



## Gavin Jennings MLC

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Warren McCann  
Chair  
Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal  
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D19/322329

Dear *Warren*

I refer to the Discussion Paper issued by the Tribunal seeking feedback on certain matters in *Members of Parliament (Victoria) Guidelines No. 01/2019* (Guidelines). Thank you for issuing the Discussion Paper and the opportunity to make a submission. My comments are limited to the issues concerning the eligibility for the international travel allowance.

On page eight of the Discussion Paper, the Tribunal requested information about whether international travel for electorate business could be more suitably claimed from the electorate allowance rather than the international travel allowance.

By way of context, I note that in the past some Members used the Electorate Office and Communications Budget to fund international travel for legitimate electorate-related work overseas, such as furthering sister city relationships and investigating policy, program or service initiatives that are relevant to their electorate. This appears to be no longer possible following the determination.

In my view, there are issues that arise if Members cannot use the international allowance for electorate-related travel.

It runs counter to the intention of streamlining and simplifying the allowances available to Members, which underpinned the establishment of a single consolidated allowance to fund legitimate international travel. It would also create further confusion about the application of the compliance, monitoring and enforcement regime to international travel, as it would depend upon the source of funding.

If electorate-related work can be funded from the international travel allowance, it would ensure that the additional safeguards proposed by the Tribunal apply to all types of legitimate international travel. It would also prevent the potential for members to be in a less favourable position following the first Determination should they fund travel from within their electorate budget.

I also note that this position is consistent with the feedback provided to you by the Clerks of Parliament in their letter dated 31 October 2019, included in your Discussion Paper.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on the Discussion Paper, and for the Tribunal's important work in ensuring Parliamentary allowances are clear and fit for purpose.

Yours sincerely



**Gavin Jennings MLC**  
Special Minister of State