
Business Manager	24	10.5%
Chief Executive Officer / Managing Director	18	7.9%
State Member of Parliament	16	7.0%
% of Mayor / Councillor	7	3.1%
Chair of a Board	6	2.6%
2IC	5	2.2%
Federal Member of Parliament	5	2.2%
Deputy School Principal	5	2.2%
Other	8	3.4%
Total Count	228	100%

Comparable Role to Office of Council Committee Chair	Number of Responses	%
Company Director	57	28.8%
Business Manager	38	19.2%
No similar position	21	10.6%
Chair of a Board	19	9.6%
Board Committee Chair	16	8.1%
Chief Executive Officer / Managing Director	11	5.6%
State Member of Parliament	10	5.1%
Foreman / Supervisor / Team Leader	6	3.0%
Federal Member of Parliament	5	2.5%
Other	15	7.5%
Total Count	198	100.0%

Comparable role to office of councillor	Number of Responses	%
Company Director	123	49.2%
No similar position	25	10.0%
State Member of Parliament	23	9.2%
Business Manager / Middle Management	22	8.8%
Other	7	2.8%
Total Count	250	100.0%

The most commonly identified roles as being comparable to the office of councillor are a Company Director or a State Member of Parliament.

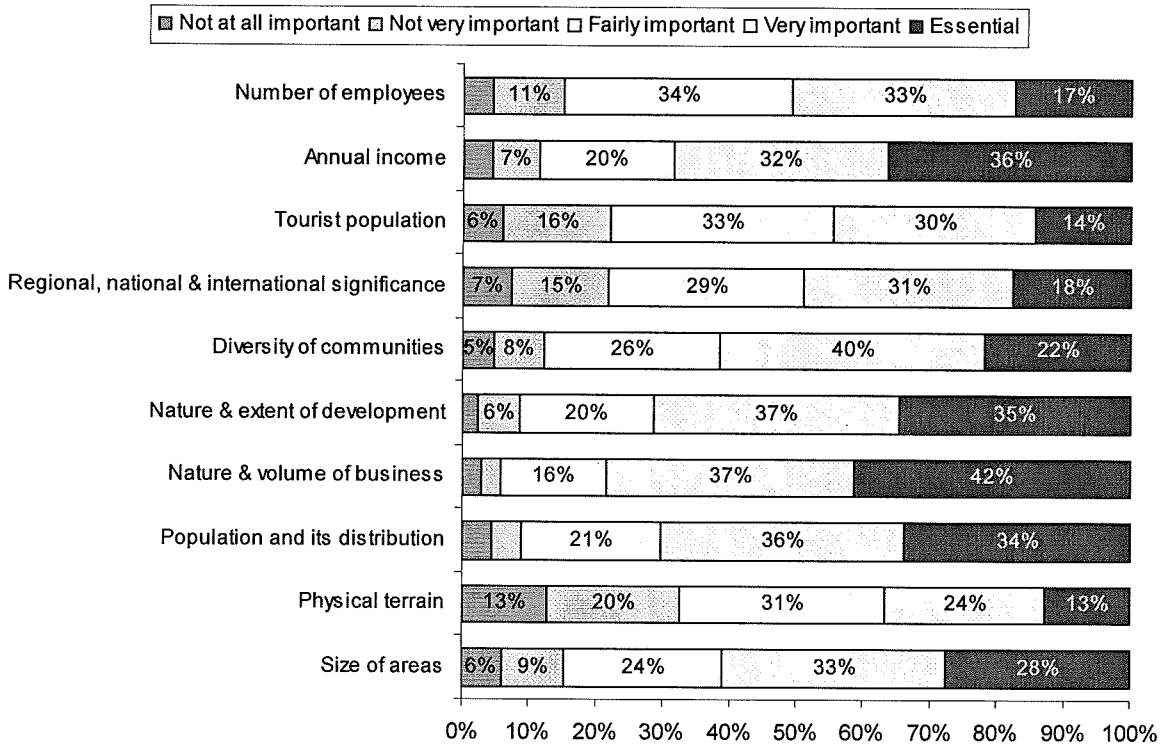
4.9 Council categories

The factors used to determine the classification of each council are defined in the Act and used for the purpose of setting minimum and maximum fees payable to mayors and councillors.

Given that these council categories have a direct impact on remuneration, the survey questionnaire asked respondents to rate the importance of each of the factors used to determine the classification of councils, as well as a number of other factors that may or may not be considered important in determining council categories. These results are summarised below.

Participating councillors consider the most important factors to be:

- The nature and volume of the business dealt with by each council;
- The nature and extent of the development of areas;
- The population of areas and the distribution of the population; and
- Annual income.



Labels are not shown where the percentage is less than 5%.

5. Comparative analysis of growth in remuneration

This section of the report summarises the roles and responsibilities of councillors and seeks to identify jobs in the wider community that may be comparable to council offices, and in particular the offices of mayor and councillor.

Then, in order to test the hypothesis that councillor fees have not kept pace with growth in remuneration in other roles over time, the report looks at changes in market pay rates for comparable roles as well as growth in Average Weekly Earnings since the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal made its first determination in April 1994.

5.1 The role of councillors

The Act sets out the role of councillors in section 232. In summary, the role is composed of two parts; firstly, to direct and control the affairs of the council in accordance with the Act (s.232(1)) and secondly, as an elected person, to represent the interests of residents and ratepayers and provide leadership and guidance to the community (s.232(2)).

While the roles and responsibilities of councillors vary because of the diversity of the activities undertaken by their respective council, typical roles and responsibilities outlined by the LGI (2006) (page 19) and consistent with the stakeholder interviews conducted as part of this review include:

- Governance
  - Fiduciary obligations
  - Monitoring results and managing risks
  - Appointing and evaluating the General Manager
  - Checking management delegations
  - Ensuring compliance with statutes
- Performance
  - Setting objectives, strategies and targets
  - Approve policies
  - Rewarding and sanctioning management performance
- Representation and accountability
  - Bringing constituents concerns to the attention of the council
  - Ensuring council's decisions are widely communicated to the community
  - Represent council through membership or participation in external community groups and committees
- Leadership
  - Establish the corporate values under which the council will operate
  - Set the vision and long-term strategy to align with community needs
  - Review and approve corporate / management plans



- Making certain decisions in accordance with council's policy of delegated authority

With greater complexity in ensuring compliance with statutes and greater diversity in the provision of services, councillors should not be regarded as providing an honorary community service.

5.2 Comparable roles

Local government in Australia is unlike many other countries because it provides a narrower range of services (McBride & Moege, 2005). The roles and responsibilities of outlined in the Act and summarised above provide sufficient flexibility to allow each council to determine service provision in line with local needs and available resources.

The most commonly identified roles as being comparable to the office of mayor are a Chief Executive Officer, Chairman of a Board, or a State Member of Parliament. The most commonly identified roles as being comparable to the office of councillor are a Company Director or a State Member of Parliament. These results are summarised below and provided in more detail in section 4.8 of this report.

Most comparable jobs to the office of mayor	%
Chief Executive Officer	29.5%
Chair of a Board	26.0%
State Member of Parliament / Local MP	10.6%

Most comparable jobs to the office of councillor	%
Company Director	49.2%
State Member of Parliament	9.2%

The LGI (2006) considered that councillors should be treated more like statutory body board members and more adequately remunerated, with any increased payment associated with increased levels of capacity and commitment amongst councillors. However, we note that external boards (including boards of statutory authorities) are generally single purpose organisations (e.g. a water or electricity authority) and lack the diversity of services provided by councils. The breadth of knowledge required by a councillor is therefore significantly greater than would be typically seen in other boards of directors.

In our view, the office of councillor is most closely aligned to that of a non-executive director on a board (including government owned statutory authorities).

Consistent with the findings from the LGI, Mastertek believes that the office of mayor is most closely aligned to that of a chairman of a board (including government owned statutory authorities). Alternatively, the office could be compared to that of a State Member of Parliament. It seems appropriate for the rate payable to the mayor to be a set proportion of the rate payable for a State Member of Parliament.

In addition, we do not believe that a Chief Executive Officer is a reasonable benchmark for the office of mayor. The Act clearly underlines the separation of day to day management from the council and/or the mayor to the General Manager.

5.3 Growth in fees over time for comparable roles

In April 1994, The Local Government Remuneration Tribunal made an interim determination of annual remuneration fees for councillors in each of the categories determined under s.241 of the Act. This provided a base fee of $5,000 for councillors plus an additional $5,000 for mayors for the period 1 July 1994 to 30 June 1995. Members and chairpersons of county councils would receive a base fee of $1,000. In 1995, the Tribunal re-categorised a number of councils and made determinations of annual fees after taking into consideration factors such as:

- The role of the councillor
- The time commitment of mayors and councillors

At that time, the minimum fees were determined on the basis that councillors and mayors are performing a community service in addition to their normal occupations, whereas the maximum fees are intended for councils to assess their performance compared with other councils in the same category (The Local Government Remuneration Tribunal, 1995).

Maximum Annual Fees for mayors and councillors, 1 July 1995
by council category

	Mayor	Councillor
Category 4	12000	6000
Category 3	20000	10000
Category 2	20000	10000
Category 1	30000	12500
Category 1A		
S4	5000	3000
S3	5000	3000
S2	40000	15000
S1	75000	20000

Source: The Local Government Remuneration Tribunal (1995)

The Tribunal has since handed down a number of determinations relating to the categorisation of councils, fees for councillors and additional fees for mayors that have resulted in an annualised compound wage growth of 2.8% for most council categories for councillors, and around 7% for mayors.

The following table details the growth in the maximum fees payable to mayors and councillors since 1995 by council category, growth in Average Weekly Ordinary Time Earnings over the same period, and changes in market pay rates for comparable roles.

Growth in Total Remuneration 1995 to 2006	1995	2006	Total growth for period (%)	Annualised growth (%)
Mayor (maximum $ per annum)[4]				
• Category 5	12,500	n/a	n/a	n/a
• Category 4	18,000	26,680	48.2%	3.3%
• Category 3	30,000	44,500	48.3%	3.3%
• Category 2	30,000	44,500	48.3%	3.3%
• Category 1	42,500	65,070	53.1%	3.6%
• Category 1A	n/a	82,080	n/a	n/a
• S4	n/a	18,470	n/a	n/a
• S3	8,000	11,820	47.8%	3.3%
• S2	55,000	82,080	49.2%	3.4%
• S1	95,000	181,440	91.0%	5.5%
Councillor (maximum $ per annum)[1]				
• Category 5	5,000	n/a	n/a	n/a
• Category 4	6,000	8,380	39.7%	2.8%
• Category 3	10,000	13,980	39.8%	2.8%
• Category 2	10,000	13,980	39.8%	2.8%
• Category 1	12,500	17,795	42.4%	3.0%
• Category 1A	n/a	20,965	n/a	n/a
• S4	n/a	6,990	n/a	n/a
• S3	3,000	4,190	39.7%	2.8%
• S2	15,000	20,965	39.8%	2.8%
• S1	20,000	27,960	39.8%	2.8%
Average Weekly Ordinary Time Earnings (actual $ per week)[5]	646.3	1043.0	61.4%	4.1%
Chairman of Board – Government owned authority (average $ per annum)[6]	38,403	53,493	39.3%	3.8%
Non executive Director – Government owned authority (average $ per annum)[3]	23,032	28,451	23.5%	2.4%
State Member of Parliament (private member, excluding electoral allowances)	75,449	118,450	57.0%	3.8%

The purpose of this analysis is to consider whether the annualised compound growth in mayor and councillor fees have kept pace with compound wage growth for other comparable roles since the Tribunal handed down the Report and Determinations on 1 May 1995.

With the exception of City of Sydney, the fees paid to mayors in 1995 (including the councillor fee and the mayoral allowance) and to councillors were well below the fees / salaries paid to comparable roles at that time. This has since been compounded as the annualised increases provided to mayors and councillors have not kept pace with compound growth in Average Weekly Ordinary Time Earnings (although they are slightly higher than the percentage increases provided to non-executive directors of government owned statutory authorities). The dollar value of fees in 2006 are well below the amounts paid for chairmen and directors of external boards given the disparity in the hours worked between these roles.

[4] The Local Government Remuneration Tribunal (1995 and 2006)

[5] ABS Catalogue No 6302.0 Table 1, Average Weekly Earnings Of Employees, Australia (Dollars) – Trend, Time Series Spreadsheet, August 2006.

[6] PRO:NED (1997 and 2006). Information shown as 1995 is from 1997, and the total percentage change for this sample is based on the difference between the amounts paid in 1997 and 2006. Note that although this information may be helpful in providing long-term trend data, the comparisons do not include the same companies year on year.

6. Comparative analysis of councillor fees

In order to test the hypothesis that there is a gap in remuneration levels, this section of the report compares the maximum fees payable to mayors and councillors in NSW Local Government to the amounts paid to other comparable roles identified above.

6.1 Average weekly earnings

The Australian Bureau of Statistics measures and reports on average weekly ordinary time earnings (ABS, 2006) each quarter, and was most recently reported at $1,043.00. On an hourly basis (based on 38 hours per week), this is equivalent to $27.44 per hour.

From the responses to the survey, a councillor's average hourly rate was calculated to be $15.18 (see section 4.4 of this report) – 55.3% of average weekly earnings on a per hour basis. This very low comparison ratio reflects the historically honorary nature of the role of councillor noted by the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal in its 1995 report.

6.2 Boards of Directors

A survey of Non-Executive Directors of Australian companies (PRO:NED, 2006) noted that there has been a continuing and significant increase in the time required for directors to discharge their responsibilities, which has resulted in higher fees over time.

This survey included organisations from the public, private, government and not for profit sectors, and included matters such as the time commitment of directors, the fees they receive, board governance, and board composition. Some of the key findings are summarised below.

6.2.1 Total time commitment

The total time commitment includes all time spent on matters relating to the organisation, including where relevant, time spent on board meetings, committee work, ad-hoc meetings, discussions with the General Manager / CEO, site visits, conferences and seminars, and required travel.

The median total time commitment for a chairman is 5.0 hours per week, 5.3 hours for a deputy chairman (where this role exists) and 3.5 hours for non-executive directors. This has remained essentially unchanged for non-executive directors since 2002, while the time commitment required by the chairman and deputy chairman has increased from 4.4 hours to 5.0 hours, and from 3.9 hours to 5.3 hours respectively.

The chairman of a government board spends significantly more time on board matters than the overall survey sample (median of 6.0 hours per week), and the chairman of a not-for-profit board spends significantly less time on board matters than the overall survey sample (median of 3.65 hours per week).

In comparison, although there is significant variation in the time commitment of councillors, the results from our survey of NSW mayors and councillors result in mayors spending 35.1 hours per week on council business and councillors spending 19 hours per week (see section4.4 of this report). The comparison is also shown in the following table.

Average hours per week By office	
Mayor	35
Chairman of the board	5
Councillor	19
Non executive director	3.5

Mayors spend significantly more time on council business than do chairmen of external boards, including government boards and councillors spend significantly more time on council business than do non-executive directors of external boards. In our view, the time commitment of mayors and councillors should be reflected in the determination of fees

6.2.2 Base fee ratios

At the median of the PRO:NED survey sample, the fees paid to the chairman are twice that of non-executive directors.

Using the median of a random sample of councils in NSW (LGSA, 2006), the fees paid to the mayor are more than three times that of councillors. This analysis is shown below for a selection of the council categories used by The Local Government Remuneration Tribunal (2006).

Median Ratio of fees by Office / Position	
	Mayor : Councillor
Category 4	3.2
Category 3	3.2
Category 2	3.2
Category 1	3.7
External boards	2.0

Sources: LGSA (2006); The Local Government Remuneration Tribunal (2006)

When fee comparisons are undertaken on the basis of these ratios, these results suggest that the maximum fee payable to councillors (as a ratio of the total fee payable to mayors) falls well below the typical practice of external boards of directors.

6.2.3 Base fee rates

The fees paid to the chairman and non-executive directors of government boards were analysed by organisational turnover, and are summarised below. Mastertek recommends alignment to at least the upper quartile of this sample given the disparity in the hours worked by mayors and councillors compared to a chairman and non-executive director of these boards.

Chairman – Government Board			
Annual Turnover	**25th percentile (lower quartile)**	**50th percentile (median)**	**75th percentile (upper quartile)**
Up to $15 million	$7,750	$27,500	$33,750
$16 to $50 million	$26,000	$39,000	$67,500
$51 to $250 million	$44,000	$60,000	$62,000
$251 to $1,000 million	$65,000	$75,000	$81,000
Above $1,000 million	$65,000	$70,000	$75,000



Non-Executive Directors – Government Board			
Annual Turnover	25th percentile (lower quartile)	50th percentile (median)	75th percentile (upper quartile)
Up to $15 million	$3,250	$12,000	$18,500
$16 to $50 million	$15,250	$20,500	$27,000
$51 to $250 million	$25,000	$29,000	$33,000
$251 to $1,000 million	$21,250	$35,000	$43,750
Above $1,000 million	$35,000	$47,500	$60,000

The fees paid to a chairman and non-executive director of a privately held company were also analysed by organisational turnover, and are summarised below. Again, we would recommend alignment to at least the upper quartile of this sample for the reasons given above.

Chairman – Privately held companies			
Annual Turnover	25th percentile (lower quartile)	50th percentile (median)	75th percentile (upper quartile)
Up to $15 million	$23,500	$40,000	$48,000
$16 to $50 million	$30,000	$45,000	$50,000
$51 to $250 million	$54,000	$78,000	$95,000
$251 to $1,000 million	$76,000	$120,000	$160,000

Non-Executive Directors – Privately held companies			
Annual Turnover	25th percentile (lower quartile)	50th percentile (median)	75th percentile (upper quartile)
Up to $15 million	$14,000	$22,000	$28,000
$16 to $50 million	$20,000	$25,000	$48,000
$51 to $250 million	$28,000	$36,000	$45,000
$251 to $1,000 million	$46,250	$70,000	$90,000

Publicly held companies pay higher fees to their chairman and non-executive directors than government boards or privately held companies. This information is summarised below.

Chairman – Publicly held companies			
Annual Turnover	25th percentile (lower quartile)	50th percentile (median)	75th percentile (upper quartile)
Up to $15 million	$31,250	$40,000	$60,000
$16 to $50 million	$52,500	$70,000	$90,000
$51 to $250 million	$62,500	$90,000	$100,000
$251 to $1,000 million	$92,500	$137,500	$150,000
Above $1,000 million	$175,000	$200,000	$280,000

Non-Executive Directors – Publicly held companies			
Annual Turnover	25th percentile (lower quartile)	50th percentile (median)	75th percentile (upper quartile)
Up to $15 million	$14,250	$25,000	$45,000
$16 to $50 million	$30,000	$37,500	$45,000
$51 to $250 million	$40,000	$50,000	$54,000
$251 to $1,000 million	$48,750	$57,000	$66,250
Above $1,000 million	$73,750	$92,000	$130,000

6.2.3 Committee fees

The additional contribution of individual directors participating on sub committees of the board may also be recognised through separate payments on top of the base fees shown above. 37% of organisations who have one or more board committees make separate payments for committee membership, although the amount does vary depending on the type of committee (typically around $5000 at the median, with members of an audit or finance committee receiving double this amount).

One of the common themes that emerged from the stakeholder interviews (see section 3.1 of this report) is that committee membership is not evenly spread amongst all the councillors. There were a number of factors impacting on committee workload that emerged from these discussions. These are generally a combination of the available time of individual councillors, their motivation and personal commitment, and the individual skills of the councillor. Although some councillors may be highly motivated to participate in committees, their commitment to external employment precludes active participation.

The Local Government Act does not allow councils to make additional payments to recognise the workload and responsibilities of councillors who participate in committees.

6.2.4 Board composition

The median size of the board is six directors, although board size does vary based on organisational turnover. Government owned organisations (who represent 9% of the survey sample) have a median board size of eight directors. On the other hand, councils in NSW have an average of 10.6 councillors, although this may range from five to fifteen (McBride & Moege, 2005).

Females represent 16% of the total director population of all boards surveyed. Although there has been improved representation in some sectors (particularly government and not for profit boards), in general, the smaller proportion of available women candidates who have achieved successful executive careers at the top level results in a continuing tendency to appoint more male candidates. Females are also under-represented in NSW Local Government (section 4.2 of this report notes that only 26% of respondents are female), although councils have a more positive gender balance than was reported in the PRO:NED (2006) survey.

There is a significant difference in the way that a chairman or non-executive director of a board is appointed when compared to NSW Local Government. The majority of boards use a combination of methods to recruit directors, with only 4% appointing directors to the board using a process of election. The most common method is via the personal knowledge of existing board members. In the case of government boards, 27% use search firms to assist in appointing non-executive directors to the board.

6.3 State MPs

Currently, Members of the NSW State Parliament receive a base salary of $118,450, being $500 less than the amount paid to Federal MPs.

Given the time commitment of mayors and the political nature of this office, Mastertek believes that a State Member of Parliament is a reasonable comparison. With the exception of City of Sydney, mayors of other council categories are paid between 23% and 69% of the rate currently paid to State MPs.

In our view, the fees payable to mayors of Category 1A and S2 given their time commitment, the size and complexity of their council and the responsibilities of their office should be lifted to at least 80% of the rate currently paid to State MPs. This would result in a fee (including both the councillor fee and the mayoral allowance) of $94,760. This will provide an anchor point on which to determine the fees for other categories of council.

6.4 Interstate comparisons

The method of determining remuneration levels of councillors varies significantly between the states and Northern Territory, but can be broadly categorised into two groups – those that provide full flexibility for the council to set their own remuneration levels and those that provide limited flexibility (such as within a defined range or up to a defined maximum fee).

Methods of determining councillor fees		
	Full Flexibility	Limited Flexibility
NSW		✓
Victoria		✓
South Australia		✓
Queensland	✓	
Western Australia		✓
Northern Territory	✓	
Tasmania		✓

Source: McBride & Moege (2006)

In the case of the largest city councils across Australia (City of Sydney, City of Melbourne, City of Brisbane, City of Adelaide, and City of Hobart), the fees payable to the mayor are sufficient for them to be employed full time. This is not the case in other council areas, with the possible exception of councils located in Queensland and Northern Territory where remuneration levels are determined by each council, resulting in large variations.

Different sizing methodologies and range of council activities undertaken between councils in the different states and the Northern Territory make it difficult to compare actual remuneration levels of mayors and councillors.

A comparative analysis of fees payable to mayors and councillors in NSW and other states undertaken by the LGSA in 2004 noted that Victorian councils have higher fees in areas with a population under 50,000, although the fees become comparable to their NSW counterparts as the councils become larger. In Tasmania, councils with a population of around 10,000 pay similar amounts to similarly sized councils in NSW. However as the population increases, Tasmanian mayors receive higher fees than NSW mayors. Councillor and mayoral fees are higher in Queensland than in NSW and other Australian states.



7. Conclusions & Recommendations

Although mayors and councillors have an average age that is significantly older and are on average more highly educated than the broader population, the demographic profile of survey respondents suggests that mayors and councillors are generally representative of the population that they are elected to represent. The survey results show the primary motivation for becoming a councillor to be "to perform a civic duty".

However, 43% of respondents do not intend to stand at the next election. The main reasons are age, financial hardship, and frustration with bureaucracy. Financial hardship is of greatest concern to councillors below the age of 56 years.

7.1) Mastertek recommends that the Tribunal provide an appropriate increase in the fees for mayors and councillors in NSW to reduce the impact of financial hardship and assist in the retention of knowledge and experience within councils, along with being able to attract aspiring candidates with appropriate capabilities.

Mayors and councillors spend significantly **more** time on council business than do individuals in comparable roles, with the possible exception of Members of Parliament. In addition, mayors spend significantly less time in their normal occupation than other councillors – probably because of the additional council duties incumbent on mayors.

7.2) Mastertek recommends that the fees payable to mayors and councillors in NSW be increased to reflect:

a) The time commitment of mayors and councillors
b) The increasing complexity of council activities, and the expectation that council activities will continue to become more complex in the future as a greater number of services are delivered by local government
c) Factors such as loss of business, lost time at work, and superannuation contributions
d) Councils' ability to attract and retain high calibre and experienced candidates from the community to fulfil the important role of councillor

The fees paid to councillors and mayors were well below the fees / salaries paid to comparable roles in 1995 and have not kept pace with compound growth in Average Weekly Ordinary Time Earnings since that time. Although the complexity of council activities and the time commitment of councillors have increased substantially over time, this has not been reflected in the quantum of fees payable to mayors and councillors.

Consistent with the findings from the LGI and the results from our survey of mayors and councillors, Mastertek believes that the office of mayor is most closely aligned to that of a chairman of a board and that the office of councillor is most closely aligned to that of a non-executive director on a board. Alternatively, the office of mayor could be compared to that of a State Member of Parliament. Given the time commitment of mayors, their visibility and direct involvement with the local community, and the political nature of this office, Mastertek believes that this is a reasonable comparison. Further because of the extensive time required to effectively fulfil the role of mayor in most councils, it is more likely that the role requires a full time commitment.



7.3) Mastertek recommends that a mechanism be established to ensure that future determinations of fees for mayors and councillors are adjusted regularly and on an equitable basis. Further, we recommend that the determination of fees for mayors and councillors be based on a consistent benchmark, such as a State Member of Parliament and are set at a level which would facilitate a full time role for mayors of larger councils.

Using these as a benchmark, the fees paid to mayors in 2006 are well below the amounts paid for chairmen of external boards, particularly given the disparity in the hours worked between these roles. For example, the chairman of a privately held company with annual revenue between $51 million and $250 million receives $78,000 per annum at the median and $95,000 per annum at the upper quartile. Given the disparity in the hours worked by mayors when compared to the time commitment of the chairman of external boards, Mastertek believes that the upper quartile is a more reasonable point of comparison than the median. It is also reasonable because of the nature of the public office.

The comparative analysis of councillor fees against the amounts paid to the chairman and non-executive director of external boards also showed that there is greater disparity between the remuneration levels between mayors and councillors than occurs in other boards of directors, where the typical practice is for the chairman to receive twice the base fee paid to other directors. Given the significant time commitment of councillors (average of 20 hours per week on council activities, with mayors spending an average of 35 hours per week), Mastertek believes that the ratio should be brought more into line with the practices of other external boards of directors.

7.4) To align with the practice of external boards of directors and reflect the time commitment of councillors, Mastertek recommends that the councillor fee be equivalent to 50% of the total mayoral remuneration for the appropriate council category.

7.5) Mastertek recommends that the total amount payable for a mayor be a set proportion of the State MP salary (based on council category), but also aligned to the upper quartile of the fees paid to the chairman of a board of directors for a similarly sized organisation. This would provide the Tribunal with a benchmark on which to determine the fees for other categories of council and a mechanism for ensuring appropriate adjustments to fees in the future.

a) In the case of Category 1A and S2 councils (due to the time commitment of mayors, and the size and complexity of these councils), Mastertek recommends that the total amount payable to mayors be at least equivalent to 80% of the rate currently paid to State MPs. This would result in a fee (including both the councillor fee and the mayoral allowance) of $94,760.

b) *With this rate as the benchmark for determining the maximum fees and using a standard range spread (where the minimum is set at 60% of the maximum), Mastertek recommends the following schedule of fees based on council category.*

Proposed Annual Fees for mayors (including councillor fee) by council category			
	Minimum Fee	Maximum Fee	Maximum as % of State MP
Category 4	$28,428	$47,380	40%
Category 3	$42,642	$71,070	60%
Category 2	$42,642	$71,070	60%
Category 1	$49,749	$82,915	70%
Category 1A	$56,856	$94,760*	80%*
S4	$17,768	$29,613	25%
S3	$7,107	$11,845	10%
S2	$56,856	$94,760	80%

* Benchmark rate.

c) *In the case of Category S4 county councils (due to the significance of their work as a water authority), Mastertek believes a significant increase in fees is warranted.*

d) *Mastertek recommends that the annual fees for councillors be set at 50% of the total mayoral remuneration, as outlined in the following schedule.*

Proposed Annual Fees for councillors by council category			
	Minimum Fee	Maximum Fee	Maximum as % of State MP
Category 4	$14,214	$23,690	20%
Category 3	$21,321	$35,535	30%
Category 2	$21,321	$35,535	30%
Category 1	$24,875	$41,458	35%
Category 1A	$28,428	$47,380	40%
S4	$8,884	$14,807	12.5%
S3	$3,554	$5,923	5%
S2	$28,428	$47,380	40%

Feedback from the qualitative interviews and the results of the PRO:NED (2006) survey suggest that an additional fee to the chairman of a council committee is warranted in order to recognise the additional workload and responsibilities of councillors who fulfil these functions. Further, it seems reasonable for councils to pay a pro-rata fee to a councillor who acts in the office of mayor when the mayor is on leave or otherwise unavailable.

7.6) *Mastertek recommends that the Act be amended to allow for:*

a) *An additional allowance for councillors who act in the office of mayor when the mayor is on leave or otherwise unavailable. Based on a period of 4 weeks' annual leave per annum, Mastertek recommends that the annual amount be set at one-tenth of the annual mayoral allowance.*



b) *An additional allowance for councillors who take on the role of chairing one or more of the formal sub-committees of council (where these exist). Based on the market practice of external boards of directors, Mastertek further recommends a conservative amount of $5,000 per annum. This is equivalent to the lower quartile for the chairman of an Audit Committee of an external board of directors.*

Survey respondents believed that the factors currently used by the Tribunal in determining the categories of council are important, although a smaller number of factors were seen as more significant.

7.7) Mastertek recommends that the councils be categorised based on:
- *The nature and volume of business dealt with by each council;*
- *The nature and extent of the development of areas;*
- *The population of areas and the distribution of the population; and*
- *Annual income*

7.8) Mastertek recommends that a formal means of classifying councils into categories based on these quantifiable factors be developed.



Appendix: References

Australian Bureau of Statistics (2006) Average Weekly Earnings of Employees, Australia (Dollars) – Trend, Time Series Spreadsheet. Catalogue No 6302.0 Table 1. Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra.(www.abs.gov.au)

Australian Bureau of Statistics (1997) ASCO Australian Classification of Occupations, Second Edition. Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra.(www.abs.gov.au)

Australian Bureau of Statistics (2001) 2001 Census of Population and Housing. Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra. (www.abs.gov.au)

Department of Local Government (2006) Guidelines for the payment of expenses and the provision of facilities for mayors and councillors for Local Councils in NSW. Sydney.

Local Government and Shires Associations (LGSA) (2006) LGSA Remuneration Survey 2006 - General Manager, Directors and Managers. Sydney. (www.lgsa.org.au)

Murray, S. & Miller, P. (2004) A submission to the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal on 4 March 2004. LGSA, Sydney.

Local Government Inquiry (LGI) (2006) Are Councils Sustainable? Final Report: Findings and Recommendations. Independent Inquiry into the Financial Sustainability of NSW Local Government. Sydney. (www.lgi.org.au)

The Local Government Remuneration Tribunal (2006) Report and Determinations of The Local Government Remuneration Tribunal under Sections 239 and 241 of the Local Government Act 1993, 19 April 2006. Sydney. (www.remtribunals.nsw.gov.au)

McBride, S. & Moege, S. (2005) Interstate Comparison of Australian Local Government. Sydney. (www.lgi.org.au)

PRO:NED Board and Executive Search Consultants (1997) Non-Executive Directors' Remuneration Survey Report. Sydney. (www.proned.com.au)

PRO:NED Board and Executive Search Consultants (2006) Non-Executive Directors' Remuneration and Board Governance Survey Report. Sydney. (www.proned.com.au)

The Wyatt Company (1994) Submission to The NSW Local Government Remuneration Tribunal. Sydney.

ANNEXURE LG-2



MASTERTEK

Engaging People + Rewarding Success

This document has been prepared in confidence for:

Local Government NSW

Councillor Value Review

December 2018

www.mastertek.com.au

Executive Summary

Mastertek was appointed by Local Government New South Wales (LGNSW) to conduct an independent review of the appropriateness of the current levels of Councillor Remuneration. Information for this review was gathered from one-on-one interviews with a selection of Councillors and an online survey. A summary of the key findings and recommendations discussed in more detail throughout this paper are set out below.

Observations & Recommendations	Survey Findings & Rationale
There was a strong indication that the role of a Councillor continues to expand in complexity.	+ Some 86.9% of respondents reporting that the role has become more complex over time as shown in the table below + The reported time associated with the responsibilities of an elected representative averages at 45.61 hours per week – a significant increase from our 2006 study where the average was 21.90 hours per week. + Some potential causes for this increase in complexity and time requirements could perhaps be attributed to the various changes to the Local Government landscape since the last time a similar review was conducted. + The main changes involve the introduction of the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) Framework, changes to the Local Government Act 1993 (NSW) (The Act) and Council mergers.
The current remuneration being offered to Councillors appears to be impacting the pool of candidates who can realistically undertake the role.	+ There is an 11.7% male dominant gender gap within survey respondents compared to a 7.6% gap across the overall Australian workforce. + Some 85.5% of survey participants were aged 45 years or older, highlighting an under-representation of younger elected representatives

Observations & Recommendations	Survey Findings & Rationale
It is our recommendation that Councils have the ability to increase the range of remuneration paid to elected representatives in certain circumstances. Ranges should be expanded so that the maximum fee levels are brought into line with, and indexed to, the Australian Average Ordinary Time Earnings.	+ We believe the remuneration available to elected representatives should be reflective of the time and complexity associated with the roles (and that it is therefore important that the expectations of the role are clarified by each Council) + An increase to the fees paid to elected representatives could help broaden the pool of potential future Councillors, ultimately better representing the community. + 53.5% of respondents reported that since becoming a Councillor their annual income has decreased, and only 16.1% agreeing and the balance (83.9%) believing that they are not remunerated adequately.
We believe Council's should be required to develop a business case supporting their Councillor remuneration decisions, based on a standardised pro forma considering a range of pre-established criteria to ensure fiscally responsible and sustainable decision making.	+ It is important that any role expectations are clearly articulated and that supported by ongoing personal development in order to help ensure Councillors are able to have a positive impact + The basis for remuneration decisions should be published and shared with the community to ensure an open, transparent and accountable process.
It is also our recommendation that superannuation contributions should be paid to elected representatives, utilising a model based on that introduced in Queensland in 2009.	+ With a few exceptions, the Superannuation Guarantee scheme applies to everyone, regardless of whether they are full-time, part-time or casual employees. We see no reason why elected members should be treated differently in this regard. + We are suggesting a simple implementation method, where superannuation fund membership would be compulsory for all Councillors and contribution rates would be paid as a fixed percentage of the annual fees paid to Councillors

Introduction and Background

Mastertek was appointed by Local Government New South Wales (LGNSW) to conduct an independent review of the appropriateness of the current levels of Councillor Remuneration. The review stems from concerns that the fees set by the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal do not adequately reflect the responsibilities that elected representatives undertake on behalf of their communities.

Mastertek interviewed four Councillors that were amongst a shortlist nominated by LGNSW, representing a range of council categories and personal perspectives. In addition, and in partnership with a project team at LGNSW, we also developed and conducted an online survey which was offered to all New South Wales Mayors and Councillors to complete.

The purpose of this remuneration review was to consider whether the remuneration paid to Mayors and Councillors is appropriate. This was to be determined in regard to:

+ Matters held within a similar review conducted by Mastertek in 2006;
+ The workloads of elected members;
+ The remuneration of comparable roles;
+ The distinction between Mayors and Deputy Mayors; *and*
+ The question of whether full time elected members are required.

Since a similar review was undertaken in 2006, there have been significant changes to the Local Government landscape. The main changes involve the introduction of the *Integrated Planning and Reporting* (IP&R) *Framework,* changes to the *Local Government Act 1993* (NSW) (The Act) along with the State Government's reform program including Council mergers.

In 2006, we saw divergence in the way that elected representatives are remunerated in different states throughout Australia. This has not gone backwards since 2006 and we still see the same lack of harmonisation present with large discrepancies in remuneration still present when comparing New South Wales to other states.

The key findings from this study and our analysis of comparable roles are presented in this report.

Project Methodology

Mastertek undertook the following activities:

Stakeholder Interviews:

Interviews were held with four Councillors identified by LGNSW, representing a range of Councils and individual perspectives.

The purpose of these interviews was to:

+ Obtain an understanding of the key functions, including responsibilities and key accountabilities of the roles of Mayor and Councillor;
+ Obtain their views on the current demands of Mayors and Councillors;
+ Obtain their views on the fairness of the current level of reward and remuneration offered to elected representatives and;
+ Offer any further insight that may assist with this review.

Questionnaire Design:

Mastertek drafted a questionnaire based on that used for the 2006 review which was then refined in partnership with a project team from LGNSW. The questionnaire was designed to be open to all Mayors and Councillors to obtain information about their role and the remuneration that they receive.

The survey was designed to collect information in four sections:

+ Section 1: Background information;
+ Section 2: Responsibilities of elected members;
+ Section 3: Resources and rewards; *and*
+ Section 4: Additional comments.

The questionnaire was designed to ensure questions were not leading and would not elicit bias answers. A draft questionnaire was developed and tested by members of LGNSW. Feedback from this testing phase was considered and changes were incorporated into the final version of the questionnaire.

Data Collection

Survey invitations and promotion was conducted by LGNSW. Invitations were sent to all Councillors in NSW, excluding those representing Eurobodalla or Goulburn Mulwaree, as these councils are not financial members of LGNSW.

Respondents participated in the survey electronically via an online survey tool. Data collection occurred over a three week period, concluding October 19th 2018.

Participation in the survey was encouraged but was not compulsory. In total there were 256 survey responses from over 100 Councils, representing a response rate of approximately 21%.

Clarification of the Role

One of the first questions that needed clarification in this review was whether or not the roles of elected representatives are full time roles or not, and whether or not they should be remunerated that way. To answer these questions we have attempted to analyse what is actually involved in the role of elected representatives as well as how seeking a reasonable definition of a 'full time role'.

The Premier & Cabinet Division of Local Government outlines that "Being a councillor is an important commitment to the local community – but in NSW it is not a full time job. As such, councillors are not entitled to wages, workers' compensation or sick pay".

Fairwork Australia defines a full-time employee simply as an employee that has "ongoing employment and works, on average, around 38 hours each week. The actual hours of work for an employee in a particular job or industry are agreed between the employer and the employee and/or set by an award or registered agreement".

Mastertek recognise that the office of Councillor is not considered to be a full time job, however, in our view, and in some cases, we believe the requirements of the position could reasonably be considered comparable to the demands of a full-time position. Our opinion has been formed through analysis of both the quantitative and qualitative information collated as part of this review. To begin with, there was a strong indication that the role of a Councillor continues to expand in complexity, with **86.9%** of respondents reporting that the role has become more complex over time as shown in the table below.

Changing Complexity of the Role	
Since Becoming a Councillor the role has…	%
Become Significantly More Complex	57.4%
Become Slightly More Complex	29.5%
Remained About the Same	10.1%
Become Less Complex	3.0%

This increasing complexity is, as one might expect, having a direct impact on the time required to fulfil the duties of office. To understand these requirements, respondents were asked to map their time per week across the range of duties understood to form the basis of the role. The hours associated with these responsibilities were broken into three categories:

+ Preparation (the time spent preparing for the activity);
+ Doing (the time spent physically completing the activity);
+ Travel (any necessary time spent travelling to complete the activity).

In summary, 87.8% of respondents believe that time commitments associated with their role have increased since when they first became a Councillor as outlined in the table below.

Change to time commitments since becoming a Councillor	
Perceived Impact	%
Increased	87.8%
Decreased	2.0%
Remained the same	10.2%

We believe the average tenure of a Councillor to be an important point of reference when referring to the changing complexity and time commitments of elected representatives. The average number of years spent as a Councillor for our survey respondents was 6.24 years.

A breakdown of the reported time associated with each of the listed responsibilities is outlined in the following table, highlighting an average of **45.61** hours per week.

Note: A data validation check was conducted that removed responses which totalled more than 84 hours per week (12 hours a day, 7days a week). In addition to this, two pieces of data which were recorded as "20+" hours have been converted to 25 hours for the purpose of analysis.

Time Associated with Responsibilities of the Role (Average Hours per Week)				
Responsibility	Preparation	Doing	Travel	Total hr/week
Formal Council Meetings	4.57	3.46	0.96	8.99
Committees, Task Forces, Briefings and Workshops	2.38	2.99	1.08	6.45
Research & Preparation	2.13	1.85	0.34	4.32
Constituent Matters within Council Jurisdiction	1.44	2.42	0.85	4.71
Telephone Calls from Constituents	0.65	1.47	0.09	2.22
Council Policy and Management	0.90	1.07	0.21	2.18
Ceremonial	0.43	1.04	0.54	2.01
Administration	0.57	1.10	0.12	1.79
Media Liaison	0.35	0.61	0.12	1.09
Training	0.43	0.77	0.39	1.58
Matters Requested by Constituents that you believe are within the Jurisdiction of State or Federal Governments and are not Council Matters	0.57	0.96	0.23	1.77
External Charities or Community Groups as an Official Representative of your Council	0.53	1.24	0.58	2.35
Social Media Interaction	0.43	1.21	0.04	1.68
Site Inspections	0.30	0.75	0.53	1.57
Delegations and Forums	0.36	0.71	0.44	1.51
Liaising with Joint Organisations (JO) or Regional Organisations of Councils (ROC)	0.23	0.32	0.20	0.75
Other	0.18	0.37	0.08	0.64
Totals	**16.46**	**22.35**	**6.81**	**45.61**

In order to understand the change in time commitments required over time, we have compared this years findings with those from our 2006 review. The table below highlights a significant increase from the overall average of **21.90** hours reported in 2006.

Time at a Glance - By position (Hours per Week)					
Role	2006 Average	2018 Average	LQ	Median	UQ
Mayor	35.10	55.00	49.75	60.00	65.00
Deputy Mayor	18.80	48.13	35.00	45.00	63.00
Council Committee Chair	19.30	60.00	50.00	62.50	72.50
Councillor	20.00	43.28	31.00	41.00	54.00
Total	**21.90**	**45.61**	**31.50**	**43.00**	**59.50**

It must be recognised that these results vary by Council categorisation, as outlined in the table below. Despite this, the hours per week across all categories are significantly higher than they were for the same role at the time of the last review. Regardless of categorisation, we believe the requirements can reasonably be considered comparable to, and in many cases, in excess of the hours worked in a standard full-time position (according to the Fairwork Australia definition).

Time at a Glance - By Category (Hours per Week)				
Category	Average	LQ	Median	UQ
Principal CBD	73.00	73.00	73.00	73.00
Major CBD	59.50	47.75	59.50	71.25
Metropolitan Large	53.27	38.00	51.00	73.00
Metropolitan Medium	41.33	33.00	42.00	44.00
Metropolitan Small	41.27	21.50	54.00	57.00
Regional City	49.22	38.25	45.00	64.00
Regional Strategic Area	45.13	35.25	42.00	55.00
Regional Rural	44.85	32.00	44.50	53.25
Rural	43.71	30.00	40.00	63.00
Overall	**45.61**	**31.50**	**43.00**	**59.50**

Some potential causes for this increase in complexity and time requirements could perhaps be attributed to the various changes to the Local Government landscape since the last time a similar review was conducted.

The main changes involve the introduction of the *Integrated Planning and Reporting* (IP&R) *Framework*, changes to the *Local Government Act 1993* (NSW) (The Act) and Council mergers. Another change that will need to be considered looking forward concerns the introduction of Joint Organisations. Being a board member of a Joint Organisation sees an increase in complexity and time, but is not currently rewarded.

We recognise that the roles are not full-time roles and we are not seeking for that classification to be changed. Our recommendation, however, is that these roles, in some cases, could be full-time comparable and Councils should have the ability to remunerate them as such where appropriate.

How Should the Role of Mayor be Remunerated?	
Response	%
Full Time	78.4%
Part Time	21.6%

*While there was overwhelming support for the role of Mayor to be remunerated as full-time, only **39.7%** of respondents believes that the same should be true for the role of Councillor.*

How Should the Role of Councillor Currently Remunerated?	
Response	%
Full Time	39.7%
Part Time	60.3%

This is surprising as the analysis suggests that it is Councillors in particular that are not being appropriately remunerated for the time they are dedicating.

Should There be a Separate and Recognised Role for the Office of Deputy Mayor?	
Response	%
No	15.2%
Yes, Part-time	61.3%
Yes, Full-time	23.5%

*Respondents were also asked whether the role of Deputy Mayor should be a separate and recognised role. Results are shown below, with **84.8%** of respondents agreeing that this should be a separate and recognised role.*

Potential Impact of Current Remuneration Arrangements

Noting that the role has become more onerous over time and can in many cases be comparable to a full-time role, an important question around remuneration arises. How much should these elected representatives be paid? Most contemporary remuneration and reward strategies identify the following aims amongst their objectives:

+ Serve to attract quality candidates to the role/organisation;
+ Support the engagement and motivation of individuals once on board;
+ Help ensure the retention of best performers.

Of course, the role of elected Councillor does not directly equate to that of a regular employee, hired and fired at the discretion of management. However, we believe that it is imperative to consider the impact of remuneration arrangements on the pool of individuals that is, as a result, willing and able to stand for office – similar to the challenge of attraction, motivation and retention in general industry.

To inform this discussion we have explored the cross-section of the community that elected representatives are currently representing and by inference, the cross-section of the community who may be under represented, seeking to determine if the current remuneration arrangements are potentially prohibitive to those whose personal financial circumstances do not permit one to undertake the equivalent of a full time role without reasonable recompense.

Upon analysis, we have found that the pool of candidates for the role appears to be skewed towards the retired, semi-retired or independently wealthy. This creates a serious impact on a fundamental element of Local Government and Councils – to represent the community. The following tables offer some insight into the current demographics of elected office holders.

*It should be noted that only **0.4%** of respondents reported remuneration and reward as being a motivation behind becoming an elected representative.*

The table below shows the gender distribution of elected representatives compared to the distribution of the workforce Australia wide. At first glance we can see there are potential gender representation issues within the roles of elected representatives. There is an 11.7% male dominant gender gap within survey respondents compared to a 7.6% gap across the overall Australian workforce.

Gender Distribution		
Gender	Distribution of Elected Representatives (Survey Responses)	National Distribution (2016)
Male	55.1%	53.8%
Female	43.4%	46.2%
Not Reported	1.6%	-

Distribution of Survey Participants by Age	
Age	%
18-24	0.0%
25-34	4.7%
35-44	9.8%
45-54	20.3%
55-64	36.7%
65+	28.5%

For example, some **85.5%** of participants were aged 45 years or older, highlighting an under-representation of younger elected representatives.

A number of respondents hypothesised that one possible reason for this under-representation was that the fees paid to elected representatives are not high enough and therefore exclude those who otherwise *'cannot afford'* to be a Councillor.

Gender Representation per Age Group			
Age Group	Male	Female	Not Reported
18-24	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
25-34	75.0%	25.0%	0.0%
35-44	56.0%	44.0%	0.0%
45-54	42.3%	55.8%	1.9%
55-64	50.0%	46.8%	3.2%
65+	67.1%	32.9%	0.0%

The survey results suggest a clear underrepresentation of females in every age group except for those aged 45-54. The area for most concern is in the 65+ age bracket, which makes up 28.5% of total respondents, where male respondents out represent females by **34.2%**.

Highest Completed Level of Education		
Level of Education	2006	2018
Bachelor's Degree	22.2%	21.9%
Diploma	16.1%	15.6%
High School	33.3%	19.5%
Post Graduate Degree	13.9%	29.7%
TAFE Certificate	14.4%	13.3%

The analysis also suggests a change in levels of education of the people fulfilling these roles. In 2006, high school represented the highest level of education for **33.3%** of respondents which is now down to **19.5%**.

Participants now appear to be more educated than ever before with **29.7%** of respondents having completed a post graduate degree, compared to **13.9%** in 2006.

When asked about their occupation/professions, **20.3%** reported being fully retired. The largest represented groups were "*Managers*" (**27.0%**) or "*Professionals*" (**26.6%**). Profession groups were defined by the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations and respondents reportedly spend an average of **33.9 hours** per week in their occupation/profession.

Gross Income from External Sources	
Income Bracket	%
$0	4.3%
$1 - $18,200 per annum	20.3%
$18,201 - $37,000 per annum	16.0%
$37,001 - $90,000 per annum	35.9%
$90,001 - $180,000 per annum	17.2%
$180,000 or more per annum	6.3%

Only **8.2%** of all respondents report receiving no financial support other than the fees that they receive from council.

Many respondents reported that this is not by choice and that they would choose to only work as a Councillor if it was financially viable.

Levels of income from all other sources are reported in the table below, based on the income tax brackets set by the Australian Taxation Office.

Further to the above insights, some **53.5%** of respondents reported that since becoming a Councillor their annual income has decreased. Despite reporting a decrease in income, only **31.6%** of respondents are actively looking for additional sources of income. Respondents were asked whether the fees set by the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal were adequate for the roles and duties undertaken in their role, with only **16.1%** agreeing and the balance (**83.9%)** believing that they are not remunerated adequately.

This does not take into account the cross-section of the community that would have otherwise been a perfect candidate for the role but disregards it because the level of remuneration on offer isn't adequate for their cost of living.

An increase to the fees paid to elected representatives could improve the quality of candidates and broaden the pool of potential future Councillors in order to better represent the community.

We believe, any changes to the remuneration of elected representatives should be reflective of the time and complexity associated with the role and therefore the expectations of the role must be clarified.

Remuneration

If the time, complexity and responsibilities of the role of elected representatives can be considered at times to be full-time comparable, then decisions need to be made regarding quantum of remuneration that can be offered. Currently the fee ranges set by the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal are based on Council categorisation. These fees are outlined in the table below.

Current Fees Set by the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal				
Category	Councillor		Mayor (Councillor Fee + Mayor Fee)	
	Minimum Fee ($ per Year)	Maximum Fee ($ per Year)	Minimum Fee ($ per Year)	Maximum Fee ($ per year)
Principal CBD	26,970	39,540	191,950	256,620
Major CBD	17,980	33,310	56,180	140,930
Metropolitan Large	17,980	29,670	56,180	116,110
Metropolitan Medium	13,480	25,160	42,120	92,020
Metropolitan Small	8,970	19,790	28,070	62,940
Regional City	17,980	31,260	56,180	128,630
Regional Strategic Area	17,980	29,670	56,180	116,110
Regional Rural	8,970	19,790	28,070	62,960
Rural	8,970	11,860	18,510	37,740

Our main area of concern centres on the role of Councillor. The role of Councillor is paid between a minimum of **$8,970** and maximum of **$39,540** per year (for individuals required to spend an average of **43.28** hours per week). For comparison, Councillors in Queensland are paid between a minimum of **$53,049** and maximum of **$150,986** per year. The *minimum* fee for a Councillor in Queensland is significantly higher than the *maximum* fee for the same role in New South Wales.

The current full-time adult average weekly ordinary time earnings according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics is $1,586.20 per week, or **$82,704.47** per year. Weekly ordinary time earnings refer to the earnings for the completion of one week of work. It is calculated before taxation and any other deductions. Ordinary time earnings are exclusive of salary sacrificed amounts, non-cash components, overtime, reimbursements and employer superannuation contributions.

Considering the time that is required to complete the role of an elected representative, it seems appropriate to suggest average ordinary time earnings as a reasonable comparison for salary expectations. In addition to the time commitments of the role aligning with ordinary time earnings, it also seems like an appropriate comparison as it allows for management over time that relates to indexed market movements.

As another point of reference, the salary of a state Member of Parliament (MP) was also considered. This role was considered as it has consistently been referenced as a comparable role to that of Mayor in Local Government. The base salary of a state MP is $165,066 plus an electoral allowance (within a range) that can take the total remuneration of a state MP between $214,951 and $305,231.

Furthermore, we have also undertaken a comparative analysis of fees paid to Mayors, Deputy Mayors and Councillors against data obtained from the 2018 *Australian Board Remuneration Survey Report*. The roles were compared to similar roles in the Not For Profit (NFP) and Government (boards of Government entities) sectors and the results are outlined in the tables below.

Mayor ($ per Year)				
Role	Average	25th	Median	75th
Mayor - Survey Response	$ 43,716	$ 34,500	$ 36,000	$ 60,000
Chairman - NFP (McGuirck)	$ 55,408	$ 19,240	$ 40,000	$ 80,000
Chairman - Government (McGuirck)	$ 88,385	$ 59,189	$ 80,536	$ 115,097

Deputy Mayor ($ per Year				
Role	Average	25th	Median	75th
Deputy Mayor - Survey Response	$ 16,025	$ 11,450	$ 18,500	$ 19,000
Deputy Chairman - NFP (McGuirck)	$ 28,618	$ 10,750	$ 20,000	$ 41,250
Deputy Chairman - Government (McGuirck)	$ 57,057	$ 37,782	$ 48,497	$ 78,785

Councillor				
Role	Average	25th	Median	75th
Councillor - Survey Response	$ 17,690	$ 11,124	$ 18,000	$ 20,000
Director - NFP (McGuirck)	$ 25,459	$ 9,500	$ 19,500	$ 35,460
Director - Government (McGuirck)	$ 42,279	$ 28,852	$ 38,950	$ 53,536

It is our recommendation that Councils have the ability to increase the remuneration paid to elected representatives in certain circumstances. Fee ranges should be expanded so that Councils are able to pay in line with the Australia Average Ordinary Time Earnings. We are not suggesting a change to the minimum range of fees, only the maximum.

Governance and Delivery

The system we are suggesting is not an automatic pay rise to all Councillors. It revolves around Councils determining and clarifying the expectations and requirements of their Councillors in context of their operating environment.

Where the role is considered to be equivalent to full-time it seems clear that the current range of remuneration, particularly the maximum amounts for Councillors, need to be expanded to better align with a reasonable 'living' wage such as that evidenced by the current average ordinary time earnings level.

As mentioned, we are not suggesting that all roles in all specific Councils will receive a pay rise. We believe Council's should be required to develop a standardised business case, considering a range of pre-established criteria to ensure fiscally responsible and sustainable decision making. For example, a business case pro forma could be constructed considering factors such as:

+ The specific expectations and demands of the role within Council's own context;
+ The individual Council's capacity to pay;
+ Impact on ratepayers (ensuring no detriment);
+ Impact on Service delivery (ditto).

An implementation option to ensure transparency with the community would be to make it compulsory for any business case calling for an increase to fees to be included in Council's *Community Strategic Plan*. By linking governance of fees with a pre-existing community consultation based mechanism we ensure the appropriate level of community engagement.

It is important that any new role expectations are upheld and that the community is receiving value for any increase in elected representative remuneration.

There are already personal development structures in place, such as the Local Government Capability Framework, that could potentially assist with governance.

Delivery – Superannuation

It is also our recommendation that superannuation contributions should be paid to elected representatives. Superannuation is a very important avenue to assist in providing for workers retirement. The provision of superannuation for elected representatives would continue to develop a more desirable reward package, creating a more attractive role. This continues to aid in the achievement of the overarching goal of broadening the pool of potential candidates and better representing the local community.

We note that there is clear precedent behind making this change, with superannuation being offered to Councillors in Queensland with the provisions outlined in *Section* 226 of the *Local Government Act 2009 (QLD)*. In terms of the level of superannuation offered to Councillors, the 2018 *Local Government Remuneration and Discipline Tribunal – Remuneration Report* concluded that "the level of superannuation payments made to a Councillor is a matter to be determined by each individual Council having regard to the relevant Commonwealth legislation and section 22 of the Act".

As another point of reference we have considered the superannuation benefits on offer to state MPs. MPs have a dedicated superannuation scheme where membership is compulsory and contribution rates are given as a fixed percentage of annual allowances or base salary. The current superannuation contribution amount for MPs is15.4% and is outlined within the *Parliamentary Superannuation Act 2004*

We are suggesting a simple implementation method, where superannuation fund membership would be compulsory for all Councillors and contribution rates would be paid as a fixed percentage of the annual fees paid to Councillors. There is a minimum level of superannuation that must be paid, known as the *Super Guarantee* (SG), which is currently 9.5% of ordinary time earnings. We recommend that Councils be given the same freedoms as in Queensland where contribution levels are able to be determined by each individual Council, as long as it is at least in line with the *Super Guarantee* described above.

For reference, outlined on the following page is the excerpt from the Queensland LG Act that is referred to above.

Section 226 – Super Scheme for Councillors - Local Government Act 2009 (QLD)

(1)A local government (other than the Brisbane City Council) may, for its councillors—
(a)establish and amend a superannuation scheme; or
(b)take part in a superannuation scheme.

(2)If it does so, the local government may pay an amount from its operating fund to the superannuation scheme as a contribution for its councillors.

(3)However, the local government must not make contributions to the superannuation scheme—
(a)of more than the proportion of a salary that is payable by the local government for its standard permanent employees under this part; or
(b)for a person who is no longer a councillor.

(4)A councillor of the local government may enter into an arrangement with the local government under which—
(a)the councillor agrees to forgo a percentage or amount of the remuneration that the councillor is entitled to as a councillor; and
(b)the local government agrees to contribute the percentage or amount to the superannuation scheme for the councillor.

(5)A superannuation scheme is a superannuation scheme that complies with the Commonwealth Super Act.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT NSW

ANNEXURE LG-3

LOCAL GOVERNMENT NSW · WORKPLACE ANALYTICS

Elected Representative (M&C) Work Value Survey

Final analysis deck . distributions, summary statistics, text analytics & research-question deep-dives

191 respondents . NSW-wide . Stage 1

Prepared by LGMS (a department of Local Government NSW) for the LGRT Stage 1 submission.

ONE VOICE FOR COUNCILS

ORIENTATION

HOW TO READ THIS DECK

Seven parts. Each survey question gets its own slide built around four things: an annotated chart, a summary-statistics strip, a plain-English note on how the data was measured and aggregated, and an interpretation of what it means for the submission. Sections close with a synthesis; the deck ends with deeper research-question analysis.

A **Who responded**
Q1–Q6 . the respondent base

B **Time & workload**
Q7, Q8, Q10 . hours and effort

C **How the role has changed**
Q9, Q11 . skill, complexity, volume

D **Classification and recognition**
Q13–Q15 . full/part-time, Deputy Mayor

E **Fees – adequacy and impact**
Q16–Q18 . the core work-value case

F **In their own words**
Q12, Q19–Q21 . keywords, themes, sentiment

G **Deeper analysis**
5 research questions & sub-group findings

LGNSW . Local Government NSW Base: 191 responses. Percentages use valid-n (those who answered each question).

LOCAL GOVERNMENT NSW

PART A

Who responded

The respondent base — Q1 to Q6

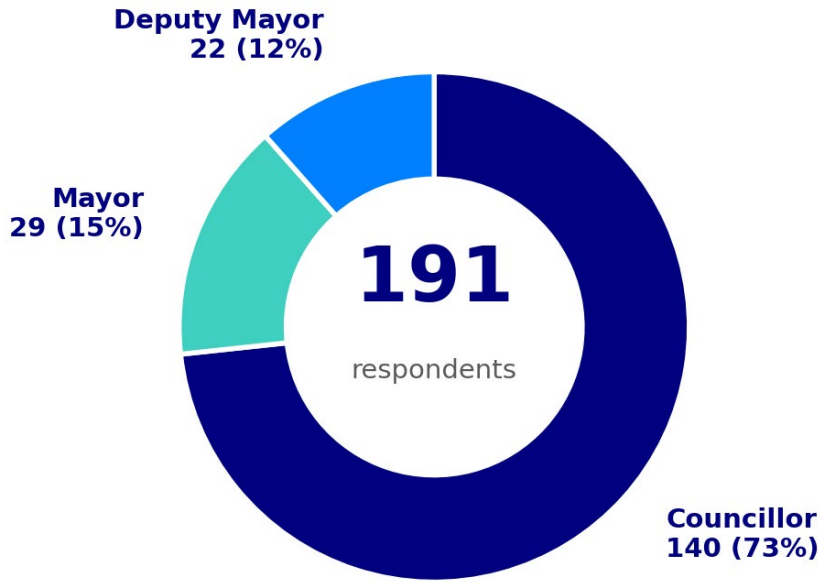
→ Role, tenure, gender, and age

→ Council type and population range

→ How representative the 191 responses are

Current role

What is your current role?



How it was measured & aggregated

Each respondent picked one role. We counted each and converted to a share of all 191. For a category, the only meaningful 'centre' is the mode.

What it means

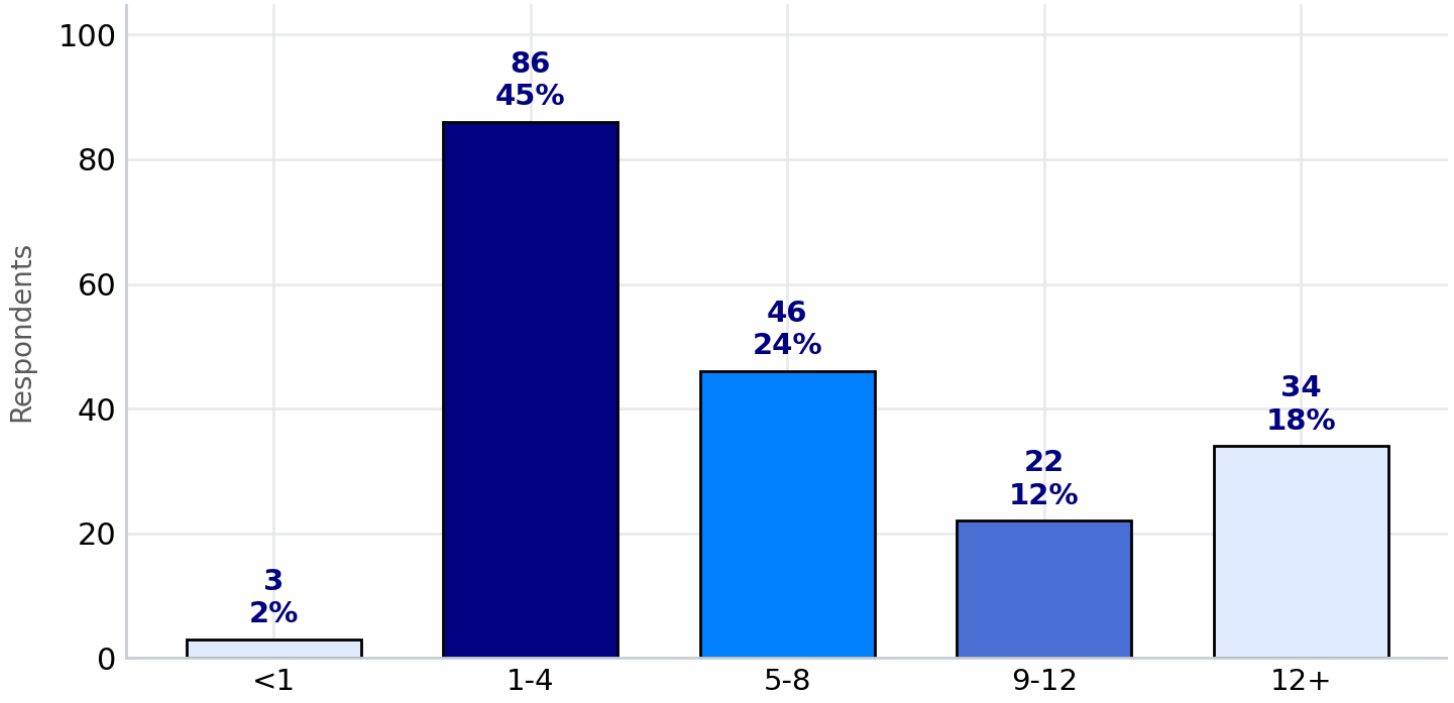
Councillors make up 73% of respondents, alongside 29 mayors and 22 deputy mayors, so the findings reflect the whole elected body rather than leadership alone.

191	Councillor	—	n/a	Nominal
n (responses)	Mode (most common)	Mean . Median	Skewness	Data type

LGNSW . Local Government NSW *Categorical (nominal) . valid-n shown in statistics strip.*

Tenure

How many years have you served as an elected representative?



How it was measured & aggregated

Answers are tenure bands. To average we used band mid-points (e.g. '1–4 years' → 2.5; top band capped at 15).

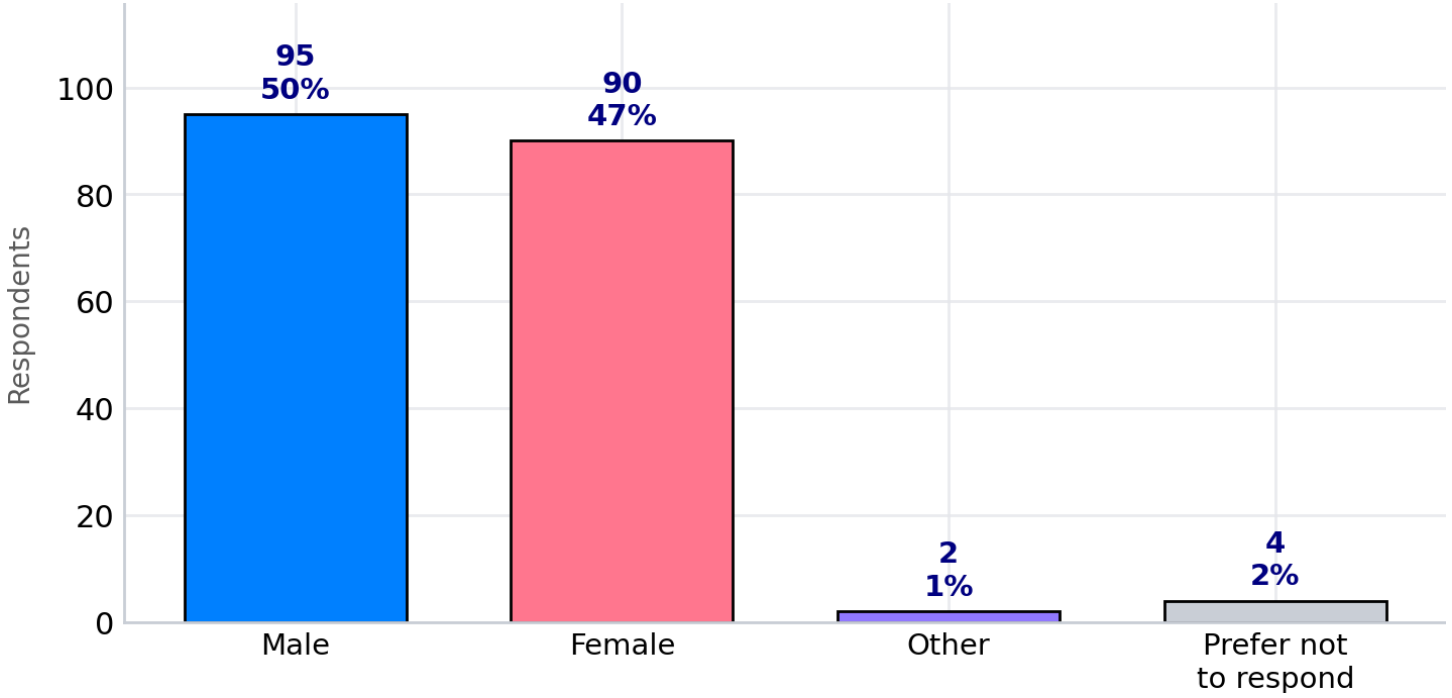
What it means

The base leans toward newer members — 45% have served 1–4 years — and even this group reports that the role has grown, so the case does not rest on comparisons with the past.

191	6.58	6.5	2.5	+0.74
n	Mean (yrs)	Median (yrs)	Mode (yrs)	Skewness

Gender

How do you describe your gender?



How it was measured & aggregated

Self-described gender, counted by category. A near-even split needs no averaging.

What it means

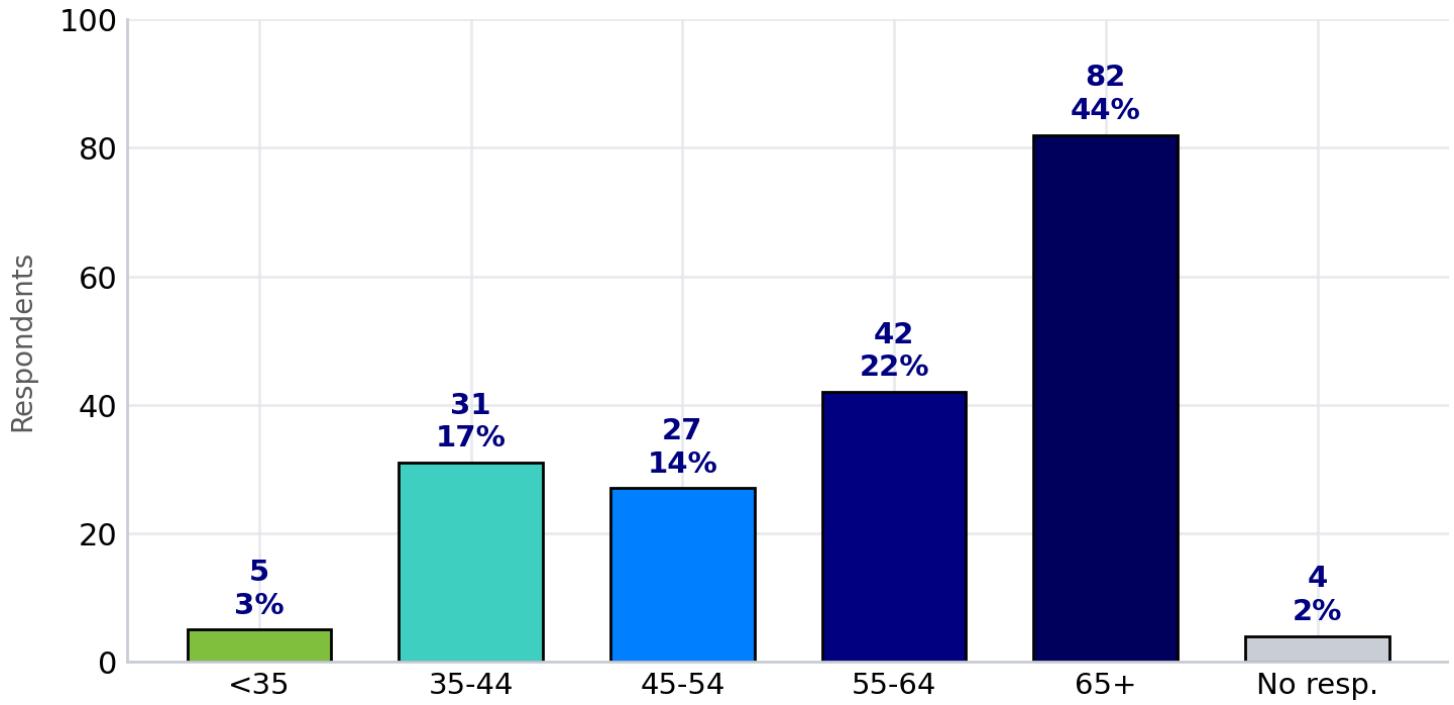
With 95 male and 90 female respondents, the workload and fairness findings are drawn from a well-balanced sample (see RQ4 in Part G).

191	Male	—	n/a	Nominal
n	Mode	Mean . Median	Skewness	Data type

LGNSW . Local Government NSW *Categorical (nominal) . valid-n shown in statistics strip.*

Age

Which age group are you in?



How it was measured & aggregated

Age bands given mid-points to average; 'Prefer not to respond' excluded (187 remain). Negative skew = responses concentrated in the higher bands.

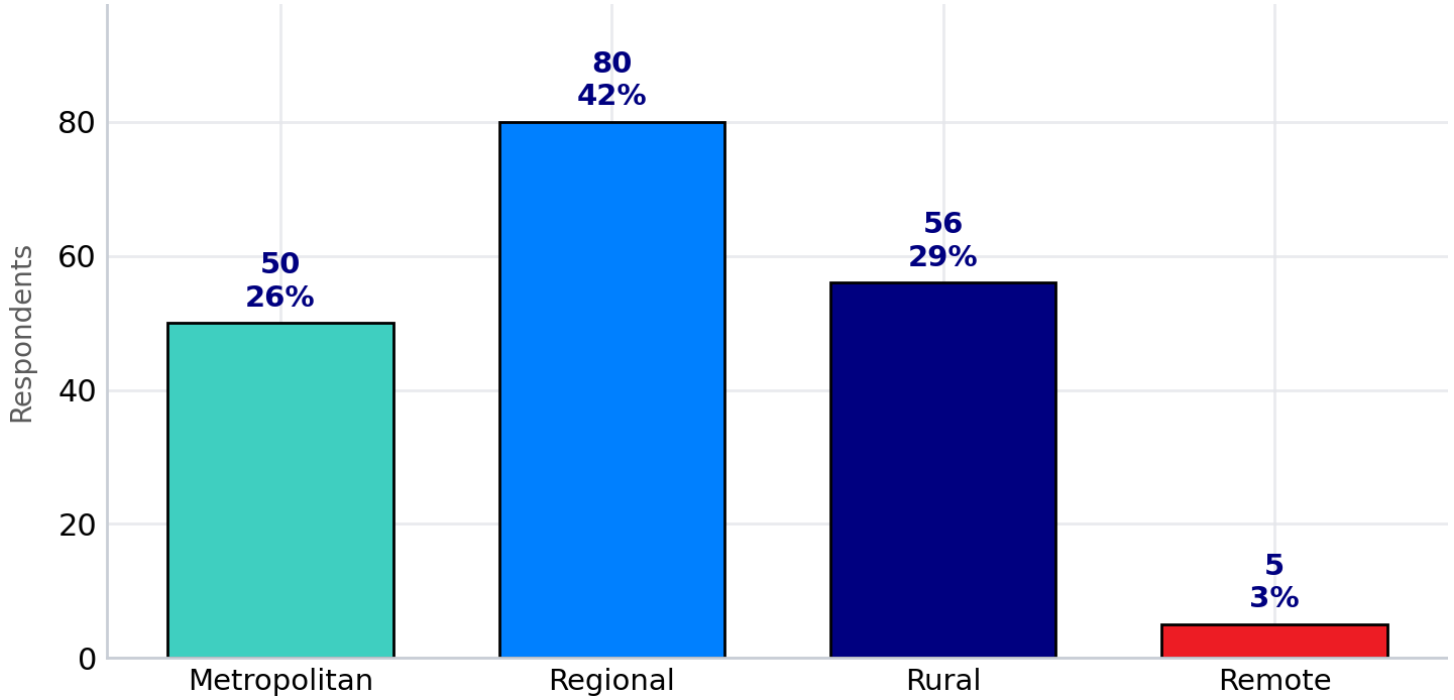
What it means

Around 66% sit in the 55+ bands, while 34% are under 55 — a spread that gives the workload and fee findings a broad base across career stages.

187	~59	55–64	65+	−0.69
n (4 skipped)	Mean age (band)	Median band	Mode	Skewness

Council type

How would you describe your council?



How it was measured & aggregated

Each respondent classified their own council. Regional/Rural/Remote combine to 141 of 191.

What it means

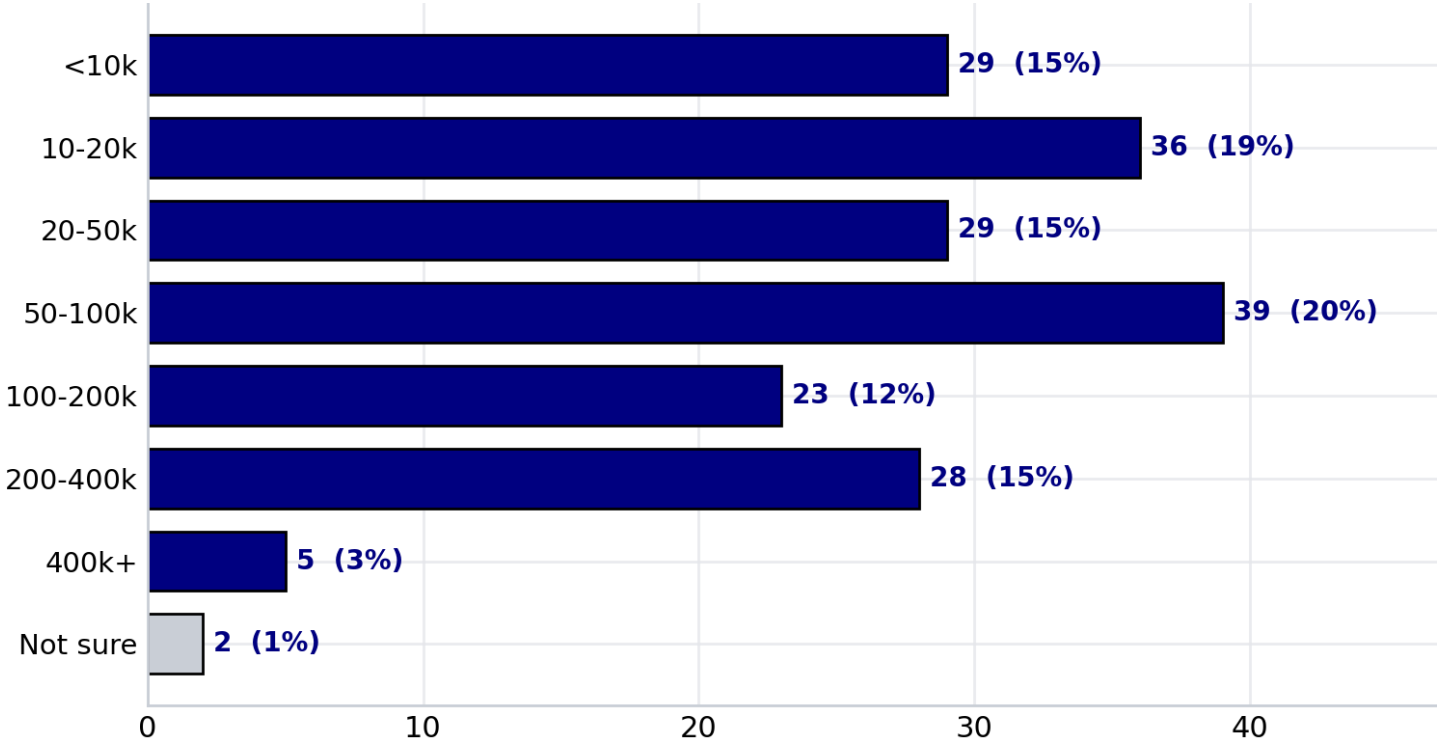
74% of respondents serve Regional, Rural or Remote councils, so the geographic diversity of the sector is well represented — a central consideration in the categorisation discussion.

191	Regional	—	n/a	Nominal
n	Mode	Mean . Median	Skewness	Data type

LGNSW . Local Government NSW *Categorical (nominal) . valid-n shown in statistics strip.*

LGA population range

Which population range best represents your Local Government Area?



How it was measured & aggregated

Population bands given mid-points (top capped 450k). Strong positive skew: a few large metros pull the mean above the median.

What it means

Respondents are spread across LGA sizes, with the median in the 50–100k band. The gap between the mean and the median shows population is an uneven measure, and a limited basis for categorisation on its own (tested in RQ5).

189	~100k	75k	75k	+1.40
n	Mean (residents)	Median	Mode	Skewness

Who responded — what the base tells us

1. The base is broad and credible: 176 elected representatives spanning every role, all four council types and the full range of LGA sizes.

2. 73% are from Regional, Rural or Remote councils, so the geographic reality of the sector is well represented — central to the categorisation debate.

3. The sample is concentrated in the higher age bands (mean age-band ≈59) and toward lower tenure —consistent with the recurring concern that current remuneration limits who can afford to serve.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT NSW

PART B

Time & workload

How much time the role takes — Q7, Q8, Q10

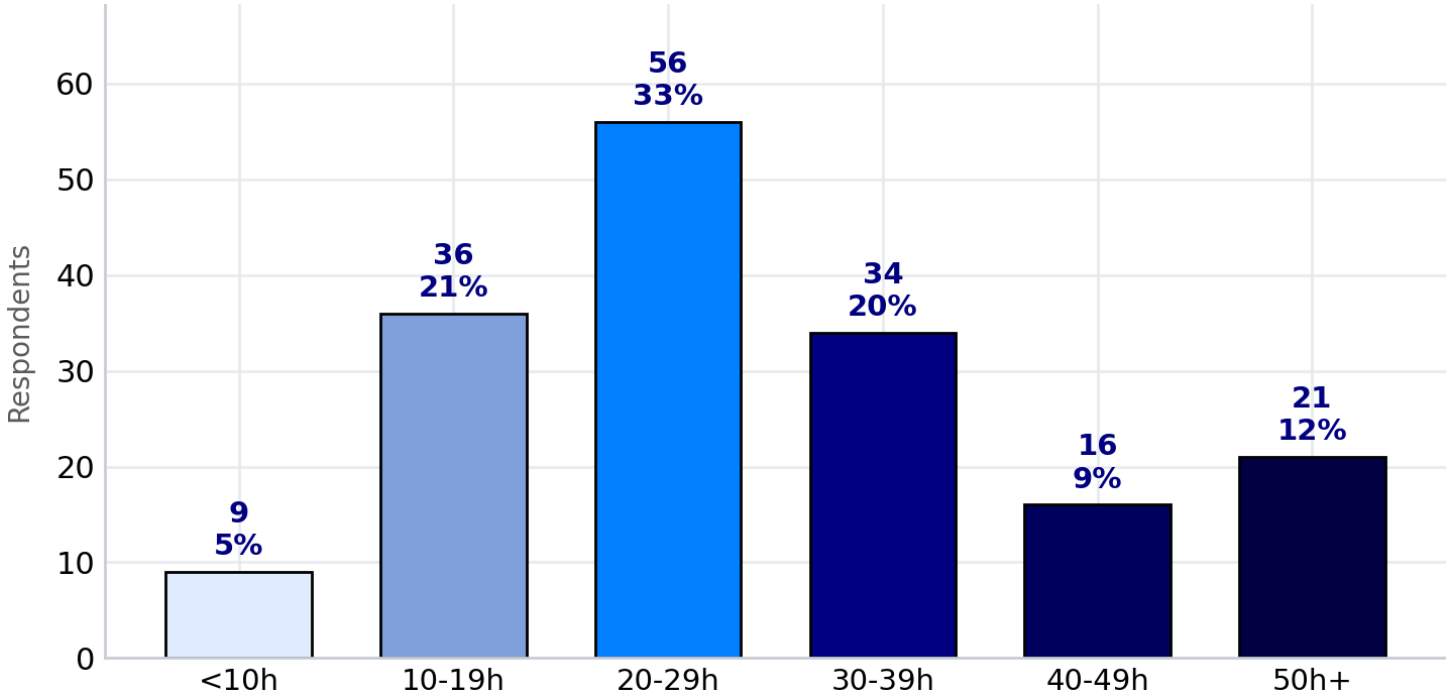
→ Total weekly hours and travel time

→ Where the hours actually go, by activity

→ Why averages can understate the load

Weekly hours

On average, how many hours per week do you spend on elected duties?



How it was measured & aggregated

Hours bands converted to mid-points (e.g. '20–29' → 24.5; '50+' capped at 55) and averaged.

What it means

Half of respondents report 20–39 hours a week, and the mean (~29 hrs) already exceeds what a part-time allowance assumes — the clearest single measure of the quantum of work.

172	28.9	24.5	24.5	+0.44
n (19 skipped)	Mean (hrs)	Median	Mode	Skewness

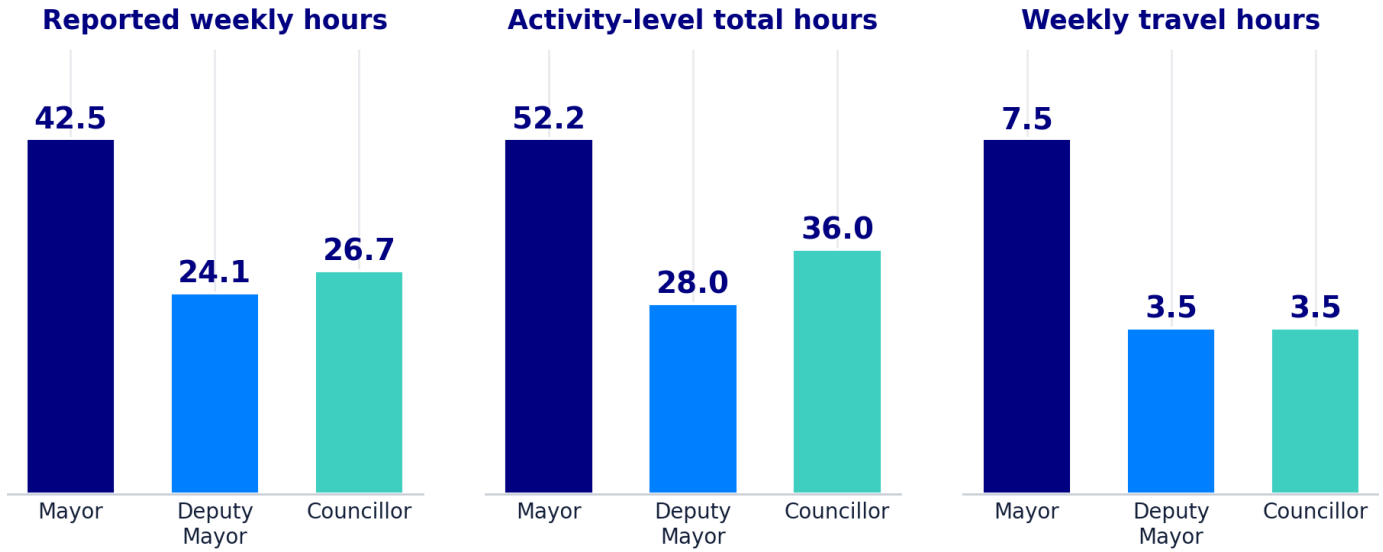
LGNSW . Local Government NSW *Ordinal (hours bands) . valid-n shown in statistics strip.*

Weekly hours by role

Do reported weekly hours differ by role — and do activity and travel data support them?

Mayors report the highest time commitment across all three measures

Reported weekly hours, activity-level totals and travel time, by role.



Q7 / Q8 / Q10 x Q1. Mayors n=28, Deputy Mayors n=21, Councillors n=123.

How it was measured & aggregated

Weekly-hours bands (Q7) converted to mid-points; activity totals (Q8) summed across 14 categories; travel (Q10) band mid-points. Averaged within each role.

What it means

Mayors reported the highest weekly time commitment (42.5 hours on average, with 82% reporting 30 or more hours). Their activity-level allocations (52.2 hours) and travel time (7.5 hours) are broadly consistent with these higher reported workloads,

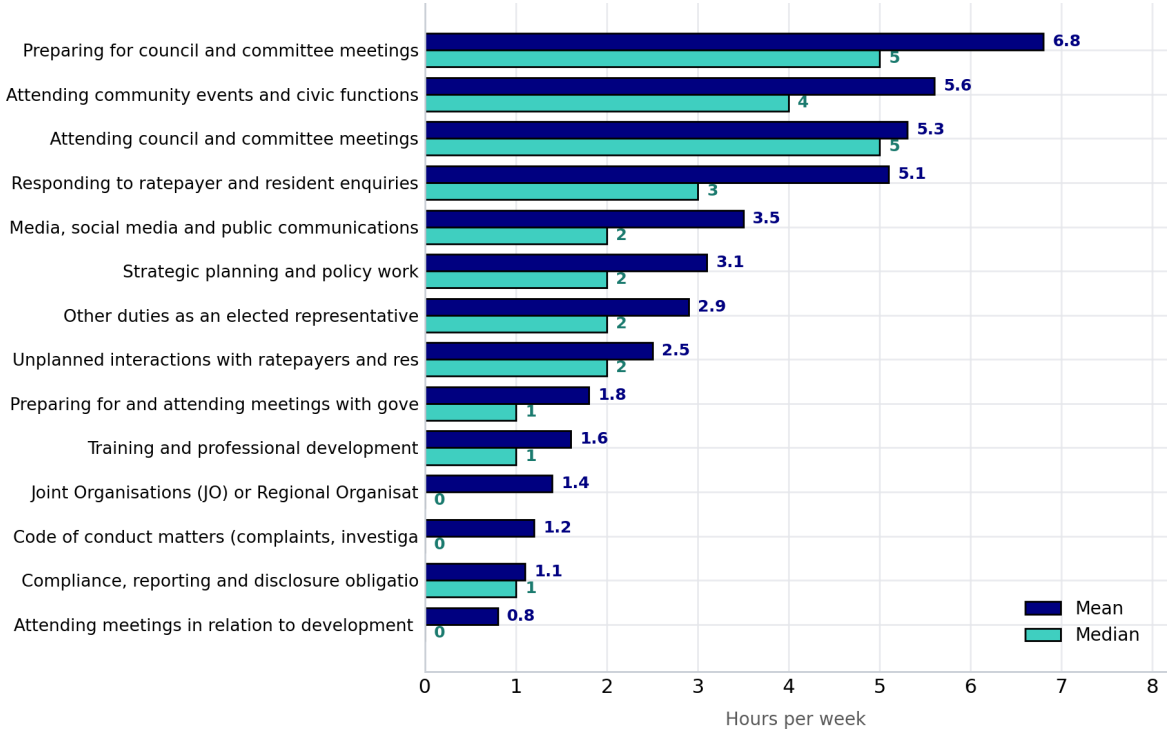
28	42.5	26.7	24.1	82%
n (Mayors)	Mayor mean (hrs)	Councillor mean	Deputy Mayor mean	Mayors at 30+ hrs

LGNSW. Local Government NSW Q7 / Q8 / Q10 × Q1 . valid-n shown in statistics strip.

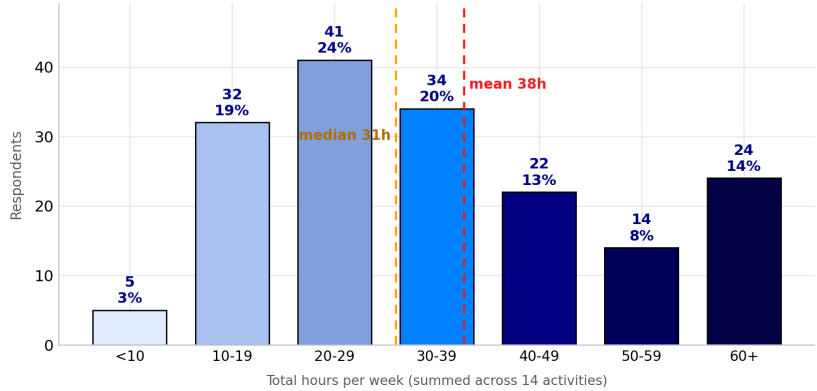
Where the hours go — by activity

Approximately how many hours per week do you spend on each activity?

Average & median hours, per activity



Distribution of total weekly hours



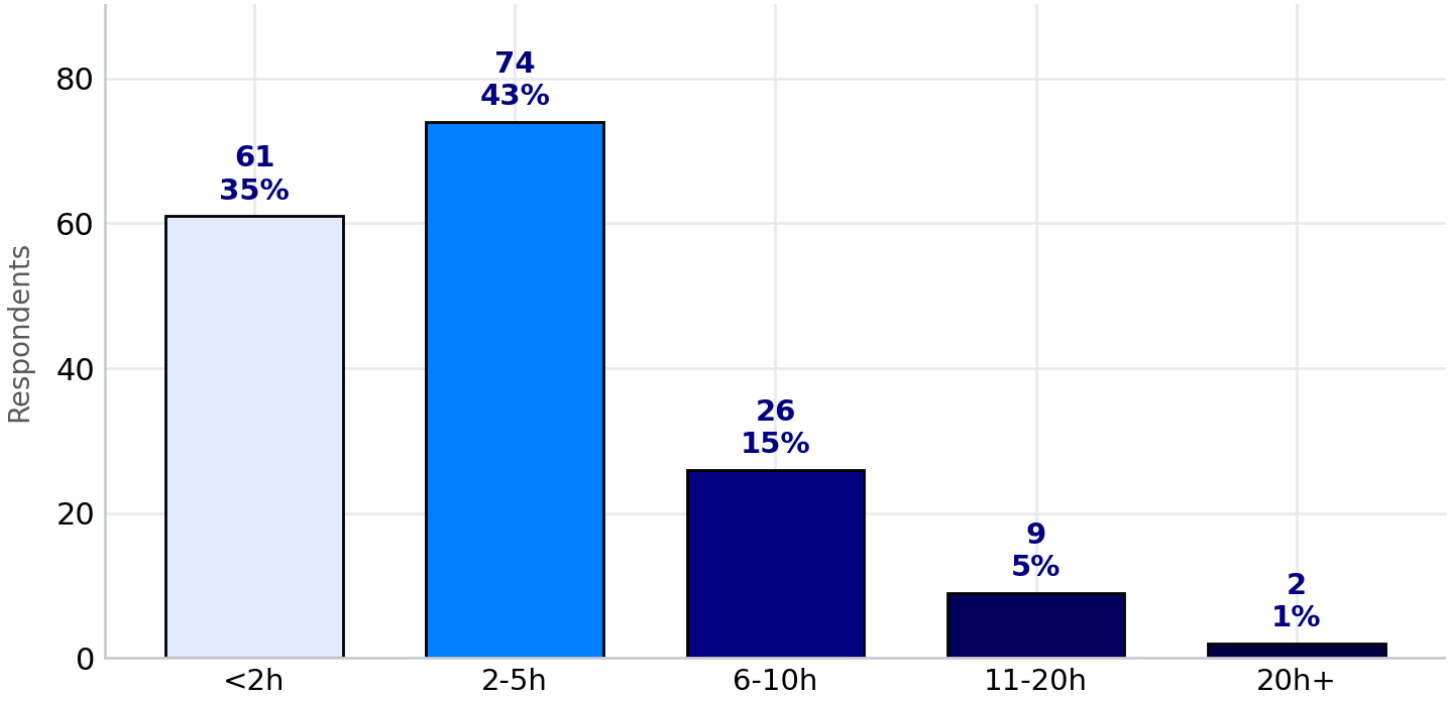
How it was measured & what it means

Respondents entered hours against 14 activities. Left: the mean and median for each activity. Right: each person's 14 entries summed into a weekly total, then binned. Preparation (6.8h), community events (5.6h) and meetings (5.3h) account for the most time. The right-skewed total (median 31h, mean 37.7h) indicates a group of representatives working close to full-time hours.

172	37.7	31.0	6.8	+2.79
n	Mean total (hrs)	Median total	Top activity mean (prep)	Skewness (total)

Travel time

How much time do you spend on average travelling for council duties per week?



How it was measured & aggregated

Single-select travel bands, counted for the distribution shown. Band mid-points (e.g. '2–5h' → 3.5; '20h+' → 25) give the mean and median. 78% travel under 6 hours a week.

What it means

Most respondents travel relatively little, but the right-skew matters: 22% travel 6–20+ hours a week, reflecting rural and remote representatives covering large areas — a cost a population-based framework does not capture.

172	4.2	3.5	2–5h	+2.39
n	Mean (hrs)	Median	Modal band	Skewness

LGNSW . Local Government NSW *Ordinal (travel bands) . valid-n shown in statistics strip.*

Time & workload — what the base tells us

1. The time commitment is substantial: councillors report they work around 29 hours in a typical week, half report 20–39 hours, and 12% report 50 or more.

2. Summed across 14 activities the average total is ~38 hours — effectively full-time — driven by preparation, community events and meetings, not meeting attendance alone.

3. A minority of respondents carry a much heavier load — in both total hours and travel time — which pulls the averages above what most respondents report (mean 38 hours vs median 31). Travel is one such cost that a population-based framework does not capture.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT NSW

PART C

How the role has changed

Skill, complexity and volume — Q9, Q11

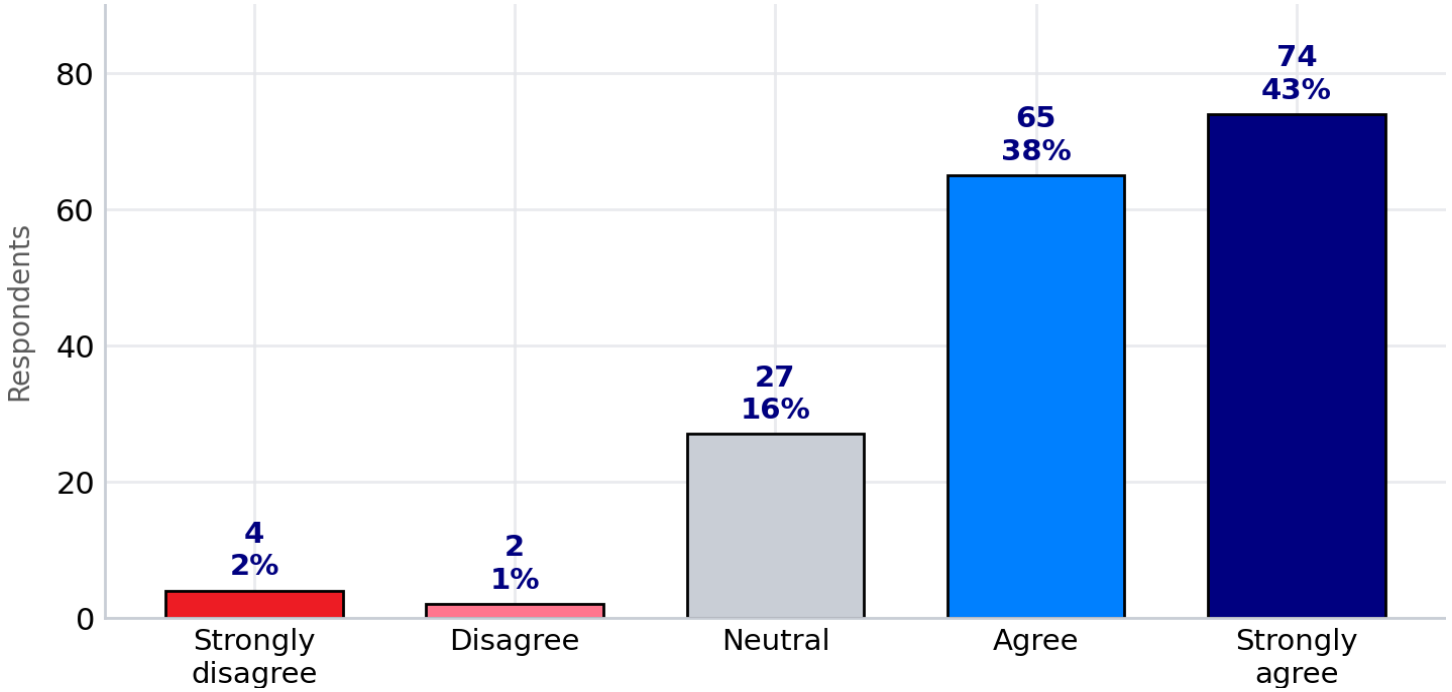
→ Digital communication and workload

→ Growth in skill, complexity and workload

→ Evidence behind the work-value case

Digital workload

Social media, email and online communication have increased my workload.



How it was measured & aggregated

Five-point agreement scale coded 1–5. Strong negative skew: answers pile up at the 'agree' end.

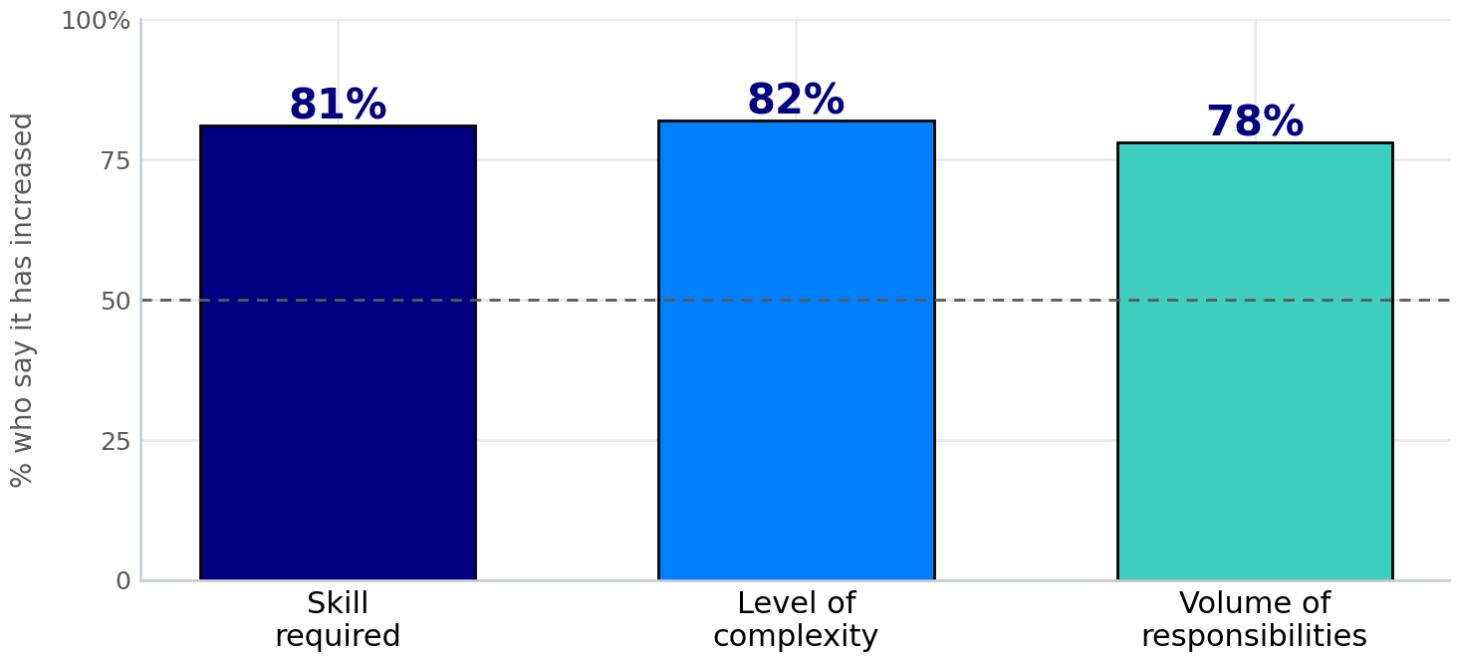
What it means

81% agree (mean 4.18, mode 5) that digital communication has increased their workload — a near-consensus that the role now carries an expectation of constant availability.

172	4.18	4	5	−1.22
n	Mean (1–5)	Median	Mode	Skewness

Change in the role

Compared with when you first became an elected representative, how has the role changed?



How it was measured & aggregated

Three dimensions rated 'Greatly decreased' (−2) to 'Greatly increased' (+2). Bars show the share choosing 'increased'/'greatly increased'.

What it means

About 8 in 10 report growth in skill (81%), complexity (82%) and volume (78%), with all three means firmly positive. Respondents consistently report the role has grown since they were first elected. Note the comparison point differs by respondent, reflecting varied tenure.

171	+1.11	+1.14	+1.10	78–82%
n	Mean. Skill	Mean. Complexity	Mean. Volume	Say 'increased'

LGNSW. Local Government NSW *Ordinal (−2…+2), 3 dimensions . valid-n shown in statistics strip.*

How the role has changed — synthesis

1. The role has fundamentally grown: ~8 in 10 report increased skill, complexity and volume, with every change-mean firmly positive.

2. Digital communication is a clear, near-unanimous driver — 81% agree it has increased their workload (mode = 'strongly agree').

3. Reported growth in work value underpins the submission: respondents consistently describe a role that has grown since they were first elected, across all three dimensions measured.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT NSW

PART D

Classification & recognition

Full/part-time and the Deputy Mayor — Q13, Q14, Q15

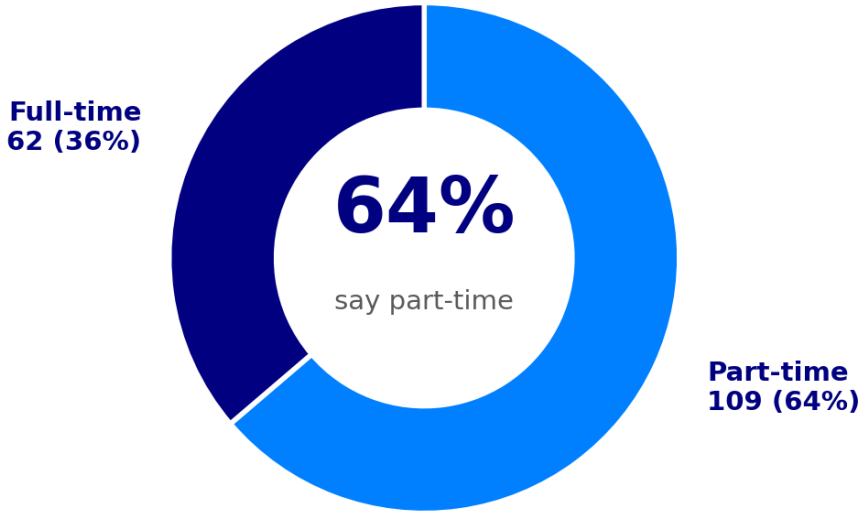
→ How the Councillor and Mayor roles should be classified

→ Recognition of the Deputy Mayor role

→ A nuanced classification signal

Councillor classification

How should the role of Councillor be classified for remuneration purposes?



How it was measured & aggregated

A binary choice (full- vs part-time), counted directly.

What it means

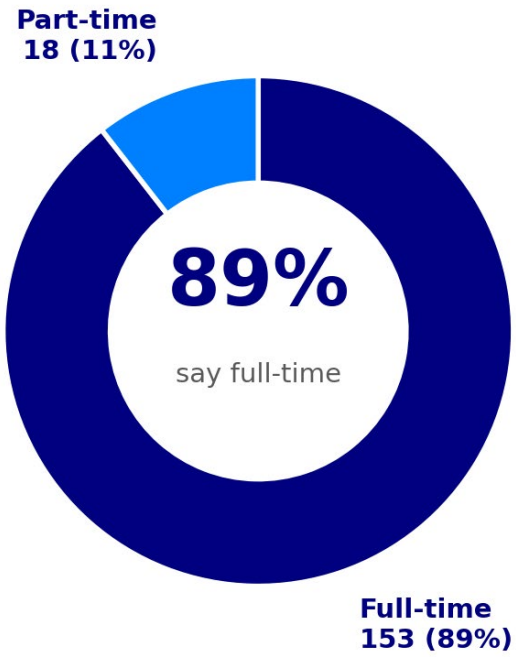
Views are divided and lean toward part-time (64%). This split is a more accurate reflection of Councillor opinion than a single consensus, and contrasts with views on the Mayoral role.

171	Part-time	64%	—	Nominal
n	Mode	chose part-time	Mean . Skew	Data type

LGNSW . Local Government NSW *Categorical (nominal) . valid-n shown in statistics strip.*

Mayor classification

How should the role of Mayor be classified for remuneration purposes?



How it was measured & aggregated

Same binary choice, applied to the Mayoral role, counted across 171.

What it means

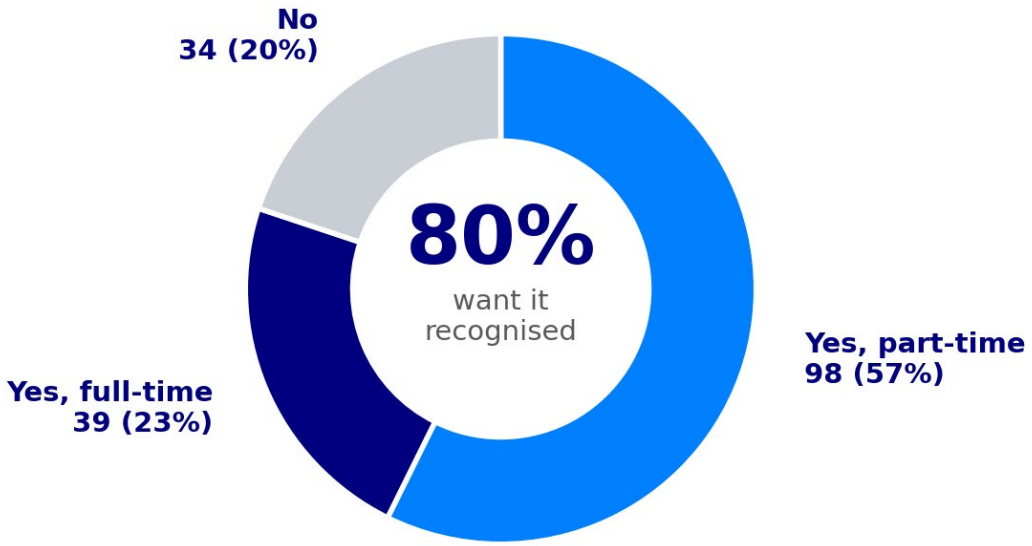
89% consider the Mayoral role should be full-time — a clear contrast with the divided view on Councillors, suggesting a framework that distinguishes between the two roles.

171	Full-time	89%	—	Nominal
n	Mode	chose full-time	Mean . Skew	Data type

LGNSW . Local Government NSW *Categorical (nominal) . valid-n shown in statistics strip.*

Deputy Mayor role

Should there be a separate and recognised role for the Office of Deputy Mayor?



How it was measured & aggregated

Three options ('No'/'Yes, part-time'/'Yes, full-time'); the two 'Yes' options combine into overall support.

What it means

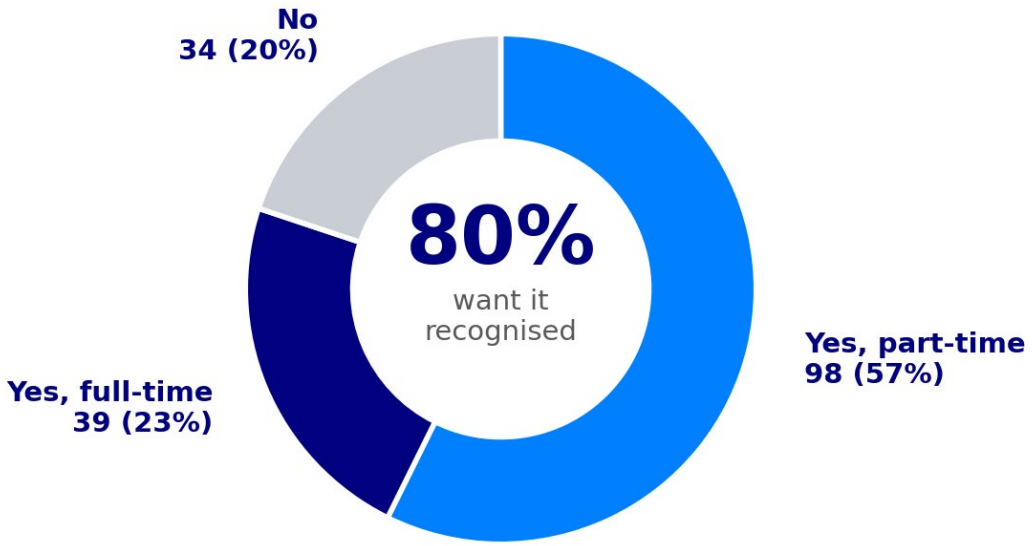
80% support formally recognising the Office of Deputy Mayor, with 'Yes, part-time' as the most common response. The role currently attracts the same fee as a Councillor under the present determination

171	Yes, part-time	80%	—	Nominal
n	Mode	want it recognised	Mean . Skew	Data type

LGNSW . Local Government NSW *Categorical (nominal) . valid-n shown in statistics strip.*

Deputy Mayor role — views by respondent role

Do views on recognising the Office of Deputy Mayor differ by respondent role?



How it was measured & aggregated

Q15 responses cross-tabulated by the respondent's own role (Q1). Percentages use each role's valid-n.

What it means

Deputy Mayor respondents were the most likely to support a separately recognised Office of Deputy Mayor (95% of n=21), most commonly identifying it as a part-time role (76%). Mayors and Councillors both recorded 78% support.

21	95%	76%	78%	78%
n (Deputy Mayors)	Deputy Mayors: support	of these: part-time	Mayors: support	Councillors: support

Classification & recognition — synthesis

1. A decisive 89% say the Mayoral role should be full-time, while views on the Councillor role lean part-time (64%) — a nuanced, honest classification signal.

2. 80% support formally recognising the Deputy Mayor role, which currently attracts the same fee as a councillor.

3. Together these point to a classification framework that distinguishes roles more clearly than the current one.

LGNSW. Local Government NSW Synthesis of the preceding question slides. Base: 191.

PART E

Fees: adequacy & impact

The core work-value case — Q16, Q17, Q18

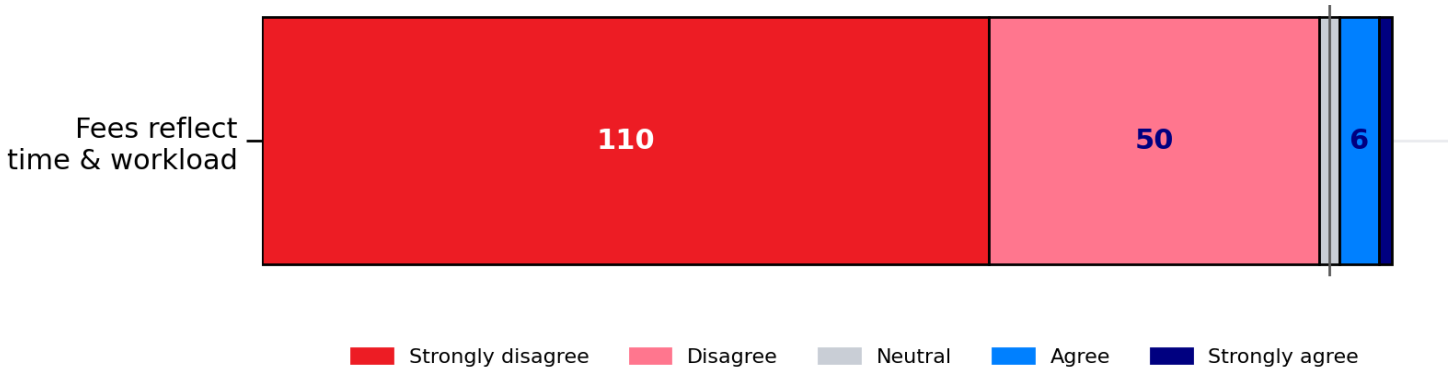
→ Whether fees reflect the work value

→ Whether fees encourage others to nominate

→ Whether fees affect everyday life

Fee adequacy

Current fees adequately reflect the time/workload and complexity of your role.



How it was measured & aggregated

Two agreement statements coded 1–5; the diverging bar centres on 'Neutral'. A mean near 1.5 sits between 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree'.

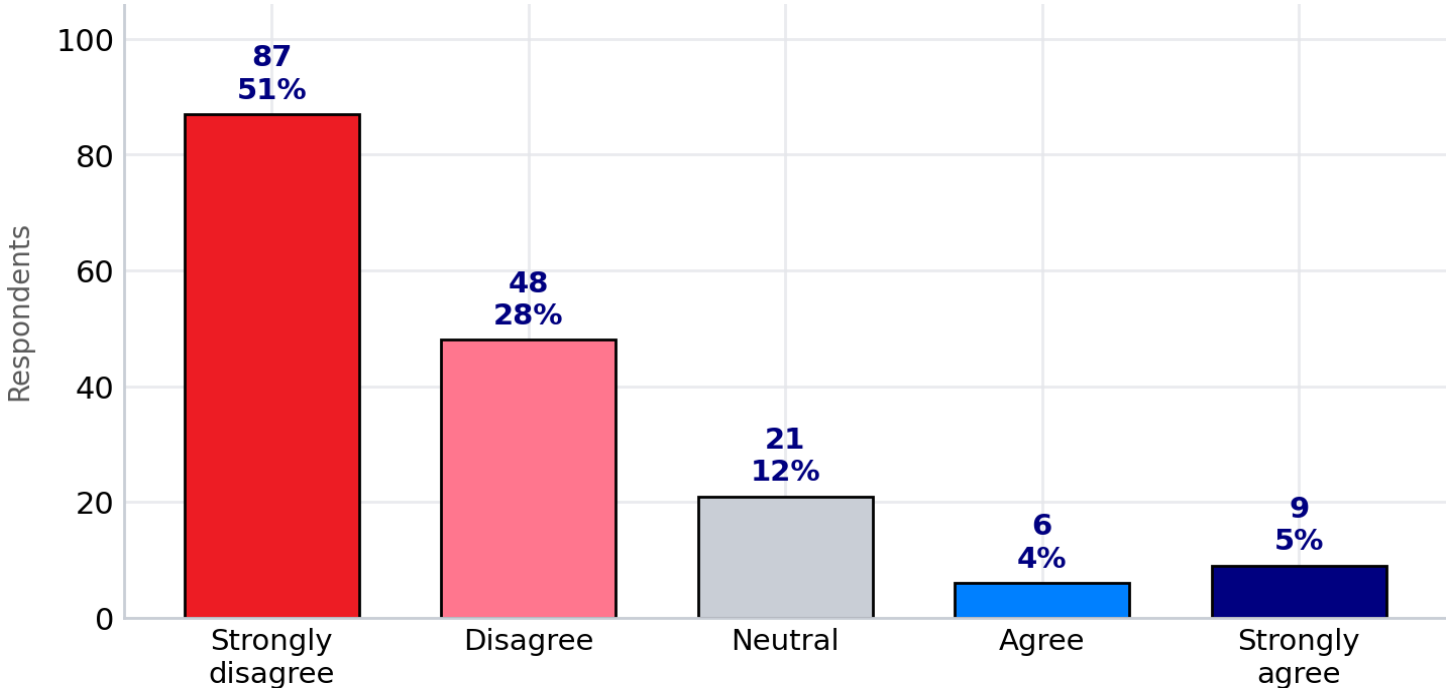
What it means

94% disagree that current fees reflect their time, workload, and complexity — the clearest signal in the survey. 'Strongly disagree' was also the most common response, so this reflects the broad view of respondents rather than a small group at one end of the scale.

171	1.48	1.45	94%	Clear
n	Mean . Time/workload	Mean . Complexity	disagree (both)	majority

Would fees encourage others to nominate?

The level of remuneration would encourage me to recommend others run for council.



How it was measured & aggregated

A single five-point agreement item coded 1–5. Both median and mode are 1 — the most common and middle answer are the lowest possible.

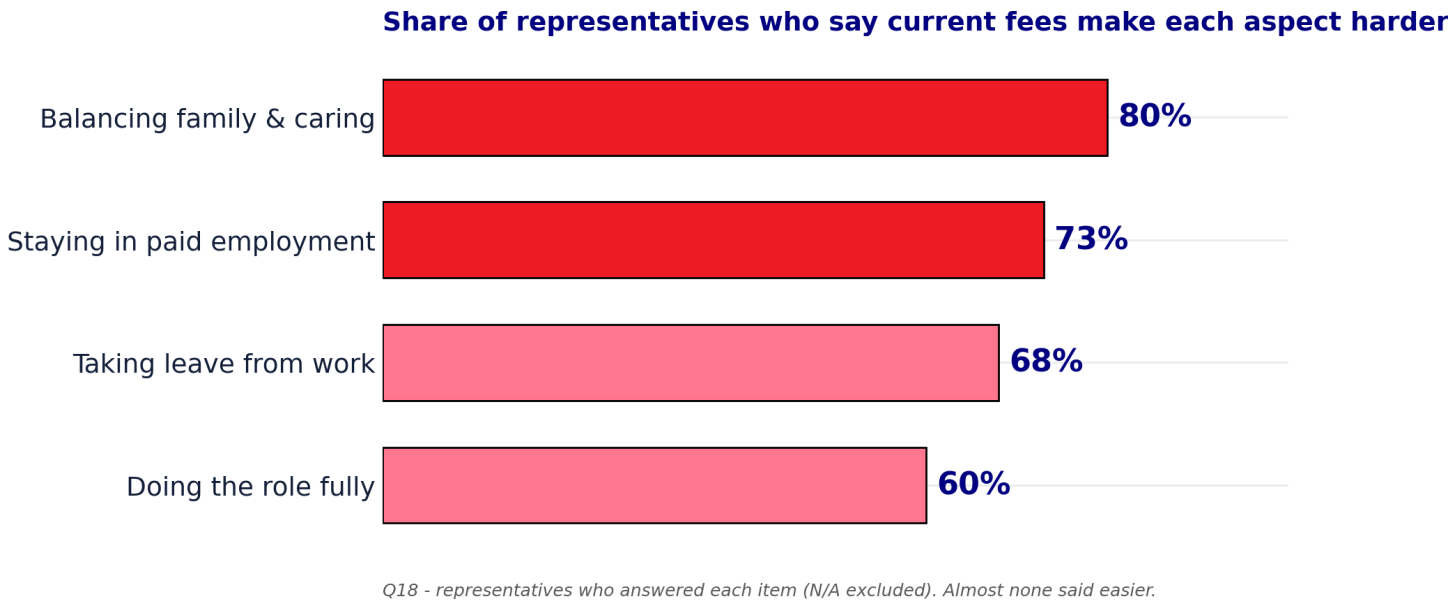
What it means

Respondents were asked whether current fee levels would encourage them to recommend that others run for council. Most disagreed: the average response was 1.84 out of 5, and 'strongly disagree' was the most common answer. Current fees are not encouraging members to promote the role to others.

171	1.84	1	1	+1.41
n	Mean (1–5)	Median	Mode	Skewness

Impact on everyday life

To what extent have current fee arrangements affected your ability to...



Q18 - representatives who answered each item (N/A excluded). Almost none said easier.

How it was measured & aggregated

Four life-impact items. We report the share of respondents who said each got harder ('less able' or 'significantly less able') because of current fee arrangements. 'N/A' excluded.

What it means

A majority of respondents say current fee arrangements have made each of the four aspects harder. Balancing family and caring responsibilities is affected most (80%), followed by staying in paid employment (73%).

137–161	80%	73%	68%	60%
n (N/A excluded)	harder: family & caring	harder: staying employed	harder: taking leave	harder: doing the role

Fees, adequacy & impact — synthesis

1. The core finding: 94% disagree that current fees reflect their time and workload — and 'strongly disagree' was the single most common answer, so most representatives chose the most negative option available.

2. Only 1.84/5 agree that current fees would encourage recommending the role to others, and fee arrangements are reported as a barrier to staying employed, taking leave and managing caring responsibilities.

3. Together these point to remuneration as a factor in who is able to take on and remain in the role — 80% say current arrangements make balancing family and caring responsibilities harder.

LGNSW. Local Government NSW Synthesis of the preceding question slides. Base: 191.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT NSW

PART F

In their own words

Text analytics on 143 open responses — Q12, Q19–Q21

→ Keyword frequency (word cloud)

→ Theme prevalence

→ Sentiment analysis

Keywords — what respondents talk about

Word frequency across 143 free-text responses. Common filler words and ubiquitous terms (like 'council') were down-weighted; size = how often a word appears.



How it was aggregated

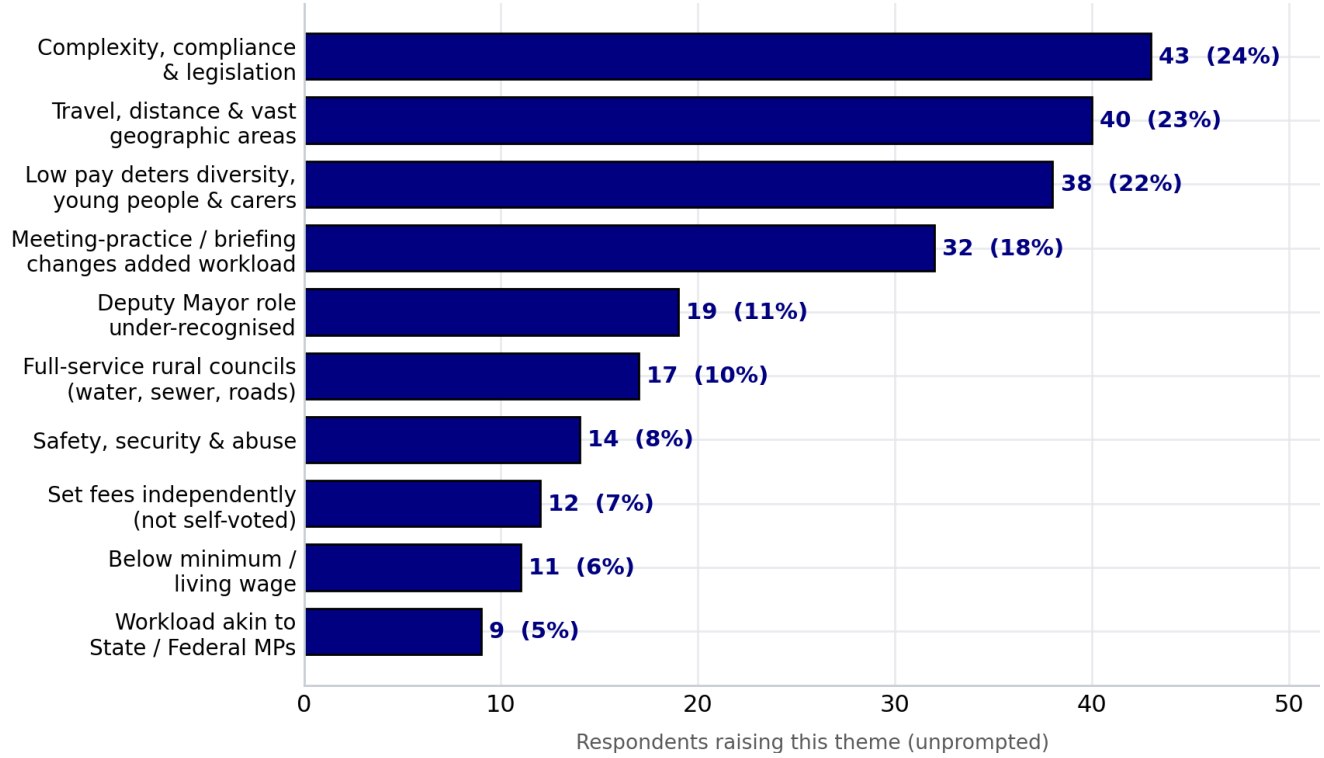
Every free-text answer was tokenised into words; stopwords removed; counts tallied across all responses.

What it means

'Time', 'work', 'community' and 'remuneration' appear most often, followed by 'increased', 'rural' and 'travel'. The prominence of 'rural', 'travel' and 'increased' is notable, as these terms were not stated explicitly in the questions asked.

Themes — what they raise unprompted

Each free-text answer was theme-coded by keyword; bars show how many of the 176 respondents raised each theme without being asked.



How it was aggregated

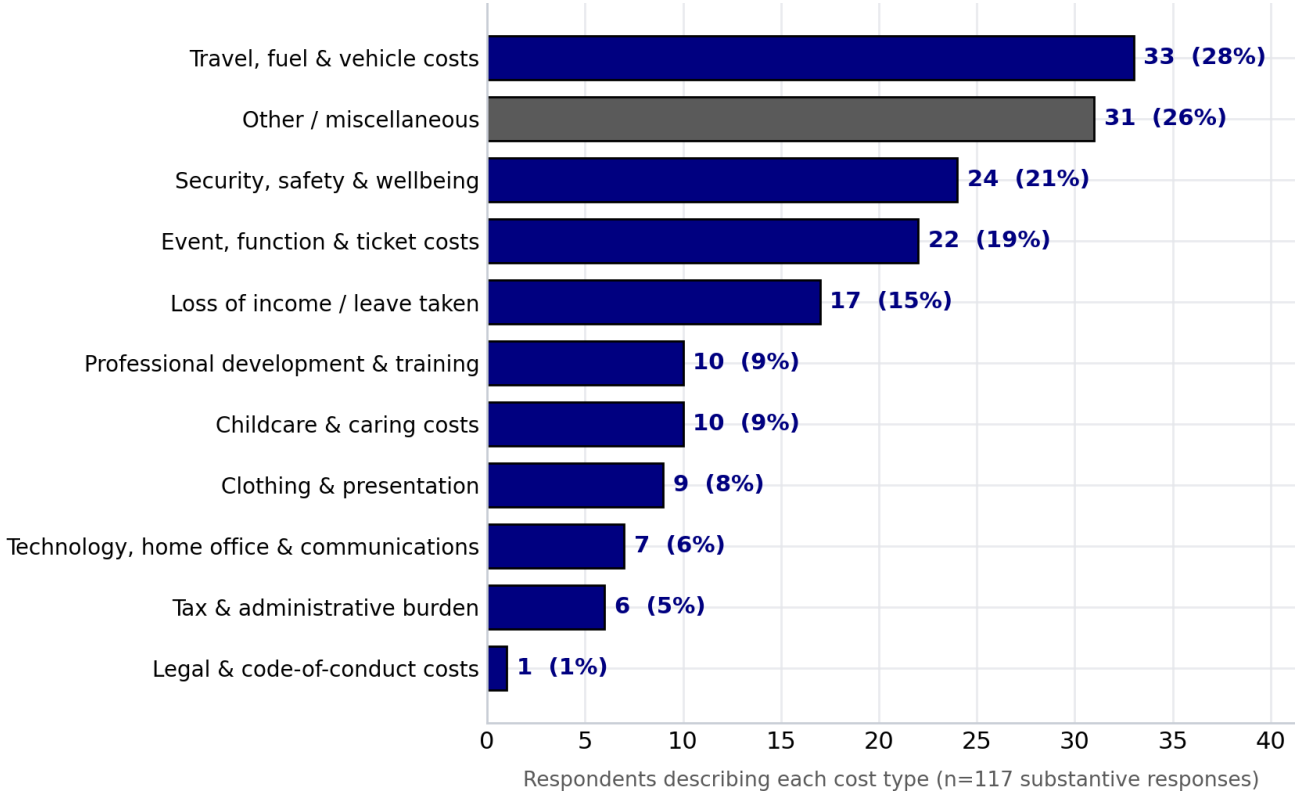
A keyword code frame flagged whether each response mentioned a theme. Counts are conservative — one flag per respondent per theme.

What it means

Complexity and compliance (24%), travel and distance (23%) and the effect of current fees on diversity (22%) are raised most often — the same drivers evident in the quantitative results.

Unplanned costs and expenses

Have you incurred any unplanned costs or expenses because of your role as an elected representative?



How it was aggregated

Free-text responses to Q19 were coded to recurring cost types; a response may mention more than one. 127 of 191 respondents answered, of which 117 described a cost.

What it means

Respondents identified a range of out-of-pocket costs associated with performing the role, including travel and vehicle costs, security and wellbeing, event and function tickets, forgone earnings, caring costs, technology and professional obligations. 31 responses did not fall into a recurring theme and are retained separately as other or miscellaneous.

LGNSW. Local Government NSW Q19 free-text. Multi-coded; 'no/nil' responses excluded from theme counts.

Wards and councillor numbers — an emerging theme

Raised unprompted in free-text responses (Q12, Q19–Q21)

Illustrative comments

"No of councillors and if a ward structure is in place, representing the whole LGA increases workload."
— Councillor, Rural

"Because the maximum number of Councillors is 15, any increase in population in large city councils is not accounted for."
— Councillor, Metropolitan

"The number of Councillors that you have."
— Mayor, Rural

"I think size of ward or council should have less impact on the size of the remuneration."
— Councillor, Metropolitan

How it was identified

Free-text answers (Q12, Q19–Q21) were searched for references to wards, councillor numbers or representation structure.

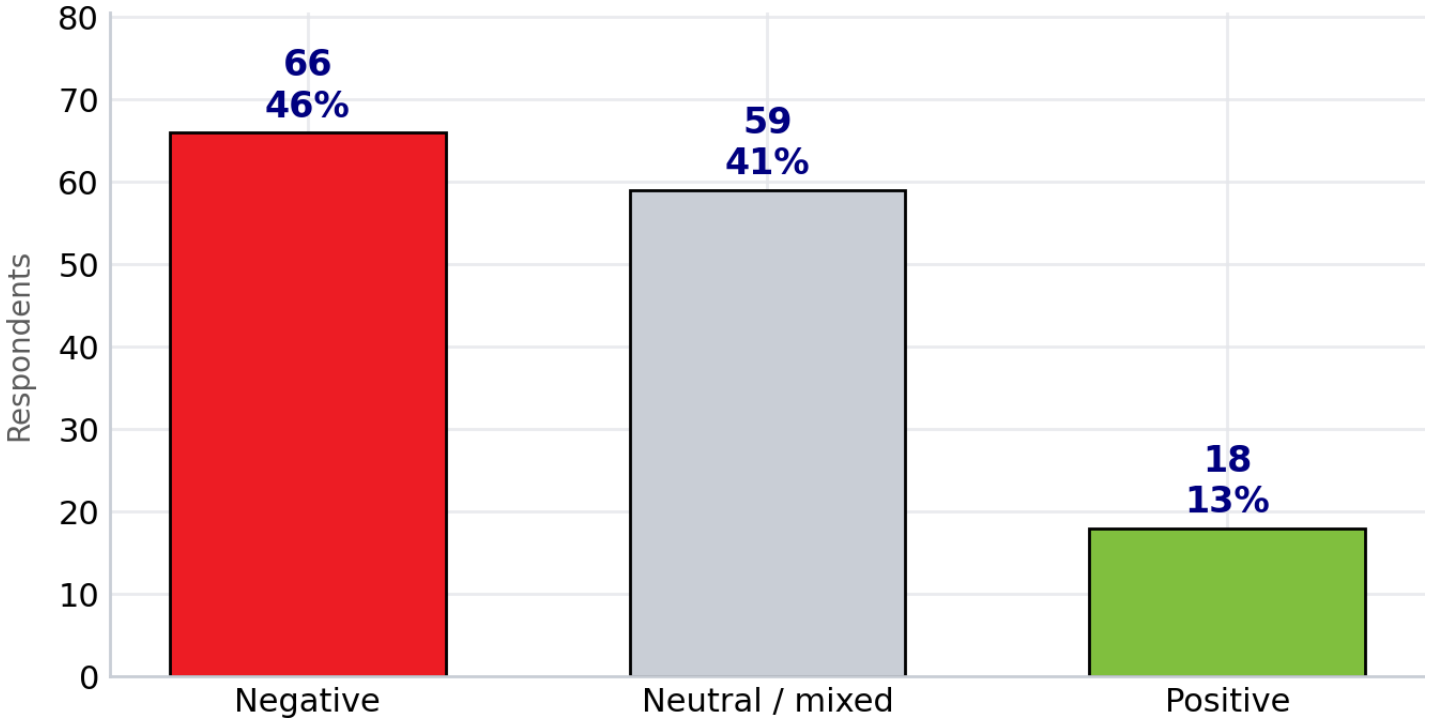
What it means

A small number of respondents (13, or 7%) suggested that the number of wards and councillors should be considered as a parameter in determining remuneration, as council structure affects workload and representation demands. This is noted as an emerging theme only and is not a primary finding.

LGNSW. Local Government NSW Q12, Q19–Q21 free-text. Keyword-identified; indicative only.

Sentiment — the tone of the responses

A domain-tuned lexicon scored each response on remuneration/workload vocabulary. Labelled as such — a transparent word-list method, not a general-purpose AI model.



46%
Negative overall

−0.28
Mean score (−1..+1)

143
n (responses)

How it was aggregated & what it means

Each response was scored by counting positive vs negative domain words, netted to a −1…1 score, then bucketed. Tone is predominantly negative (46% negative, mean −0.28) — consistent with a survey about fee adequacy, and on-the-record qualitative evidence of sector-wide concern.

In their own words — synthesis

1. Free-text corroborates the numbers: the most frequent terms are time, work, community and remuneration.

2. The leading unprompted themes — complexity/compliance, travel and the diversity impact of low pay — map directly onto the categorisation and work-value arguments.

3. Sentiment is clearly negative (46% of scored responses, mean −0.28), giving the submission a strong, on-the-record qualitative backbone.

LGNSW. Local Government NSW Synthesis of the preceding question slides. Base: 191.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT NSW

PART G

Deeper analysis

Five research-question deep-dives & sub-group findings

→ RQ1–RQ3: role, council type & fee views

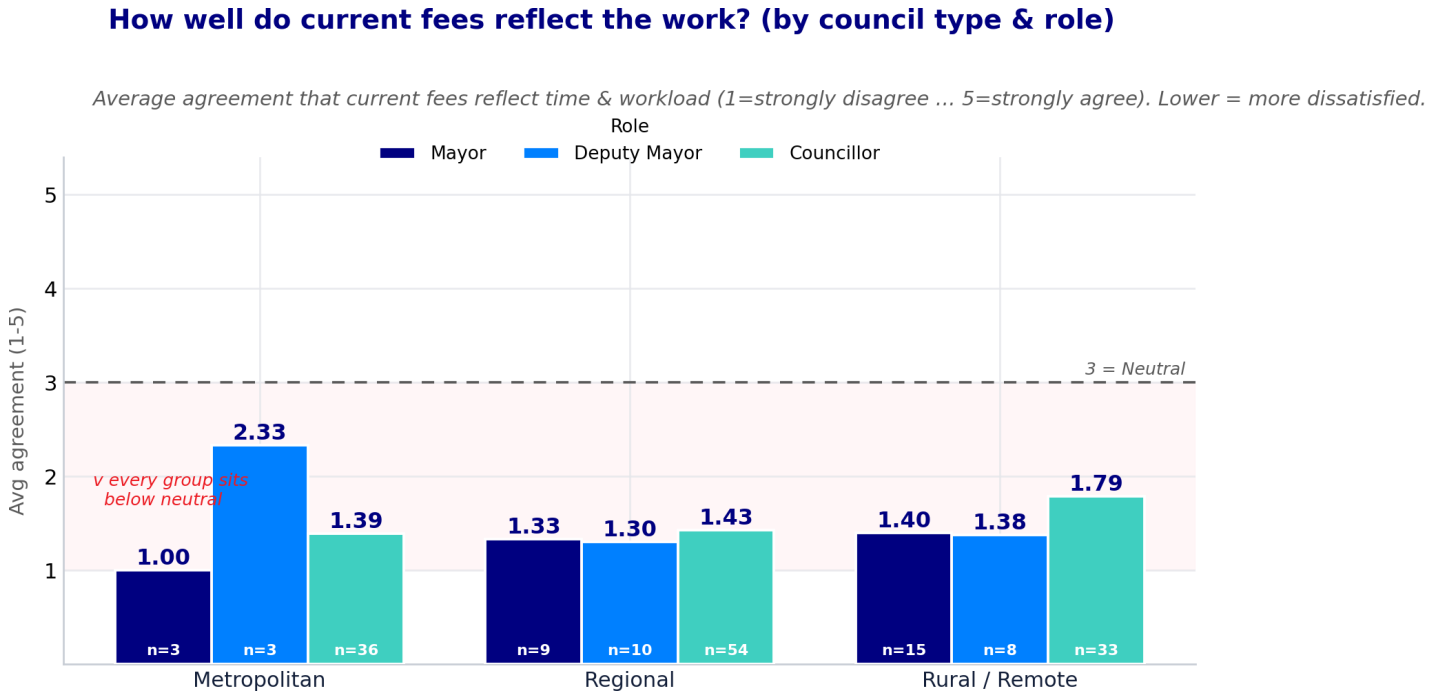
→ RQ4 gender . RQ5 population

→ Plus: who reports the longest working weeks

How well do current fees reflect the work?

Research question: does the view that current fees don't reflect the work differ by council type AND role together? (Q5 × Q1 × Q16)

Key takeaway: Dissatisfaction runs deep for every group — but it's sharpest for Mayors (Metropolitan Mayors average just 1.00/5, small base). Among the larger groups, Rural/Remote councillors are the least dissatisfied (1.79), yet still well below neutral.



How it was aggregated

For each council-type × role cell we averaged the 1–5 agreement score that current fees reflect time & workload. Bars grouped by type, coloured by role; n on each bar. Remote merged into Rural.

What it means

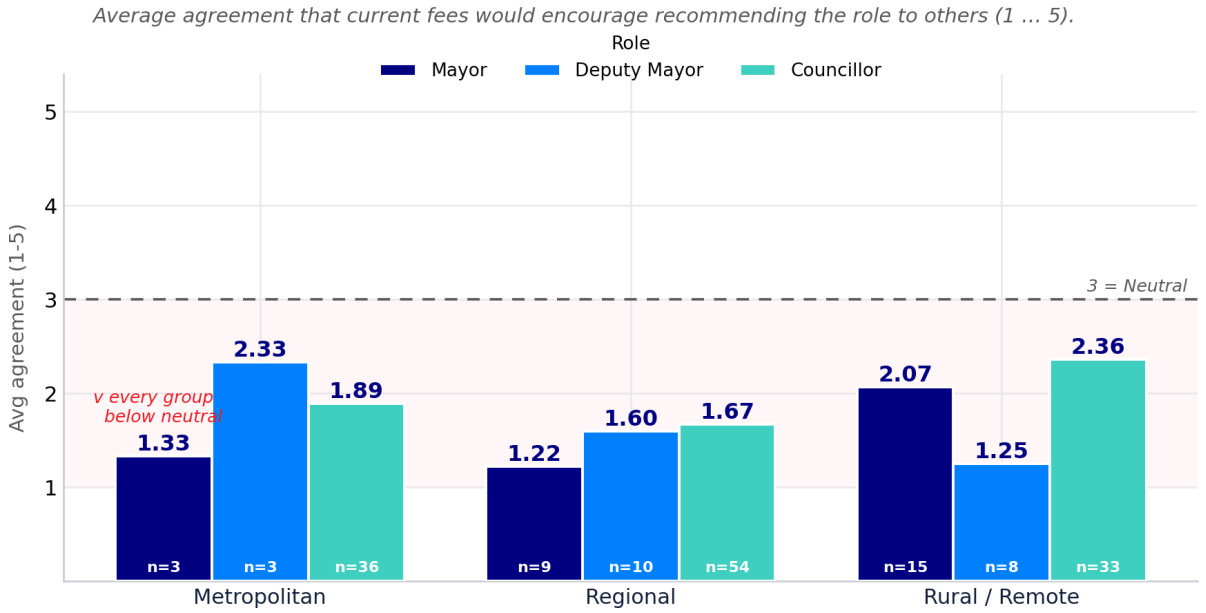
No group scores above neutral. The mismatch between the work done and the fee paid is largest for Mayors, who work the longest hours, and is only slightly smaller for Rural/Remote councillors.

Would current fees encourage recommending the role?

Research question: does agreement that current fees would encourage recommending the role differ by council type and role? (Q5 × Q1 × Q17)

Key takeaway: Even the most positive group sits below neutral — Rural/Remote councillors are the most likely to agree current fees would encourage recommending the role (2.36); Regional Mayors the least (1.22).

Would current fees encourage recommending the role? (by council type & role)



How it was aggregated

Same method on the agreement that current fees would encourage recommending the role to others (Q17, 1–5), averaged within each type × role cell. n on each bar.

What it means

This looks different from RQ1: the groups unhappiest with their fees are not always the least willing to recommend the role. No group scores above neutral, so the reluctance is shared right across the sector.

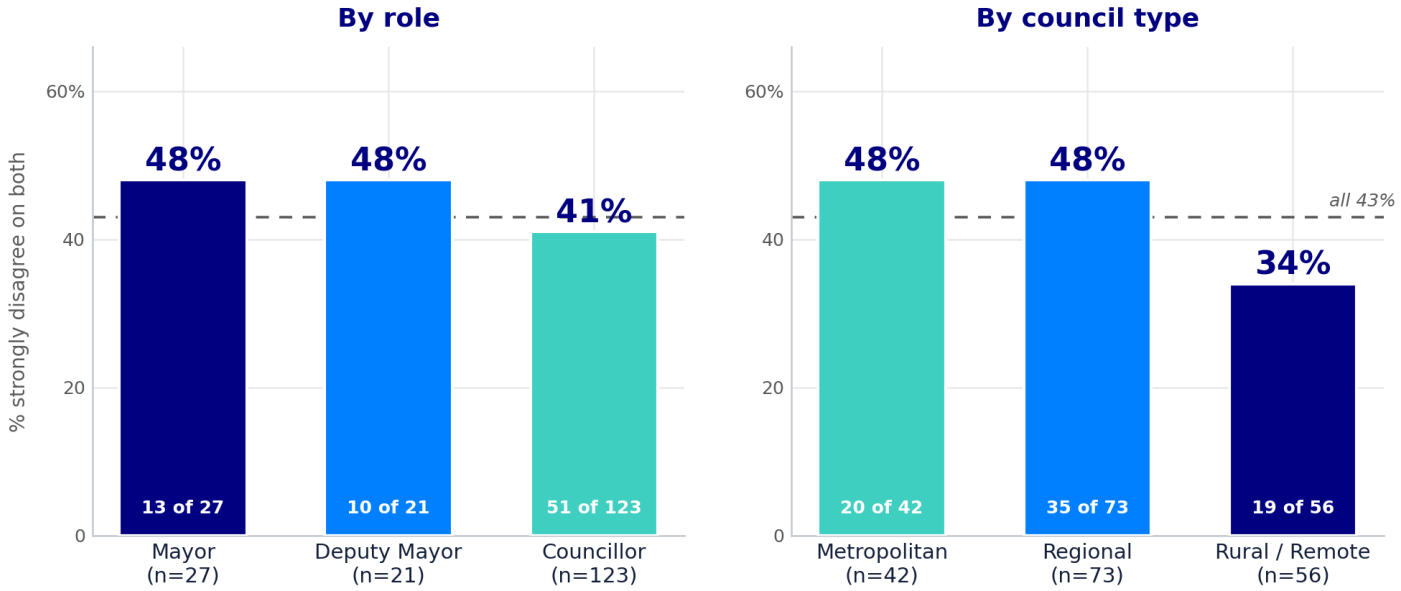
Strongly dissatisfied on both counts

Research question: who strongly disagrees on BOTH fee adequacy and whether current fees would encourage recommending the role?

Key takeaway: 43% of all respondents strongly disagree on both counts at once — highest among Mayors and Deputy Mayors (48%) and in Metropolitan and Regional councils (48%).

Strongly dissatisfied on both counts

% who strongly disagree that current fees reflect their workload AND strongly disagree that current fees would encourage recommending the role to others



How it was aggregated

We flagged each respondent who chose the lowest option (strongly disagree) on BOTH fee adequacy (Q16) and whether current fees would encourage recommending the role (Q17), then took the share within each group.

What it means

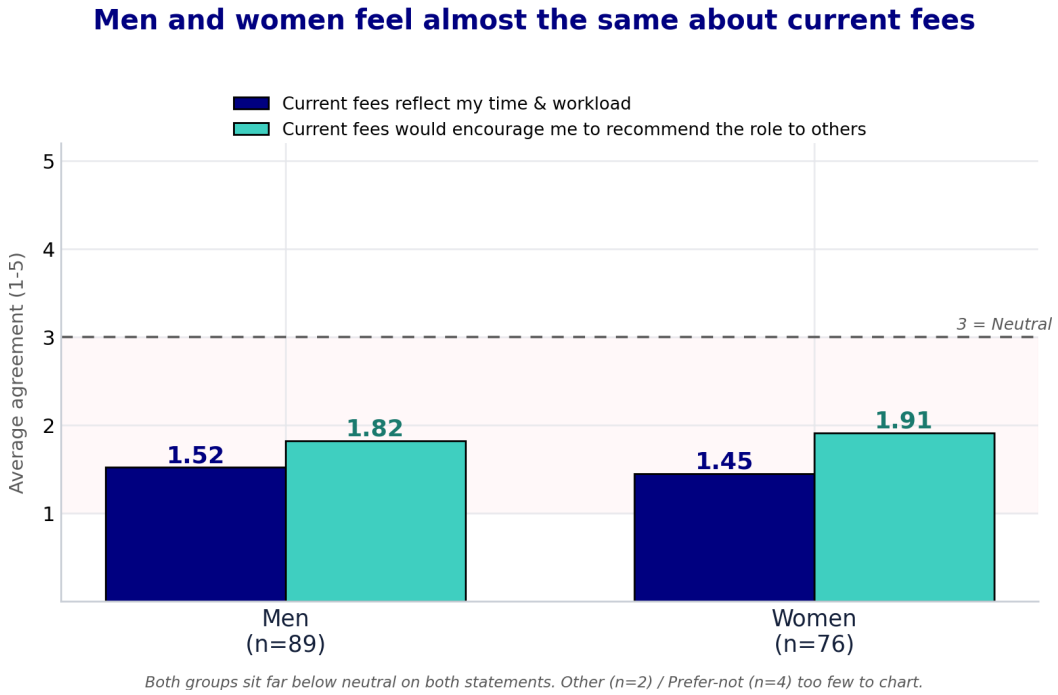
This shows where dissatisfaction is deepest — those respondents who strongly disagree on both the fee and recommending the role. It peaks among Mayors and Deputy Mayors (48%) and in Metropolitan and Regional councils, and is relatively lower in Rural/Remote councils (34%).

LGNSW. Local Government NSW Q16 × Q17 × Q1/Q5. n=171. Indicative sub-group pattern.

Do men and women feel differently about current fees?

Research question: does the view on current fees (adequacy and encouragement to recommend) differ by gender? (Q3 × Q16/Q17)

Key takeaway: Men and women feel almost identically about current fees — both deeply dissatisfied. This is not a gendered issue.



How it was aggregated

We averaged both 1–5 scores separately for male (n=89) and female (n=76) respondents. Both statements use consistent 'current fees' wording. 'Other' (n=2) and 'Prefer not' (n=4) are too few to chart.

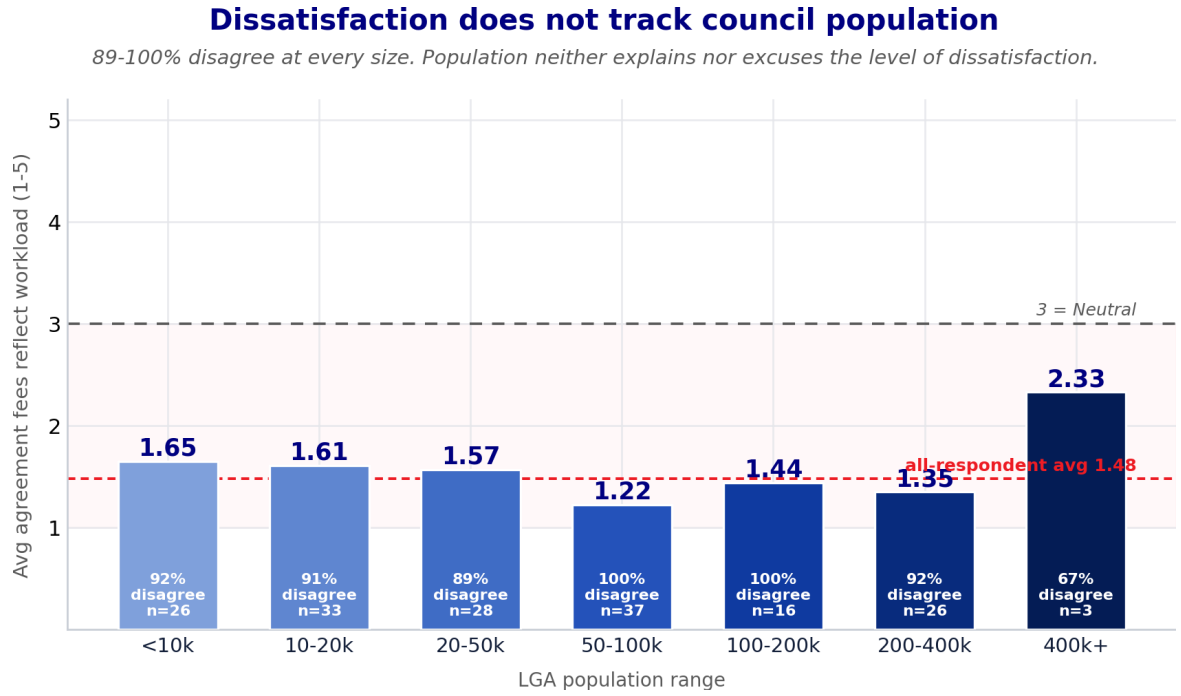
What it means

Scores are almost identical: fee adequacy 1.52 (M) vs 1.45 (F), and encouragement to recommend 1.82 vs 1.91. One caveat: a survey of current members cannot reach those who never stood for election — who the free-text responses suggest are more often women and people with caring responsibilities.

Does dissatisfaction track council population?

Research question: does the view that current fees don't reflect the work scale with LGA size? (Q6 × Q16)

Key takeaway: Dissatisfaction doesn't track council size — 89–100% disagree at every population band, and every band sits far below neutral.



How it was aggregated

We averaged the 1–5 agreement that current fees reflect workload within each of the seven population bands, and computed the % who disagree. Bars ordered smallest → largest LGA.

What it means

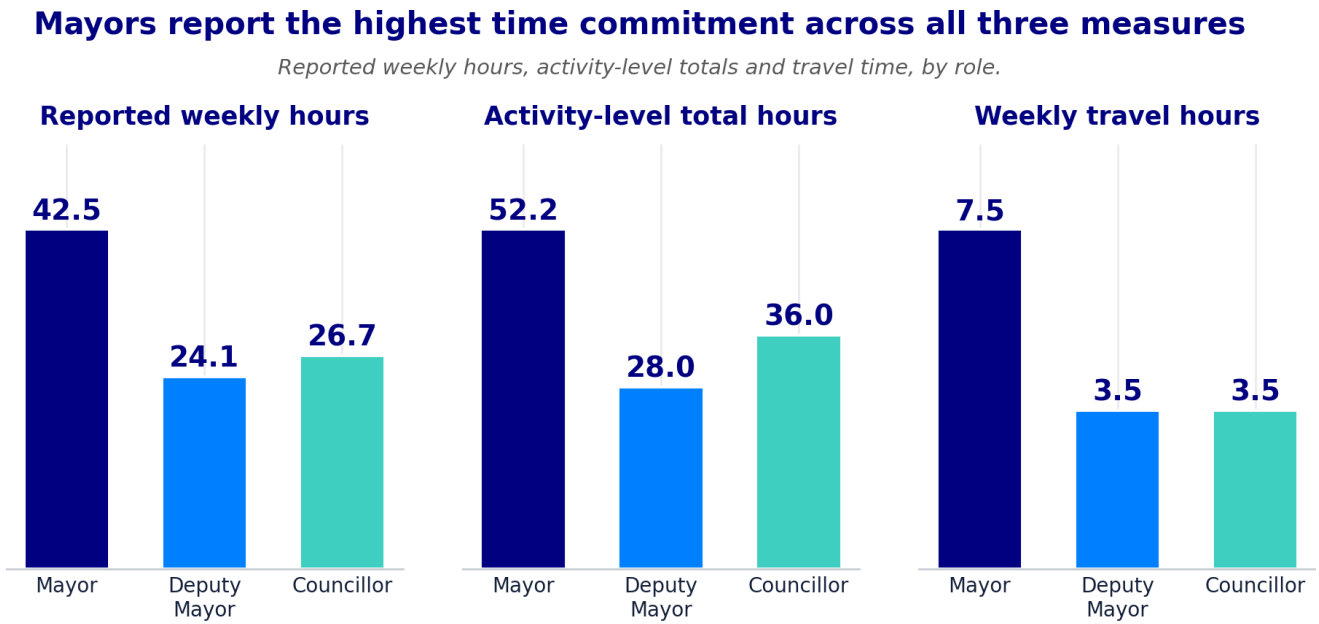
There is no clear gradient, and the 400k+ band rests on just n=3. Population alone neither explains the level of dissatisfaction nor provides a sufficient basis for categorisation.

LGNSW. Local Government NSW Q16 × Q6. n=169 (2 'Not sure' excluded). Smallest bands carry wider uncertainty.

Who reports the longest working weeks?

Sub-group question: do reported weekly hours differ by council type or gender? (Q7 × Q5 / Q3)

Key takeaway: Metropolitan representatives report the longest weeks (36 hrs), and — on an interim view — women report more hours than men (~32 vs ~26).



Q7 / Q8 / Q10 x Q1. Mayors n=28, Deputy Mayors n=21, Councillors n=123.

How it was aggregated

Weekly-hours bands converted to mid-points and averaged within each group. Council-type figures use all 159 who answered; gender is an interim cut.

What it means

Larger metropolitan workloads are consistent with bigger populations and development activity. The gender difference — women reporting more hours — should be confirmed as further responses arrive, and aligns with free-text comments on caring responsibilities.

Deeper analysis — synthesis

1. Dissatisfaction with current fees runs below neutral for every group — sharpest for Mayors on fee adequacy (RQ1), while no group agrees current fees would encourage recommending the role (RQ2).

2. 43% strongly disagree on both counts at once, rising to 48% of Mayors and Deputy Mayors (RQ3). The view is not gendered (RQ4) and does not track council population (RQ5).

3. Reported workload differs by sub-group: metropolitan representatives, and — interim — women, report the longest weeks — reinforcing the categorisation and work-value arguments.

LGNSW. Local Government NSW Synthesis of the preceding question slides. Base: 191.

FROM ANALYSIS TO SUBMISSION

What the full analysis supports

1	**The role has grown**	~8 in 10 report an increase in skill, complexity and volume; a typical ~29-hour week (~38h summed across duties).
2	**Fees don't match the workload**	94% disagree current fees reflect their workload — the most common answer was the most negative option, and the view is uniform across gender, council type and population.
3	**Broaden the council classification parameters**	Dissatisfaction doesn't track LGA size (RQ5); travel, full-service delivery and complexity dominate the free-text.
4	**Current fees discourage participation**	Only 1.84/5 agree current fees would encourage recommending the role; 43% strongly disagree on both counts.
5	**Distinguish between the roles**	89% say Mayor should be full-time; 80% support recognising the Deputy Mayor role.

Scope: informs the Tribunal's categorisation and general determination; does not propose specific dollar fee amounts (Stage 2). . ONE VOICE FOR COUNCILS

ANNEXURE LG-3

Q1 · Current role

What is your current role?

Data type: Categorical (nominal)

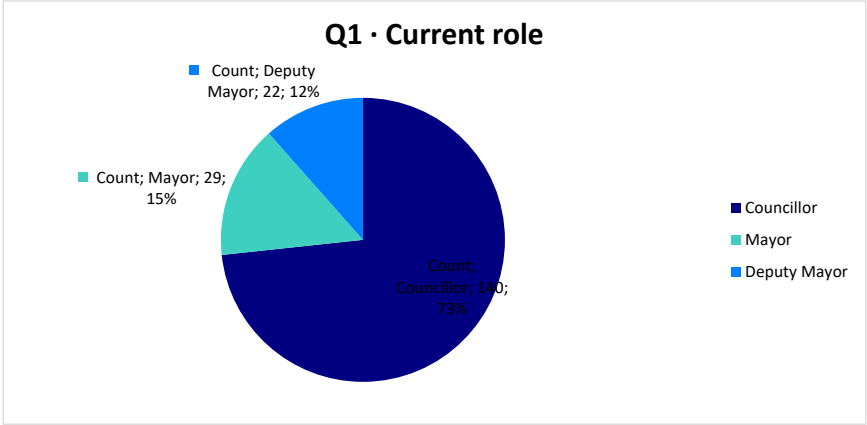
Response distribution

Response option	Count	% of valid
Councillor	140	73.3%
Mayor	29	15.2%
Deputy Mayor	22	11.5%
Valid responses (n)	**191**	**100.0%**

Total survey respondents = 191. Blank/skipped = 191 minus valid n.

Summary statistics

Statistic	Value	How it is calculated
n (valid)	191	Sum of category counts
Mode (most common)	Councillor	Category with the highest count
Mean . Median	–	Not applicable to a categorical variable
Skewness	n/a	Not applicable to a categorical variable
Data type	Categorical (no	Counts and mode only



How it was measured and aggregated

Each respondent selected one role. Counts are taken directly from the Raw Data tab using COUNTIF; percentages use the valid response base.

What it means

Councillors make up the large majority of respondents, alongside mayors and deputy mayors, so the findings reflect the whole elected body rather than leadership alone.

Q2 · Tenure

How many years have you served as an elected representative?

Data type: Ordinal (tenure bands)

Response distribution

Response option	Count	% of valid
Less than 1 year	3	1.6%
1 to 4 years	86	45.0%
5 to 8 years	46	24.1%
9 to 12 years	22	11.5%
More than 12 years	34	17.8%
Valid responses (n)	**191**	**100.0%**

Total survey respondents = 191. Blank/skipped = 191 minus valid n.

Summary statistics

Statistic	Value	How it is calculated
n (valid)	191	COUNT of coded responses
Mean	6.58	AVERAGE of coded responses
Median	6.50	MEDIAN of coded responses
Mode	2.50	Most frequently occurring value
Skewness	0.75	Positive = tail to the right; negative = tail to the left

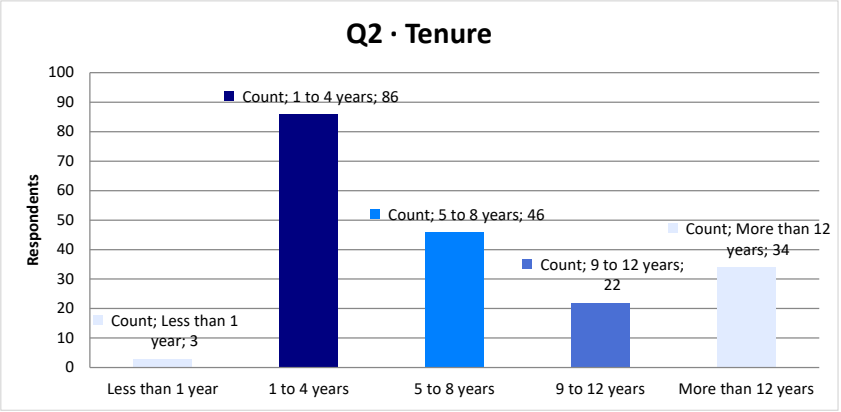
How it was measured and aggregated

Answers are tenure bands. To calculate averages each band was given its mid-point (e.g. '1 to 4 years' → 2.5 years; the open top band capped at 15). Statistics are computed on the 'Q2 yrs' column in Raw Data.

What it means

The base leans toward newer members, and even this group reports that the role has grown, so the findings do not rest only on long-serving comparisons.

Band mid-points: <1→0.5, 1–4→2.5, 5–8→6.5, 9–12→10.5, 12+→15 (capped).



Q3 · Gender

How do you describe your gender?

Data type: Categorical (nominal)

Response distribution

Response option	Count	% of valid
Male	95	49.7%
Female	90	47.1%
Other	2	1.0%
Prefer not to respond	4	2.1%
Valid responses (n)	**191**	**100.0%**

Total survey respondents = 191. Blank/skipped = 191 minus valid n.

Summary statistics

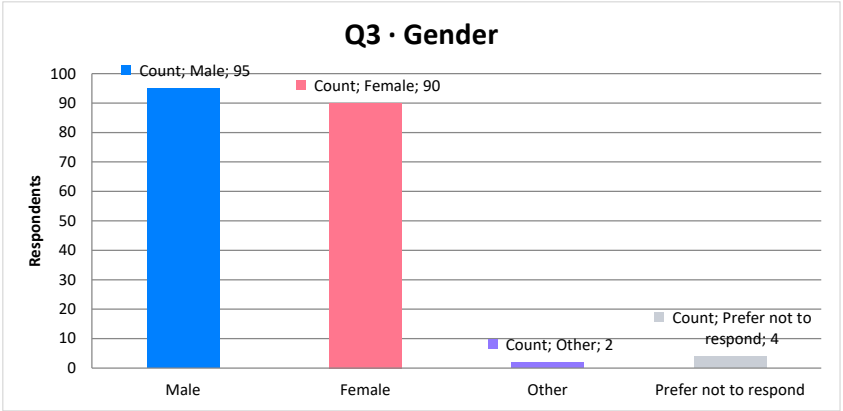
Statistic	Value	How it is calculated
n (valid)	191	Sum of category counts
Mode (most common)	Male	Category with the highest count
Mean . Median	—	Not applicable to a categorical variable
Skewness	n/a	Not applicable to a categorical variable
Data type	Categorical (no	Counts and mode only

How it was measured and aggregated

Self-described gender, counted by category from the Raw Data tab.

What it means

The sample is close to evenly split between male and female respondents, so the workload and fee findings are drawn from a well-balanced base (see Cross-tabs RQ4).



Q4 · Age

Which age group are you in?

Data type: Ordinal (age bands)

Response distribution

Response option	Count	% of valid
Under 35	5	2.6%
35 to 44	31	16.2%
45 to 54	27	14.1%
55 to 64	42	22.0%
65 or over	82	42.9%
Prefer not to respond	4	2.1%
Valid responses (n)	**191**	**100.0%**

Total survey respondents = 191. Blank/skipped = 191 minus valid n.

Summary statistics

Statistic	Value	How it is calculated
n (valid)	187	COUNT of coded responses
Mean	58.82	AVERAGE of coded responses
Median	60.00	MEDIAN of coded responses
Mode	70.00	Most frequently occurring value
Skewness	-0.70	Positive = tail to the right; negative = tail to the left

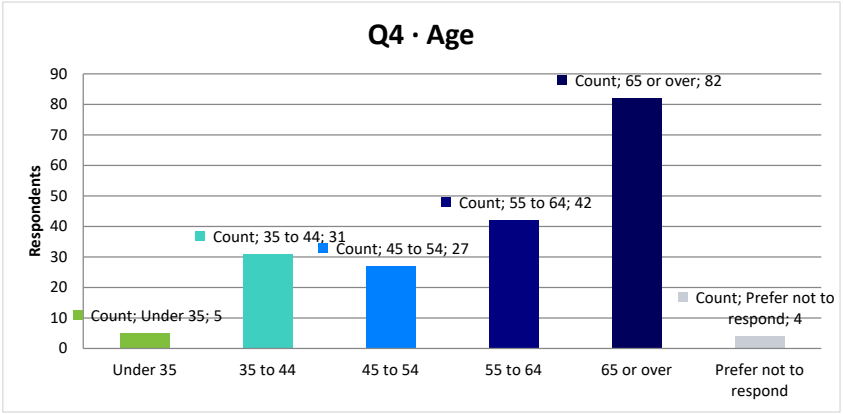
How it was measured and aggregated

Age bands were given mid-points to calculate an average (Under 35→30 … 65+→70). 'Prefer not to respond' is excluded from the statistics. A negative skew indicates responses concentrated in the higher bands.

What it means

Respondents span all career stages, with a concentration in the 55+ bands, giving the workload and fee findings a broad base.

'Prefer not to respond' has no mid-point and is therefore excluded from mean/median/mode/skew.



Q5 · Council type

How would you describe your council?

Data type: Categorical (nominal)

Response distribution

Response option	Count	% of valid
Metropolitan	50	26.2%
Regional	80	41.9%
Rural	56	29.3%
Remote	5	2.6%
Valid responses (n)	**191**	**100.0%**

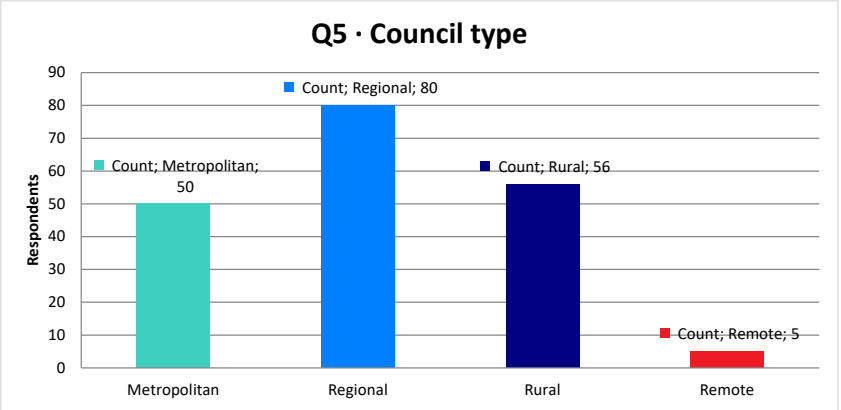
Total survey respondents = 191. Blank/skipped = 191 minus valid n.

Summary statistics

Statistic	Value	How it is calculated
n (valid)	191	Sum of category counts
Mode (most common)	Regional	Category with the highest count
Mean . Median	—	Not applicable to a categorical variable
Skewness	n/a	Not applicable to a categorical variable
Data type	Categorical (no	Counts and mode only

Key measures

Measure	Value	Definition
Regional + Rural + Remote	73.8%	Share of respondents outside Metropolitan councils



How it was measured and aggregated

Each respondent classified their own council. Counts taken directly from Raw Data.

What it means

Regional, Rural and Remote councils together account for the large majority of respondents, so the geographic diversity of the sector is well represented — a central consideration in the categorisation discussion.

Q6 · LGA population range

Which population range best represents your Local Government Area?
Data type: Ordinal (population bands)

Response distribution

Response option	Count	% of valid
Below 10,000	29	15.2%
10,000 – 19,999	36	18.8%
20,000 – 49,999	29	15.2%
50,000 – 99,999	39	20.4%
100,000 – 199,999	23	12.0%
200,000 – 399,999	28	14.7%
400,000 or more	5	2.6%
Not sure	2	1.0%
Valid responses (n)	**191**	**100.0%**

Total survey respondents = 191. Blank/skipped = 191 minus valid n.

Summary statistics

Statistic	Value	How it is calculated
n (valid)	189	COUNT of coded responses
Mean	99074.07	AVERAGE of coded responses
Median	75000.00	MEDIAN of coded responses
Mode	75000.00	Most frequently occurring value
Skewness	1.41	Positive = tail to the right; negative = tail to the left

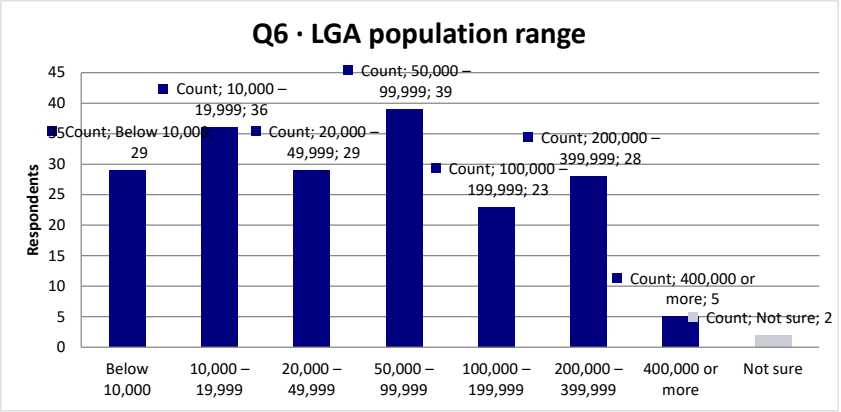
How it was measured and aggregated

Population bands were given mid-points (top band capped at 450,000). 'Not sure' is excluded from the statistics. A strong positive skew indicates a few large metropolitan LGAs pull the mean above the median.

What it means

Respondents are spread across LGA sizes. The gap between the mean and the median shows population is an uneven measure, and a limited basis for categorisation on its own (tested in Cross-tabs RQ5).

Mid-points: <10k→5,000; 10–20k→15,000; 20–50k→35,000; 50–100k→75,000; 100–200k→150,000; 200–400k→300,000; 400k+→450,000 (capped).



Q7 · Weekly hours

On average, how many hours per week do you spend on elected duties?

Data type: Ordinal (hours bands)

Response distribution

Response option	Count	% of valid
Less than 10 hours	9	5.2%
10 to 19 hours	36	20.9%
20 to 29 hours	56	32.6%
30 to 39 hours	34	19.8%
40 to 49 hours	16	9.3%
50 hours or more	21	12.2%
Valid responses (n)	**172**	**100.0%**

Total survey respondents = 191. Blank/skipped = 191 minus valid n.

Summary statistics

Statistic	Value	How it is calculated
n (valid)	172	COUNT of coded responses
Mean	28.95	AVERAGE of coded responses
Median	24.50	MEDIAN of coded responses
Mode	24.50	Most frequently occurring value
Skewness	0.44	Positive = tail to the right; negative = tail to the left

Key measures

Measure	Value	Definition
Reporting 30+ hours per week	41.3%	Share of valid respondents in the 30+ hour bands

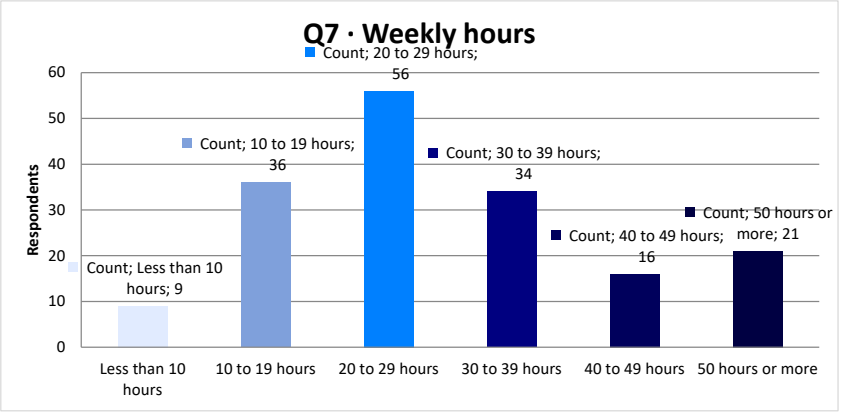
How it was measured and aggregated

Hours bands were converted to mid-points (e.g. '20 to 29' → 24.5; '50 or more' capped at 55) and averaged using the '07 hrs' column in Raw Data.

What it means

Half of respondents report 20–39 hours a week, and the mean already exceeds what a part-time allowance assumes — the clearest single measure of the quantum of work.

Band mid-points: <10→5, 10–19→14.5, 20–29→24.5, 30–39→34.5, 40–49→44.5, 50+→55 (capped).



Q8 · Where the hours go — by activity

Approximately how many hours per week do you spend on each activity?
Data type: Numeric (14-activity matrix)

Hours per week, by activity

Activity	Mean hrs	Median hrs	Max hrs	n (answered)
Attending council and committee meetings	5.3	5.0	20	171
Preparing for council and committee meetings	6.8	5.0	36	171
Attending community events and civic functions	5.6	4.0	20	168
Responding to ratepayer and resident enquiries and communic	5.1	3.0	40	170
Joint Organisations (JO) or Regional Organisations of Councils (	1.4	0.0	10	110
Strategic planning and policy work	3.1	2.0	25	131
Media, social media and public communications	3.5	2.0	25	152
Training and professional development	1.6	1.0	30	127
Code of conduct matters (complaints, investigations)	1.2	0.0	20	101
Unplanned interactions with ratepayers and residents	2.5	2.0	20	157
Preparing for and attending meetings with government agencie	1.8	1.0	21	122
Attending meetings in relation to development applications	0.8	0.0	9	109
Compliance, reporting and disclosure obligations	1.1	1.0	10	121
Other duties as an elected representative	2.9	2.0	25	122
TOTAL weekly hours (per respondent)	**37.7**	**31.0**	**195**	**172**

Summary statistics — total weekly hours

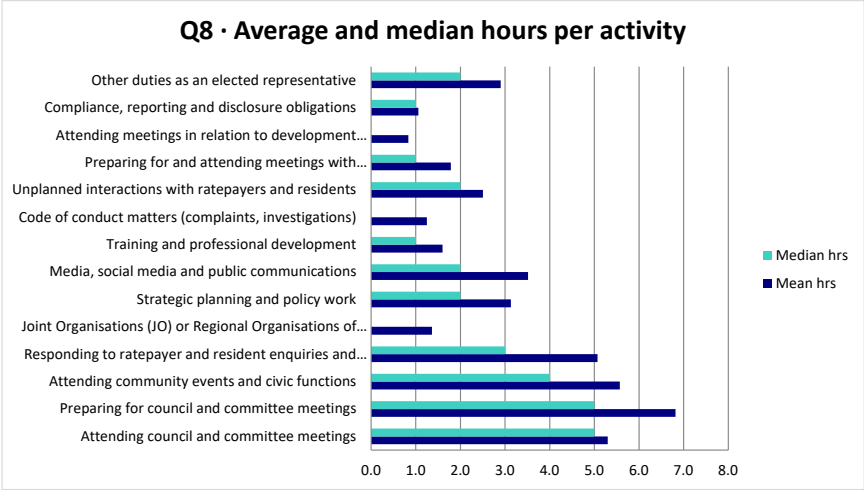
Statistic	Value	How it is calculated
n (valid)	172	Respondents entering at least one activity
Mean	37.66	AVERAGE of each respondent's 14-activity total
Median	31.00	MEDIAN of the same totals
Mode	19.00	Most frequently occurring total
Skewness	2.81	Positive = a minority reporting very high totals

How it was measured and aggregated

Respondents entered an approximate number of hours against each of 14 activities; blanks mean 'not applicable' and are excluded from that activity's average. Each respondent's 14 entries are summed in the 'Q8 Total hrs' column of Raw Data, and

What it means

Preparation, community events and meetings account for the most time. The right-skewed total indicates a group of representatives working close to full-time hours, while the median sits below the mean.



Q9 · Digital workload

Social media, email and online communication have increased my workload.
Data type: Likert scale (1–5)

Response distribution

Response option	Count	% of valid
Strongly disagree	4	2.3%
Disagree	2	1.2%
Neutral	27	15.7%
Agree	65	37.8%
Strongly agree	74	43.0%
Valid responses (n)	**172**	**100.0%**

Total survey respondents = 191. Blank/skipped = 191 minus valid n.

Summary statistics

Statistic	Value	How it is calculated
n (valid)	172	COUNT of coded responses
Mean	4.18	AVERAGE of coded responses
Median	4.00	MEDIAN of coded responses
Mode	5.00	Most frequently occurring value
Skewness	-1.23	Positive = tail to the right; negative = tail to the left

Key measures

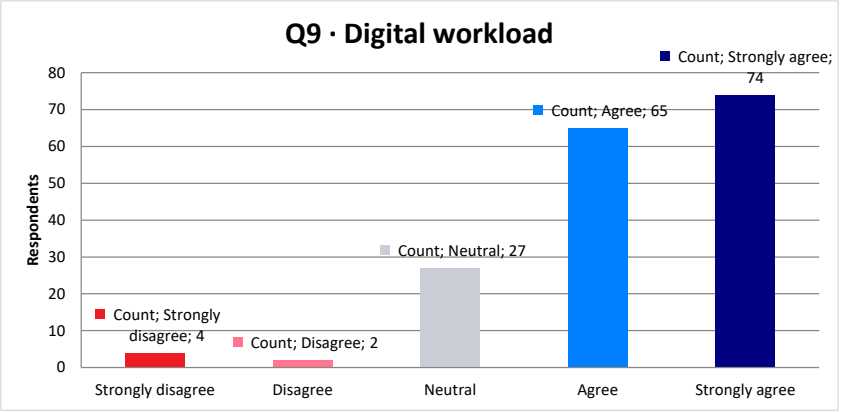
Measure	Value	Definition
Agree or strongly agree	80.8%	Share of valid respondents selecting Agree or Strongly agree

How it was measured and aggregated

A five-point agreement scale coded 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) in the 'Q9 code' column. A strong negative skew shows answers concentrated at the 'agree' end.

What it means

A large majority agree that digital communication has increased their workload — a near-consensus that the role now carries an expectation of constant availability.



Q10 · Travel time

How much time do you spend on average travelling for council duties per week?
Data type: Ordinal (travel bands)

Response distribution

Response option	Count	% of valid
Under 2 hours	61	35.5%
2 to 5 hours	74	43.0%
6 to 10 hours	26	15.1%
11 to 20 hours	9	5.2%
More than 20 hours	2	1.2%
Valid responses (n)	**172**	**100.0%**

Total survey respondents = 191. Blank/skipped = 191 minus valid n.

Summary statistics

Statistic	Value	How it is calculated
n (valid)	172	COUNT of coded responses
Mean	4.17	AVERAGE of coded responses
Median	3.50	MEDIAN of coded responses
Mode	3.50	Most frequently occurring value
Skewness	2.41	Positive = tail to the right; negative = tail to the left

Key measures

Measure	Value	Definition
Travelling 6 or more hours	21.5%	Share of valid respondents travelling 6+ hours per week

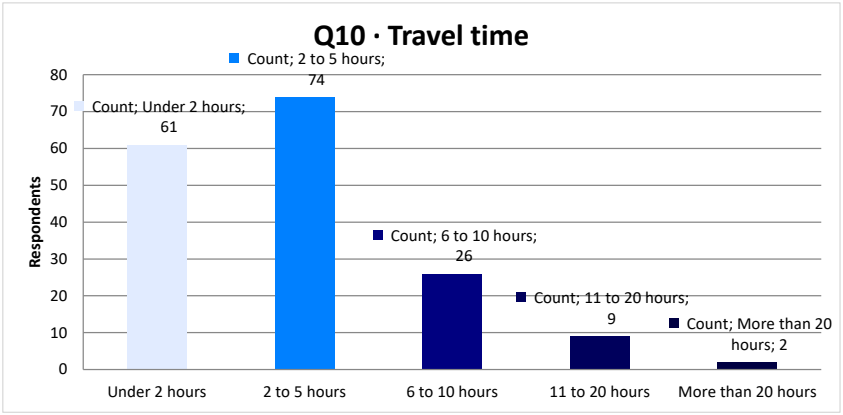
How it was measured and aggregated

Single-select travel bands, counted for the distribution. Band mid-points (e.g. '2 to 5 hours' → 3.5; '20+' → 25) give the mean and median.

What it means

Most respondents travel relatively little, but the right-skew matters: a meaningful minority travel 6–20+ hours a week, reflecting rural and remote representatives covering large areas — a cost a population-based framework does not

Band mid-points: <2→1, 2–5→3.5, 6–10→8, 11–20→15.5, 20+→25 (capped).



Q11 · Change in the role

Compared with when you first became an elected representative, how has the role changed?

Data type: Ordinal (−2 to +2), three dimensions

Response distribution (count by statement)

Response option	Skill required	Level of complexity	Volume of responsibilities
Greatly increased	54	59	61
Increased	84	82	73
Unchanged	31	26	31
Decreased	2	3	5
Greatly decreased	0	1	1
Valid responses (n)	**171**	**171**	**171**

Summary statistics (by statement)

Statistic	Skill required	Level of complexity	Volume of responsibilities
n (valid)	171	171	171
Mean	1.11	1.14	1.10
Median	1.00	1.00	1.00
Mode	1.00	1.00	1.00
Skewness	-0.36	-0.78	-0.74

Key measures

Measure	Skill required	Level of complexity	Volume of responsibilities
Increased or greatly increased	80.7%	82.5%	78.4%

Share of valid respondents selecting 'Increased' or 'Greatly increased'.

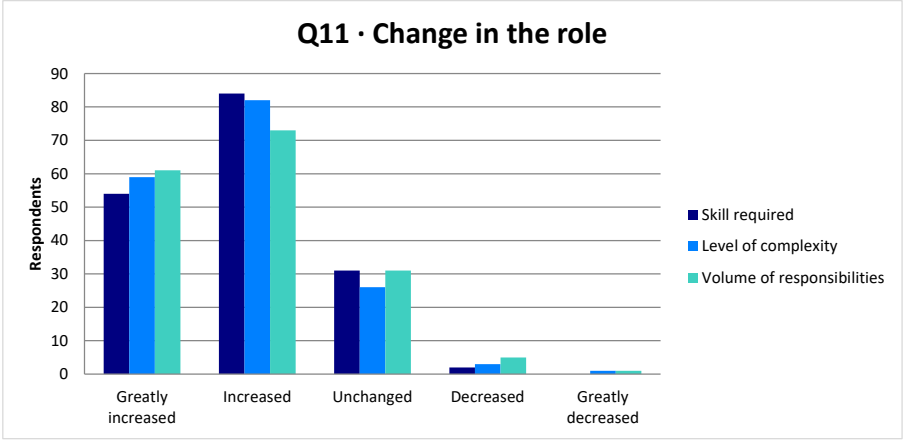
How it was measured and aggregated

Three dimensions each rated from 'Greatly decreased' (−2) to 'Greatly increased' (+2). Counts come from the label columns in Raw Data; statistics are computed on the matching coded columns.

What it means

Around 8 in 10 respondents report growth in skill, complexity and volume, with all three means firmly positive. Respondents consistently report the role has grown since they were first elected. Note the

Coding: Greatly decreased −2, Decreased −1, Unchanged 0, Increased +1, Greatly increased +2.



Q13 · Councillor classification

How should the role of Councillor be classified for remuneration purposes?

Data type: Categorical (nominal)

Response distribution

Response option	Count	% of valid
Part-time	109	63.7%
Full-time	62	36.3%
Valid responses (n)	**171**	**100.0%**

Total survey respondents = 191. Blank/skipped = 191 minus valid n.

Summary statistics

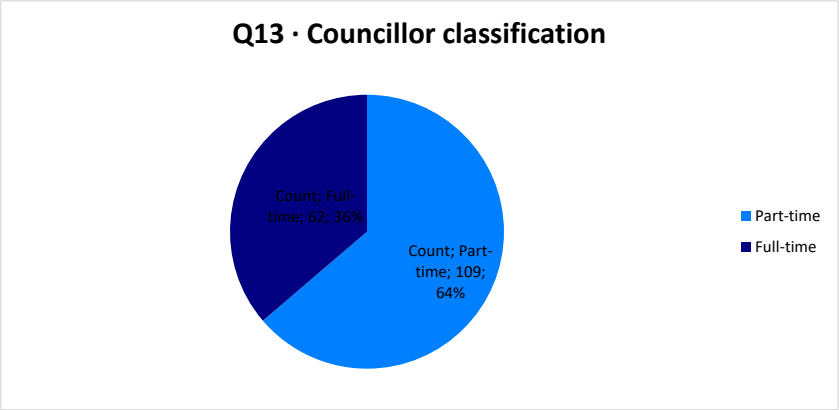
Statistic	Value	How it is calculated
n (valid)	171	Sum of category counts
Mode (most common)	Part-time	Category with the highest count
Mean . Median	–	Not applicable to a categorical variable
Skewness	n/a	Not applicable to a categorical variable
Data type	Categorical (no	Counts and mode only

How it was measured and aggregated

A binary choice (full-time vs part-time), counted directly from Raw Data.

What it means

Views are divided and lean toward part-time. This split is a more accurate reflection of respondent opinion than a single consensus, and contrasts with views on the Mayoral role.



Q14 · Mayor classification

How should the role of Mayor be classified for remuneration purposes?

Data type: Categorical (nominal)

Response distribution

Response option	Count	% of valid
Full-time	153	89.5%
Part-time	18	10.5%
Valid responses (n)	**171**	**100.0%**

Total survey respondents = 191. Blank/skipped = 191 minus valid n.

Summary statistics

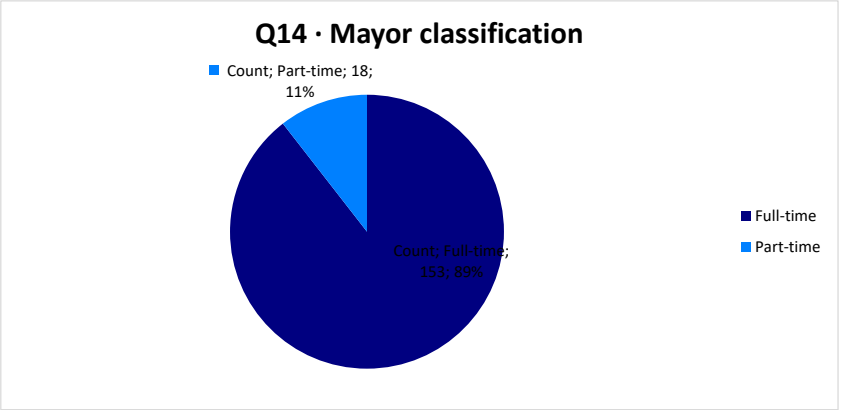
Statistic	Value	How it is calculated
n (valid)	171	Sum of category counts
Mode (most common)	Full-time	Category with the highest count
Mean . Median	—	Not applicable to a categorical variable
Skewness	n/a	Not applicable to a categorical variable
Data type	Categorical (no	Counts and mode only

How it was measured and aggregated

The same binary choice applied to the Mayoral role, counted directly from Raw Data.

What it means

A decisive majority consider the Mayoral role should be full-time — a clear contrast with the divided view on Councillors, suggesting a framework that distinguishes between the two roles.



Q15 · Deputy Mayor role

Should there be a separate and recognised role for the Office of Deputy Mayor?
Data type: Categorical (nominal)

Response distribution

Response option	Count	% of valid
Yes, part-time	98	57.3%
Yes, full-time	39	22.8%
No	34	19.9%
Valid responses (n)	**171**	**100.0%**

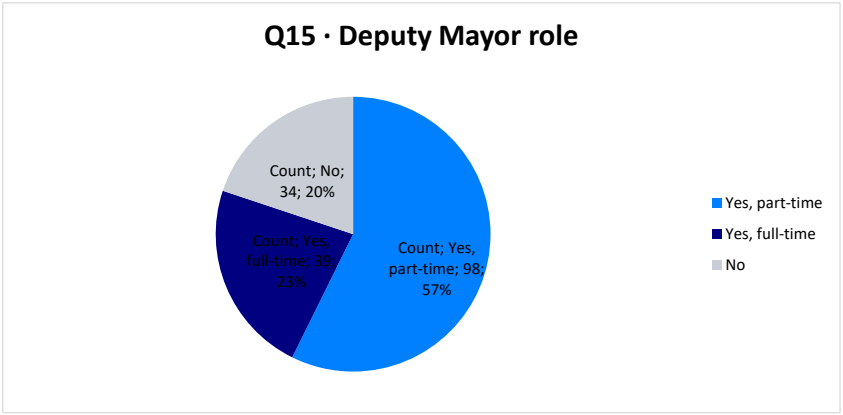
Total survey respondents = 191. Blank/skipped = 191 minus valid n.

Summary statistics

Statistic	Value	How it is calculated
n (valid)	171	Sum of category counts
Mode (most common)	Yes, part-time	Category with the highest count
Mean . Median	—	Not applicable to a categorical variable
Skewness	n/a	Not applicable to a categorical variable
Data type	Categorical (no	Counts and mode only

Key measures

Measure	Value	Definition
Support recognition (any 'Yes')	80.1%	Combined 'Yes, part-time' and 'Yes, full-time'



How it was measured and aggregated

Three options; the two 'Yes' options are combined into overall support in the Key measures block below.

What it means

A large majority support formally recognising the Office of Deputy Mayor, with 'Yes, part-time' the most common response. The role currently attracts the same fee as a Councillor under the present determination.

Q16 · Fee adequacy

Thinking about council fees and remuneration, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Data type: Likert scale (1–5), two statements

Response distribution (count by statement)

Response option	Fees reflect time & workload	Fees reflect complexity
Strongly disagree	110	112
Disagree	50	48
Neutral	3	5
Agree	6	5
Strongly agree	2	1
Valid responses (n)	**171**	**171**

Summary statistics (by statement)

Statistic	Fees reflect time & workload	Fees reflect complexity
n (valid)	171	171
Mean	1.48	1.45
Median	1.00	1.00
Mode	1.00	1.00
Skewness	2.20	2.07

Key measures

Measure	Fees reflect time & workload	Fees reflect complexity
Disagree or strongly disagree	93.6%	93.6%

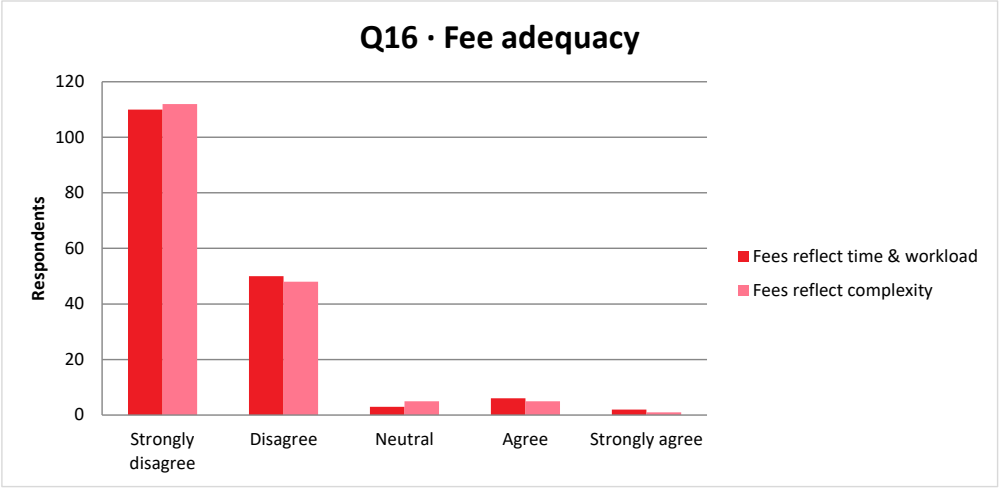
Share of valid respondents selecting 'Disagree' or 'Strongly disagree'.

How it was measured and aggregated

Two agreement statements each coded 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). A mean near 1.5 sits between 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree'.

What it means

An overwhelming majority disagree that current fees reflect their time, workload and complexity — the clearest signal in the survey. 'Strongly disagree' was also the most common response, so this reflects the broad view of respondents rather than a small group at one end of the scale.



Q17 · Would fees encourage others to nominate?

The level of remuneration received would encourage me to recommend other people to run for council.

Data type: Likert scale (1–5)

Response distribution

Response option	Count	% of valid
Strongly disagree	87	50.9%
Disagree	48	28.1%
Neutral	21	12.3%
Agree	6	3.5%
Strongly agree	9	5.3%
Valid responses (n)	**171**	**100.0%**

Total survey respondents = 191. Blank/skipped = 191 minus valid n.

Summary statistics

Statistic	Value	How it is calculated
n (valid)	171	COUNT of coded responses
Mean	1.84	AVERAGE of coded responses
Median	1.00	MEDIAN of coded responses
Mode	1.00	Most frequently occurring value
Skewness	1.42	Positive = tail to the right; negative = tail to the left

Key measures

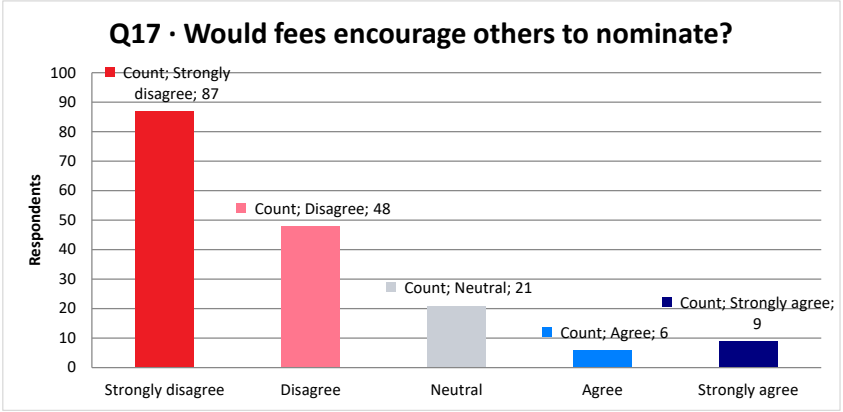
Measure	Value	Definition
Disagree or strongly disagree	78.9%	Share of valid respondents selecting Disagree or Strongly disagree

How it was measured and aggregated

A single five-point agreement item coded 1–5 in the 'Q17 code' column of Raw Data.

What it means

Most respondents disagreed, and 'strongly disagree' was the most common answer. Current fees are not encouraging members to promote the role to others.



Q18 · Impact on everyday life

To what extent have current fee arrangements affected your ability to do the following?

Data type: Ordinal (−2 to +2); 'N/A' excluded from statistics

Response distribution (count by statement)

Response option	Remain in paid employment	Balance family or caring commitments	Take leave from work	Participate fully in council duties
Significantly less able	43	40	39	29
Less able	63	88	54	66
No impact	36	30	41	54
More able	2	3	3	8
Significantly more able	2	0	0	1
N/A	25	10	34	13
Valid responses (n)	**171**	**171**	**171**	**171**

Summary statistics (by statement)

Statistic	Remain in paid employment	Balance family or caring commitments	Take leave from work	Participate fully in council duties
n (valid)	146	161	137	158
Mean	-0.98	-1.02	-0.94	-0.72
Median	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00
Mode	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00
Skewness	0.64	0.35	0.13	0.21

Key measures

Measure	Remain in paid employment	Balance family or caring commitments	Take leave from work	Participate fully in council duties
Made it harder (less able)	72.6%	79.5%	67.9%	60.1%

Share of respondents (excluding 'N/A') selecting 'Less able' or 'Significantly less able'.

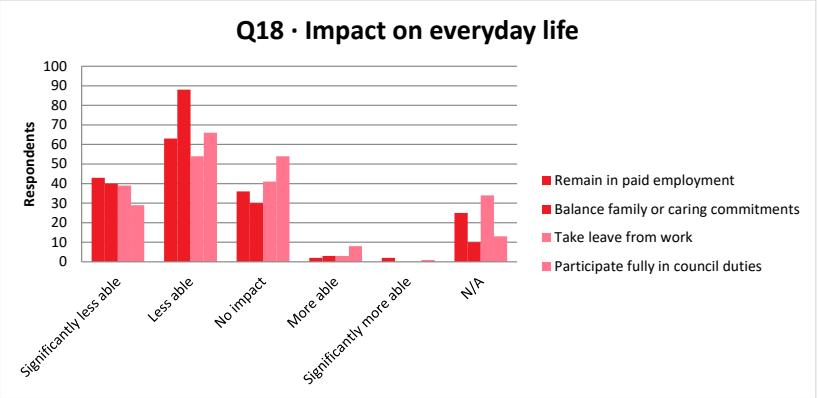
How it was measured and aggregated

Four life-impact items rated from 'Significantly less able' (−2) to 'Significantly more able' (+2). 'N/A' responses carry no code and are therefore excluded from the statistics and from the valid base for the percentage below.

What it means

A majority of respondents say current fee arrangements have made each of the four aspects harder. Balancing family and caring responsibilities is affected most, followed by staying in paid employment. Almost no respondents said any aspect had become

'N/A' is counted in the distribution above but excluded from all statistics and from the percentage base.



Elected Representative (M&C) Work Value Survey

Dashboard . final dataset . n = 191 . prepared by LGMS for the LGRT Stage 1 submission

Headline measures

191
Survey respondents

94%
Disagree that current fees reflect their time and workload

79%
Disagree that fees would encourage recommending the

41%
Report 30 or more hours a week

28.9
Mean weekly hours on elected duties

37.7
Mean total hours across 14 activities

89%
Say the Mayoral role should be full-time

80%
Support recognising the Office of Deputy Mayor

Work value signals

Measure	Value	Source tab
Say the skill required has increased	81%	Q11 Change in role
Say the level of complexity has increased	82%	Q11 Change in role
Say the volume of responsibilities has increased	78%	Q11 Change in role
Agree digital communication increased their workload	81%	Q9 Digital workload
Say fees make balancing family and caring harder	80%	Q18 Everyday impact
Say fees make staying in paid employment harder	73%	Q18 Everyday impact
Serve Regional, Rural or Remote councils	74%	Q5 Council type
Travel 6 or more hours a week	22%	Q10 Travel

How to use this workbook

Every number on this dashboard is a live link to a question tab, and every question tab calculates from the Raw Data tab. Nothing is typed in. To audit any figure, follow the formula: Dashboard → question tab → Raw Data. The Cross-tabs tab holds the research-question and sub-group analysis; Open responses holds every free-text answer verbatim.

Open Text - Respondents' Comments to Questions

#	Role	Council type	Q12. Other changes affecting effort and time	Q19. Unplanned costs or expenses	Q20. Factors for the Tribunal to consider	Q21. Anything else for the review
1	Councillor	Regional		Yes unpaid travel miscellaneous office and the Printing	Population size is no longer a reflection of the work load and issues we deal with. Multiple complex SSD developments and their impacts increase the workload	
4	Councillor	Regional		Meetings held and night and no childcare so baby sitting	Minimum wage - I pay my 18yr old waiter more than I get paid.	It being considered a work-like role and be subject to fair work conditions. Like gig economy now is. Regionally we pay our GM's 350k and the mayor 50k, you can imagine the disparity in capability. It's giving to much power to staff. Also I'm in the middle of my life, young children, high mortgage etc even if I wanted to mayor I couldn't afford it. It only allows retired or indecently weathly people to become mayor
5	Councillor	Regional	The changes to the CPP I think will reduce work load	Wellbeing costs - it is a very stressful position. Clothing costs - you are expected/ invited to many formal events that require formal attire. Likewise business attire. Also Event costs - you are invited to many community events and many times you are still expected to pay for those tickets yourself.		Currently the amount of work a Councillor does, is very much up to the individual councillor. We have both retired Councillors who do very little, and full-time employed Councillors who do a lot. Certainly it helps to be self employed as a Councillor, so you can make yourself available for committee meetings and other events during the day. But there is definitely a trade off - for every hour you are doing a Council activity you are not earning money for yourself. This also means those on low incomes would not be able to be an involved Councillor because they need to work during the day, often to pay their bills and attending meetings during the day is therefore impossible. I personally think that a greater remuneration package should be connected to the actual work expected, for example an amount per committee one chairs, or advisory group one attends.
6	Councillor	Regional		Security	Remunerate us for the workload we put in. Consider qld model of rumeneration.	
7	Councillor	Metropolitan				No
8	Councillor	Regional	The whole minns government rule changes turned everything upside down, just to go back to the old rules and really wasted so much of our time on it.	Yes! It has put me in a tax bracket which cost me so much, i get about 25-27k before tax, but then i get a tax bill for like 5-7k. Im a low income worker and the tax from the council allowance makes you think why am i doing this role, as the pay does not make up for the hours or time away from my family, dealing with the public. I would be better to work full time in my current job, which is better hours, & i would earn way more, for less late nights, less drama, less stress	You need to look at the tax side of this. For the hours i do each week & some weeks are a lot more, you brake down that payment and its like $10 an hour	Make it easier to claim back for tax, because the amount of tax is ridculous, the council allowance is meant to cover your cost, yet your taking 7k for tax, & then leaves me out of pocket 7k for expenses for the role
9	Councillor	Regional		I left my small business to dedicate my time to council duties knowing full well the decrease in financial benefit however the workload is far greater than I ever expected. I attend the annual local government conference, travel between accomodation or airports to conference etc has been personally costly.	Community expectations play a huge factor in the consideration of the classification of councils. There is a lack of understanding the role.	
10	Councillor	Regional			there is inconsistency in the way councillor fees are reported in taxes which has been frustrating and difficult to reclaim costs associated with the role. Significant representation and public facing impact. Claiming on fair policy reimbursements is difficult as it is politicised in the chamber (so we look bad or bear the cost personally even when there are opportunities to recover some costs).	
11	Councillor	Rural			IT shouldn't be on population as councils with less population but a large geographical area be paid less as travel is grater for these councillors and a lot would be councillors can not see that their time is not as valuable because of the remuneration they will receive.	
12	Councillor	Regional		Plenty! Weekly fuel costs can't be fully recovered without burdening council's overall budget.	The physical size of the council means more and more travel is required	Councillor remuneration should be comparable to what interstate councillors receive, it should be more consistent nationwide .
13	Councillor	Regional				Councillors and Mayors need to pay more
14	Deputy Mayor	Regional	There has not been an increase in time and effort required since I am a relatively new Councillor. The responsibility remains huge as does the time needed to perform Council duties well. I currently earn way less than the minimum wage for my work as an elected Councillor.	the additional unplanned costs are surprising to me. A good example is the recent Mayors Charity Ball. Councillors were required to pay full costs for the event - which could be seen as part of our duties. In addition there was pressure to spend additional $$ for the fund raising aspect of the ball eg silent auction etc. there is an assumption that Councillors are independently wealthy which is not true in my case	the remuneration of Councillors should cease to be related to population of the LGA. Regional and remote Councils often have significant additional responsibilities relating to water and sewerage provision. They have more KMS of roads to manage and often increased issues around climate change and biodiversity.	I would like the review to consider implementing the Queensland model which pays a living wage to the important role undertaken by Councillors and does not make assumptions about income outside of the role.
15	Mayor	Rural	Very difficult to work fulltime	Yes enormous costs	Size not just population	No
16	Councillor	Regional	Changes to the local government act for meetings have meant that there is less time spent with executive staff and this has hampered understandings of many of our topics. It means that to get the same amount of information councillors must spend much more time researching.	Yes	Many country councils have much greater business complexity to urban organisations. A much greater breadth of knowledge is essential to be across businesses and services that community rely on.	No
18	Councillor	Rural	As a Councillor living in a small town you are never anonymous. Ratepayers aren't shy of raising issues. Having said that it is pleasure to serve the community.	Travelling across our Shire - 1.5 hours from home to furthest town.	Rural Councils should be remunerated and funded with a deliberate bias to counteract the large areas, kilometres of roads, tyranny of distance. Councillors in rural areas tend to be on duty 24/7	
19	Councillor	Rural	Now on additional committees		No of councillors and if a ward structure is in place, representing the whole LGA increases workload	At the last election we only had 12 people put their hand up for council, for 10 positions. WE need better representation and remuneration increasing reflect the commitment and may attract additional candidates
20	Councillor	Rural		travel	rural nature has increased time travelling	
21	Councillor	Regional	As a member of the political minority on my Council I am not asked/nominated to represent Council on committees that are considered strategic or politically important. This has reduced the time I would spend attending or preparing for committees. Although this situation has increased the time I spend preparing for Council meetings as the number of notices of motion on highly objectionable matters has increased.	I needed to buy a car. I needed to buy new clothes suited to my role as a Councillor. I have rented a PO Box because my mailbox was maliciously destroyed. I employ a house cleaner to better balance my Council life and leisure time for personal well-being.	lack of transport in regional/remote/rural councils and the requirement to own a reliable vehicle. Greater cost of fuel outside metro areas. Unreliable internet connections and the possible need to have satellite connections that are more costly. The geographic size of LGAs and time spent for Councillors to travel to meetings and maintain connection with their constituency.	

Open Text - Respondents' Comments to Questions

#	Role	Council type	Q12. Other changes affecting effort and time	Q19. Unplanned costs or expenses	Q20. Factors for the Tribunal to consider	Q21. Anything else for the review
23	Councillor	Regional	Social and employment changes within the Shire.	Ongoing small and medium; but that is part of the community service side of things.	Our council is in a rural area but highly industrial. Thus is not reflected in how we are treated. Grants; are often are not appropriate in application time, time constraints to completion or reflective of true costs and needs.	Not at this time that I can think of.
24	Councillor	Metropolitan	The expectation now is that councillors not only respond to resident inquiries, attend meetings, and campaign on issues, face to face, but also that we are highly visible in how we do this, and have detailed communications strategies that involve maintaining a website, social media presence, newsletter, and that this be to a standard of design and professionalism. This is very different to when I was elected 12 years ago. In communications, there is an expectation about engagement across all platforms, and a higher level of responsiveness, and criticism (often aggressive) if this is not provided. People don't understand that being a councillor is not a full time role. I was orginally part of the smaller council, that was forcibly merged. I was able to handle responding to resident inquiries in my ward. The larger council with so many more responsibilities, makes it hard if not impossible to respond to all residents. Unlike when I was first elected, I have had to drop my paid employment, and rely on my partner to support me, so I can continue to do the role.	Yes - the increased communication expectation, where councillors are now expected to have some form of professional level communications strategy in place, newsletter, social media etc, is not free. Councillors are expected to find these project costs from their stipend.	The Tribunal should have a more sophisticated understanding of the scale of requirements on councillors. We govern. We are expected to engage with and vote on budgets and policy in detail - in a way MPs are not, if they are not part of government! Some councils have wards and are quite small. A part-time equivalent payment is appropriate. A part-time salary is not appropriate when councillors are expected to be responsive to 30,000 or more people. A State MP with no ministry is only responsible to 50,000 voters, yet gets staff, an office, a large personal budget, a project/ communications budget, and can get reimbursement for travel, accom and training costs. Meanwhile, even a Councillor representing 200,000 people (like I do, on a large metro council with no wards) gets paid less than minimum wage, despite working 60 hours a week (if I'm lucky). The allowance should be set at an amount which is liveable in their location, taking into account key costs like housing.	Councillors either need to be paid full time, and have an office, or continue to be paid parttime, but also have an office AND STAFF. There should be someone to answer the phone and email for residents, during office hours - which councillors can't, because to live most councillors have to have a job.
26	Councillor	Rural	The Orifice of Local Government and the corrupt-AF Minister for Local Grubberment have wasted a lot of my time and personal money on pernicious, malicious and vexatious code of conduct complaints, meanwhile two councillors have threatened me with violence in the chamber and NOTHING has been done about that by the Orifice or the Minister. Local Government under the Labor party has become a complwte joke, a laughable outrage that the communities around NSW hold in the highest of contempt. My job now is to try to protect the people of my area FROM the council and from the corruption of Noreen Vu, as she secretly records their private conversations.	YES I have had to spend over $100,000 fighting off the corruption of the Local Government sector.	Councils are either a proper part of our community and have an important role to play and fulfil, or they are a timewasting joke and councillors are just a theatre and sad spectacle.	Treat the job seriously and make the job will be treated seriously by serious, skilled, motivated and real people. Presently they pay is peanuts, and the sector is full of monkeys.
27	Councillor	Rural		The cost of fuel and maintenance of vehicles has increased dramatically for councillors in rural and regional areas. The need for personal transport is high to attend meetings with council and ratepayers. The remuneration for this expense is very poor.	The extra costs of living in rural and regional areas.	If councilors costs in rural and regional areas were were covered sufficiently, rural and regional councilors would be able to spend more time fulfilling the duties they are passionate about. Most of us are at pension age, so generally our income is very low and we dependant on finding extra income to cover living costs. The costs of training and skill development courses provided by LG are beyond our budgets. Most of us can not attend these courses. These should be free unless remuneration was enough to cover this extra cost to councilors, it would be a small cost to have better councilors that felt they had the skills to better serve the people they represent.
28	Deputy Mayor	Rural		Regularly take annual leave from my full time role for Council duties. Reduced work ours each week (flexible work arrangements accessed) which reduces the income from my full time job to be a Deputy Mayor.	A increase in wage for the Deputy Mayor of Council as they do more than Councillors. Make the Mayor role full time and therefore paid a full time wage. Unless wage for Councillors are increased it is going to become more difficult to attract candidates, especially in regional areas.	This should be a key focus area for LGNSW in the next couple of years.
29	Mayor	Regional	Social media. Becoming Mayor	Childcare. Time poor. Struggle financially		If representing a significant population, salaries should be commensurate with MPs. Ie As Mayor the number of electors I have is approximately 170,000. Which is more than a Federal MP. Yet I receive no staff and no electoral allowance, and considerably less salary and minimal entitlements.
30	Mayor	Rural		Loss of income from my business as I can not participate as much as I can	The income from your council gets put to your income from your business and puts you in another tax bracket	Some time you need a dedicated assistance to carry out your duties
31	Councillor	Regional	The adversarial nature of the current Council has increased time spent on both preparation and response	Unfounded travel to meet ratepayers or liaise with other levels of government		
32	Councillor	Metropolitan		Lots of travel required for attending events all over NSW		
33	Councillor	Rural	Keeping abreast of State issues affecting Communities eg Data Centers, Changes to planning rules and changes to Waste Management.	No		Complications? Red Tape with Code of Conduct issues, takes up time and mental impact on you which can be quite significant.
36	Mayor	Rural	The lack of a central point of communications, ie a local newspaper, has added considerably to the work load because we have to find other means of getting the message out which is very time consuming.	Yes and mostly with fuel costs. To attend all the Mayoral duties, I need to weigh up whether they are worth attending considering the cost it bears to travel to the function.	For rural Councils, there needs to be better consideration/remuneration given to both Councillors and Mayors for travel. The nature of their council areas are vast and unless they attend in person, community doesn't believe they are representing their issues in the Council Chamber.	
37	Councillor	Regional	It's not the role. It's the expectations of the community and other councillors. I do not post on social media due to toxic community behaviours so increased workload there is not an issue as I do not enegage	Time costs. The community expects you to know everything about council and answer their specific questions immediately. The minister removing pre meeting briefings makes it difficult to understand some content or context and is discriminatory against certain types of learners	No idea how you currently do this. So increased education would be helpful. City councils with apartments get increased income and have budget for most things. Rural and regional are spread out and therefore struggle in many ways. Current system is not fair	We are provided with an allowance that does not meet minimum wage yet expected to be available and accessible more than a full time job. You want all types of people on council and the current allowance and expectations only account for people who are either passionate about their community, have the time and money, or are using it as a political stepping stone. Also consider redefining or doing something about the fact that councillors can't have tax deducted from our allowance yet the ato has their hand out then you are forced into payg. Also look into the election donations. I do not take donations and will never take donations. Having to complete that form that always has errors it another waste of time that we incur for no good reason. Help make life easier.
38	Councillor	Rural	Council reports are often not accurate or lack information, good councillors spend a lot of time finding the truth, if you don't then staff do anything and then what is the purpose of councillors?	Home office, motor vehicle expenses are huge, coffee meeting community because we don't have office so every meeting costs $15-30 in coffee.	We get poor quality councillors because they are paid nothing and constantly accused of corruption. Rural Councillors have a greater responsibility than city councillors but get paid less, eg water and sewer, many bridges and dirt roads, social services. These are not council services in the city.	Councillors are liable but do not have the protections of an employee. Councillors are not employees yet they can be taken by staff to the industrial relations court, the code of conduct is worthless this all makes council leadership dysfunctional.

Open Text - Respondents' Comments to Questions

#	Role	Council type	Q12. Other changes affecting effort and time	Q19. Unplanned costs or expenses	Q20. Factors for the Tribunal to consider	Q21. Anything else for the review
39	Councillor	Metropolitan	I have had to become aware of the role of local government in relation to the State and Federal governments, in particular the need to stand up for local government in the face of State Government attempts to increase its control over Councils and seek to turn us effectively into little more than a government department.	I have had to significantly increase the expenses incurred for my family duties and international, interstate and local travel arrangements due to Council duties. My Government pension has also been reduced and my income tax has increased.	In its deliberations on remuneration levels for Councillors, the Tribunal needs to recognise the importance of the role played by local government relative to state and federal government in serving our community. In so doing the Tribunal needs to compare the vast difference between the remuneration provided to local government councillors and their state and federal Member counterparts, including the other benefits which are provided to the latter two, including staff, office space and cars.	The Tribunal needs to consider some form of legislative protection for the role and functions of local government. The current Local Government Act spells out in great detail the controls which the State Government has over local government but it does not provide adequate protection from attempts to impose arbitrary control of Councils. One example is the recent changes to the Code of Conduct which prevents meetings and briefing of Councillors by Council Staff, except via the Chef Executive and Mayor. The effect of this change is to limit information to Councillors on factual matters pertaining to Meeting Agenda items and to ensure that Councillors have to consider their policy response to these items in ignorance of the issues. Another is the attempt to limit allowance for remote attendance at Council meetings to strictly confined circumstances. This is particularly disadvantageous for rural Councils. In the absence of Constitutional protection there needs to be a Bill of Rights for local government which outlines in detail the roles and responsibilities of Councils and establishes protections against external government controls which affect their ability to adequately serve their local community's needs.
43	Councillor	Metropolitan			SUCH THINGS AS RAPID POPULATION INCREASE DUE TO TOD, TOD DEVELOPMENT, DIVERSITY OF COMMUNITY, IMPORTANT TRANSPORTATION HUB COULD INCREASE COUNCILLORS' WORKLOAD	
44	Councillor	Regional	The changes in code of meeting practice and confusion has created unnecessary extra workload	Childcare Leave provisions from paid work used less time for annual leave	How many councillors there are and volume of workload	
45	Councillor	Metropolitan	Increased rezoning (LMR and state led) has resulted in an increase in complaints to respond to, and taking the time to explain how DAs are assessed.	Yes, taking annual leave days or leave without pay to attend community events, or represent the mayor when they cannot attend, even taking an hour of leave to make representations on behalf of community members at planning panels during the work day. I have also had to pay for security cameras to be installed due to a community member being upset about a community project and stalking me at my home. I have also had to purchase an additional laptop as the council provided device isn't able to read spreadsheets and other docs easily.	Higher remuneration would encourage more women to enter local politics especially if they are caring for children. It's a fulfilling and stimulating role however with young families most women would return to a proper paid part time role. This is a loss for our communities, as we have many very well educated and accomplished women that would contribute so much. The same can be said for men, you need to be able to attract good talent to make complex decisions on the communities behalf. As it is currently, the system only benefits those well off enough to do it, or who are retired. We are lacking so much diversity in our councils and a lack of remuneration is stopping younger people putting their hand up.	
46	Deputy Mayor	Remote	Learnt a lot	No	Always representing ratepayers so is full time.	Time
47	Councillor	Metropolitan	Changes to Code of Meeting Practice and Pre-Meeting briefings have taken time to understand	Between caring for my young kids and council, I do not have the capacity to take on additional work which means I am working for less than minimum wage. Unplanned costs would be opportunity cost due to the demands of the role and additional costs for suitable clothing.	The size of the council. Metro councils should be full-time minimum wage at the least.	That the role of a councillor has considerable risk in terms of legal exposure, results in an increase of public exposure and loss of anonymity and has the burden of responsibility for decisions that impact the lives of (metro council) hundreds of thousands of residents. It includes week-end work and evening work away from family with no penalty rates, often on top of a full time job in order to make ends meet. Constituents expect councillors to respond in a timely manner and to be available as soon as something goes wrong. They do not factor in the hours or pay of an elected representative and in order to do your job effectively, neither can the representative themselves - not when you are impacting peoples lives and have a duty of care. The compensation does not come close to meeting the demands of the role.
49	Councillor	Metropolitan	The new code of meeting practice has made me feel unprepared for important decisions.			
50	Councillor	Regional	ACCEPTANCE OF RESPONSIBILITY	YES BUT IT GOES WITH THE JOB	CAN'T COMMENT COUNCILLORS UNDERSTANDING OF THEIR COMMITMENTS	COUNCILLORS
51	Councillor	Rural		No		
53	Mayor	Rural	Renewable Energy transition and complexity of integrating it.	Yes. Staff to help on farm.	The quality of applicant due to financial constraints. Inability of younger people, especially females to participate.	Where the money will come from.
54	Councillor	Rural		NO		
56	Councillor	Regional		Need to buy in some services to compensate for lack of time, e.g. household maintenance & gardening	In my community, people seem to think councillors work full-time in their role. They expect prompt replies to their emails or phone calls, to attend every civic and community function regardless of the size of the LGA, and don't understand the full range of responsibilities of councillors and what this means for time management. I sometimes think they imagine councillors are elected officials like their local state and federal MPs, with staff and access to other resources.	Councillor remuneration should be determined by the Tribunal, not each council, to remove the politics from the decision. After my council increased fees to the top of the band effective July 2022, there was such a negative and nasty reaction from a widespread section of the public that the council has left the fees unchanged since. It will be a five-year freeze by 30 June 2027. I am concerned that the volume of work is impossible for anyone who has to earn an income, which is most of the councillors on my council. I tried combining part-time work and councillor duties for eight months and found the workload so onerous that I left work. This was possible only because I had the opportunity to retire with a reasonable superannuation pension. People from all ages and work groups should be able to serve their community. The role shouldn't be restricted to those with private means (wealthier and / or older people).
58	Councillor	Regional	Banning of pre-meeting briefings has required more formal webcasted meetings which are much longer than the old pre-meeting briefings	Never claim for travel costs as this leads to criticism from ratepayers. Easier not to claim.	Due to the sporadic and inconsistent nature of council duties there are many jobs that would not fit with council duties. Since director pay stopped being contractual, having evening council meetings has become more expensive due to overtime payments in the award. This leads to pressure to have the council meetings during the day - although this makes it far more difficult for councillors and their daytime work.	Councillor allowances should be set by an independent review panel and not required to be voted on by councillors.
59	Councillor	Rural		NO		
60	Mayor	Regional	AI generated email questions and code of conduct complaints take a lot of resources.	My marriage?	DA numbers If they are a water/wastewater utility If they have planning powers	Only paying Councillors a part time allowance severely limits who can afford to do the role, meaning we dont get a diversity reflecting our community.

Open Text - Respondents' Comments to Questions

#	Role	Council type	Q12. Other changes affecting effort and time	Q19. Unplanned costs or expenses	Q20. Factors for the Tribunal to consider	Q21. Anything else for the review
61	Councillor	Regional	1. Management successfully 'conditioned' through gaslighting in 'strategy sessions' the Mayor and a majority of Councillors. There is now an obvious GM group think dynamic. The mayor has not been doing his job, and the General Manager is very happy to leave it like that. This puts more pressure on in terms of accountability. Mayor has gone back to his other paid work and let the GM control everything with some very challenging consequences for our community. The Code of Conduct system is "imperfect" to say the least which means that if I do spend the considerable amount of time to put one in, with all legal documentation, OLG passes a recommendation to the Minister that says nothing to see here. Meanwhile if ask the relevant governance questions to assist the GM and management with oversight I get obfuscation and obstruction. Then there is the conflicts of interest issue if people wish to keep getting work in local government they have to keep GMs happy, so the GM conduct reviewer is the furthest thing from impartial and simply ignores all evidence of chronic dysfunction. And the Peter Principle is in play. Why can't people who are good in their role just get paid more to stay in that role, rather than being promoted into a managing role they don't have the relevant skills for? Everyone who we have had who is really good at their job is being bullied out, and leaving with PTSD. I benefit from this with insights into the organisation however I would prefer for us to be able to retain these amazing staff.	Childcare I have had to book consistent days scheduled for council strategy sessions and then management keep cancelling them, even though we could still have them just live-streamed.	If management was legislated to be required to provide costings for each budget line item in a template that including such information as resourcing, where funds were coming from eg grants/developer contributions/ general fund, and delineated between materials and contracts and how much was projected for materials for a project, and whether a project is critical, important or deferrable, then that would make the role more accessible and accountable for the community. It would reduce timeframes for weighing up decisions.	If personal liability insurance cover is ambiguous as to whether Councillors and Management will be made to pay fines and costs if convicted of breaches to the criminal code, or guilty of misleading conduct, then is this a clear boundary to support the right outcomes for all concerned? Is it legal for it to be possible for public money to be used to pay anything, ever, in such instances? I wouldn't have thought so. So why are Councillors told that it's only if you're found guilty you 'may' be asked to pay. Where is the accountability in that? We know that due to trauma not everyone is able to easily self- regulate their behaviour. So independent oversight and clear boundaries around ethical conduct supports everyone to be high functioning in their roles and responsibilities. As it stands, it means we waste so much time on farcical behaviour as those 'veterans' in local government know they can get away with bad behaviour. If we tidied up this issue alone it would help clean everything up, support more participation, significantly reduce workload... and increase job satisfaction. Who knows, the job may even become 15-20 hours a week. Just saying...
62	Councillor	Metropolitan	The levels of expectation from residents and resident groups has increased dramatically in the past 9 years. The Ministers decisions on the Codes has been particularly distressing and not helpful to our roles as Councillors.		Because the maximum number of Councillors is 15, any increase in population in large city councils is not accounted for. Conversely where Councillors represent a large geographical area with low population, this should also be accounted for.	the maximum number of Councillors permitted.
64	Councillor	Rural		Yes. Have had to apply for annual leave from my full-time job to attend council related meetings/matters due to notice. Childcare costs to attend meetings in person when rules changed to not be able to join remotely (have now 10 month old twin babies).	The Mayor of our council (Warrumbungle) spends a significant amount of time on Council matters, including considerable travel and community representation. This commitment has increased substantially with the REZ. Given the time, responsibility and expectations of the role, I believe it is poorly remunerated.	
66	Councillor	Regional		Costs to attend meetings for council related roles eg ALGWA. Also using annual leave from my main job to attend council related events and conferences	There is not enough financial incentive for councillors to give as much to the role as they should. This limits opportunities for professional development given the need to work full time and use annual leave to cover attendance at council events. There is no time for professional development let alone time with family	Being a councillor and doing it properly while paying a mortgage and trying to live and support a family is impossible and unsustainable for many women or relatively young people
68	Councillor	Metropolitan	Having to be extra careful in council meetings to minimise social media attacks by some other councillors	Nothing comes to mind at the moment	The tribunal needs to take into consideration that local government is a level of government and the role of a councillor must stop being thought of as something someone does in their spare time. Our industry deserves to be seen as a profession and we should be remunerated accordingly.	It's about time we are provided real expenses that don't end up on the front page of the Daily Telegraph.
69	Councillor	Regional	Code of meeting conduct requires more time in researching because of contacting staff constraints		cost of attending community functions for self and partner	
70	Councillor	Metropolitan	As minority councillor I am effectively locked out of policy, committee and similar activities which reduces my workload (and ability to represent)	Yes, advertising spend on non-electronic communications in particular. Childcare and wellbeing financial costs are absorbed (but have a time and mental cost of their own)	Stress and mental health	Renumeration for many industries are based on both the "industry average" and also the need to attract and retain good staff. I think the latter consideration - the fee needed to attract good people who are not after some secondary gain - should be
71	Mayor	Regional	Much more time lobbying at both State & Federal levy Much more demand to attend social functions & local activities	Had to purchase Security system for home after several incidents.	The volume and complexity of issues facing regional and rural councils - including travel to villages within the LGA ,travel to meetings in Sydney & Canberra & JO obligations . In control of many matters in addition to City councillors - eg roads , water & sewer . required to lobby on regional issues - in my case 42 State Significant Developments - primarily in Green Energy & Extractive Industries	The remuneration offered to Councillors often prevents individual candidates from applying- as it is not sufficient to live on . Councillors then have to juggle work and council obligations in order to be financially secure whilst representing their community
72	Mayor	Regional		Travel, clothing, meals	Community expectation that councillors are in fact full-time	Council autonomy, let council decide these issues in conjunction with community expectations
74	Councillor	Metropolitan		The challenge of balancing a full time job, being a councillor, being in a relationship and being the primary carer of two teenagers is quite stressful. I feel that I am unable to do any of these things well or to the best of my ability. It is not a financial cost, more of stressload, mental health and capacity	Councillors are at the front line of our democratic institutions. They are often the most approachable of all elected representatives. Unlike State and Federal Politicians, we have no administrative staff to filter and manage the emails, meetings, publicity and events. The changes to the Model Code of Conduct have also increased the expectations on Councillors by removing flexibility in attendance at meetings and denying comprehensive briefings on matters coming before council meetings. This has substantially increased our workload and also increased the level of risk that we are carrying when making decisions. The remuneration should not only reflect the workload but also the level of responsibility and risk associated with the role.	
75	Councillor	Regional				Elected councillors should not have to vote on their own level of renumeration. The independent ruling should dictate the fee applicable and apply it directly.
76	Mayor	Metropolitan	Increased pressures on council budget	Significant pay reduction on doing the mayor role full time. Looking to go back into full time work and doing the mayor role part time	Growth, compare work load to local state and federal MP's and the Mayors role is very similar in time needed with less resources	
78	Councillor	Metropolitan	Not being able to attend council meetings by AV has been a hugely challenging to life work balance	Changing travel plans to attend unscheduled council meetings	Just look at the hours spent per week by most councillors and look at the current pay and see what we are paid per hour. It is a pittance	A barrista makes more money than a councillor per hour. If you want quality councillors then pay them a reasonable fee. Otherwise the only people who can afford this role are the retired or wealthy
79	Councillor	Metropolitan	Not affected	Travel cost		
80	Councillor	Regional	Rules that make getting the information I need to make informed decisions akin to getting blood out of a stone.	Additional Stress detrimentally affecting my health		Think about the power structure and how GM and council staff view providing councillors with what they need to make informed decisions detrimentally affects the ability of councils to serve residents and ratepayers.
81	Councillor	Metropolitan	I'm now chairing different committees which has increased my workload both hours spent in actually meetings but as chair having to spend many hours preparing. All for no extra remuneration.	I would say I pay my own wellbeing costs.I couldn't do this role if I wasn't retired and my children weren't adults. Or I wouldn't be able to do all the committee work I do.	Interestingly some Councillors are clearly doing very little preparation for Council Meetings as evidenced by their performance. Many don't do any committee work. If the remuneration was higher you would probably get a higher standard of Councillor	Some of the Committee work I do really deserves remuneration. When things go wrong the time spent goes up astronomically.

Open Text - Respondents' Comments to Questions

#	Role	Council type	Q12. Other changes affecting effort and time	Q19. Unplanned costs or expenses	Q20. Factors for the Tribunal to consider	Q21. Anything else for the review
82	Councillor	Regional		After a recent injury whilst carrying out council business, I am significantly impacted financially as councillors are not cover under worker's compensation and the insurance that council has is fraught with hurdles and insufficient. The fact that since 2009 councillors are not covered under the workers compensation act is appalling.	Councillors work hard. The remuneration is an absolute joke. The lack of cover for work place injuries is disgusting.	Councillors need to be paid a living wage. Councillors need to be covered under the Workers Compensation Act.
83	Councillor	Regional			Increased complexity & community expectations	
85	Councillor	Metropolitan	Rezoning	Not really		
86	Deputy Mayor	Metropolitan				Councillors who are conscientious and give the attention and energy that the role requires are available every day of the year apart from occasional leave for holidays outside the LGA. Councillors in most LGAs don't have staff or any admin support. The workload can be over whelming especially in the week prior to a Council meeting. I am able to devote myself to my ward and to all duties required of me because I have retired from paid employment. I would not have been able to afford to be on Council earlier in my life. The role of elected representative at local government level is critical to good governance and effective service provision at a grass roots level. It is hard to encourage young people to take on the important work of representing their communities on Council when they are bound to be financially and personally stressed as a result. State and Federal representatives are paid a fair amount to support them during the time they spend in government; this should extend to fair remuneration for councillors, mayors and deputy mayors.
87	Councillor	Remote	Understanding Council Financials/ Asset management/ etc	Yes, unpaid travel, accommodation as I live out of the main centre	Remoteness of both the Council & of the Councillors trying to represent out lying communities.	
88	Mayor	Regional			'Proximity to Sydney' - what an insult. Remove that. The population figures are designed to stop councils progressing up the classification rungs.	All Councillor pay should be doubled, and mayors 50% increase (100% increase in smaller rural councils). We are an elected body of government. State MPs wouldn't do what we do for the same money and time impost. Why should it be an essentially voluntary role when State and Fed MPs aren't. It's insulting. No wonder so many good people won't touch it. Why does a R/R/R mayor/councillor get paid less than the equivalent metro mayor/clr??? The demands of the job are now 24/7 with socials and emails - not like the olden days when a clr could turn up at the meeting and open their packet of printed papers. Here's something to copy: Maximum annual remuneration for elected officials at Western Downs Regional Council (classified as a Category C1 local government in Queensland) is $80,784 for a Councillor, $95,041 for the Deputy Mayor, and $152,068 for the Mayor
89	Councillor	Metropolitan		Unable to continue in council role		
90	Councillor	Metropolitan	The demands of the councillor role have increased over time, requiring greater time and effort outside of formal Council meetings. This includes increased engagement with residents and community groups, responding to constituent enquiries and service requests, attending more community events and meetings, and keeping up with Council matters and emerging issues. The role increasingly requires availability outside normal business hours, including evenings and weekends, to properly represent the community and respond to residents' needs.		The Tribunal should consider a broader range of factors when determining the classification of councils, rather than relying primarily on population size. In particular, consideration should be given to population growth and density, the complexity of the community's needs, the level of infrastructure and service demands, the diversity and socio-economic characteristics of the local population, the number and complexity of development applications, and the volume of constituent and community engagement required. For councils experiencing significant growth and higher-density development, the increased workload, infrastructure pressures and community expectations can place substantially greater demands on councillors and Council staff. The classification framework should therefore recognise the actual complexity and workload of a council, as well as its population, to ensure classifications accurately reflect the responsibilities and demands of the role.	
91	Mayor	Regional	Accountability to the community. Social platforms, media click bait, red tape at other levels of government, sustainability concerns.	Loss of income from permanent employment due to choice of taking Leave without Pay to meet the accountabilities of the Mayoral role.	Remuneration as an attraction to quality representation with reward for skills and effort.	Fair and equitable conditions as an employee of council receives.
92	Councillor	Regional		Yes, we are often invited to community events that Council do not cover under the current arrangements, we therefore pay out of our own pockets if we want to attend and stay connected with our community.	The significant responsibility councillors undertake and the lack of paid time to consider it's implications for the organisation and community. This should be a full time role if councillors were to effectively discharge their ever increasing and complex duties.	The legal implications of councillors making decisions based on staff recommendations that may end up being found or proven to be unlawful. Many councillors feel like they must go with the recommendations provided and therefore do not ask questions or seek clarification.
93	Councillor	Rural		Councilor Fees should be tax free.		
94	Deputy Mayor	Regional			The level of complexity over a range of issues and dealing with the consequences of State government decisions, for example, in relation to State significant development	Professional development should be mandatory for Councillors to ensure they maintain their currency of knowledge in key areas, similar to that required by professions such as architecture
95	Councillor	Metropolitan		attendance function costs ticket fees	Population and complexity of council operations	
96	Councillor	Regional	Code of conduct changes removing briefing meetings, and consolidating everything into the week we get the business papers drastically reduces the time and effort we can give to issues, and results in worse outcomes.			

Open Text - Respondents' Comments to Questions

#	Role	Council type	Q12. Other changes affecting effort and time	Q19. Unplanned costs or expenses	Q20. Factors for the Tribunal to consider	Q21. Anything else for the review
97	Mayor	Rural	The more one's skill increases, the more the volume of responsibilities you tend to take on as your confidence grows. Being informed on our Code of Meeting Practice and Code of Conduct is critical to be a strong and capable chair of meetings.	Higher levels of stress as a result of attending and/or chairing council meetings (often arduous) and committees; extensive driving in our rural area contributes to tiredness, headaches, tense muscles/joints requiring regular massage & other physio support. This can become quite costly.	I feel our classification is fair, being Large Rural, however the remuneration, particularly for a Mayor is totally unreasonable. A significant increase in the Mayoral allowance must be considered.	Being a Mayor in today's Local Govt arena is a far cry from decades ago. We are no longer just here to support our ratepayer base, there is so much more legislative areas we need to be involved in. We are the leading voice for the community and bear the brunt of media engagements and the fallout from that if it's not what people want to hear. Due to social media we are easily abused online and have to sit back and take it without daring to comment as it then gets far worse. This impacts one's mental health. Being in a rural area, councillors are subject 24/7 to interrogation - up the street, out for dinner, at a sporting event etc. We are always on the job and our weekends can be just as busy as our weekdays. We do not have a normal 9-5 job and should be renumerated accordingly. Being a rural council we spend a lot of time travelling, including flights, attendance and accommodation to Sydney (Country Mayors and training at LGNSW); as well as JO meetings which are several hours away, thereby spending more time away from home and family.
98	Councillor	Regional		I don't feel I'm able to meet the expectations of my community and the high responsibility of this role while working in full time employment. I've made the choice to work casually in order to accommodated the flexibility that's required for meetings and engagements during work hours and busier times leading up to monthly meetings. As a result I'm making a financial sacrifice for my family in order to undertake this role. If I could afford to focus my efforts on being a full time councillor, I would but the renumeration isn't enough. When I'm required to work, those are days that I'm not able to respond to emails and calls. Sometimes these requests pile up and constituents become frustrated with me, thinking that I don't care about their issues, which isn't the case. It's just that I'm not able to dedicate my time to this role in the way that they assume. I regularly find members of my community are surprised to learn that I don't have a staff or an office as a councillor, let alone that I'm juggling the role with other employment. Their expectations just don't match the reality and I feel that's damaging the reputation of local government.	The size of the population might not be the only factor to take into consideration. If the area is experiencing regular natural disasters, or is an area with high media attention on elected councillors, these things can add additional workload and responsibility to those elected. The more time a councillor can dedicate to the role, the better they will be able to meet the expectations of their community and make well informed decisions.	It's important that the renumeration for councillors doesn't disincentivise community members from running in an election. If elected councillors are all running for office because they can afford to, there will be a lack of community representation in the chamber. I'm particularly worried that the current arrangement is best suited to someone who is retired and therefore has ample time and little need to collect an income. In terms of the earlier question about the Deputy Mayors, this is dependent on the amount of time that the Mayor requires of their Deputy. If they are regularly being asked to attend functions on behalf of the Mayor and they're doing this without additional renumeration, it's unfair that they're undertaking this responsibility effectively as a volunteer while the Mayor continues to be paid in the role.
99	Councillor	Regional		My first full financial year I incurred a tax bill from the ATO, $5,000 I owed. Once I ceased permanent part time work I have not incurred a tax debt while undertaking the role of councillor		
101	Councillor	Regional	This is only my second term	I have 2 other jobs as well as Council, and I live in a town which is easy to get to most places within 5 minutes. The other jobs I have recognise my role as Councillor and allow me to attend meetings and workshops. I am well aware that this is not the same with other people. My council remuneration is $28,000. Significantly more than the 11,000 than some colleagues. Not enough for some people.	More travel allowance. An independent group to determine the amount. The same amount for all councillors ? Why do we have 3 different pay scales	
103	Councillor	Rural	No audio papers Limited time to read and respond to Council papers OLG needs an overhaul To many Councillors 5/6 max 12 months only for a mayor to sit concurrently This will stop the unhealthy liaison between the CEO and the Mayor Police investigation and civil Penalties for fraudulent use of ratepayers funds	Unable to work full time	Councillors and Mayors Deputy Mayors should be all paid the same remuneration We are elected equally and should see the role of Mayor and Deputy Mayor as an honour	Make the misuse of Rayepayer funds an offence punishable by law instead of the bushy washy pathetic response from the OLG
104	Councillor	Rural		My husband has had to reduce work hours and take time off to have our kids so that I can fulfill my role.	There are factors impacting elected representatives in rural and remote communities that are different to their city peers. Whilst there may be just under 10,000 people in our LGA, a lot of them have direct access to us when we are in community partaking in daily life. Residents often know or can find out easily where you live and work and they have more opportunities to approach you on a daily basis. Being an elected rep feels like a full-time role in this respect even if you are able to put boundaries in with people who approach you. We are still required to fulfill the same roles as city and Regional LGA's without having the same remuneration, and we have larger geographical areas to cover. Creating pay equity could attract more people in rural and remote communities to nominate to become an elected representative.	Increasing the exposure to the day-to-day role of an elected representative could also help attract more people into the roles as there is still a significant amount of misunderstanding about the role.
105	Councillor	Regional	Councillors don't vote on DA's anymore, but media scrutiny has increased.	Yes, my new car was vandalised whilst I was attending a council meeting.	Remoteness to attend council meetings/community functions.	
106	Mayor	Rural	Sitting on community consultative committees representing Council Chairing Bush Fire Liaison and Management Committees and associated plans Attending regional transport meetings including Great Western Highway Taskforce Attending consultation on state plans Writing submissions on behalf of Council on state government submissions. Attending a large number of Joint Organisation committees and writing submissions Writing a large number of Mayoral Minutes, averaging about 4 a month. Writing delegates reports on meetings I attend. Attending Joint Organisation meetings in Canberra, Sydney and in regional centres on a regular basis. Doing a large amount of media commitments. Having to do Council business even when I am on holidays. Country Mayor also takes a great deal of time yet not mentioned above. It disappoints me that I am on the lowest remuneration level for Councillors yet contribute far more than many of my peers.	I have to run my on vehicle as Council can't afford to fund one for me. I do receive a km allowance for this but current fuel prices have not kept pace with the allowance. I also pay for my own mobile phone and own internet connections. I also have to use my home office as Council does not provide the Mayor with an office. I do not receive any allowance for the home office.	The number of Councillors that you have. There is far more work for each Councillor with seven Councillors compared with 9 or 11 or 12. The extra workload for Councillors and the Mayor of smaller Councils who don't have a lot of staff. As Mayor I use the General Managers PA for booking, but have to organise everything else. I have to organise appointments, meetings, book thing and write report. Many of the larger Councils have support for their Mayors I don't have. The remuneration tribunal seems to ignore what takes place in reality with many smaller Councils.	I just spent 30 hours undertaking a Code of Conduct Complaint against my GM. To do the review properly, it takes a lot of time for zero remuneration. To follow correct process, it does take a lot of time. I am also writing a submission to the NSW Grants commission on Federal Financial Assistance grants for my LGA. I am constantly writing submissions so our staff can get on with delivering. It is also important to note this survey took far longer than the advertised time at the start.

Open Text - Respondents' Comments to Questions

#	Role	Council type	Q12. Other changes affecting effort and time	Q19. Unplanned costs or expenses	Q20. Factors for the Tribunal to consider	Q21. Anything else for the review
107	Councillor	Rural		Wellbeing Clothing Stationery Travel	The time and commitment of a rural councillor is as high if not higher than a regional councillor and city councillor. We cannot go anywhere in community where we are not approached by ratepayers or on show. We cannot choose to shop in the suburb next door to get some peace and quiet from being approached by ratepayers. Our travel times to village meetings etc are significant and often of a night time in challenging driving conditions. The work level is not less because of less population density in fact the could actually be increased due to never being able to switch off. The community expects us always to be available and responsible and at times the way we are treated in community makes it incredibly hard to keep turning up without adequate compensation for the hours we put in. To attract good people to put their hand up to do the role is hard in rural areas given the very low payment. The work levels mean that you can't have a fulltime job and family commitments whilst being a councillor so therefore the role tends to atttact retired or semi retired people. We need to have younger people and greater diversity and with the current payment this is hard to attract.	Fair pay for fair hours work. The responsibility of being a councillor is not fairly recognised in the stipend. If you were in a paid directors role with as much responsibility the director fees would be five to ten times more then what we receive.
108	Deputy Mayor	Regional	It has become a lot harder as a new Councilor due to the fact that we do not have briefings anymore. it has made reading and understanding reports a lot more intensive	no	Deputy Mayer should get paid more than the general Councilors, Due to the fact that the deputy mayor's duties can be more significant than the General Counsel's duties	no
109	Councillor	Metropolitan		Yes, My other worked has been reduced by approx $80k per annum to allow me to fulfill my responsibilites as a councillor	Acknowledged that the role requires full time dedictaion and that renumeration should reflect this. Create a wide scale for renumeration that allows each council to decide the levcel of renumeration.	
110	Councillor	Metropolitan		When I was first elected, I had to take months of unpaid time off work because the increased duties, responsibility, necessary learning and - frankly - the hostility and tension of the chamber, caused me extreme stress. I am now only working part-time because I need to balance my work for council - but because we are remunerated so poorly, I am locked into a tiny apartment with a housemate and dreams of being able to save for a home are put on hold. Note also the remuneration does not allow any councillor to afford the average cost of a rental or mortgage - we rely on second jobs, or being rich/retired. This is not feasible and does not allow fair representation for people from all backgrounds. My dreams of being able to afford to raise a family are also solidly on hold - even if I could find a way to balance the work of parenthood, I could never afford it on my current salary. Finally - career progression has also been put on hold, as I have simply sought to find a part-time job that I can manage on top of council - whatever career I dreamed of having has to wait whilst I balance council duties. Full-time remuneration wouldn't just be a fair reflection of the work associated with council - it would allow us to take it seriously and work towards the best possible outcomes for our residents, instead of just the best we can do in the limited time we can find to devote to it each week. I could do easily double the amount of work outlined in the hours section - and there certainly is that work to be done - but I do not have the time to devote to it. Paying councillors poorly is leading to poor outcomes for residents and causing us incredible amounts of personal stress.	As outlined - we can do better work, and remain in the roles longer, if we were paid fairly for our work. I shouldn't have to give up the dream of affording my own home and having kids just to represent my community.	Do you really want to lock into this system only people who have already achieved home ownership/retired, were born rich, or balance this work by not devoting themselves to it? If we seriously want to increase representation and look after the health of our councillors, increasing remuneration to full-time hours is the only way to do it fairly.
112	Mayor	Rural	None	Net loss of income ($100,000/annum)	1. Our submission seeking reclassification from large rural to regional was not successful despite meeting the threshold of 20,000. The reason was because we did not have one town with a population of 20,000. Our largest town has a resident population of 8,656 and a visitor and tourist population averaging 8,200 = 16,856. We actually service the larger population with waste, sewerage, potable water and roads, footpaths, walking tracks and beaches. This needs to be clarified. 2. Visitor and Tourist population - adds 55% to our resident population of 15,000 = actual population of 23,200.	Area of the LGA and number of towns, villages and communities requiring waste, Sewerage and potable water services.

Open Text - Respondents' Comments to Questions

#	Role	Council type	Q12. Other changes affecting effort and time	Q19. Unplanned costs or expenses	Q20. Factors for the Tribunal to consider	Q21. Anything else for the review
113	Mayor	Rural	The mental load of being a councillor and Mayor have increased greatly since I commenced in 2022, and since councils before us, who did not livestream meetings or be expected to be ever-present in both the physical and online realm. They were able to maintain external work, businesses and social lives. The community now has a stronger sense of entitlement towards councils and councillors, with greater animosity and scepticism playing out both online and in-person. Councils are under more pressure than ever to deliver services and facilities in tough operating conditions and an employee's market, at the same time being placed under pressure to operate more like a state government, but without the resourcing or avenues available to state parliamentarians. Councils are expected to open up everything to community scrutiny, without the community understanding a councillor's or Mayor's role, governance, and capacity to effect change. On top of this, we have daily issues around councillor misconduct which are not expediently or comprehensively addressed by OLG, creating an unsafe environment for councillors and staff. The remuneration is a drop in the ocean in comparison to the very real and personal toll of being in the public eye and under constant scrutiny and pressure. As Mayor, I am never "off-duty" when anywhere in our Shire as I am known everywhere I go. When away, I'm still expected to be available online and on phone 24-7. The huge increases in pressures and lack of support will result in good, well-intentioned councillors not running again. A Mayor being effectively paid below minimum wage for what is expected to be a full-time role will result in it being the exclusive realm of those who are well established enough to afford the foregone income. That does not result in equal opportunity or good representation.	The largest cost has been to my health, both physical and mental.	Consider the role of Mayor as a full-time role. Consider that rural councils are actually under more pressure due to the Mayor being known across the whole shire and hence never anonymous - meaning every personal outing becomes an official outing. Additionally, our shire is so large that it would take 2 hours to drive across its diameter. Size of council area should be factored in. Population should not be a determinant, as smaller populations actually have increased expectations of the Mayor. The Deputy Mayor role should have a higher remuneration than a standard councillor, reflecting the fact that Deputies have a higher work load. Councillor remuneration should be akin to a corporate board level position. There is frustration at our council that councillors with low attendance at council meetings, committees and civic functions receive the same remuneration as other councillors with no limit on how much leave one can take aside from the 3 meeting automatic removal from office. Councillor remuneration could match board remuneration which is paid on attendance.	I would like the review to consider what happens if it does not listen to its key stakeholders of Mayors, Deputies and councillors. When one couples the pay conditions with the intense public scrutiny, tough financial conditions, and increase in serious councillor misconduct, who does the OLG and tribunal expect to throw their hat into the ring to be the community leaders of the future?
114	Councillor	Regional		Security arrangements for primary residents and that of family who have experienced attacks.	Councillors should not be setting their own remuneration.	The state need to set the amount!
116	Mayor	Metropolitan	The constant additional planning changes introduced by the state government have required an extensive understanding of planning to assist my community		Comparison with state and federal elected representative remuneration. Local govt are treated by state and federal representatives as secondary to them and this would be made more equal if remuneration was equal - as it should be for both!	All levels of govt are equally important and should be treated as such with both recognition, respect and remuneration!
117	Councillor	Metropolitan	Time and effort increased dealing with State Planning Portal & attempted defence of community input and opinions being ignored by Planning Panels	Fees to solicitors to defend myself against vexatious allegations by developers.	Councils subject to increasing growth need to be categorised differently from ones that are essentially 'developed' and have stable populations.	Banning members of political parties from serving as local councillors along with political lobbyists, real estate agents and all developers.
118	Councillor	Rural			Increased level of complexity and level of reading Our business paper is regularly 1000 pages.	Becoming increasingly attractive to stand for council for those that don't have a business background or experience dealing with complex decision making leaving open to party politics taking over majority voting It's a numbers game not a democratic process in the rural areas anymore
119	Councillor	Regional		Yes as I convene the health forum and seek to raise funds to support our lacking services and this takes an average of 6 hours per week	We should be paid more than $5 per hour for what we do and nowadays a few can afford to do civic duty in the confines of our remuneration. We should see the gap between metro and rural regional as we all do the same work and perhaps more is expected of us regionally	Please pay us as a normal classified salary as the job is much more than that. We do not have parliamentary privelege and we carry director responsibility .... At $5 per hour or less.
120	Deputy Mayor	Rural	Compliance and training required take a lot of extra time. Changes to meeting code of practice has also added complexity, uncertainty and wasted a lot of time.	Entry fees and tickets to events, appropriate business and formal clothing, last minute flight to a city conference from an away from home location, luggage	The expectations of the community, duties and areas covered by rural and regional councillors should be taken into consideration when determining remuneration. Rural and regional councils have the same governance and compliance requirements as city councils but the remuneration gap is huge. Councillors in these areas are feeling very undervalued. The classification of councils doesn't necessarily need to change but the huge gap in remuneration does!	The full role, responsibilities and duties of the Deputy Mayor are not recognised. The Deputy Mayor is regularly called on to attend functions and events when the Mayor has other engagements, not just when the Mayor is on leave. The Deputy Mayor is also often expected to attend events and conferences alongside the Mayor. The compliance and responsibilities all councillors now face adds a lot of complexity to the role and should be reflected in the remuneration they receive.
121	Mayor	Rural	To many surveys heaps of government changes	Yes from time to time	Better outcomes from State Government and more face to face training fie Mayors	Local government minister get it right before he makes decisions.look after Rural Regional Area better
122	Councillor	Rural	More stakeholder meetings and briefings each month	As i work casually I have lost work because of council responsibilities such as meetings and training, and the monthly fee does not go close to compensating my loss of casual hours	Because of cost-shifting local government has more and more responsibility, and less funding. Councillors are charged with the duty of making decisions on behalf of ratepayers and this takes a lot of investigation and preparation. People I have spoken to are aghast at the low level of remuneration received and does not encourage people to stand for council.	
123	Councillor	Rural		Travel / vehicle costs to attend meetings and events across the council area.		
124	Deputy Mayor	Rural		Needing to take unpaid leave fr my employment to attend conferences	Rural councillors have increased responsibilities, eg advocating for health care, child care, education. This takes additional time. Rural councillors are well embedded in the community so there's a significant increase in rare payer requests, attendance at events. This also takes up additional time. Deputy mayor has greater responsibilities than councillors , therefore it's only equitable that they are remunerated.	
125	Councillor	Metropolitan	The State emphasis on provision of housing, that has intensified over the last two years with SSDs and HDA recommendations, has required a lot of work to keep up a database of applications, and a focus on how Council can/should respond. Also informing residents through social media and meetings of the magnitude of change that is coming.	No	For me, collating and understanding and informing the public about the changes coming as a result of the State Government's committment to housing provision has been a very big work load. There are a significant number of SSDs/HDAs in my ward. My Council has had to be asked to provide relevant statistics. It appears that State Government will have to be pressured to provide accompanying infrastructure - schools, hospitals, road upgrades. That is all work over and above a typical workload.	No
126	Mayor	Rural			Council should have to vote pay increase should be sent each year	
127	Deputy Mayor	Rural	Our council is deamalgamating which has added responsibilities and complexity	Not really	Of councils no.....	just highlighting that as Deputy Mayor I receive no more remuneration than a general councillor, however I carry a greater workload and perform a wider range of community engagements. It would seem reasonable that the Deputy Mayor might receive some level of additional remuneration

Open Text - Respondents' Comments to Questions

#	Role	Council type	Q12. Other changes affecting effort and time	Q19. Unplanned costs or expenses	Q20. Factors for the Tribunal to consider	Q21. Anything else for the review
128	Deputy Mayor	Rural		As a full time employee a large part of my councillor allowance goes in tax . I take annual leave or leave without pay from my day job to attend to council duties. That combined with fuel, wardrobe and misc expenses would mean I'm net financially disadvantaged as Councillor/ Deputy Mayor. It is a cost to me to be a councillor.	It's hard to see why the renumeration varies between classifications of councils. Population differences are surely evened out by travelling times and vehicle costs. The responsibilities can be greater in rural councils than metropolitan, as we are often "full service councils". Providing water utilities, childcare, cinemas and medical centres etc.	The concept of "community service leave" incorporated into industrial awards for councillors who work full time in their primary careers. Similar to that afforded to Defence Reservists and RFS volunteers.
129	Councillor	Rural	Understanding the continually changing regulatory requirements behind most matters that come to Council for consideration - especially planning matters. Also the expectation from community members who seem to believe that Councillors can do anything/everything, and are available to deal with their issues 24/7		Regional/rural Councils are all different -- being "tarred with the one brush" is a failing of city-centric administrations. Of course there are factors that are common among all, but equally there are many who have distinctly different issues to others. Roads are the single biggest issue for all and dominate expenditures and community angst. More recognition of these aspects would ease the constant drain on resources, time and engagement.	We all (at least the conscientious ones) take on this role with the best of intentions for our communities. As a result more than expected time and effort is required to meet the community's needs and expectations. Some will do this better than others - but if well credentialled future Councillors are to be encouraged to get involved in Local Government, they'll need an adequate level of remuneration to off-set time they will need to commit from usual employment. You've heard all this before . . . time to do something meaningful about it.
130	Councillor	Metropolitan		Medical expenses to manage health impacts of council work.		
131	Councillor	Metropolitan	The tasks are basically changed, but some things are easier as I have learned better ways to define and handle the tasks.	No	From my observation, all or most of our current councillors do not depend on their councillor remuneration to make ends meet. However, if we were to have a demographically broader range of councillors, then some of them would not be able to make ends meet. For example, younger councillors, those with occasional unemployment or single mothers might be forced to resign due to financial reasons. An increase in councillor remuneration would help broaden the representation on councils.	No
132	Councillor	Regional	As I have developed as a councillor I have been more aware of upscaling my skills in planning and development	attending conferences and other responsibilities as a board member representing council means less opportunity to do more work hours or familiy time with grand children	Attracting younger people relies on having an attractive remuneration.	no
133	Councillor	Regional	Our LGA is in the heart of a renewable energy zone as well as having several other large mines and SSD in either operation, development or application stages. Council has had to take on responsibility for developing housing; attracting and funding doctors to our region as well as having to plan infrastructure (water, waste, roads etc) for the increasing population.	Yes. They vary from simple travel costs that you feel that you should not claim to costs associated with attending events and functions. There is also the loss of income when you have to leave work. I work full time in a sales and marketing role. My employer also takes the time spent doing council work out of my annual leave. Simply attending council meetings costs me two weeks of my annual leave each year.	The complexity of the LGA that councillors represent. The size of the population really has no relevance to what many regional councillors and councils have to grapple with. As stated earlier, the type of industries represented in our LGA, the impending avalanche of SSD's heading our way (creating both opportunities and challenges) is a good example. Many regional councils are responsible for multiple water and sewer treatment plants, waste facilities, libraries, pools, aged care centres - the list goes on.	The training requirements of councillors. There should be a minimum level of training and professional development that a councillor should have to complete within a set period of being elected. E.g the Diploma of Local Govt? The state should pay for it.
135	Deputy Mayor	Regional	I became Deputy Mayor in the last two years. This is an unpaid position with considerably increased workload. Attending events and community forums is an expectation in this position which adds to 'workload'. Whilst of course, it is a privilege to attend these events, I have to do so in my normal work hours. So I have to take annual leave to attend events, or work late at night to compensate lost time. The other day I had to take annual leave to donate blood as it was a Council-initiated blood drive for the community.	Many! Every time I attend an event, I need to find a babysitter. I can only work part-time because of my commitments to Council but I am not adequately compensated for this loss of two days of work. It's also a huge cost to our lifestyle and family time - most evenings and weekends are spent at community events.	Whether a Council area has a small or large population is pretty irrelevant as most Councils and Councillors perform the same duties and functions: meetings, committees, community activities, events and advocating for our regions.	Consider a paid remuneration for Deputy Mayor. And the Mayors of all Councils should be paid the equivalent of a full time role. Our Mayor receives an allowance of $60K - it's a full time job! No wonder we have never had anyone but a retiree for a Mayor - it's not allowing for diversity as the allowance is too small.
136	Councillor	Rural	Question 11 is unanswerable for a first-term Councillor. The work load is huge, reading especially, though also attending meetings and the travel in a rural electorate-region.	Personal use of vehicle (many 1,000kms pa), telecommunications-data, combined with a general lack of impact for all of the cost and effort involved anyway.	I don't know what you mean by 'classification' of Councils. However, the current remuneration would be classified as 'modern slavery' when calculated back to an hourly rate (and it'd be the maximum not minimum hourly rate at that!).	No thank you.
138	Councillor	Regional	The nature of required activities continues to change quite often, as we have been navigating the changes around the new Code of Meeting practice documentation and changes in the state govt EP&A and other acts and policies, etc. Continual upskilling is required to ensure we stay on top of all the changes.	I am also a high school teacher with the NSW Dept of Education. Each year, I am permitted to have three days of paid "other elected official" leave. For all my other leave days away from my Dept of Education employment - such as attending council meetings, conferences, etc. - I have to use up my long service leave with the dept, should I wish to continue to receive my usual Dept of Education pay. I feel strongly that the financial recompense for a regional councillor (around 26K per year), does not take into account any income lost through taking days off from one's primary workplace to attend council meetings, events, etc. Something else to consider, I understand that regional councillors are paid so much less than metro councillors. I also understand that QLD councillors are paid considerably more (approximately triple!) than their NSW counterparts.	Please consider bringing NSW Councillor pay into alignment with QLD councillor pay. Also, please take into account the impact that attending councillor engagements and events will have on a councillor's overall bottom line - due to the lost income from their primary place of work. The current regional councillors' level of payment absolutely does not provide any relief for this. Currently, it is only offering some financial recompense for the day to day work of being a councillor, it is not covering lost income. At present, it is often costing councillors financially to attend council events like meetings, conferences, trainings, etc. (I am certainly being impacted in this way. I have lost about 25% of my long-service leave by attending councillor events including training sessions.)	I recently spoke to a Brisbane City councillor and he told me that his income was around $170K, plus they get an office and two staff members, compared to the $26K that regional NSW councillors receive. Makes me want to leave NSW and move to QLD!
139	Deputy Mayor	Regional		Increased fuel costs and cost of living have significantly affected my cost of travel, electricity and everyday running costs with yearly raises of Council allowance going nowhere near covering the increases.	There is plenty of room for the role of Councillor's to become a full-time position. We are very limited with having to continue holding down other work just to survive. Also my effectiveness as a Councillor/Deputy Mayor is significantly hampered by my need to balance bills with income. Therefore the needs of our constituents are often deferred or missed completely bringing much frustration and often criticism from residents who feel they are being ignored. As a Councillor/Deputy Mayor, this causes me much concern.	
141	Deputy Mayor	Regional	increased expectations from ratepayers. They expect me to have the same resources as state and federal MPs, both of whom have significant personal staff. As a councillor, it's just me, trying to juggle this part time alongside other work commitments.	yes, due to the hyper partisan nature of councillor expenses, I am reluctant to make claims as these have been weaponised locally and in the media. This means I wear these costs personally.	Being a councillor can be very rewarding. However it is the single worst paid job I have ever held, substantially more responsibility and personal risk. It is insulting that the NSW Government remunerates so many of its paid board roles above and beyond what councillors receive, for work where there is substantially less risk (personal and reputational).	The review of councillor remuneration should also consider the size of councils. I support full time councillors. I believe this to be an important integrity measure to resolve the perennial conflicts of interest that otherwise apply. But - if councillors were full time, there's an argument that fewer would be needed. This should be an option on the table as part of any serious reform. But in summary, pay councillors properly. Remove the limitations on the remuneration tribunal in doing its job. THey should have the same scope as the Parliamentary Remuneration Tribunal, not be artificially limited by statute. Also, the Remuneration Tribunal should fix the actual fee, completely independently and at arms length. Fixing a range only is incredibly damaging, politically motivated, and creates undue and improper conflicts.

Open Text - Respondents' Comments to Questions

#	Role	Council type	Q12. Other changes affecting effort and time	Q19. Unplanned costs or expenses	Q20. Factors for the Tribunal to consider	Q21. Anything else for the review
142	Councillor	Rural	Elected councillors have no "off" time like normal employees, we are 24/7 . Does not matter where we go there is someone wanting to discuss a problem or issue. Then there is advocating on behalf of the community with ministers, doing surveys, creating petitions, literature reviews and systematic reviews on issues policy and new legislation.	Question 17 is ridiculous - elected officials should give 150% We give up time with family time with friends, social events become avenues where you are asked about more council issues, when you try to have fun your shunned and you're a "councillor" why are you dancing and having fun, you have to give up time at your job because you have elected official responsibilities, you are judged 24/7 - you are attacked and mocked ridiculed and blamed, there is nothing that pays us for that abuse. Expenses to attend community events are not costed in	we should be paid similarly to state politicians, we have far more duties and more responsibility	Pay us what we are worth, there will never be attraction for people to stand without correct remuneration.
144	Councillor	Remote	Lack of 'Briefing' and 'Workshop' meetings greatly inhibits Councillors ability to discuss and background items coming before Council, let alone development new initiatives and ideas. This inability is particularly detrimental to discussion between Councillors, does not encourage due diligence or oversight of Council business whilst in an open forum. Therefore greater individual research is required but not necessarily shared.	I view the role of Councillor as a community serve, I have not claimed any expenses in my two terms of Council. Have absorbed travel and stationary costs from my Councillor allowance.	There is a significant imbalance in the various classification levels which requires consideration. Rural and remote Councils are often smaller in population, they are however significantly larger in geographical area. This brings about greater responsibility and complexities which should be considered when determining classification and remuneration levels. Ie; Roads, fragmented Water and Sewerage infrastructure, Health and Well Being issues, spread of community assets over vast areas.	Give Councils / Councillors the ability to workshop and discuss issues and emerging ideas in a 'round table' format. The current Councillor Meeting Policy is detrimental to good governance and certainly does not promote the sharing of Council business from the Executive or Mayoral level. The ability for Councillors to video conference if unable to attend and Ordinary meeting in person, but able to link via remote access.
145	Mayor	Rural		Out of pocket costs such as hosting events, travel costs.	Nil	The financial sustainability of small, rural councils. Any increase in councillor or mayoral fees would have a large impact on council finances. The reason our council does not vote for any increase in fees is because of the impact this would have on council. With no increase in financial assistance to small, rural councils, an increase in mayor / councillor fees would be totally unsustainable.
147	Councillor	Regional	The complexity of local gov. law and regulations, where to direct inquiries that I receive have increased the time I spend on council work.	Quite a lot of time and money.	The high level of skill development and the many hours of study and learning to comprehensively fulfil the role.	The sometimes emotional cost of stress from council meetings
148	Councillor	Metropolitan	attending precinct meetings, meeting with residents and checking issues around my ward	yes, travel, wellbeing costs, charities, donations, buying required outfit...	time, council cooperation, stress management	
150	Councillor	Regional		Attending community events	Take councillor pay determination out of each councils hands and do it at the OLG	
151	Mayor	Metropolitan		Yes many additional costs estimated to be circa $5,000 pa	Fees do not reflect actual work performed.	Fees should be received as a wage rather than as a stipend.
152	Mayor	Rural	The role of Mayor has become significantly more demanding in both the time commitment and level of responsibility required. In addition to the traditional civic and community leadership functions, there is now a much greater emphasis on governance, compliance, accountability and risk management. A Mayor is required to remain abreast of constantly changing legislation, regulations, the Code of Conduct, Code of Meeting Practice, planning and local government requirements, audit and risk matters and other governance obligations. This requires considerable additional reading, preparation and consultation outside formal Council meetings. Community expectations have also increased. Mayors are increasingly expected to be accessible and responsive to residents, community groups, businesses, media and other levels of government, often outside normal working hours. The role involves significant travel across large rural local government areas, including attendance at community events, meetings, regional and state forums, advocacy meetings and functions. The complexity of issues being dealt with by councils has also increased, requiring Mayors to spend more time understanding issues, engaging with staff and stakeholders, and advocating to State and Federal Governments. There is also a growing need for Mayors to provide strong leadership during periods of crisis, including natural disasters and other emergencies, when the time commitment can increase substantially and may extend over prolonged periods. I also believe there is an increasing expectation that Mayors should be genuinely community-focused and available for the full term of office. The role can be undermined where the position is viewed primarily as a stepping stone to State or Federal politics, rather than as an opportunity to provide dedicated leadership and advocacy for the local community. Overall, the Mayoral role now requires considerably more time, availability, governance knowledge, advocacy and community engagement than may have traditionally been recognised. There aren't enough hours in the day to complete everything I am expected to do because we are a small rural Council without sufficient staff to do what we do now, let alone the "extras" I have taken on.	Oh dear God, yes. Sponsorships, event tickets, raffle donations, mileage (because it wasn't submitted within the 3 month time frame), vehicle damage and maintenance - I could go on but it is not a small amount. I have given money to individuals and families who are homeless so they could stay somewhere safe, get food and toiletries etc. I attend a lot of events, all of which have an entry fee. With fuel at an all time high, I have attended events which are not covered under Council's mileage policy. I have attended professional development courses which I have paid for myself because we have such a small allocated budget for this.	Some Councils have large geographic areas with smaller populations. We drive extremely long distances. We service large areas. We have a much more personal relationship with our residents, who expect face to face conversations. We're also expected to use our own vehicles for a remuneration of $0.98 cents per kilometres which doesn't cover escalating fuel and maintenance cost especially when some areas have very few kilometres of sealed roads. Those unsealed roads are poorly maintained and subject to increasing severe weather events leading to poor conditions for both residents, ratepayers and elected representatives.	Councillors in NSW are among the most poorly remunerated in the country limiting the pool of applicants that want to apply for council. It's a 24/7 b with a casual salary that doesn't pay a living wage meaning councillors are either part time representatives that can't meet community expectations or have to supplement their council stipends with outside employment. It's well past time to realise that being an elected councillor is a job like any other and should be remunerated accordingly based on an independent work value assessment. If you pay peanuts, you get monkeys and if local government is ever to be an effective and contributing partner with State Government, the work value of elected representatives needs to be recognised and remunerated. Until then, all you'll attract to councils are people with predetermined agendas or those looking for a stepping stone to higher office.
153	Councillor	Rural	Increase regulations -eg no ability to have workshops prior to council meetings to understand complex/strategic matters prior to council meeting - leading to kess informed decisions and poorer outcomes for the community	Travel time and council affairs has impacted ability to generate fee earning work - huge opportunity cost	Remoteness and area of the ward impacts travel time and connectivity - requiring late night travel when meetings finish late eg 9pm	Effectively current fees are equivalent to $19/hr - significantly less than the minimum wage Not all councillors read the papers and are across the issues before they vote in council meetings - lack of time, capability and experience
154	Councillor	Regional	Code of Conduct changes mean more personal time searching for information affecting decisions.	Need to create a home office space to work effectively.	Time needed to interpret local government complexities around IP&R, particularly financial implications and reporting.	More time needed for initial orientation as written material doesn't adequately cover complex interfaces of reporting and planning. More direction around limitations in decision making and restrictions created in governance.
155	Deputy Mayor	Rural		Need to take unpaidTime off tododuties as Deputy mayor		
156	Mayor	Regional			Look at Queensland	

Open Text - Respondents' Comments to Questions

#	Role	Council type	Q12. Other changes affecting effort and time	Q19. Unplanned costs or expenses	Q20. Factors for the Tribunal to consider	Q21. Anything else for the review
157	Councillor	Regional	The changes to the Code of Meeting practice has greatly increased the volume of work as questions that were once asked of the CEO and the SLT have to be completed in a more formalised manner for transparency. I feel that the previous system of recording briefings and workshops already provided transparency for our residents and now everyone's workload has increased exponentially with no real benefit. Personally, I feel that my decisions aren't as informed as they were previously which disappoints me as I want the best outcome for my Shire and residents.	Due to the varying functions and events that are attended my expenses in respect of suitable executive clothing and formal wear has increased significantly as this type of wear wasn't required in my employment. Due to the hours required in the role I have had to cease my employment that I undertook two days a week and semi retire from my own business. I juggled all three roles for the first year of the term but it just wasn't possible to sustain that workload.	The Councillor role is one that is very difficult to determine a weekly number of hours. Some Councillors are more invested than others and some work part time while others work full time. The increasing demand on Councillors is meaning that the role is heading towards a full time position if it is to be done diligently. I believe that more needs to be done around communications for future candidates so that they are fully aware of the time commitment required. I knew that the role would be very busy but not to the extent that it is. For that reason I had to earn less from ceasing one of my jobs to be able to fully commit to my Councillor role. While this is my story, I am not alone.	
158	Councillor	Metropolitan	Lack of briefings has increased my need to self educate about upcoming agenda items			
159	Mayor	Regional	The demands placed on the role of Mayor of a large council are similar to those of a State MP, who have dedicated staff to assist them with responding to residents concerns, developing their social media content, take meetings for them etc.	Two years ago I suffered a stress-related heart attack. I had to take 2 months leave from the Mayoral role - during this period the Deputy Mayor was paid the Mayoral allowance. That is a ridiculous situation that should be addressed.	Our classification as a Regional Centre is fair and correct	When considering whether to fix the annual fee or increase the fee as determined by the Tribunal, Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council resolved that there be no increase to the Councillor and Mayoral fee in 2026/27. Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council is of the view that adopting an annual fee within a minimum or maximum range and adopting a recommended increase should not be determined by Council. It would be more prudent if the NSW Local Government Remuneration Tribunal would establish the annual Councillor and Mayoral fee, and this decision is presented to Council for information. The current legislated requirement for Council to consider and make this determination every year, is neither appropriate or conducive to Councillors being remunerated in accordance with the outcomes of the Remuneration Tribunal. Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council urges you initiate a legislative amendment to direct the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal to set fees for Councillors and Mayors.
160	Councillor	Regional	We receive more emails now than we did letters (when I first started, 20 years ago), but we can more easily reply to them now also. However, wading through them all does take longer in the first place.			I strongly believe that the Mayor should be a PT role as it is not a permanent position, it is a temporary position. Being PT enables the Mayor to retain their existing job while also undertaking their duties as the Mayor. A 'working' (ie: they have another job) Mayor can ask other councillors to attend functions and events on behalf of the Council. I remind LGNSW that the role of the Mayor is not to make day to day operational decisions of Council, that is why we have CEO's and staff. I believe that the Deputy Mayor role does NOT require greater remuneration. The community engagement activities that the Mayor does not attend should not all be given to the Deputy Mayor..... They should be shared with all Councillors.
161	Deputy Mayor	Metropolitan	significant increase in complexity due to ever increasing State Government regulation and legislation. More cost shifting, increased statutory responsibilities, less control over strategy and policy. Community do not fully understand that the State Government has been constantly eroding Local Government control but increasing Local Government responsibility and the correspondence and community interactions are marked by increasing anger towards councillors	No	I am retired, empty nester (with some grandparenting responsibilities) and I am not depending on my Council allowance to be able to manage my household budget. we have a similar demographic around the table (aged 59-69) BUT ... in a perfect world we need younger people on council and when I have talked to my own adult children and other people in their 30s and 40s, they have all agreed that they could not afford to take on the role with such a modest allowance.	Maybe it is perfect to have retired or semi retired people who can afford to be on council provide their skills and wisdom around the table for the modest allowance. I want to debate and decide along other locals, commonly community volunteers, who feel passionately about their community and passionately feel they have something to offer. If councillor allowances moved to a proper payment for services 2 things are likely 1. the wrong people may be attracted to the role 2. state govt could have another go at amalgamations or elimination of councils as they could argue a significant increase in councillor remuneration will make them unsustainable.
162	Councillor	Regional	The Minister's change to meeting arrangements is utterly unworkable. It must be immediately withdrawn. I will not run as a councillor again because of it. Having timely access to staff where things can be explained rather than writing and getting answers back and round and round again is shambolic. It places unfair burdens on a mayor and is utterly unworkable. The Minister's deliberations and meeting with his staff aren't conducted that way - neither should ours. He should be sacked for his absolutely dismissive attitude to the concerns raised at LGNSW meetings by councillors right across the political spectrum.	My remuneration is less than what I lose by not working ordinarily. I don't do the job to make rivers of gold - but it actually COSTS me in a net sense to be a councillor		
163	Councillor	Metropolitan				PAYG instalments to avoid potential tax bills.
164	Councillor	Rural	I identify as an Indigenous Councillor. The Indigenous community members have limited access to non-Indigenous Councillors. My tasks as a Councillor are more complex, as an Indigenous Councillor. The Indigenous choose to contact me, because their issues are about their dissatisfaction and distrust, with the mainstream Councillors and Administration.	Yes, I gave up my part-time employment as a school bus driver.	Designated "Councillors" for high Aboriginal populations, in specific Councils, with high Aboriginal representatives.	Local Government Administration offices should be encouraged to have the same percentage of employee staffs, to represent the diversity of the Council's population.
165	Councillor	Regional	The model code of meeting practice does not allow us to become fully informed on matters before us in advance, causing us to take extra time in committee of the whole and / or have us quizzing staf on the florr of council. Maybe the minister would like to propose the same code for members of Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council.			
166	Councillor	Metropolitan		Yes, having to trouble interstate back for council meeting due to the previous Code of Meeting Practice not allowing Councillors on audio-visual which the cost is not recoverable on the expenditure policy. Childcare and wellbeing costs has also increased due to the hours taken for councillor duty has significantly reduce my time available for young children.	- The learning time for a new councillor - Extra costs with meeting the constituents on councillor duties	
167	Councillor	Regional		Election cost s, social media costs , expenses not claimable under council policy - some travelling exp , some meal expenses ,travel insurance,	Water and sewerage responsibilities for those councils that provide these Length of road network Geographical area to be administered	Suggest a general expenses fee of say $1000 for unexpected and non recoverable expenses related to civic duty
169	Deputy Mayor	Regional		Yes as our council has limited training budget		

Open Text - Respondents' Comments to Questions

#	Role	Council type	Q12. Other changes affecting effort and time	Q19. Unplanned costs or expenses	Q20. Factors for the Tribunal to consider	Q21. Anything else for the review
170	Councillor	Regional	Community expectations are higher than expected as they think we have more power and influence than we actually do.	Food costs not included in accommodation when representing council at state level events.	At the moment, the fees are about equal to a single days pay for a beginning teacher per week. It should be expanded to reflect at least 2 days full time payment as that is about the time spent on council matters.	The tribunal should set the fees without making councils vote for their own stipend amounts.
171	Councillor	Regional	As a growth area we have complex strategical plans and decisions that require many hours of research, discussion with stakeholders and community that I believe many council leaders would not have in stable councils.	Security systems around my home. Additionally costs associated with chores around the home because of lacking time to complete traditional home duties.	If a council is in a growth area and has significant pressure from the developers and competing interests from residents. Further the number of residents an area is increasing by, for example some areas are becoming higher density through dwelling types rather than just broader development however every resident adds to the work of a councillor to represent their community.	The minimum standards for understanding the complexity of how the governing body controls the council however not the day to day. This requirement should be applied BEFORE people nominate so as they understand if elected the responsibility, the decisions and the workload along with the balance of how this works with staff.
172	Deputy Mayor	Metropolitan		Yes, cost of attending social functions, contributions to community charities and events. Sponsorship od community services etc.	Councillors need to attend Council meetings and committees irrespective of work and business commitments. Far too many Councillors fail to attend community events and Forums as well as essential briefing sessions prior to Council Meetings.	Many elected Councillors appear to treat their remuneration as supplementary income while failing to attend important community committees and advisory groups that form a key part of their responsibilities. Given that Councillors receive remuneration for carrying out their duties and representing the community, attendance at essential community committees should be subject to minimum participation requirements. Where a Councillor fails to meet these attendance obligations without reasonable justification, a proportionate reduction in remuneration should be applied. Such a measure would promote accountability, encourage active participation, and ensure that elected representatives are fulfilling the responsibilities for which they are publicly funded.
173	Councillor	Metropolitan			Reduce the number of categories and pay all councillors more equitably. I think size of ward or council should have less impact on the size of the remuneration. The job is largely similar.	I want Councillors and Mayors to be remunerated close to a full time salary to reflect the demand and entice more people into this public service role. As a young person I will struggle to do multiple terms on council without significant reforms to
174	Councillor	Metropolitan	Changes to the briefing practices have increased my workload		The amount of time and research required to make informed decisions	The fees are completely inadequate
176	Deputy Mayor	Regional			There needs to be an additional allowance for deputy mayors	
177	Mayor	Rural	The expectation of local councils to fix state & federal governments issues has increased dramatically, this is an overwhelming increase in time required	Im self employed but my business has been impacted as the workload of my current mayors roles has significantly increased	I feel catorgising councils with population isnt an appropriate measure. My experience in some larger councils have more resources & support for councillors than smaller coulcillors, but effectively the smaller councillor do more work,	Totally against the population model, the size of our council would fit 4 or 5 metro councils in it but hasnt the population. But the complexities of community are still there
178	Mayor	Rural	First renewable energy zone. Renewable projects.	Extremely fortunate that I am self-employed and are able to leave my business to carry out Council business I'm extremely exhausted as I do my own work to be able to survive financially	We are the first renewable energy zone and the workload on our Council has been unbelievable	Councils in a renewable energy zone need full-time Mayor to carry out public demand
180	Councillor	Metropolitan		Out of pocket expenses	Pay Abuse Code	Review of local govt structures
182	Councillor	Regional	Expectations from ratepayers. Especially with the increase in online harassment	Yes, trying to get time off work from a NSW public servant job to attend council activities is near impossible. At the same time, I have not had a holiday in 4 years as my leave is always depleted for Council related conferences	The fees for Deputy Mayors should not come out of the Mayors fee. In no other industry do we see someone going on leave pay out of their own pay packet for their replacement. Also in today's day and age Deputies are often assisting Mayors when there's multiple events on at the same time. Therefore it should be a stand alone allowance	Every year the tribunal shuts down calls from councils to review both the inconsistency renumeration and the stand alone request for deputy mayor allowance. This is not good enough
183	Mayor	Regional		Yes- Had to leave full time employment and yearly income has dropped by $80,000pa	Some elected Mayors or Councilor's may put a limited amount of time and work into their position. Others are fully committed and dedicated	
184	Deputy Mayor	Regional	The complexity of 'issues' that are the responsibility of Councillors is immense. To make informed decisions requires significant time and energy to ensure those decisions are good.	Undertaking initiatives that are outside the norm for Councillors, like, I hold a monthly 'Meet the Councillor' meeting day in the local community hall. This has proved to be an excellent initiative enabling ratepayers (and others) to connect directly to their Council. I rent the local hall for this initiative at my own cost		
186	Councillor	Rural	Vast area Council is involved in and trying to be on top of all this. REZ zones, medical centers, pools, planning, recruitment, ect	I am fortunate to have retired when I took on the Councilor role. Had I still been working I don't believe I would have had the time and energy required to work f/T, personal time and adequately prepared for council role.	Rural Councillors very rarely clock off. They go to supermarket or sports event they are asked questions by rate payers. So while we may not have the level of planning developments there plenty more focus on strategic plans to attract developers. Our council own medical centres, livestock centers, airports, in renewable energy zones. Strong Councillors need to time to get across all these things this is often not possible if they are still working full time.	If remuneration was increased then there opportunity for more diverse range people taking up the role however there would also need to be expectation that they would be expected to do more. At this stage many rural Councils cannot afford to increase Councillor remuneration. Do you need as many Councillors? Should skills assessment and time commitment also be considered not just popular vote? Councillors training imperative
187	Councillor	Metropolitan		Taking time of work bave left with less income and less time with family on weekends	The workload taken by the councillor outside their council meeting, attending training and professional development	Travel time to conferences
188	Mayor	Rural	openess and transparency mean greater time spent explaining and delivering news, procedures and communicating with countless other agencies.	I have added security monitors added to the family home, there have been occasions of uninvited guests seeking audience.	I prefer to travel by car not plane to distant venues as a cost saving method, however, more time is consumed or to be considered when planning. Regional air transport can also be temperamental	People are looking more to Local Government representation, with State and Federal governments seeming too distant!
189	Deputy Mayor	Rural	Changes to the Code have negatively impacted relationships with GM and senior staff. We must now depend more on the Mayor for briefings, which is inefficient and politicised	Yes, it has negatively impacted my employability. My actual earnings have decreased significantly - at this point I am paying to be a Councillor. The system favours retirees and independent wealth.	Greater weight should be placed on factors beyond population. A metro council may have 10x the people, but if they are not responsible for DAs, water, aged care, transport, saleyards, large road networks, and the myriad of other services rural and regional councils provide, then they are not actually do the same level of work. It seems to me that metro councillors are paid well to oversee some footpaths and a library. The disparity is disgusting, and actively discourages people in country areas from becoming elected members.	It is not unreasonable for people to be paid for their time. The current government, both state and federal, have championed "equal pay for equal work" and yet fail to recognise that country councillors are doing the same job as their metro counterparts, with less resources and less remuneration.
190	Councillor	Metropolitan	I think the financial situation for Councils with cost shifting, constantly planning changes, constant code of meeting practice changes, all is driving greater complexity.	While the expenses policies exist it has become politicised so much that I do not claim everything to avoid notice/attention. The fact the job is only remunerated for part time necessitates I have another job, and I often feel I cannot dedicate enough time to council as a consequence. Being a current councillor significantly impairs my job prospects as I work advising the LG sector. Council is badly paid for the hours I put in and the complexity of the work.	I am in a large metro council with 50,000 residents in my ward, this should be a full time role to do it justice. Maybe for smaller councils the role is genuinely only part time.	Greater pay to enable full time attention to council for larger councils. Less politicisation of expenses and perhaps council should cover more of these costs to avoid them being perceived as personal expenses
191	Councillor	Remote			I'm fully of the opinion that the Deputy Mayor Role should not be paid at the same level as a regular Councillor. The Deputy is shadowing the Mayor in most roles and to not renumerate commenserate with that increased representative responsibility is untenable.	In Rural and Regional areas Councillors are less able to devote more hours to Council as they are often compelled to Work either full time or Part time outside of Council to support their families as the renumeration as a Councillor is not sufficient to fill that gap. This places these Council's at further disadvantage to

ANNEXURE LG-4

Form 43A

WITNESS STATEMENT OF TODD ANTHONY CARNEY

WITNESS STATEMENT	
Name	Todd Anthony Carney
Address	601 High Street, Penrith NSW 2750
Occupation	Mayor of Penrith City Council
Date	24 September 2026

I state:

1 I am Todd Carney.

2 I was first elected as a Councillor of Penrith City Council in 2016.

3 For the past 3 years, I have served as Mayor and have recently been re-elected to serve as Mayor for a further two years.

4 Prior to my appointment as Mayor, I served as Deputy Mayor for one year.

5 Prior to my election as Mayor in 2023, I was the National Service Manager at an international crane manufacturer. I am a qualified Heavy Vehicle Mechanic by trade.

6 I also worked for a Federal Member prior to my election to Council in 2016.

7 I would estimate that I typically spent approximately 50 – 60 hours per week in my position as National Service Manager.

8 In addition to this, as a Councillor I was required to attend Council Meetings which were held weekly on Monday nights and I typically attended approximately 2 community events each week, which would take approximately 2 – 6 hours depending on the nature of the event and its location.

9 A Business Paper is typically prepared each week by Council staff to inform councillors of upcoming agenda items. Preparing and reading the business paper would take approximately 3 – 4 hours per week during my time as a Councillor. More recently, I have observed that these papers have become larger and contain more complex detail. As such, the time commitment required to become familiar with the material has increased substantially.

10 The recent changes to the Code of Meeting Practice have also meant that, for a period, Councillor Briefings were prohibited. The changing legislative landscape in relation to the Code of Meeting Practice has contributed to the stress, confusion and workload of elected officials.

11 In addition to this work, in my capacity as Mayor I regularly engage and deal with constituent and community matters both in person and online. This includes community events, of which I now attend 3 or 4 per day, including at schools, charities, sporting clubs and citizenship ceremonies. This also usually involves 2-3 hours of driving to and from events.

12 I also engage with my community on social media. The way social media is used has expanded greatly during my time on Council. It is now an expectation that I

proactively use social media to inform the community of news and events and to raise awareness of particular issues.

13 I also field media enquiries on a day-to-day basis and liaise with ministers and other state and federal government stakeholders. I have observed that this level of collaboration with state and federal government has far exceeded that of my predecessors. I consider that this may be due to the increasingly complex nature of local government and the large number of matters which intersect or overlap with state/federal government

14 In total, I estimate that I spent approximately 60 – 65 hours per week performing my duties as Mayor.

15 This does not include weeks or longer periods which require additional time commitment. For example, council meetings which include budgetary considerations or major planning or infrastructure projects require additional time for preparation and consideration. For example, matters relating to Western Sydney Airports have required additional commitment by councillors.

16 Unexpected events and disasters also require Councillors and the Mayor to be visible and play a front-line role. For example, the floods in Penrith in 2022 occurred while I was Deputy Mayor. I recall that the Mayor at the time was speaking with news media multiple times per day, in addition to coordinating the community response to the incident and liaising with residents to provide appropriate support.

17 I resigned from my private employment upon my election as Mayor. It was not feasible for me to work up to 120 hours per week in total across both roles.

18 I estimate that I have experienced a loss of approximately $50,000 per year as a result of resigning from my private employment which does not include any bonuses, increases or promotions.

19 At this time, my wife returned to work one additional day per week, and has taken on more domestic responsibility at home, including household tasks and caring responsibilities for our children.

20 While this arrangement has worked, increasing cost of living pressures means that I am currently in the process of applying for private employment once again. My wife's income and the fees I derive from my role as Mayor are not enough to support my family.

21 It is my view that the fees payable to councillors are not adequate. While I decided to run for council on the basis of my passion for civic service, this does not mean that financial considerations should be ignored. The current fees make it very difficult for those without means to take on a community service role, particularly the role of Mayor or Deputy Mayor, which requires an even greater commitment.

22 I also note that Mayors and Councillors often resign from the private workforce in pursuit of civic service. While this has financial implications during their terms, it also means that they are making a sacrifice in their private careers by effectively stepping out of the workforce for at least 4 years. This means that further training or education may be necessary to remain competitive in seeking employment once a councillor or mayor returns to the workforce.

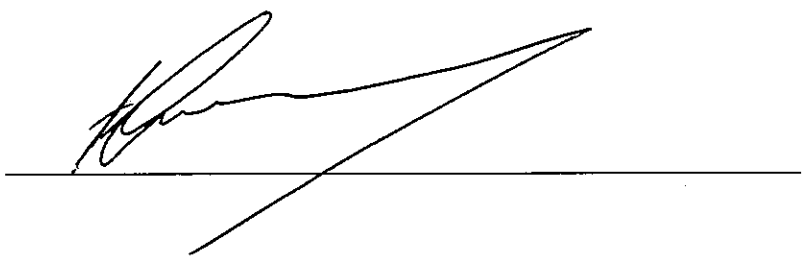
23 In addition to the financial sacrifices, dedication to this role has also meant that that my family life has suffered. I have less time now to assist with domestic work and cannot readily and reliably support my children in their activities, for example homework or school-based events.

24 In my experience on Council, I have observed that there has been a gradual drift of functions from State to local government. This includes housing, employment, planning, roads, drainage, environment and transport. The old adage that councils are responsible for 'roads, rates and rubbish' is no longer accurate and I believe the remuneration levels should reflect this.

25 Generative artificial intelligence was not used to generate:

i. this witness statement.

ii. any annexure/exhibit to this witness statement.

Signature of witness 

Form 43A

ANNEXURE LG-5

WITNESS STATEMENT OF ROBERT LIVINGSTON BELL

WITNESS STATEMENT	
Name	Robert Livingston Bell
Address	32 Salisbury Street NSW 2358
Occupation	Mayor of Uralla Shire Council
Date	24 September 2026

I state:

1 I am Robert Livingston Bell.

2 I am retired was first elected Mayor of Uralla Shire Council in December 2021.

3 I was first elected as a Councillor of Uralla Shire Council in September 2016.

4 I previously worked for Uralla Shire Council as the Director of Infrastructure for 30 years with two 18-month periods of working for Tamworth Regional Council.

5 Whilst I was a Councillor I worked part-time 2 days per week at a a renewable energy solar company. I retired in 2019.

6 I hold a Bachelor of Civil Engineering from the University of New South Wales.

7 I have lived in Uralla for over 40 years.

8 I first stood for election in 2016 because I had a strong sense of pride for the work I had done as a Director at Council and was concerned about the direction Council was taking after my retirement.

9 During my time as a Councillor, I usually worked between 5-10 hours per week on my Councillor tasks, however, I found that I was unable to predict the amount of work and time required of me as a Councillor and decided to resign from my paid employment because I could not guarantee my availability.

10 It has been my experience that the work and time required of a mayor is at least 40 hours per week and I do not believe I would have been able to work full-time and serve as Mayor.

11 Uralla Shire Council holds weekly Council Meetings on Tuesdays from 4-7pm, though these meetings can sometimes finish as late as 9:30pm. I believe at least 10 hours of reading and research is required to adequately prepare for these meetings and understand the Business Papers.

12 I usually have 2-3 meetings or workshops every day including Zoom meetings with stakeholders in Sydney and other local parties such as the University of New England.

13 Although new technology like Zoom has allowed me to become more accessible to individuals and organisations in Sydney, I am still required to travel to Sydney at least once every two months for at least two days. It has been my experience that it is best to allow for at least two days of travel (to and from Sydney) due to unexpected cancellations or delays from Armidale Airport.

14 I am provided with a Council vehicle, noting that the Uralla local government area (LGA) spans over 3,600 square kilometres. Travel around the LGA is divided amongst myself and my fellow councillors though I still drive at least 200 kilometres per month by car.

15 Whilst I do not believe I would be able to serve as Mayor and maintain paid full-time employment, I note that my Deputy Mayor does currently work full-time though she has flexibility over her working hours. I believe such flexibility is essential for councillors to be able to manage their workloads.

16 Uralla Shire Council has two other councillors who work full-time. The remaining five councillors are either semi-retired or retired.

17 In 2026, Uralla Shire Council elected to lower the allowance paid to our Councillors to offset the Special Rate Variation approved by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal. I opposed this motion because I do not believe the current allowance is fee for service or an adequate remuneration for the time councillors spend serving the community.

18 I believe that the complex issues facing our Council, especially surrounding the New England Renewable Energy Zone, has increased mine and my fellow councillors' workloads significantly.

19 I also believe that the introduction and subsequent disallowance of the 2025 Model Code of Meeting Practice and the ban on pre-meeting briefing sessions caused immense confusion, especially for newly elected councillors, and has increased our workloads.

20 Generative artificial intelligence was not used to generate:

i. this witness statement.

ii. any annexure/exhibit to this witness statement.

Signature of witness 

ANNEXURE LG-6

Form 43A

WITNESS STATEMENT OF SARAH CATHERINE NDIAYE

WITNESS STATEMENT	
Name	Sarah Catherine Jane Ndiaye
Address	70 Station Street Mullumbimby NSW 2482
Occupation	Mayor of Byron Shire Council
Date	30 September 2026

I state:

1. I am Sarah Catherine Jane Ndiaye.
2. I am 50 years old and was first elected to Byron Shire Council in 2016.
3. I served as Deputy Mayor for 5 years and was elected as Mayor in 2024.
4. I also sit on the Local Government NSW State Board and am a Councillor for Rous County Council which have a paid component.
5. I previously worked as a high school teacher and ABC radio producer.
6. I hold three Bachelor degrees including a Bachelor of Arts.
7. From my time working in local radio, I developed extensive experience covering a variety of local issues including, environmental concerns and the privatisation of council assets, which inspired me to run for Council in 2016.
8. When I was first elected as a Councillor, I moved from full-time to part-time work 3 days per week as a teacher.
9. I did not continue my teaching position because I did not have enough time to dedicate to both roles.
10. My teaching qualifications will expire next year (2027) and will need to complete supplementary training to maintain these qualifications as I note that as a popularly elected mayor, my position is only guaranteed until 2028.
11. I estimate that I work on average between 60-65 hours per week in my role as Mayor including reading agendas, managing my social media, and attending Council and community engagement outside of regular hours.
12. I attend approximately 12 meetings per week for Council, in addition to the seven committees I sit on. I also regularly engage with local stakeholder issues, advocacy work, and media appearances. I also attend many community and cultural events outside of normal working hours.
13. I am required to read and research the agendas and business papers for Council meetings and committee meetings which range between 300-2000 pages and Council meetings usually run from 9:00am – 6:15pm once a month on a Thursday.
14. The changes to the Code of Meeting Practice have also changed the way that information is shared to councillors. It is no longer permissible for councillors to be briefed by staff on agenda items. This means that councillors, who often work full-time

positions to support themselves financially, are required to undertake their own unguided independent research on various issues. This, in turn, has an effect on the quality of decision making as councillors are not able to be briefed by staff on the background and history of various issues or attend site visits for planning matters with staff.

15. I also travel to Sydney at least twice per month for the advocacy work I do to represent the Northern Rivers regions.
16. It has been my experience that over the past 10 years, the roles of councillor and mayor have increased substantially in complexity. This is partially due to the natural disasters Byron Bay suffered in 2022 and the ongoing socio-economic and infrastructural consequences of these events.
17. Additionally, the community has come to expect an increased level of availability from the mayor over the past 4 years and look to the mayor as a trusted voice.
18. I have also been required to engage more with the community, especially on social media, to combat disinformation and manage the heightened levels of distrust of the state and federal government, particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic.
19. Residents are also more frequently utilising AI platforms such as ChatGPT to generate formal and informal complaints which has also increased the time I need to spend responding to inquiries.
20. Many of my fellow councillors work full-time and struggle to manage their workloads as it is not financially viable to cease their paid employment and remain on Council. For example, one of my councillors is an Indigenous woman who was interested in the position of Deputy Mayor and I believe the remuneration was a deterrent for her because she could not afford to take the time off work which she would have needed to to serve in this role.
21. It is therefore my opinion that the current remuneration fees are a barrier to increasing diversity in Councils.
22. I have also seen the disparity in the workloads between metropolitan and rural and regional councils through my work with Local Government NSW and the Country Mayors Association. I do not believe the current remuneration levels are commensurate with the amount of time and work rural and regional councillors and mayors are required to spend in their roles. It is also not commensurate with the level

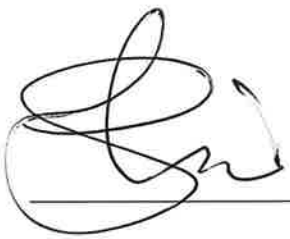
of responsibility afforded to the mayor and councillors. Byron Shire Council is responsible for approximately 1.5 billion worth of assets across a range of portfolios. This requires discrete assessment of many complex issues which can range from planning and environment issues, roads, waste, and other services such as homelessness and conservation. The fees received are not adequate when compared with what is asked of councillors and mayors.

23. I am fortunate to have relatively cheap rental expenses which have not drastically increased over recent years. My partner is also able to derive an income and I have two adult children who do not live at home full-time. If my family was younger, and I was still a single mother, I would struggle to afford to stand for council.
24. I also believe the increased levels of community participation and engagement on social media exposes councillors and mayors to psycho-social risks. For example, some of my fellow councillors have felt they needed to step away from social media due to the hostility and vitriol they experienced online.
25. Nonetheless, social media is a necessary part of my role in being a conduit between Byron Shire Council and our constituents. Social media is one of the essential ways in which the community engages with Council. In my view, engagement on social media is as important to constituents as attendance at various community events. If I declined to engage with residents via social media, I consider it likely that vitriol and misinformation would arise on forums and community pages without any mechanism for us to respond effectively.
26. Additionally, it has been my experience that the requirement for councillors to publicly decide their own fees is humiliating and dehumanising. This is especially true in the context of Council seeking a Special Rate Variation due to a lack of funding. Seeking a fee increase, for some, is often not worth the political capital required of councillors and, as a result, the elected councillors may not receive anywhere near the maximum fee.
27. I understand that Byron Shire Council will be relying on the information contained in the document annexed hereto and marked "Annexure A" to inform its own submission to the Tribunal.

28. Generative artificial intelligence was not used to generate:

i. this witness statement.

ii. any annexure/exhibit to this witness statement.

Signature of witness 

Local Government Remuneration Tribunal 2026/27

The central issue for the Tribunal is whether the remuneration framework still reflects the actual role of a Mayor and Councillor in 2026.

- The nature of local government representation has changed substantially.
- The role now involves a significantly greater time commitment, complexity, public accountability and expectation of accessibility than the traditional understanding of part-time civic service.
- This is particularly apparent in regional councils, where elected representatives are often required to deal directly with a very broad range of community, infrastructure, environmental, economic and social issues.

1. Extent of the time commitment

The role extends well beyond Council meetings

- The workload of an elected representative cannot be measured simply by attendance at Ordinary and Planning Meetings.
- At Byron Shire Council, elected representatives are also involved in:
  - advisory committee meetings
  - briefings and workshops – now made more difficult by not having them under the proposed changes to the Code of Meeting Conduct and the expectation that I, as Myaor, will be the conduit between all Councillors.
  - site inspections
  - community meetings
  - stakeholder meetings
  - advocacy with other levels of government
  - civic and ceremonial functions eg RFS, Volunteers Day, High Schools
  - correspondence and constituent enquiries
  - preparation and reading
  - media and public communication
- Byron Shire Council currently has nine advisory committees, as well as the Local Transport Forum and five Section 355 community hall committees
- As Mayor, I am currently a member of seven Council committees and forums:
  - Arts Advisory Committee
  - Biodiversity and Agricultural Advisory Committee
  - Finance Advisory Committee
  - Transport and Infrastructure Advisory Committee
  - Local Transport Forum
  - Water and Sewer Advisory Committee
  - Climate Change and Resource Recovery

  Plus, I also attend the Byron bay Masterplan Groups, Place Planning Committee, Place Planning North Committee and Community Roundtable.

Now with the proposed changes to the Code of Meeting Conduct, I will also be open to third party prosecutions.

A significant weekly commitment

- Over just six weeks from mid February to 1 April, I attended **75 appointments**.
- That is more than **12 appointments per week**.

- Importantly, this records the appointments themselves. It does not include the considerable time required for reading, preparation, correspondence, travel or follow up.
- Nor does it capture the informal work that occurs between scheduled meetings, including telephone calls, emails, community enquiries and emerging issues.

Increasingly a seven-day role

- The practical boundaries around the role have largely disappeared and the role of social media has magnified the impact.
- Community expectations increasingly require elected representatives to be available **outside normal working hours and across seven days of the week**.
- The workload therefore needs to be considered in its entirety, rather than simply by counting formal Council meetings.

2. Complexity of the role

The role of local government has become substantially more complex.

- Mayors and Councillors are now regularly required to understand and make decisions involving:
  - strategic and statutory planning
  - housing and development
  - major infrastructure
  - transport
  - environmental management
  - water and sewer services
  - financial sustainability
  - community services
  - economic development
  - emergency management and disaster recovery
- Decisions are frequently made within complicated legislative, financial and regulatory frameworks.
- Elected representatives need to understand detailed reports, balance competing community interests and make decisions that can have significant financial, environmental and social consequences.
- They must also explain and defend those decisions publicly.

Regional councils should not be regarded as carrying a lesser or simpler responsibility than metropolitan councils.

- The Tribunal's own Regional Centre category recognises councils that:
  - provide significant housing and employment
  - provide higher order services
  - manage growth pressures
  - support major tourism ventures and events
  - deal with issues attracting State and national attention
- In a regional setting, elected representatives can also have fewer nearby State Government agencies and resources available to assist.
- This places greater emphasis on local leadership, advocacy and direct community engagement.

Effective I am the CEO of a company with assets of approximately $1.53 billion, an annual turnover of $168 million across a broad range of portfolio areas – I was paid more as a high school teacher and Byron Shire is paid more than many other regional councils.

3. Changes in the nature and scope of the role

The modern role bears limited resemblance to the traditional concept of attending Council meetings and dealing primarily with local roads, rates and rubbish.

- Community expectations have expanded significantly.
- Mayors and Councillors are increasingly expected to act as:
  - community representatives
  - advocates to State and Federal Government
  - be representatives on other local government bodies
  - communicators
  - convenors between agencies and community organisations
  - leaders during emergencies
  - sources of information during periods of uncertainty
  - highly visible representatives of their communities
  - attend conferences
- Council's commitment to engagement and transparency also means structured engagement occurs with:
  - Community Roundtables
  - chambers of commerce
  - residents organisations
  - community groups
  - sector representatives
  - regional organisations and stakeholders
- The role now extends well beyond matters formally controlled by Council.
- Residents frequently approach their Mayor or Councillors about issues involving other levels of government because local elected representatives are the most accessible level of government.
- The distinction between Council business, community advocacy, emergency response and constituency work has become increasingly blurred.

4. Impact of natural disasters on the role

Natural disasters have added another substantial dimension to local government leadership.

- Mayors and Councillors are expected to remain informed, visible and accessible during emergencies and throughout what can be lengthy recovery periods.
- Disaster events can require elected representatives to engage with:
  - affected residents
  - Council operational teams
  - emergency services
  - State and Federal agencies
  - businesses and community organisations
  - media
  - recovery and funding bodies
- This work is additional to the ordinary responsibilities of elected office.

- The workload also does not end when the immediate emergency has passed – four years post the 2022 floods the work continues with the impacted communities.
- Recovery can continue for years through:
  - reconstruction of infrastructure
  - community recovery
  - funding advocacy
  - planning issues
  - housing pressures
  - insurance and resilience issues
  - ongoing communication with affected communities
- An elected representative can move in the same day from an ordinary Council matter to a resident enquiry, a media request and a disaster recovery briefing, to an event in the evening.
- The remuneration framework needs to recognise this expanded leadership responsibility and the additional workload generated by emergencies and recovery.

5. Impact of technology on the role

Technology has fundamentally changed accessibility

- **Technology has probably produced one of the greatest changes in the day to day nature of elected office.**
- Email, mobile phones, text messaging, online meetings and social media mean elected representatives can be contacted at virtually any time and through multiple channels.
- The traditional distinction between working hours and private time has consequently become much less clear.
- There is now an expectation of rapid response to emerging issues, particularly with AI.

Social media has created an additional professional responsibility

- Social media is now an established part of local government communication and public discourse.
- The Office of Local Government recognises that social media enables councils and councillors to:
  - communicate directly with communities
  - provide information
  - discuss community issues and events
  - increase transparency around decision making
- But social media also carries legal, governance and reputational risks.
- Elected representatives therefore need to communicate frequently while exercising appropriate judgement about accuracy, confidentiality, legal risk and Council policy.
- These are responsibilities that did not exist to anything like the same extent when the existing model of councillor remuneration was developed.

Communication has become part of the core role

- In the NSW public sector, a senior media adviser can earn approximately **$110,000 to $150,000 per year**.
- Mayors and Councillors are nevertheless expected to undertake significant public communication and media engagement themselves as part of their elected responsibilities.
- This illustrates the extent to which functions requiring specialist skills have increasingly become embedded within the elected role.

6. Financial considerations

Remuneration has not kept pace with responsibility

- **The question is not simply whether elected representatives should receive higher fees.**
- The issue is whether remuneration fairly reflects the time, responsibility, expertise and opportunity cost involved in undertaking the role.
- Significant components of the role attract no additional remuneration.
- For example, attendance at Council advisory committees is part of the elected role.
- By comparison, other public advisory roles can attract separate payments, including:
  - LGNSW Board member: $701 per day
  - NPWS regional advisory committee: $200 per day

Regional and metropolitan disparity

- There is also a significant disparity between Regional Centre and metropolitan Mayoral fees.
- Under the Tribunal's 2025 determination, the additional Mayoral fee ranges were:
  - Regional Centre: $32,940 to $68,800
  - Metropolitan Large: $44,840 to $101,470
  - Metropolitan Major: $44,840 to $114,300
- Yet regional elected representatives can face comparable complexity, substantial workloads and significant community expectations.
- In many regional communities they also undertake this work with fewer institutional resources immediately available.

The minimum to maximum fee range is too wide

- For Regional Centre Councillors, the current range is:
  - Minimum: $15,830
  - Maximum: $27,860
  - Difference: $12,030
- That means the **maximum is approximately 76 per cent higher than the minimum**.
- Such a broad range places individual councils in the difficult position of determining the value of their own elected representatives each year.
- This risks unnecessarily politicising remuneration.
- A narrower range, or a fee determined more directly by the Tribunal, would provide greater consistency and transparency.

Attracting a broad range of candidates

- Remuneration also affects who can realistically afford to serve in local government.
- If the time commitment continues to increase while remuneration does not reflect that commitment, capable people may decide they simply cannot afford to stand for election.
- That can particularly disadvantage people who:
  - are of working age
  - have family responsibilities
  - do not have independent financial resources
  - need to reduce other paid employment to undertake Council responsibilities
- Fair remuneration should therefore also be considered an issue of access to democratic participation and the long term sustainability of local government leadership.

What Council is asking the Tribunal to do

1. Apply the maximum allowable increase for 2026/27

- Apply the maximum increase available to Mayoral and Councillor fees.
- This would better recognise cost of living pressures, increased workload, increased complexity and greater public accountability.

2. Recognise Deputy Mayors as a distinct category

- Deputy Mayors routinely undertake responsibilities beyond those of an ordinary Councillor.
- They represent the Mayor, chair meetings and committees, assist with advocacy and assume additional leadership responsibilities.
- Council supports a distinct additional fee for the Deputy Mayor role.

3. Properly remunerate Deputy Mayors when acting as Mayor

- When a Deputy Mayor formally assumes the Mayoral responsibilities, they should receive the Mayoral Allowance, including superannuation, for that period.
- That payment should not be deducted from the elected Mayor's allowance.

4. Reduce the gap between minimum and maximum fees

- The Tribunal should narrow the significant gap between the minimum and maximum fee available within each council category.
- At a minimum, this should involve increasing the minimum fee.

The question before the Tribunal is ultimately whether the remuneration framework reflects the modern reality of elected local government service.

- The evidence is that the role has changed significantly.
- It involves:
  - substantially greater time commitments
  - greater complexity and professional responsibility
  - broader community and advocacy responsibilities
  - increased leadership expectations during natural disasters
  - continuous accessibility created by technology
  - increasing financial and opportunity costs for those willing to serve
- A Councillor may move from a formal meeting, to a resident call, to a media enquiry, to an infrastructure or disaster recovery briefing, and then to community correspondence late into the evening.
- The modern elected representative is expected to be visible, informed, responsive and accessible.
- **The remuneration framework should reflect that reality.**

ANNEXURE LG-7

Form 43A

WITNESS STATEMENT OF KENRICK LACHLAN WINCHESTER

WITNESS STATEMENT	
Name	Kenrick Lachlan Winchester
Address	257 Crawford Street, Queanbeyan NSW 2620
Occupation	Mayor of Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council
Date	24 September 2026

I state:

1 I am Kenrick Lachlan Winchester.

2 I am 43 years of age and was elected to Queanbeyan City Council in September 2012.

3 I was elected to Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council in September 2017 following the amalgamation of Queanbeyan City Council and Palerang Council.

4 I was first elected Mayor in December 2021 and commenced this role in January 2022.

5 I stood for election in 2012 based on my desire to serve my community. I was born and raised in Queanbeyan and had previous experience in leadership positions within local football clubs.

6 I hold a Bachelor of Applied Science (Sports Management) and have worked full-time in the automative fleet management industry for over 15 years.

7 I worked full-time alongside my Mayoral duties until June 2024 when I suffered a heart-attack. For the two (2) months I was recuperating after my heart attack, I was paid the Councillor allowance and the Deputy Mayor was paid the Mayor allowance. I took a redundancy from my full-time employment in December 2025 and recently re-commenced full-time work in June 2026.

8 I currently work full-time in public service for the ACT government five (5) days per week. I am required to work seven hours and 21 minutes on each of these days.

9 I would not be able to serve as Mayor if I did not maintain paid full-time employment. My financial circumstances are such that I could not rely solely on the fee payable in connection to my role as Mayor.

10 I have three (3) school-aged children. My wife also works full-time four (4) days per week as a primary school teacher. My parents regularly assist my wife and I with child-care duties including picking my children up from school most days of the week.

11 I do not believe that I would be able to serve as Mayor without this familial support.

12 I usually undertake at least four (4) to five (5) hours of Council work every day and more on Wednesdays as this is when we have our formal council meetings and workshops (when allowed and in accordance with legislation).

13 My duties as Mayor begin with reviewing social media activity, primarily Facebook community pages, whatsapp messages , texts and emails each morning. I believe the level of social media engagement expected of Mayors has increased substantially since I was first elected to Council in 2012. It has also been my experience that social media comments and activity has become considerably more frequent and aggressive over this period.

14 I strive to conduct most of the face-to-face meetings I am required to attend on a Wednesday, as well as creating social media content and promotional meetings for Council and attending other media interviews or appearances. On other weekdays, I try to schedule meetings at lunch-time or after 4:30pm to accommodate for my public service work.

15 Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council covers an area of over 5,300 square kilometres. Much of the area suffers from poor phone reception and internet services which often makes in-person meetings necessary. Certain issues require physical attendance, such as inspection of road or weed related issues. I am required to take flexible leave from my public service job to accommodate for the significant travel required and I often have a negative leave balance as a result.

16 Each year I travel approximately 30,000 kilometres to attend various meetings, community events, and other commitments associated with my role as Mayor. I am provided with a mayoral vehicle and am required to pay 90c per kilometre for any personal travel in this vehicle. These expenses are then deducted from my allowance as Mayor.

17 Annexed to this statement and marked "**Annexure A**" is an extract of my logbook for this vehicle.

18 I spend a significant amount of time each week reading the Business Paper for Ordinary Council Meetings which are held fortnightly on a Wednesday. These Business Papers are consistently over 500 pages. Ordinary Council Meetings usually run for four (4) hours and finish at approximately 9:30pm. Meetings are regularly held in Bungendore and Braidwood, and travel of up to 1 hour after a meeting is then required to return home.

19 Weekends are regularly full with invitations to sporting and cultural events, community meetings, award presentations, charity events etc

20 I also spend significant amounts of time on weekends replying to emails that were not attended to during the week. I typically receive 200 emails per week

from residents, Council staff and Councillors, and in relation to my roles with the Country Mayors Association, Canberra Region Joint Organisation, Local Government NSW State Board, and various Council Committees.

21 By my estimation, I would spend the following amounts of time during an average week on Councillor work:

a. At least 4 hours on Mondays
b. At least 4 hours on Tuesdays
c. At least 6 hours on Wednesdays
d. At least 4 hours on on Thursdays
e. At least 4 hours on hours on Fridays
f. At least 4 hours on hours on Saturdays
g. Approximately 3 – 5 hours on Sundays

22 Annexed to this statement and marked "**Annexure B**" is an extract of my diary from the period of 29 August to 11 September.

23 I note that since the ban on Councillor briefings before meetings and the amalgamation in 2016, the amount of work required of Councillors and myself to prepare for Council Meetings, as well as the length of the Ordinary Council Meetings, has increased substantially.

24 The 2016 amalgamation also increased the travel required of Councillors. Attending in-person committee meetings often requires 60-minute of travel time from Queanbeyan, and over 90 minutes each way when visiting the extremities of the Council area.

25 The time commitment set out above does not account for the training and governance requirements I undertake as Mayor which I also believe have increased since I was first elected to Council in 2012.

26 I manage my Mayoral diary, social media and Mayoral email personally. Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council employees an Executive Assistant for the General Manager and Mayor, however, the work she undertakes for the General Manager requires a significantly larger allocation of her time.

27 I do not believe the current fees payable to Mayors and Councillors is adequate. Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council has elected not to raise the allowances

for Councillors or the Mayor for the past four (4) years following intense community backlash in 2022 when Council elected to raise the allowances.

28 I have also attempted to raise this issue within the Labor Party because I do not believe Councils in NSW should be burdened with the responsibility of allocating the minimum or maximum allowance payable to their councillors or Mayor as it is an inherently political decision easily weaponised by elected officials and readily critiqued by the community.

29 Generative artificial intelligence was not used to generate:

i. this witness statement.

ii. any annexure/exhibit to this witness statement.

Signature of witness 

Form 43A

ANNEXURE LG-8

WITNESS STATEMENT OF BRADLEY (BRAD) BUNTING

WITNESS STATEMENT	
Name	Bradley (Brad) Bunting
Address	62 Flushcombe Road, Blacktown NSW 2148
Occupation	Mayor of Blacktown City Council
Date	29 September 2026

I state:

1 I am Brad Bunting.

2 I was first elected to Blacktown City Council as a councillor in the 2016 local government election.

3 In May 2024 I became the Mayor of Blacktown City Council following the passing of Council's previous Mayor.

4 I was formally elected to the role in September 2024.

5 I have served on Council continuously since my election in 2016.

6 I began my career in the fitness industry and later moved into the funeral industry where I worked in various levels of management over a period of approximately 20 years.

7 In 2016 I began working with the Member for Chifley, where I remained employed in a full-time capacity until September 2024.

8 Blacktown City Council is among, if not the, largest council in New South Wales by both population, size, and growth.

9 Council is responsible for infrastructure and community projects which are valued at up to one billion dollars. The proposal details for these projects are included in Council's Business Papers, which are provided to councillors 5 days in advance of the monthly Council meeting.

10 These Business Papers can be thousands of pages long and contain complex analysis of key issues affecting our community. I must inform myself of these matters prior to a Council meeting in order to effectively discharge my duty to the community and to ensure that their interests are represented.

11 Recent changes to the Code of Meeting Practice have meant that, for a period, Councillor Briefings were prohibited. These briefings were important to assist Councillors understand upcoming issues and to familiarise themselves with the material in a given Business Paper. The result of this is that individual councillors, including myself, are required to conduct our own additional research into matters over and above the voluminous material contained in the Paper. Moreover, the confusion caused by these changes should be noted.

12 Upon my election as Mayor, I formed the view that I could not fully commit myself to full-time employment, and what I considered was effectively full-time

equivalent work as Mayor of Blacktown City Council. As such, I resigned from my employment upon my election as Mayor in 2024.

13 While I was able to maintain paid employment during my time as a councillor, I often had to utilise my paid annual leave entitlements to attend to council-related commitments. This meant that I was not able to take family holidays or otherwise utilise the leave to genuinely take time away from work.

14 This decision had significant adverse financial consequences for me. The councillor fee and additional mayoral fee is sufficient to cover my living expenses, including my mortgage repayment, but does not provide for much more.

15 In addition to my official duties as mayor, community engagement both in person and online forms a significant part of my role.

16 For example, I regularly attend community events and engage with constituents across various suburbs in the Blacktown Local Government Area. These events often occur on weekdays and weekends and will be scheduled in and amongst official appointments.

17 I am grateful for the support of an Executive Assistant who endeavours to ensure that I am able to spend Monday afternoon or Friday afternoon with my family, although this is not always possible.

18 Typically, councillors are provided with the business paper on Friday afternoon, ahead of the Council meeting scheduled for the following Wednesday. The lack of briefings now means that I (and other councillors) are required to do significantly more work to understand the issues raised in the Business Paper prior to the Council Meeting.

19 I have also observed that Council Meetings now tend to last for longer than they had previously. I have observed that councillors now ask more questions during the course of the meeting as a result of the removal of briefings.

20 I am not aware of any councillor that reads every business paper in its entirety. There is simply not time for councillors to review all of the information, particularly for those who juggle paid employment with their council responsibilities.

21 I also rely on social media platforms to engage with my community. This has become an increasingly popular and convenient method to reach constituents, although the process of engaging on social media has also become more

involved. For example, it is no longer sufficient to simply post a photo with a short caption to a Facebook page. Community expectations are such that video form content is preferred, which requires additional time to prepare, film and edit. I estimate that I spend approximately 8 hours per week on social media related work alone.

22 Where in-person engagement is required, which is often, travel commitments also take a significant amount of time. The Blacktown local government area is large and travel from one side to another can take up to 45 minutes each way.

23 The significant population within the local government area means that I and other councillors must engage with more people, requiring an additional time commitment which other, smaller councils may not experience as acutely.

24 Travel for these community events is not reimbursed.

25 In my view, the remuneration paid to councillors is not sufficient to attract and retain motivated and dedicated people from all sections of the community.

26 My observation is that 10 of the 15 councillors elected to Blacktown City Council are retirees, and the remaining 5 work full-time to support themselves as they are unable to do so based on the fee associated with their duties as a councillor.

27 The nature of this role means that councillors are often required to step back from other paid work, or to take on a significant additional workload with very little by way of compensation or remuneration. The reality is that for many people, the sacrifice required to effectively serve the community is too great. It is also difficult to compete with State politics, where members are remunerated appropriately and are able to commit full-time

28 Noting that my Mayoral duties are effectively my only full-time job, the time requirements for this work have meant that I have missed important family events, and I do not have the amount of time that I would like to spend with my family, including my new granddaughter.

29 Generative artificial intelligence was not used to generate:

i. this witness statement.

ii. any annexure/exhibit to this witness statement.

Signature of witness 

ANNEXURE LG-9

WITNESS STATEMENT OF JODY JOHN DAVID WILLIAMS

WITNESS STATEMENT	
Name	Jody John David Williams
Address	725 Pittwater Road, Dee Why NSW 2099
Occupation	Councillor
Date	22 September 2026

I state:

1 I am Jody John David Williams.

2 I am 67 years of age and was elected to Northern Beaches Council in September 2024 as an independent for the Frenchs Forest Ward.

3 I stood for election as an independent in 2024 based on my personal sense of civic service. I felt like I could make a positive difference in my community through my election to Council.

4 I hold a Bachelor of Arts in interior design and have previously worked in theatre, film and television as a prop maker and Set Builder.

5 Later, I worked in the building industry and I currently work part-time at Bunnings in Belrose.

6 Prior to my election to Council, I volunteered in various election campaigns for candidates such as Zali Steggall but did not have any experience in local government.

7 Immediately prior to my election to Council, I worked at Bunnings full-time.

8 Shortly after commencing my role as a Councillor, I realised that I was not able to perform both roles while I was still undertaking full-time work. As a result, I sought approval from my employer to reduce my hours.

9 I was afforded the opportunity work at Bunnings in Belrose 3 days per week in a permanent part-time capacity. My usual days of work are Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. I work eight hours on each of these days.

10 I would not be able to serve as a Councillor if I did not hold separate paid employment. My financial circumstances are such that I could not rely solely on the fee payable in connection to my role as Councillor.

11 My duties as a councillor will typically commence on Friday afternoons and involve reading and reviewing emails and other material which arise and require my attention. These emails include emails from community members, other councillors, or from Council in relation to Council papers and other reports.

12 On Saturday mornings, I usually commence my day by continuing to read through my emails. And/Or reading the business papers in preparation for a council meeting. I will usually attend community events such as sporting events during the late morning/early afternoon period.

13 On Saturday afternoons and on Sundays I try to visit different areas within my ward and engage with members of the community. This helps me to understand the issues that the community is facing and to assist in informing the community about the actions that Council is taking.

14 On Mondays, Northern Beaches Council holds its citizenship ceremonies. Typically, on days when these ceremonies occur, two are held back-to-back with a one-hour lunch break. These ceremonies usually take up the majority of my day.

15 On Tuesdays (and Mondays where citizenship ceremonies do not occur), I spend most of my day reading Council papers and attend public forums, in addition to the council meeting.

16 I typically leave the Council chambers at approximately 11:00PM on Council meeting nights.

17 On Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays I attend work at Bunnings and check emails and social media during my breaks and after work.

18 By my estimation, I would spend the following amounts of time during an average week on Councillor work:

a. At least 8 hours on Mondays
b. At least 8 hours on Tuesdays
c. Approximately 3 hours on Wednesdays
d. Approximately 3 hours on Thursdays
e. Approximately 3 hours on Fridays
f. Approximately 5 hours on Saturdays
g. Approximately 3 – 5 hours on Sundays

19 I note that since the ban on Councillor briefings before meetings, I am required to conduct significantly more research and spend more time doing my own reading on topics to ensure that I am informed of the material ahead of the meeting.

20 The time commitment set out above does not account for the additional requirements which are necessary for newly elected Councillors. Over the course of this period, there was a significant learning curve and I was required to attend various training courses, workshops in order to learning Council's

Integrated Planning and Reporting framework, governance requirements, the Code of Conduct, the Code of Meeting Practice, Planning Instruments and laws, and the various policies and procedures which regulate the way that Councillors engage with each other and the community.

21 During this period, I was required to take significant amounts of annual leave from my role at Bunnings in order to attend the various courses and workshops, and to complete the associated work and training. This meant that I could not use any of my accumulated annual leave for its intended purpose.

22 I also engage with my community on social media, including on platforms such as email, Facebook and Instagram. I do not have any staff or volunteers who assist me with this. This is an effective tool to communicate with the community but does require a time commitment.

23 I operate two social media accounts on each platform. One of those accounts is for Jody Williams 'Independent' and the other is for Jody Williams 'Frenchs Forest Ward'. I will use these pages to engage with arguments and concerns by the community about particular matters (for example, the Middle Harbour Flood Study) and counter disinformation and confusion which may be affecting the community.

24 For example, I have recently posted a survey to Facebook and Instagram to ask my constituents on their views for the future of the aquatic centres in Northern Beaches Council.

25 I did not have knowledge of what the fees payable would be in connection with the work of a Councillor. I come from a background of volunteer work and was not especially concerned with the income that I would derive from my role.

26 I hold the view that councillors should not all be business people or those who are self-employed who may have the time and skills to serve effectively on Council. A diverse council is a vibrant council and people should be paid and trained appropriately to get up to speed once elected and effectively represent their community.

27 Generative artificial intelligence was not used to generate:

i. this witness statement.

ii. any annexure/exhibit to this witness statement.

Signature of witness 

22/09/2026