

Appendix B – Consultation



In accordance with section 24(1) of the *Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal and Improving Parliamentary Standards Act 2019* (Vic), on 29 July 2019, and before making this Determination, the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal (Tribunal):

- published notice of its intention to make a Determination on its website (www.vic.gov.au/victorian-independent-remuneration-tribunal), including details about the proposed Determination
- gave any affected person or a class of affected persons a reasonable opportunity to make a submission in relation to the proposed Determination, by 22 August 2019 (when requested, the Tribunal also accepted submissions after this date).

The Tribunal used three key mechanisms to invite interested parties to participate in the Tribunal’s deliberations. These included:

- inviting submissions from any person through its notice of intention (appendix A)
- distributing (via the Clerks of Parliament) an anonymous questionnaire to all 128 Members of Parliament (MP questionnaire)
- publishing an anonymous questionnaire on Engage Victoria (www.engage.vic.gov.au) (the Victorian Government's online consultation platform) inviting responses from the public (public questionnaire).

In total, the Tribunal received:

- 154 responses to the public questionnaire
- 61 responses to the MP questionnaire
- 12 unique written submissions (including two confidential submission) and several oral submissions
- 391 submissions that were either identical or contained very similar content.

This document contains a copy of the questions asked in each of the questionnaires and summarises the responses received through both

questionnaires. In addition, it provides information about submissions received, and contains a copy of one of the 391 submissions received containing similar content. Other written submissions received (unless confidential and/or unless the author did not provide consent) are available on the Tribunal’s website (www.vic.gov.au/victorian-independent-remuneration-tribunal).

2 Member of Parliament questionnaire

The Tribunal distributed a separate questionnaire (MP questionnaire) to all 128 Victorian Members of Parliament (MPs) seeking their views on:

- motivation to be an MP
- time commitments as an MP
- how the role of an MP has changed
- engagement in the electorate
- impact of workload on other responsibilities
- allowances

A copy of the questionnaire sent to MPs is available in this appendix. The Tribunal received 61 responses.

Profile of respondents

The figures below summarise the characteristics of the MPs who responded to the MP questionnaire.

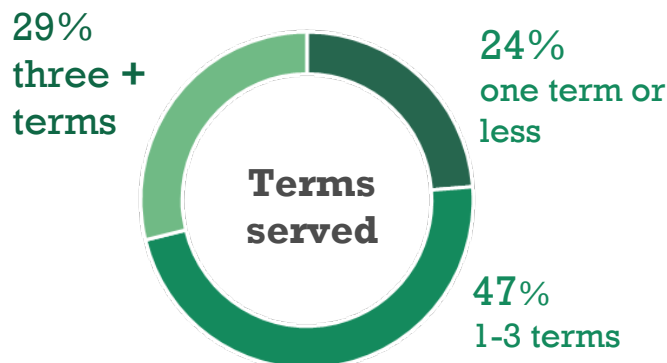
56 per cent of respondents represented a metro electorate and 44 per cent represented non-metro electorates.



Of those who responded, 72 per cent were members of the Legislative Assembly, and 28 per cent were members of the Legislative Council.



29 per cent of those who responded to the MP questionnaire had served three terms or more, 47 per cent of respondents had served more than one term but less than three, and 24 per cent of respondents had served one term or less.



Of those who responded, 63 per cent held additional specified parliamentary offices, as defined in the *Parliamentary Salaries and Superannuation Act 1968*.



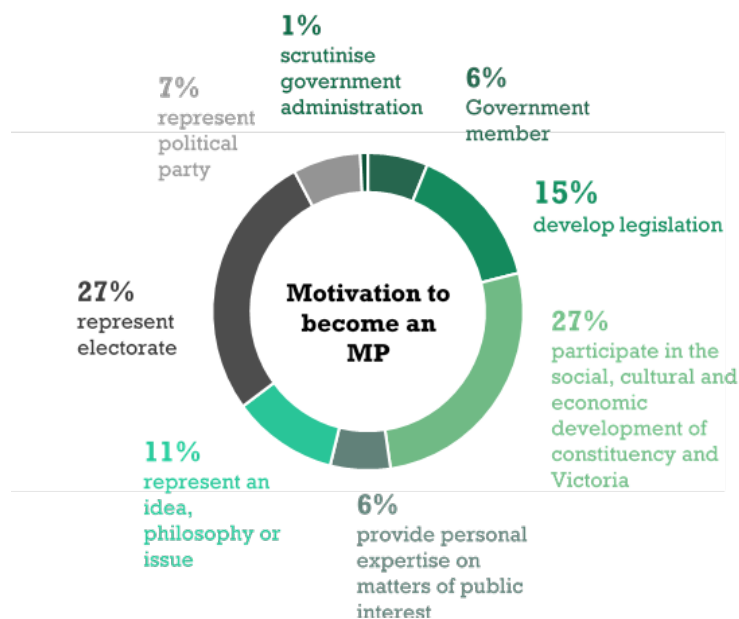
Overall themes

- High workload requires completion of tasks related to parliamentary and electorate duties after hours, and on weekends.
- Developments in technology have allowed constituents to increasingly engage with their MP which has benefits, but also means that MPs and their staff are frequently completing technology-related tasks.

Responses by theme

Motivation for becoming an MP

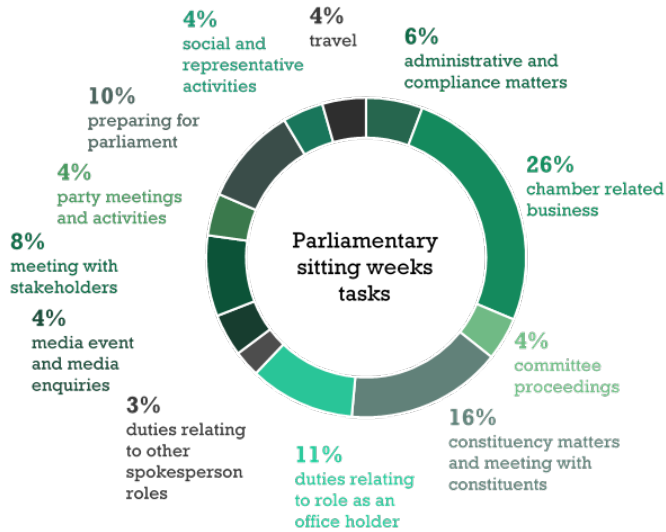
The MP questionnaire asked MPs to identify the top three motivations for becoming an MP — about a third identified the desire to represent their electorate as being a key reason, and about a third identified participation in social, cultural and economic development of their constituency and the State of Victoria as a key factor.



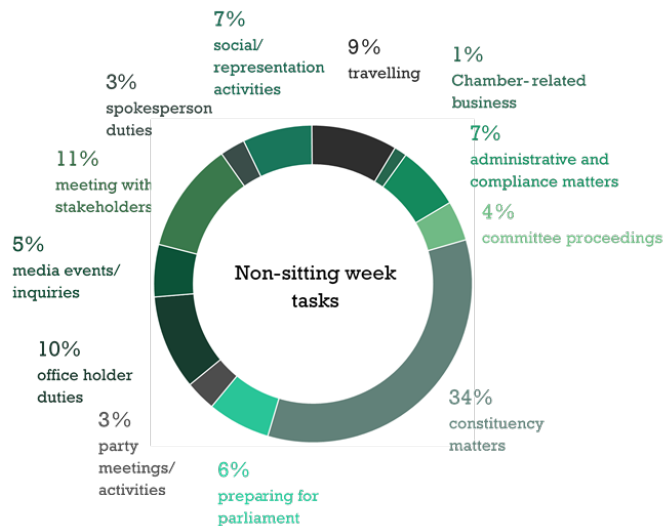
Time allocation and commitment

The MP questionnaire asked MPs to comment on the approximate proportion of time allocated to several different tasks across a full year, both during Parliamentary sitting and non-sitting weeks.

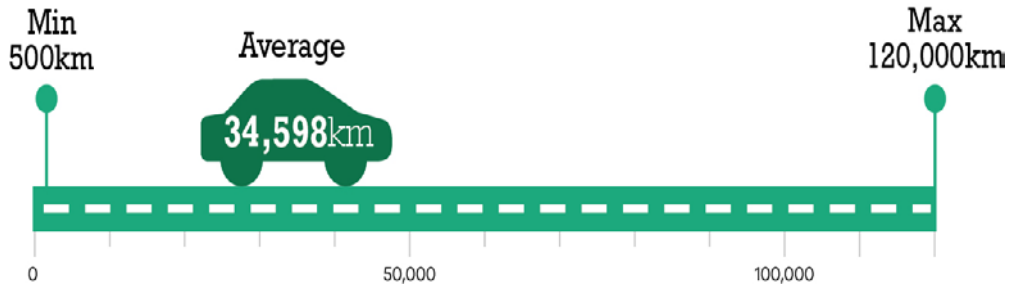
The figure below indicates how respondents to the MP questionnaire spend their time across different tasks, on average, during Parliamentary sitting weeks.



For those who responded to the MP questionnaire, constituency matters were also a time-intensive task in parliamentary non-sitting weeks, occupying approximately 34 per cent of an MP's time. During non-sitting weeks, about 50 per cent of respondents to the MP questionnaire indicated that they spend between 8 and 12 hours on all these tasks, whilst 46 per cent spent over 12 hours.



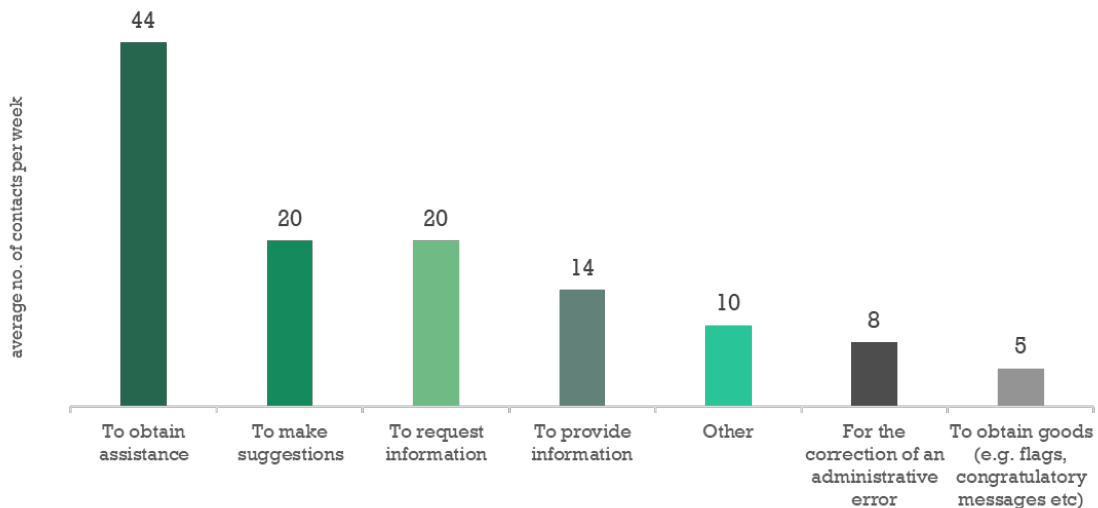
Travel was another factor that occupied the time of some of the respondents to the MP questionnaire. The responses indicated that MPs travel between 500km and 12,000km per year for parliamentary duties.



Engagement with constituents

The MP questionnaire contained questions about MPs’ engagement with their constituents. It sought information about the contacts (e.g. obtaining assistance or requesting information) MPs receive per week in their electorate office from constituents.

Across all the responses received to the MP questionnaire, most ‘contacts received per week’ by MPs were for constituents to obtain assistance. Other common reasons for contact identified in the responses were for constituents to make suggestions or to request information.



In terms of the percentage of constituent issues that MPs were directly involved with, on average, responses indicated that MPs were involved with about a third of issues. The responses received indicated that only two per cent of MPs were

involved with fewer than five per cent of issues, and that only seven per cent of MPs were involved with 100 per cent of constituent issues.

Changing role of an MP

In the questionnaire, MPs were asked to comment on how they believe the role of an MP has changed since when they first were elected.



About two-thirds of responses to the MP questionnaire contained comments on the increased time commitment of the role. In particular, many responses referred to advancements and increased use of technology as being a factor for this.

“This job is a privilege but if you take it seriously and most of us do, it is almost all consuming. Not just the hours but the headspace that we commit to it, the intensity of activity for each hour of work, the need to be switched on at high gear for almost all contacts within a work context (constituents, but also other stakeholders) - down time is very little, even on weekends. Weekends and nights is when a lot of our work occurs because that is when a lot of community activity happens and we are there for those activities but we are also working during the day. It's an extraordinarily rare opportunity to interact with people in a way that no other job provides but it is also all consuming.”

In relation to advancements in technology, close to a fifth of responses to the MP questionnaire stated that increased engagement with constituents was a result of this change.

About a third of responses to the MP questionnaire referred to increased expectations as one way the role of an MP has changed. Many responses contained comments on expectations for immediate responses on digital platforms and expectations from the community that an MP be readily available. Further examples of comments received on the changing role of an MP in responses to the MP questionnaire are provided below.

How has the role of an MP changed?

“There is an increasingly higher level of engagement by the community in their politics and a much higher level of accessibility of politicians and with this comes a higher expectation of access, immediate engagement and an immediate response to contact and an expectation that we enter every community or political debate, that we offer an informed comment on every issue, if not intervene in every issue.”

“There is an expectation that when you are contacted via a social platform, that you will respond immediately”

“There is a public expectation that MPs are available to their constituents online - after hours and all over the weekend”

“Technology requires MP's to respond to matters quicker with the community expecting instant responses on many items.”

“The size of country electorates is increasing meaning more communities that need to be visited and serviced”

“There is no rest with social media unless you deliberately take time out, which you have to do for the sake of your family and your own sanity.”

“The biggest change to the role of a Member of Parliament I can identify is summarized in the increased frequency of engagement.”

Note: spelling and grammatical errors in the sample comments above taken from responses to the MP questionnaire have not been corrected for publication and do not represent the views of the Tribunal.

Impact of workload

In the questionnaire, MPs were asked to reflect on their workload and comment on the impact it has on their other responsibilities, such as personal and family life.

“I am unable to see my children before or after work Monday to Thursday due to the long hours...”

“the nature of the job is also that I must be ready to respond to issues - such as from constituents, on social media or through email, with very quick turnaround 7 days a week most of the year which also has a bearing on mental health.”

Almost half of those who responded to the MP questionnaire commented on the significant impact the role has on their family, mostly as a result of the workload and the requirement to spend time away from family as a result of parliamentary and electorate duties. Some responses also contained comments on the impact that the workload has on their health, both mental and physical.

Examples of responses to the MP questionnaire on the impact of workload are provided below.

What impact does your workload have on you?

“As a single co-parent, balancing home duties with my young children can be difficult given the spread of hours over the whole week one works.”

“I am always constantly reading materials and briefings as well, which chews up time. You might actually be at home, but on your laptop working, or reading those briefing or research materials for the next day, event or issue.”

“Work-life balance is important but can be difficult to maintain in this role. Many in the community work long hours, however, the unique circumstances of the role is in addition to the required work week there are multiple community events, out of hours meetings and local functions. Many weeks require an MP to be away from home in the evening 3 - 4 nights on weekdays and the Friday/Sat night. As many volunteers and families we represent work Monday to Friday it is important we are available outside these hours to assist with issues of our constituents.”

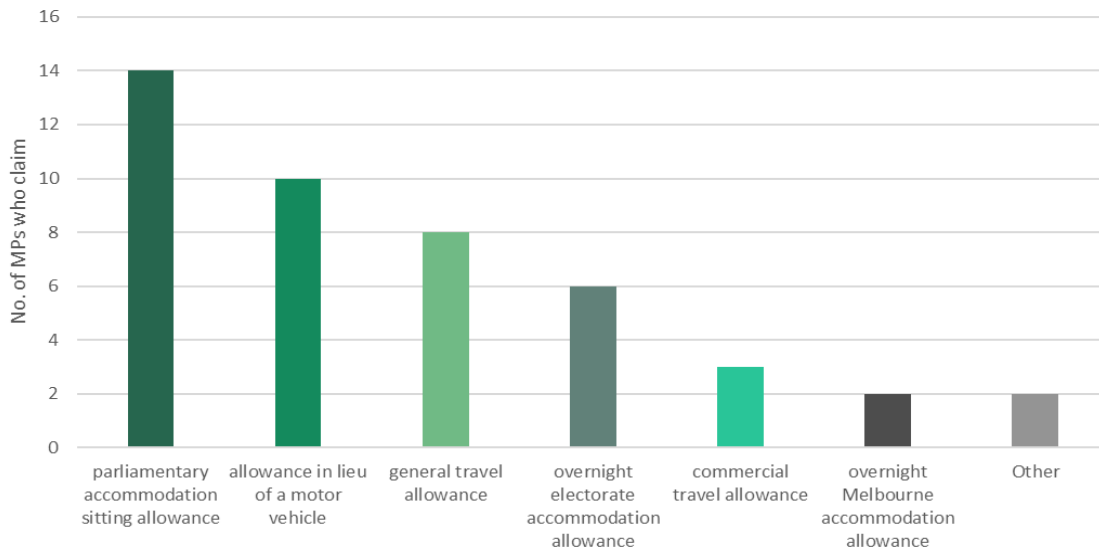
“I have very little time for a personal life and often feel guilty when I prioritise a family or personal engagement ahead of a community event”

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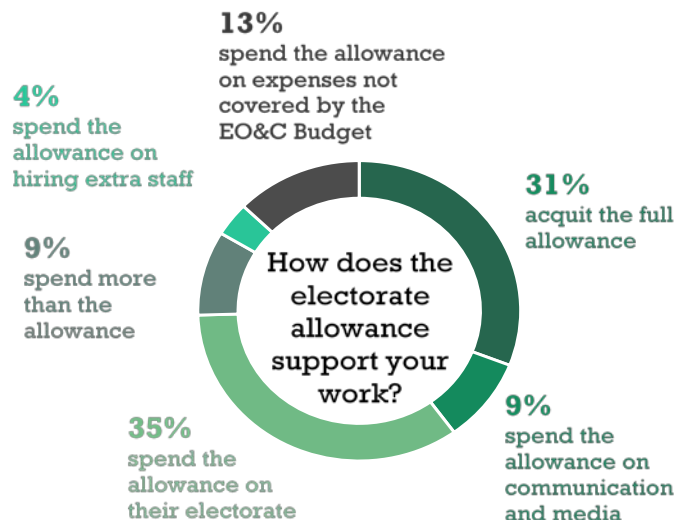
Work related parliamentary allowances

In the questionnaire, MPs were asked to identify the work-related parliamentary allowances they regularly access, and to provide comment on how the allowances support their work.

For the respondents to the MP questionnaire, the most common allowance claimed was the parliamentary accommodation sitting allowance, followed by the allowance in lieu of a motor vehicle.



The MP questionnaire also sought comments on the electorate allowance, how it supports an MPs work and what proportion of the electorate allowance is acquitted each year.



A common theme in responses received to the MP questionnaire was that the electorate allowance is spent on items that cannot be funded under the Electorate Office and Communications Budget. Examples of responses in relation to the electorate allowance are provided below.

Please comment on the electorate allowance including how it supports your work

"I acquit nearly 100% of my allowance each year... sponsorship, advertising; support for local community groups, sporting clubs and associations... prize money at school events, sporting events... local forums... on sports, gender equality, leadership, family violence, mental health... annual essay writing competition with all local schools and award prize money to every school... prize money and trophies for annual school awards... public events - barbeques, lunches, morning teas - to promote local projects or other issues (breast cancer awareness, women's sports)... sponsor students (girls in engineering, STEM). Music grants... sponsor students to travel overseas and interstate for study and sports."

"I acquit 100% of the electorate allowance each year. I use it for work related expenses not included in the electorate office budget including material and other communications costs that reflect the reality that I am elected to the parliament as a member of a political party."

"I acquit the full allowance on an annual basis, and many years more than the allowance available... used for Community Functions, sports groups, school events and other programs ensuring the money is returned to the community... functions that we are required to attend and ensuring the community group is not funding our contribution."

"Over a four year term, the electorate allowance is fully acquitted, with work expenses usually exceeding the allowance. As use of the Electorate Office Budget has become more restrictive, particularly in relation to what can and cannot be funded for publishing and printing, the electorate allowance is being used in place of the electorate office budget for electorate communications and the like."

"I use 100% of my Electorate Allowance each year on electorate-related matters, and every MP in my Party has signed an agreement to do the same. The majority is used for printing and sending of material that isn't allowed within the right rules of the EOCB..."

Note: spelling and grammatical errors in the sample comments above taken from responses to the MP questionnaire have not been corrected for publication and do not represent the views of the Tribunal.

As part of the questionnaire, MPs were also asked to provide comments on the MP motor vehicle scheme and/or the option to take an allowance in lieu of the motor vehicle.

Overall, about three quarters of those who responded to the MP questionnaire expressed satisfaction with the motor vehicle scheme. However, about a fifth of responses stated that the scheme needs to be reviewed. Examples of responses to the MP questionnaire in relation to motor vehicles and/or the motor vehicle allowance are provided below.

Please comment on the motor vehicle allowance

"I do not take a motor vehicle but instead take the allowance in lieu of a motor vehicle to cover my travel, and I believe it is a fair system. I believe those who do not take a car should continue to be allowed to take an allowance in lieu."

"I take the allowance in lieu of a motor vehicle. I choose this option because I prefer to drive a small, very fuel efficient car that is not available under the scheme. Unlike the federal scheme, state members must contribute a percentage of their base salary towards a car. A state member cannot perform or fulfil their duties as a member of parliament without a motor vehicle. In some years, my vehicle expenses have exceeded the \$16,500 allowance (which I do not think has been increased in several years)."

"The MP motor vehicle scheme has worked well, however the withdrawal of local vehicles has not resulted in a limited and unsatisfactory range of vehicles being available under the scheme. The motor vehicle allowance is presently too low to be a viable alternative to the MP vehicle scheme."

"I believe the MP Motor Vehicle scheme works well and supports my electorate travel needs"

Note: spelling and grammatical errors in the sample comments above taken from responses to the MP questionnaire have not been corrected for publication and do not represent the views of the Tribunal.

Of the respondents to the MP questionnaire who indicated they claim the Melbourne overnight accommodation allowance, respondents stated that they claim between 12 and 120 nights per year in Melbourne.

Other comments the Tribunal received from respondents to the MP questionnaire about the allowances system and how it operates included that:

- the value of the allowances, such as the accommodation allowances, need to be reviewed
- some allowances should be incorporated into basic salary
- the rules around some of the allowances are complex or confusing.

Electorate Office and Communications Budget

In the questionnaire, MPs were asked to comment on the Electorate Office and Communications Budget (EO&C Budget) and how it supports their work.

About a third of those who responded to the MP questionnaire indicated that the EO&C Budget works well and is generally a useful tool for MPs.



Of the respondents to the MP questionnaire who indicated that the EO&C Budget is not satisfactory, the reasons provided include:

- rules around allowable expenditure is too restrictive
- value of the EO&C Budget is not enough to cover all of an MP's expenses
- the EO&C Budget doesn't meet the needs of a modern MP.

Examples of comments in responses to the MP questionnaire about the EO&C Budget are provided below.

Please comment on the EO&C Budget

"I am comfortable with the arrangements. However, the size of the budget does not allow for much direct mail to constituents"

"I believe the guidelines for the communication budget have become unnessesarily prescriptive and are deterring MP's from distributing information to our constituents."

"The communication component of the EO&C budget is small for MLCs who have nearly 500,000 voters to communicate with - especially when they are spread out over a non-metropolitan region."

Note: spelling and grammatical errors in the sample comments above taken from responses to the MP questionnaire have not been corrected for publication and do not represent the views of the Tribunal.

Members Guide

The Tribunal has the power to set guidelines in relation to the use of work-related parliamentary allowances and the EO&C Budget, excluding:

- electorate allowances
- any expense allowances
- motor vehicle allowance.

In the MP questionnaire, the Tribunal sought MPs' views on the existing Members Guide and how it affects their work. About two thirds of those who responded to the MP questionnaire said that the Members Guide is not useful to them, and that it needs to be reviewed and updated.



Some responses to the MP questionnaire contained suggestions that the Tribunal look to the Commonwealth Government's Department of Finance guidance in relation to work-related parliamentary allowances when considering any guidelines it may set. Examples of comments on the Members Guide received in responses to the MP questionnaire are provided below.

Comments on the Members Guide

"As member it gives us parameters and framework to work within however that is not to say that we agree with all of the members guide, as we endeavour to service our electorate."

"I am familiar with the elements of the Member's Guide and I use it as a basis of what I can and cannot do in my role as an MP."

"Mostly it works well. However approval processes and decisions for some spending of the E&OC budget are opaque, inconsistent and illogical."

"The current guidelines are needed to ensure spending in appropriate areas but need to be able to be amended to reflect MP practice"

Note: spelling and grammatical errors in the sample comments above taken from responses to the MP questionnaire have not been corrected for publication and do not represent the views of the Tribunal.

Copy of questionnaire distributed to MPs

Section One – Background information (please tick)

1.1 I am a Member of the...

Legislative Assembly
Legislative Council

1.2 I represent a...

Metro electorate/region
Non-metro
electorate/region

1.3 I have served...

One term or less
More than one term but
less than three terms
Three terms or more

1.1 I hold an additional specified parliamentary office as defined in the *Parliamentary Salaries and Superannuation Act 1968*

Yes
No

Section Two – Office of a Member of Parliament

To make its Determination, the Tribunal requires a clear understanding of the kind of work you do and the complexity and difficulties you may face in fulfilling your duties to the electorate and Parliament.

2.1 Please select the top 3 reasons that motivate you to be an MP:

- Be a member of the government
- Participate in the development of legislation
- Participate in the social, cultural and economic development of my constituency and the state of Victoria
- Provide personal expertise on matters of public interest
- Represent an idea/philosophy/issue
- Represent my electorate
- Represent my political party

- o Scrutinise government administration
- o Other (please specify)

2.2 To the extent that it is possible to generalise, please indicate the approximate proportion (as a percentage) of time allocated to the following tasks **across a full year during parliamentary sitting weeks:**

- o Administrative and compliance matters
- o Chamber-related business
- o Committee proceedings
- o Constituency matters and meeting with constituents
- o Duties relating to my role as an office holder as defined in the Parliamentary Salaries and Superannuation Act 1968
- o Duties relating to other spokesperson roles
- o Media events/media inquiries
- o Meeting with stakeholders
- o Party meetings/activities
- o Preparing for parliament
- o Social and representation activities
- o Travel

2.3 To the extent that it is possible to generalise, please indicate the approximate proportion (as a percentage) of time allocated to the following tasks **across a full year during non-parliamentary sitting weeks:**

- o Administrative and compliance matters
- o Chamber-related business
- o Committee proceedings
- o Constituency matters and meeting with constituents
- o Duties relating to my role as an office holder as defined in the Parliamentary Salaries and Superannuation Act 1968
- o Duties relating to other spokesperson roles
- o Media events/media inquiries
- o Meeting with stakeholders
- o Party meetings/activities
- o Preparing for parliament
- o Social and representation activities
- o Travel

2.4 Please nominate the number of **hours per day** that you typically spend in total on the tasks listed above (please tick):

	Less than 8 hours	8 - 12 hours	More than 12 hours
During a parliamentary sitting week			
During a non-parliamentary sitting week			
On the weekend			

2.5 In performing your official parliamentary duties (e.g. attending Parliament), approximately how many kilometres do you travel **per year**?

2.6 Please provide comments on how you believe the role of an MP has changed, for example in relation to the advent of social media, since you first became an MP

2.7 Approximately how many contacts **per week** from constituents does your electorate office receive for the following reasons:

Reason	No.
For the correction of an administrative error	
To make suggestions	
To obtain assistance	
To obtain goods (e.g. flags, congratulatory messages etc)	
To provide information	
To request information	
Other (please specify)	

2.8 As a **percentage**, approximately how many constituent issues are you involved in?

2.9 Please provide any additional comments on your workload, including the impact your workload has on your other responsibilities (e.g. family and personal life), if you wish to do so

Section Three – Work-related parliamentary allowances and the Electorate Office and Communications Budget

A core component of the Tribunal's review into MP remuneration is an examination of current work-related parliamentary allowances and the Electorate Office and Communications Budget. The Tribunal wishes to understand how MPs use the allowances made available to them and if these allowances adequately support the work MPs undertake. Under the Act, there are two components to the funds available to MPs; work-related parliamentary allowances and the Electorate Office and Communications Budget (Budget).

3.1 Please select which of the following work-related parliamentary allowances you regularly access:

- parliamentary accommodation sitting allowance
- overnight Melbourne accommodation allowance
- general travel allowance
- overnight electorate accommodation allowance
- commercial travel allowance
- allowance in lieu of a motor vehicle
- Other (please specify)

3.2 Please provide comments on the allowances you selected above, and the expense allowance, including how they support the work you do:

- Parliamentary sitting accommodation allowance
- Melbourne overnight accommodation allowance
- General travel allowance
- Overnight electorate accommodation allowance
- Commercial travel allowance
- Allowance in lieu of a motor vehicle
- Expense allowance

3.3 Please provide comments on the electorate allowance including how it supports your work. Please also provide information on the proportion of the electorate allowance you acquit each year.

3.4 Please provide comments on the current options available to members regarding motor vehicles. Specifically, please provide any comments you have on

the MP motor vehicle scheme and/or the option to take an allowance in lieu of a motor vehicle

3.5 Please provide comments on which aspects of the allowances system work well and which aspects might be improved and how

3.2 Electorate Office and Communications Budget

The Electorate Office and Communications Budget (EO&C Budget) is an annual allocation of funds given to every MP to meet the costs of operating and maintaining an electorate office and the costs of communicating with the electorate concerning their parliamentary duties.

3.6 Please provide comments on the suitability and operation of the EO&C Budget in relation to how it supports your work, including any comments on the existing guidelines or legislation

3.7 Please provide comments how the Members' Guide affects your work as a Member of Parliament

Section Four – Other comments

4.1 Please add any other comment or feedback in relation to any aspect of your remuneration or any other matter you consider relevant to inform the Tribunal's deliberation.

2 Public consultation questionnaire

The Tribunal invited members of the community to complete a brief questionnaire made available on Engage Victoria (www.engage.vic.gov.au).

The questionnaire sought views on five key questions or topics — re-produced below:

1. Please share with us your understanding of the roles and responsibilities of a Victorian State MP.
2. Please tell us what factors, comparisons and issues should be considered to ensure Victorian State MP pay is fair and reasonable.
3. On average, how often do you engage with your local State MP?
4. If you have engaged with your local State MP, what was the primary reason?
5. Please provide any additional comments on MP pay that you consider relevant to the Tribunal's Determination.

At the closing date for completing the questionnaire (22 August 2019), the Tribunal had received 154 responses.

The responses are summarised below. Firstly, by overall theme, and then by topic. Responses represent the views of the persons completing the questionnaire and are not necessarily the views of the Tribunal. Examples of specific comments received in responses that are provided below have been copied directly from responses to the questionnaire. These quotes have not been edited for any spelling or grammatical errors.

Overall themes

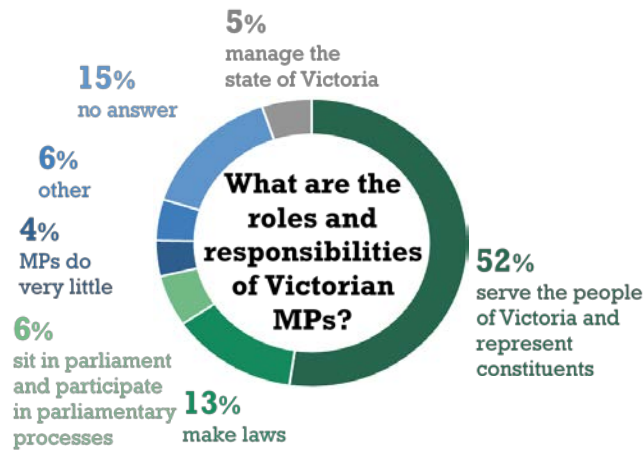
- Role of an MP is to serve their constituents and the people of Victoria.
- MP remuneration should be relative to performance.
- There should be no increase to MP remuneration.

Responses by topic

Roles and responsibilities of a Victorian State MP

Over half of the respondents to the public questionnaire stated that the role of a Victorian State MP is to serve their constituents. Comments included:

- an MP is elected by their constituents, for their constituents
- the role of an MP is to represent the values held by their community
- the responsibility of an MP is to effectively represent their electorate in the Parliament.



“They are elected to represent me, my family and all those who reside in the MP’s electorate and keep in mind the best interests of the state of Victoria”

“Their role is to engage with their constituents so well that they can then be their voice and represent their interests in Parliament”

“They are to work for the best for the electorate... talk to people in the electorate to find out what is important to them. Attend community events, assist people in their electorate with any issue or problem they have”

Some respondents expressed dissatisfaction with their local MP or stated that they didn’t understand the role of an MP. Several respondents commented that an MP seeks to act in their own interests and not those of their constituents.

Further examples of responses to the public questionnaire about the roles and responsibilities of Victorian MPs are provided below.

What are the roles and responsibilities of Victorian MPs?

“They are elected by a given electorate (the people) to represent the wishers of the people ...”

“Need to represent their constituents of the electorate
Be part of law making required processes ect”

“Legislation review as community standards change. When public service failures to investigate causes.”

“I believe that MPs have the responsibility to be the tax payers advocate. To represent tax payers as a collective and do what's best for them, not what's best for the MP. They have the responsibility to listen to the state as a whole, not listen to the MPs who will in reality only look after themselves.”

“To manage the state infrastructure and assets. To ensure laws are relevant and fair. To address any issues arising from local electorates.”

“A state MP represents the people of Victoria regarding various bills and legislation. They must be across the board in terms of knowledge of issues and be able to represent their constituents when supporting bills or otherwise.”

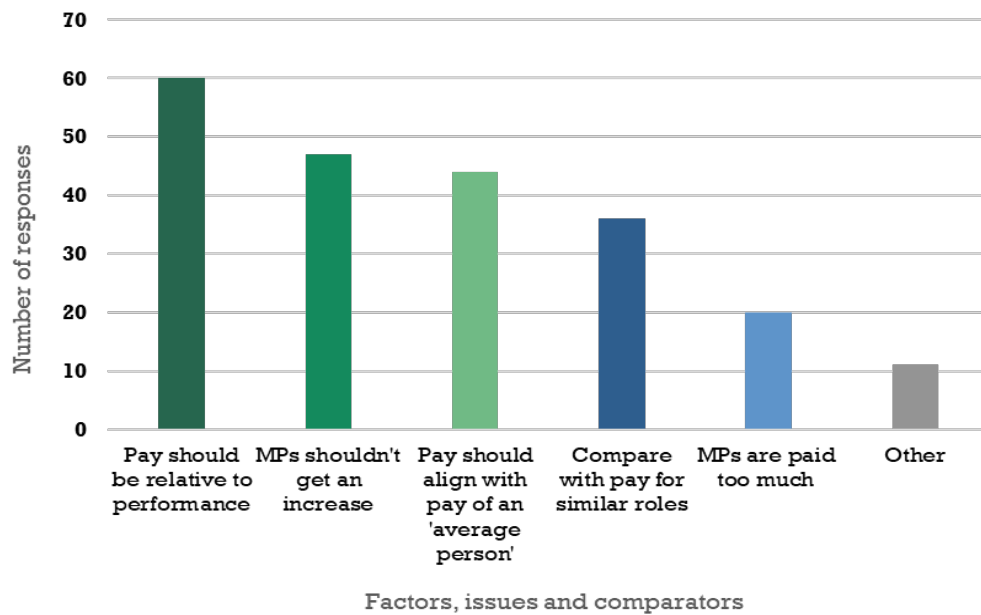
“To oversee the states projects, finances, to keep there constituents safe through legislation and other proactive means.”

Note: spelling and grammatical errors in the sample comments above taken from responses to the public questionnaire have not been corrected for publication and do not represent the views of the Tribunal.

Factors, comparisons and issues relevant for setting MP remuneration

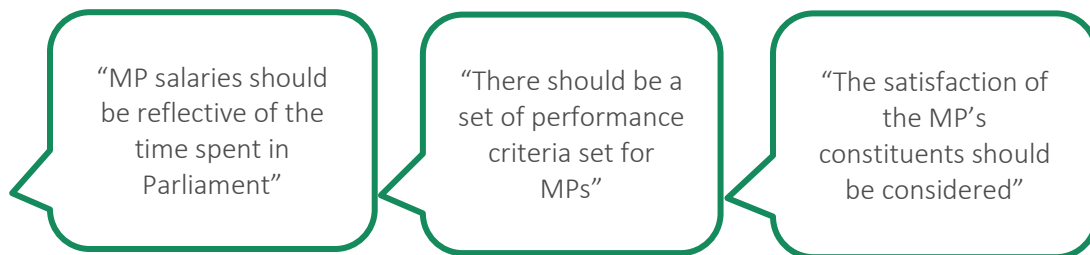
Responses to questions two and five of the public questionnaire contained common themes which have been summarised together below. These questions sought views on what the Tribunal should consider when making its Determination about MP remuneration. Some overall themes in the responses were:

- pay should be relative to performance
- pay should not be increased
- pay should align with the ‘average person’
- pay should compare with other industries
- ‘other’ (e.g. pay should reflect size of electorates, pay should take into account amount received in superannuation and allowances).



MP pay should be relative to performance

Combining responses to questions 2 and 5, over a fifth of respondents to the public questionnaire suggested that MP remuneration should be set relative to performance.



Some respondents suggested benchmarks that could be used to measure an MP’s performance, for example ‘amount of time spent in the Parliament’. Further examples of responses to the public questionnaire about linking pay to performance are provided below.

Pay should be linked to key performance indicators (KPIs)

"An increase in MPs pay should be reflected in their productivity."

"Mp's salaries should be directly linked to the time they spend in parliament and the quantity of legislative changes and additions."

"Satisfaction of the people of the MP represents."

"KPIs should be set.

1. Do they attend parliament 100%
2. Do they conduct themselves in a professional and acceptable manner
3. Do they adhere to parliamentary rules
4. Do they not conduct themselves in conflicting interests"

"If government is under performing politicians don't deserve a pay rise they should only be paid for the effort they put in as anyone else is"

"The amount of work they perform and the value returned to the community."

"Members should be paid according to the level of effort they put in."

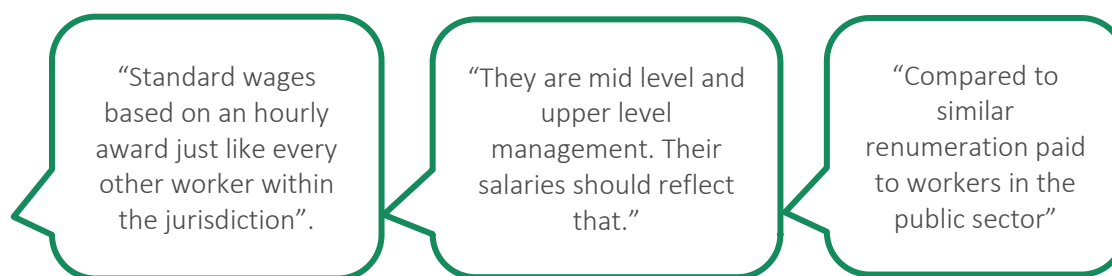
"As well as hours worked , numbers of days actually at sitting days and contribution made during parliament"

"All MP's must be on performance based salaries which are linked to actually delivering on promises and ensuring the outcomes benefit all Victorians and not just city centric minority groups. This is strategy is no different to business and if an MP doesn't deliver, they should not be rewarded over and above a base salary / retainer."

Note: spelling and grammatical errors in the sample comments above taken from responses to the public questionnaire have not been corrected for publication and do not represent the views of the Tribunal.

Setting MP pay should take comparable roles into consideration

Combining responses to questions 2 and 5, about 15 per cent of responses to the public questionnaire suggested that remuneration of MPs should be set at a level comparable to similar roles in both the public and private sectors.



Some responses to the questionnaire provided suggestions for comparable roles. Suggestions included public sector executives, nurses, police officers and lawyers. Examples of responses to the questionnaire about benchmarking remuneration to other roles or industries are provided below.

Pay should be benchmarked against comparable roles or industries

“The job of police is much harder than the MPs yet get paid less than the MPs.”

“As for comparisons to other professions, I would rate them alongside partners in law firms, or perhaps judges.”

“State MP's should be paid a base salary compared that paid to Victoria Education Principals.”

“Comparable jobs should be identified — they are public servants, so there will be many such jobs”

“... equivalent salary banding within the Victorian Public Service for someone undertaking a similar level of work (managing staff, engaging with diverse audiences, policy and legal expertise, etc)”

“Consideration of executive pay in similar organisations, taking into account the special privilege and position of a parliamentarian”

“I think the backbenchers should be paid the same salary as a teacher (first yr members getting first year teacher salaries and so on). The cabinet members could be paid something akin to a primary school principal and the premier, the equivalent of a large secondary school principal. No-one should get their superannuation on resignation unless at preservation age!”

“A State MP should be paid more than the Mayor of the municipality, but less than the Federal MP.”

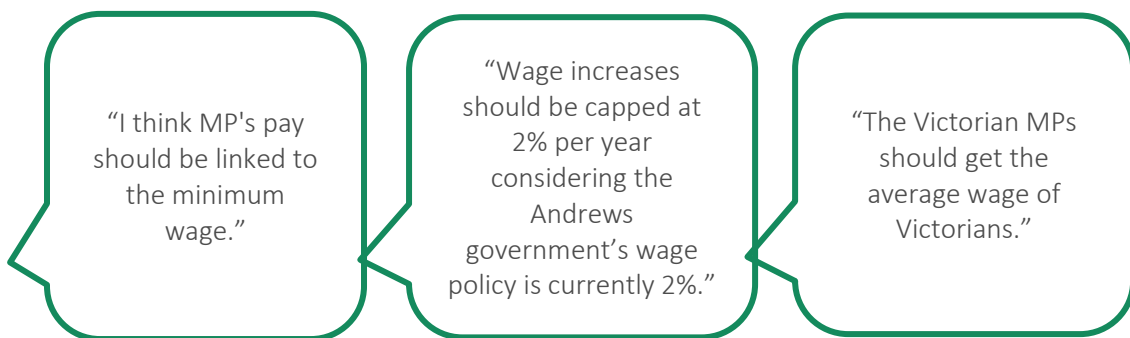
“Pay them the same wage as a nurse or paramedic....”

“Bench markin against other politicians in the state and nationally”.

Note: spelling and grammatical errors in the sample comments above taken from responses to the public questionnaire have not been corrected for publication and do not represent the views of the Tribunal.

MPs shouldn't get paid more than an 'average person'

About 18 per cent of responses to the public questionnaire stated that MP remuneration should 'align' with the salary or pay of an 'average person'.



Many responses to the public questionnaire stated that pay increases for MPs should be tied to economic measures like the consumer price index (CPI) or the Victorian Government's Wages Policy. Other responses said that MP salary should be linked with welfare payments such as Newstart or the pension.

Examples of responses to the public questionnaire about aligning MP remuneration with the 'average salary' are provided below.

Pay should be aligned with the 'average salary'

"Be relevant to the average earnings of the time"

"I believe they should be paid the mean wage of the people they are representing."

"[salary] should be capped at a certain % above median wage."

"MP's wages should be kept in line with standard wage increases or CPI."

"That it mirrors wage growth of that of tax payers"

"Comparisons with the general population in relation to benefits and what is allowed to be claimed both via remuneration and at tax time. If the general public don't qualify for a particular allowance neither should State MP's"

"In line with community expectations they are paid very well in comparison to most Victorians Increases should be in line with inflation like everyone else"

"Maybe their pay should go up at the same rate as other public servants that are implementing government programs and policies"

"... it's perfectly fair and reasonable to expect those offering to represent us to live on the same wages as those they're representing, I'd be more than happy for them to be paid the national median wage"

"MPs pay should be in line with the rest of the workforce. No automatic increases."

Note: spelling and grammatical errors in the sample comments above taken from responses to the public questionnaire have not been corrected for publication and do not represent the views of the Tribunal.

There should be no pay increase for MPs

About 20 per cent of responses to the public questionnaire said that there should not be a remuneration increase for MPs.

"The pay they receive currently is more than generous and no further pay rises should be permitted."

"Whilst their genuine costs should be considered, a pay rise should not be considered until all Victorians receive a pay rise."

"Our government is experiencing record levels of debt & increases in MP pay will only put greater pressure on our finances."

Several responses said that MPs should not get a pay rise due to stagnant wages in the community, or because MPs are already well paid. Examples of responses

to the public questionnaire about the appropriateness of an increase in remuneration are provided below.

MPs should not get any remuneration increase

“The pay they receive currently is more than generous and no further pay rises should be permitted.”

“Whilst their genuine costs should be considered, a pay rise should not be considered until all Victorians receive a pay rise.”

“I strongly believe that an increase to a sitting MP’s salary in the Vic parliament is not warranted at this time.”

“I think, with the uncertain times we are currently experiencing, no MP should receive a pay rise.”

“They do not need a pay rise.”

“Parliamentarians are paid well enough, commensurate with respective roles.”

“I feel that they are already very well paid and taken care of. They are not hard up in any way. Out of consideration for Victorians in genuine hardship, perhaps it would be more prudent and fair to all if they were to hold off.”

“But I Believe that they the Politicians are Paid and Compensated Generously.”

Note: spelling and grammatical errors in the sample comments above taken from responses to the public questionnaire have not been corrected for publication and do not represent the views of the Tribunal.

Other comments

Around seven per cent of responses to the public questionnaire identified MP travel as an issue which should be evaluated. Some responses said that travel hours should not be considered work and therefore should not be compensated. Other responses noted that most employees are not paid for their travel expense and therefore nor should MPs be paid for travel expenses.

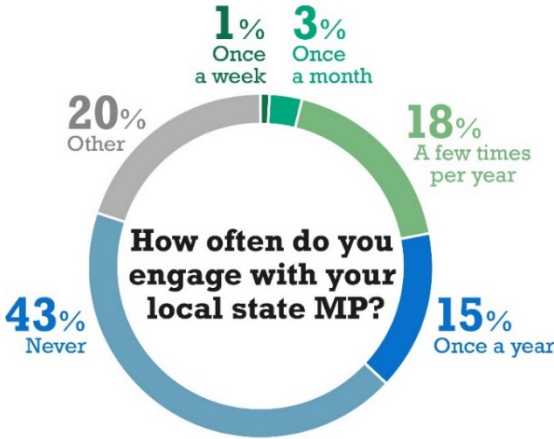
Other factors, issues and comparisons considered relevant for setting MP remuneration that were raised in responses to the public questionnaire included:

- education or qualifications
- responsiveness to constituent queries
- the public service aspect of the role.

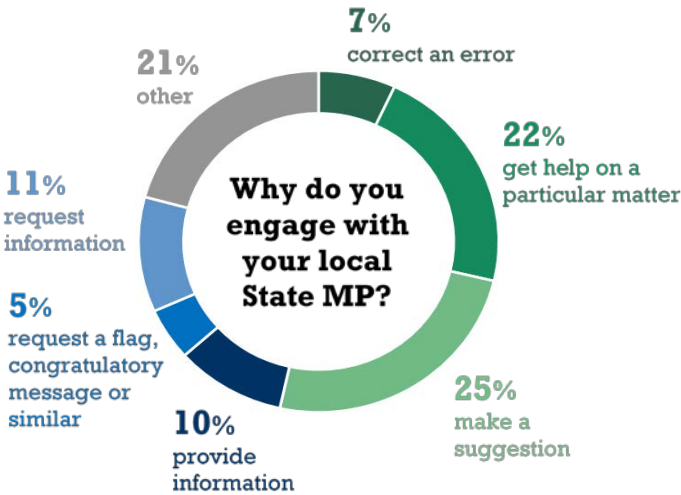
Engagement with State MPs

The public questionnaire also sought views on how, and how often, constituents engage with their local State MPs.

Many respondents to the public questionnaire said that they never engage with their MP, or that the only contact they have with their local state MP is during an election.



Of the respondents to the public questionnaire who do engage with their local State MP, the reasons given are shown in the figure below. They include making a suggestion for local matters or on a particular piece of legislation, or to seek help for a particular matter.



3 Submissions

The Tribunal directly received 12 written submissions (including two confidential submissions) and 391 submissions containing the same (or very similar) content, which were received via the Engage Victoria website.

Submissions received via the Engage Victoria website may not be re-produced on the Tribunal’s website, however the content from a representative example of these submissions is re-produced in full below.

Text from one of the 391 submissions containing the same, or very similar, content

“Victorian State MPs have a responsibility to take actions that are in the best interests of all Victorians. The current State Government’s wages policy fails this test. Capping public sector wage increases at 2% serves only to drive down wages for all working Victorians, at a time when cost of living pressures are high across the state.

Treasurer Tim Pallas has stated publicly that the government must “temper expectations in terms of wages”. Until the State Government has abandoned this cap and begun bargaining in good faith with its workforce, Victorian MPs as public servants should be held to this same standard.

The Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal and Improving Parliamentary Standards Act 2019 states that the tribunal must take into account “any statement or policy issued by the Government of Victoria which is in force with respect to its wages policy.”

Therefore, the total increase in remuneration for Victorian MPs, including allowances, should not exceed 2% until this cap is increased.”

Note: spelling and grammatical errors in the sample comments above taken from responses to the public questionnaire have not been corrected for publication and do not represent the views of the Tribunal.

All other submissions (excluding confidential submissions and/or those for which the author has not provided consent to publish) are available on the Tribunal’s website (www.vic.gov.au/victorian-independent-remuneration-tribunal).