

# **Submission to the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal**

**20 December 2024**



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



Local government in NSW employs **55,000 people**



Local government in NSW is responsible for about **90% of the state's roads and bridges**



Local government in NSW looks after more than **\$177 billion** of community assets



NSW councils manage an estimated **4 million tonnes of waste** each year



Local government in NSW spends more than **\$2.2 billion** each year on caring for the environment



NSW councils own and manage more than **600 museums, galleries, theatres and art centres**



NSW has more than **350 council-run libraries** that attract tens of millions of visits each year



NSW has more than **400 public swimming and ocean pools**

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# Opening

Local Government NSW (“LGNSW”) welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal (“Tribunal”) as part of the Tribunal’s 2025 review of the fees payable to councillors and mayors.

The primary purpose of this submission is to seek an increase in the fees payable to councillors and mayors of at least 4% to:

1. assist in reversing the fee erosion which occurred under the NSW Public Sector Wages Policy;
2. mitigate economic pressures and the rising cost of living (as measured by the Consumer Price Index (“CPI”));
3. ensure that councillors and mayors receive fair and reasonable remuneration for the work they perform; and
4. address the historic undervaluation of the work performed by elected representatives in local government in New South Wales.

This submission is made pursuant to section 243(2)(b) of the *Local Government Act 1993*(NSW) (“Act”). The submission is informed by the policy positions of LGNSW and consultation with councils.

This submission was endorsed by the LGNSW Board on 6 December 2024.

## The Tribunal’s Recent Determinations

In its 2024 Determination, the Tribunal awarded an increase of 3.75% in the fees payable to councillors and mayors. Whilst this increase exceeded what was previously permissible in years past, it failed to match the current rate of CPI. In the twelve months from June 2023 to June 2024, the CPI was 3.8%.

Increases in the fees payable to councillors and mayors since 2020 have, in the aggregate, been below increases in the cost of living (as measured by the CPI). In the twelve months to June 2021 the CPI increased by 3.8%; in the twelve months to June 2022 the CPI increased by 6.1%; in the twelve months to June 2023 the CPI increased by 6.0%; and in the twelve months to June 2024 the CPI increased by 3.8%. This accounts for a 19.7% increase in the cost of living in the four years to June 2024. By way of comparison, the fees payable to councillors and mayors increased by just 7% for the period between 1 July 2020 and 30 June 2024. This is highlighted in the table below:

CPI		Remuneration Tribunal Increases	
12 months to June 2021	3.8%	2020/2021	0%
12 months to June 2022	6.1%	2021/2022	2%
12 months to June 2023	6.0%	2022/2023	2%
12 months to June 2024	3.8%	2023/2024	3%
Total	19.7%	Total	7%

LGNSW has analysed economic and remuneration data from the last twelve months as it relates to chairs and directors of not-for-profit (“NFP”) organisations and Queensland (“QLD”) local government representatives. The analysis has identified a significant disparity between the fees payable to these categories of individuals and that which is paid to councillors and mayors in New South Wales.

This reinforces the need for a significant fee increase as councillors and mayors in New South Wales are paid significantly less than every other comparable category referred to in this submission with no discernable differences in the scope or commitment required of their role.

## Industrial Relations Amendment Act 2023 (NSW)

Section 242A of the Act requires the Tribunal, in making a determination, to:

*“give effect to the same policies on increases in remuneration as those that the Industrial Relations Commission is required to give effect to under section 146C of the Industrial Relations Act 1996 when making or varying awards or orders relating to the conditions of employment of public sector employees.”*

Previously, section 242A(1) of the Act constrained the Tribunal’s capacity to set fair and reasonable fees for councillors and mayors by limiting increases in such fees to a prescribed maximum under the *Industrial Relations (Public Sector Conditions of Employment) Amendment Regulation 2022* (“Regulation”) and *NSW Public Sector Wages Policy* (“Wages Policy”).

On 1 December 2023 the [Industrial Relations Amendment Act 2023](#) (NSW) (“Amendment Act”) completed its passage through NSW State Parliament and was assented to on 5 December 2023. Significantly, the Amendment Act repealed section 146C of the Industrial Relations Act 1996 (NSW) (“IR Act”).

Having regard to the words used in section 242A(1) of the Act, the Tribunal is also no longer constrained by the Wages Policy and can now award an increase in the fees payable to councillors and mayors that accounts for cost of living considerations.

In its 2024 Annual Determination, the Tribunal agreed that it is no longer bound by the Wages Policy and can award a discretionary increase to fees payable based on factors it considers to be relevant, consistent with the remit afforded to the Tribunal under the Act. The Tribunal also

noted that councils can be placed in other categories which attract higher fees, even in years which are not identified as categorisation years.

## Economic Indices and Wage Data

### Economic Indices

As mentioned above, the CPI increased by 19.7% for the four years to June 2024. This sits in stark contrast to the 7.0% total increase awarded to councillors and mayors in the same period. Over the same four-year period cost of living increases have outpaced the increases to fees payable to mayors and councillors by a staggering 12.7%. The cost of living continues to rise at a rapid pace with the CPI (Australia, All groups) increasing by 3.8% in the twelve months to June 2024. This alone evinces a real and cogent need to award an increase in the order of at least 4% to mitigate any further erosion of the real value of fees payable to mayors and councillors.

Noting that the Tribunal's 2025 Determination will operate from 1 July 2025, an increase of at least 4% will also operate to provide an appropriate increase that is based on the factors assessable over the preceding 12 months.

### The Fair Work Commission Annual Wage Review and the Industrial Relations Commission State Wage Case

On 3 June 2024, an Expert Panel of the Fair Work Commission ("FWC") awarded a 3.75% increase to the minimum rates of pay for Modern Awards and increased the National Minimum Wage to \$915.90 per week, effective from 1 July 2024 through its *Annual Wage Review* decision. The FWC noted at [146] of the decision that:

*"Many workers and many households have seen a deterioration in their disposable incomes in the past couple of years. Inflation has outpaced increases in wages, loan repayments have risen for many homeowners with a mortgage, rents and energy costs have risen sharply, and many workers paid more income tax."*

While it is acknowledged that councillors and mayors receive an annual fee, and not a wage, the fee must still account for the impost incurred by elected members by way of expenses such as energy costs, rent and travel expenses. A fee increase of at least 4% will go some way to ameliorating the increase in costs experienced by councillors and mayors as they serve their local communities.

A Full Bench of the NSW Industrial Relations Commission adopted a 3.75% increase to the minimum rates of pay in the relevant NSW State Awards during State Wage Case 2024 proceedings. Similarly, the rates of pay in the *Local Government (State) Award 2023* increased by 3.5% on 1 July 2024 and are set to increase by 3% on the first full pay period on or after 1 July 2025. The Award also provided a \$1000 payment in addition to the increases identified above to eligible employees to offset the pressures being experienced by the State of New South Wales. These additional award payments apply to both the 2024 and 2025 Award increases.

### IPART Rate Peg and Rate Peg Methodology

IPART has announced that the core Rate Peg for the 2025-2026 financial year will be between 3.6% and 5.1% for all councils in New South Wales. The Rate Peg for this financial year adopts an updated methodology, which aims to more comprehensively capture actual increases in costs

borne by councils. This methodology was applied following significant consultation with the sector and with community stakeholders.

LGNSW views the Rate Peg set with the new methodology as an appropriate benchmark against which the Tribunal ought to consider fee increases for councillors and mayors in NSW.

The Rate Peg is not linked to wages or employment conditions, but rather represents the cost increases that councils must manage, such as inflation, infrastructure maintenance, and service delivery demands. Given these considerations, LGNSW argues that a fee increase of at least 4% is appropriate, as it aligns with the overall financial pressures councils are experiencing. This approach ensures consistency across the diversity of councils, acknowledging varying financial circumstances while maintaining a reasonable standard for elected officials' remuneration.

While the wage increases flowing from the Annual Wage Review, State Wage Case and Award increases are determined based on differing data to the IPART Rate Peg, a clear theme emerges that increasing financial pressures on both councils and its officers warrant increases in revenue and wages. Noting this, and the removal of the Wages Policy, it should follow that fees payable to councillors and mayors be subject to a similar assessment which, in the view of LGNSW, should result in an increase of at least 4%. This result will ensure that the value of fees payable to councillors and mayors in NSW is not eroded, and that some of the financial pressures associated with holding office in local government are ameliorated.

## Market Comparability

The disparity between the fees payable to councillors and mayors in New South Wales ("NSW") and their inter-state or not-for-profit counterparts is stark. LGNSW has distilled some of the statistics below to allow the Tribunal to compare the fees payable to councillors and mayors in New South Wales with the:

- Fees payable to chairpersons/directors of NFP organisations
- Fees payable to chairpersons/directors of NFP organisations
- Comparison of fees payable to councillors and mayors in New South Wales and fees payable to chairpersons/directors of NFP organisations

The responsibilities and functions of councillors and mayors as prescribed in sections 226 and 232 of the Act are directly comparable to the duties and powers of NFP chairpersons and directors found in Part 2D.1 of the *Corporations Act 2001*(Cth)(which accounts for sections 179 – 198G).

**The role of a mayor** as set out in s 226 of the Act includes:

- (a) To be the leader of the council and a leader in the local community,*
- (b) to advance community cohesion and promote civic awareness,*
- (c) to be the principal member and spokesperson of the governing body, including representing the views of the council as to its local priorities,*
- (d) to exercise, in cases of necessity, the policy-making functions of the governing body of the council between meetings of the council,*
- (e) to preside at meetings of the council,*

- (f) to ensure that meetings of the council are conducted efficiently, effectively and in accordance with this Act,*
- (g) to ensure the timely development and adoption of the strategic plans, programs and policies of the council,*
- (h) to promote the effective and consistent implementation of the strategic plans, programs and policies of the council,*
- (i) to promote partnerships between council and key stakeholders,*
- (j) to advise, consult with and provide strategic direction to the general manager in relation to the implementation of the strategic plans and policies of the council,*
- (k) in conjunction with the general manager, to ensure adequate opportunities and mechanisms for engagement between the council and the local community,*
- (l) to carry out the civic and ceremonial functions of the mayoral office,*
- (m) to represent the council on regional organisations and at inter-governmental forums at regional, State and Commonwealth level,*
- (n) in consultation with the councillors, to lead performance appraisals of the general manager,*
- (o) to exercise any other functions of the council that the council determines.*

**The role of a councillor** is set out in s 232 of the Act in the following terms:

- (a) to be an active and contributing member of the governing body,*
- (b) to make considered and well-informed decisions as a member of the governing body,*
- (c) to participate in the development of the integrated planning and reporting framework,*
- (d) to represent the collective interests of residents, ratepayers and the local community,*
- (e) to facilitate communication between the local community and the governing body,*
- (f) to uphold and represent accurately the policies and decisions of the governing body,*
- (g) to make all reasonable efforts to acquire and maintain the skills necessary to perform the role of a councillor.*

While the roles of directors and mayors differ in many respects, they share similarities in terms of leadership, governance, and accountability. Both are responsible for acting in the best interests of the community and the organisation they serve, providing strategic direction, managing conflicts of interest, and ensuring effective and ethical decision-making. One distinguishing feature is that directors are focused on business and corporate interests, while mayors have a broader and more extensive responsibility to the local community and public welfare.

The 2024 Australian Board Remuneration Survey Report (“Australian Board Survey”) was relied upon to analyse data on NFP organisations and the fees payable to chairpersons and directors in various capacities. The Australian Board Survey has collected data from 1,089 Boards based on several factors which allow for an effective comparison between Chairpersons/Directors and councillors and mayors in NSW.

LGNSW has extracted comparisons between NFP chairpersons/directors and councillors and mayors based on comparable full-time equivalent employee (FTE) counts and the total revenue of the organisation.

Position	Total FTE	Average Remuneration	Maximum Remuneration
Chairperson NFP	201-300	\$51,903.00	-
Mayor Griffith Council	291	-	\$49,200.00
<b>Difference in the average remuneration paid to the chairperson of an NFP organisation and the maximum fee payable to the Mayor of Griffith Council: \$2,703.00.</b>			
Director NFP	201-300	\$26,645.00	-
Councillor Griffith Council	291	-	\$22,540.00
<b>Difference in the average remuneration paid to a director of an NFP organisation and the maximum fee payable to a Councillor of Griffith Council: \$4,105.00.</b>			

Position	Total Revenue	Average Remuneration	Maximum Remuneration
Chairperson NFP	40-80M	\$55,291.00	-
Mayor Lane Cove Council	66M	-	\$49,170.00
<b>Difference in the average remuneration paid to the chairperson of an NFP organisation and the maximum fee payable to the Mayor of Lane Cove Council: \$6,121.00.</b>			
Director NFP	40-80M	\$30,665.00	-
Councillor Lane Cove Council	66M	-	\$22,540.00
<b>Difference in the average remuneration paid to a director of an NFP organisation and the maximum fee payable to a Councillor of Lane Cove Council: \$8,125.00.</b>			

The table above highlights the disparity in the payments received by councillors and mayors in NSW when compared to average rates of pay for individuals performing like work in NFP organisations. In actuality, the disparity may be even more acute than that which is provided for in this comparison, as the maximum remuneration for a particular category may not apply and the figures used for Chairpersons and Directors of NFPs is averaged, indicating that the difference in real terms is likely to be far more significant.

#### **Comparison of fees payable to councillors and mayors in New South Wales and fees payable to councillors and mayors in Queensland**

Local Government in NSW and QLD are, by their nature, alike. The QLD Remuneration Commission is required to consider factors including geographical and environmental terrain, population and local government area ("LGA") size (among others) to determine the appropriate

category, and therefore the fees payable to councillors and mayors. This is provided for in Regulation 242 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*(QLD).

These factors are effectively mirrored in section 240 of the NSW Act for the purpose of determining the categorisation of LGAs and in turn, allowing the relativity of the fees payable to be considered. The data comparing the NSW and QLD jurisdictions continue to disclose an unacceptable disparity; the roles and responsibilities of the elected officials, and the criteria required by the Act are almost identical, and yet councillors and mayors in QLD are in receipt of fees up to \$120,000 higher than their NSW counterparts.

Position	Total Revenue	Total FTE	Maximum Remuneration
Mayor Townsville City Council	\$199.1M	1500	\$225,206
Mayor Inner West Council	\$298M	1014	\$98,510
<b>Difference in maximum fee payable to the Mayor of Townsville City Council and the maximum fee payable to the Mayor of Inner West Council: \$126,696</b>			
Councillor Townsville City Council	\$199.1M	1500	\$135,123
Councillor Inner West Council	\$298M	1014	\$33,810
<b>Difference in maximum fee payable to a Councillor of Townsville City Council and the maximum fee payable to a Councillor of Inner West Council: \$101,313</b>			

Position	Total Revenue	Total FTE	Maximum Remuneration
Mayor Aurukun Shire Council (QLD)	\$22.4M	84	\$119,393
Mayor Balranald Shire Council	\$25M	45	\$29,500
<b>Difference in maximum fee payable to the Mayor of Aurukun Shire Council and the maximum fee payable to the Mayor of Balranald Shire Council: \$89,893</b>			
Councillor Aurukun Shire Council (QLD)	\$22.4M	84	\$59,695
Councillor Balranald Shire Council	\$25M	45	\$13,520
<b>Difference in maximum fee payable to a Councillor of Aurukun Shire Council and the maximum fee payable to a Councillor of Balranald Shire Council: \$46,175</b>			

There is no cogent reason why councillors and mayors in New South Wales do not attract the same fees as their equivalents in Queensland. The criteria used by the respective Tribunals to make their assessments is almost identical, and the duties and responsibilities of each have a closely identifiable nexus.

LGNSW reaffirms its submission of previous years that this disparity serves only to frustrate the process of representative democracy at a local government level in NSW. Quality candidates who may otherwise have considered local office are at best, discouraged and at worst, disqualified from standing for election when the financial implications are properly considered.

## **Factors affecting categorisation of Councils**

The Tribunal should also consider demographic and economic shifts impacting the complexity of council operations and the communities that councils serve.

For instance, the NSW Government's Transport Oriented Development (TOD) program will result in accelerated development, investment, population growth and density across much of Greater Sydney. This includes the eight accelerated precincts in Greater Sydney, alongside the areas surrounding 37 train and metro stations in Sydney, Wollongong, Lake Macquarie, the Central Coast and Newcastle. These unprecedented planning reforms have drastically increased demands on the strategic and infrastructure planning functions of councils, and will continue to further increase the complexity of council operations as land use planning commences, development applications are lodged, infrastructure is planned for and built and communities densify.

In rural and regional parts of the State, the NSW Government is developing five Renewable Energy Zones (REZ) across swathes of NSW, crossing multiple LGAs<sup>1</sup>. These REZs are driving tens of billions of dollars of investment in rural and regional LGAs. These zones capture councils including but not limited to Armidale Regional Council, City of Newcastle Council, Dubbo Regional Council, Wollongong City Council, Hay Shire Council, and Balranald Regional Council.

Beyond the corporate investment in renewable energy projects directly, councils are also facilitating or partnering in accompanying investment in enabling infrastructure for transport and utilities. Alongside this investment, impacted councils are seeing their populations swell with growing workforces, both temporary and permanent, to facilitate construction and operation of renewable energy infrastructure.

In November 2024, the NSW Government released the final version of its Renewable Energy Planning Framework, which includes benefit sharing guidelines for councils to ensure their communities directly share in the benefits of large-scale renewable energy projects. The increasing responsibility of councils in managing the complexity of this new role should be recognised in the Tribunal's consideration of appropriate categories for councils in NSW.

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<sup>1</sup> NSW Government, EnergyCo *Renewable Energy Zone Locations*  
<https://www.energyco.nsw.gov.au/renewable-energy-zones/renewable-energy-zone-locations>

# Superannuation for Mayors and Councillors

Section 254B of the Act provides that superannuation contributions to councillors shall be made only in certain circumstances. Relevantly, sub-sections 254B(1) to (5) provide as follows:

1. *A council may make a payment (a “superannuation contribution payment”) as a contribution to a superannuation account nominated by a councillor, starting from the financial year commencing 1 July 2022.*
2. *The amount of a superannuation contribution payment is the amount the council would have been required to contribute under the Commonwealth superannuation legislation as superannuation if the councillor were an employee of the Council.*
3. *A superannuation contribution payment is payable with, and at the same intervals as, the annual fee is payable to the councillor.*
4. *A Council is not permitted to make a superannuation contribution payment –*
  - a. *Unless the council has previously passed a resolution at an open meeting to make superannuation contribution payments to its councillors, or*
  - b. *If the councillor does not nominate a superannuation account for the payment before the end of the month to which the payment relates, or*
  - c. *To the extent the councillor has agreed in writing to forego or reduce the payment.*
5. *The Remuneration Tribunal may not take superannuation payments into account in determining annual fees or other remuneration payable to a mayor or other councillor.*

It is clear that the payment of superannuation to councillors and mayors is not automatic; it is contingent on a resolution being passed by the council.

Importantly, sub-section 254B(5) of the Act prohibits the Tribunal from considering superannuation contribution payments or potential contribution increases flowing from these payments as part of the current review of the fees payable to councillors and mayors.

# Conference Motions

## Deputy mayors

Arising out of the LGNSW Special Conference of March 2022 and Annual Conference of November 2024, LGNSW wishes to draw the Tribunal's attention to the omission of deputy mayors from the Act, and by extension their inability to attract fees in connection with their role.

Deputy mayors undertake significant responsibilities, including representing the mayor in their absence, chairing committees, and playing a critical role in decision-making and advocacy.

These duties demand extensive time, effort and expertise beyond what would otherwise be required of a councillor.

The Act provides at s 249(5) that:

*A Council may pay the deputy mayor (if there is one) a fee determined by the council for such time as the deputy mayor acts in the office of the mayor. The amount of the fee so paid must be deducted from the mayor's annual fee.*

LGNSW submits that this provision is inadequate for several reasons.

The deputy mayor does not attract a fee independent of the mayor; time spent away by the mayor is absorbed by the deputy mayor acting in that position. This also fails to recognise the elevated level of visibility and accountability of the deputy mayor, particularly in large communities where the deputy mayor is regularly required to act in place of the mayor for community events and committee meetings.

This provision also fails to account for situations wherein the deputy mayor may be required to fulfill the duties of the mayor due to conflicting schedules, multiple engagements or where the workload of the mayor is such that additional support is required.

On this basis, LGNSW submits that the position of deputy mayor ought to attract its own independent remuneration and be considered by the Tribunal as part of its Determination.

## Removal of maximum and minimum fees

LGNSW also brings the Tribunal's attention to its Policy Platform, which reflects the collective positions of local government on issues of importance and guiding LGNSW in its advocacy on behalf of the local government sector. In this regard, the Tribunal is advised that one such Policy Platform (18.4) is to advocate for the repeal of section 241 of the Act, so that the Tribunal may determine the actual fees payable to councillors and mayors.

Determining the actual fees (and removal of the maximum and minimum fees) will create equity among councils in the state, particularly those which have been placed in the same category. Presently, it is conceivable that neighbouring councils in the same category provide differing levels of remuneration to their councillors and mayors. The hypothetical nature of fee increases in situations such as these are unnecessary, and equity can be achieved by the determination of a fixed fee applicable to each category identified by the Tribunal.

# Impacts of Low Remuneration

## Regional and Rural councillors and mayors

LGNSW wishes to again draw the Tribunal's attention to the fees payable to councillors and mayors of non-metropolitan councils in NSW. LGNSW accepts that section 240 of the Act is prescriptive in the list of factors which may be considered, and that moreover the Tribunal is not considering the categorisation of councils for the purposes of the 2025 Annual Determination. However, the significant stressors facing regional and rural councils in NSW, must feature in the Tribunal's consideration of an appropriate fee increase, particularly in light of the repeal of section 146C of the IR Act.

Low remuneration can lead to lower levels of community representation in regional areas, as skilled professionals may be deterred from serving due to the lack of compensation, thereby, potentially affecting the quality and continuity of representation. Concomitantly, low remuneration may even discourage or deter experienced individuals from taking on leadership roles, impacting the effectiveness of governance and inadvertently creating perceptions among community members that council work is not valued or important.

As affirmed by The Guardian journalist, Graeme Gibson, "the poor financial return [of being a councillor] is undoubtedly a major disincentive".<sup>2</sup> Indeed, Gibson posits that the low remuneration of councillors and mayors is disproportionately affecting certain demographic groups, and potentially skewing the representation of various segments within the community. This disproportionate skewing in representation is also having a causal relationship with the limited diversity in council composition.

It would be severely detrimental to the quality of candidature of local government if, by virtue of economic circumstance, only the wealthy or retired could plausibly stand for election. This does not engender a robust democratic process and disenfranchises already marginalised demographics from engaging in representative democracy at the local level. A fee increase of at least 4% will encourage participation from a broader range of people, who may not be retired, self-funded or otherwise independently wealthy.

Councillors and mayors, much like the members of their communities, are similarly affected by the cost-of-living stressors outlined by the Fair Work Commission in the *Annual Wage Review*. It follows that similar consideration ought to be had for the financial health of councillors and mayors in a way that facilitates the ongoing service of their respective communities.

## Uncontested Elections

The 2024 Local Government elections in NSW saw a significant number of uncontested elections when considered against the 2022 Local Government election. Data from the NSW Electoral Commission indicates that there were:

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<sup>2</sup> Gibson, G. (27 June, 2024). *If Australians want better local representation, we need to pay councillors more*. The Guardian. [If Australians want better local representation, we need to pay councillors more | Graeme Gibson | The Guardian](#)

- 4 undivided uncontested councillor elections
- 1 undivided uncontested mayoral election
- 16 uncontested ward councillor elections

With the exception of one ward, all instances of uncontested elections occurred in rural and regional local government areas. This is consistent with the results of the 2021 Local Government election, which saw 14 council elections which were uncontested.

This highlights the difficulties facing councils in attracting quality candidates to stand for election, particularly in rural and regional areas. The exceedingly low fees paid to councillors and mayors in rural and regional communities acts as a barrier to participation and entrenches patterns of participation and representation which exclude large cross sections of the community.

The Office of Local Government has published the *Candidate and Councillor Diversity Report 2021/2022*, which provides detailed demographic data on candidates and elected councillors and mayors in NSW. The report highlights that over 50% of councillors and 43% of candidates are aged between 50 and 69 years and that 58.8% of councillors and candidates fall into the occupational categories of professional, self-employed or retired.

The Report also suggests that 72.6% of mayors are male (as of 2021) which represents an increase of 0.4% from the 2017 election. This suggests that the demographic trends of local government remain consistent, and that certain groups continue to be overrepresented by virtue of their economic circumstance and associated capacity to stand for election despite the quantum of fees payable.

To facilitate broader representation of quality candidates in rural, regional and metro communities, LGNSW strongly submits that the fees payable to mayors and councillors ought to be increased to ensure that candidates are not discouraged or excluded from applying based on their economic circumstances.

Council	Uncontested Area or Ward
Berrigan	Area Uncontested
Cobar	Area Uncontested
Cowra	Area Uncontested
Greater Hume	East Ward Uncontested
Junee	Area Uncontested
Lachlan	A Ward Uncontested
Lachlan	B Ward Uncontested
Lachlan	D Ward Uncontested
Lachlan	E Ward Uncontested
Lockhart	A Ward Uncontested
Murray River	Greater Wakool Ward Uncontested
Murrumbidgee	Jerilderie Ward Uncontested
Penrith	East Ward Uncontested
Tenterfield	Ward B Uncontested
Uralla	Mayoral Election Uncontested
Uralla	Ward A Uncontested
Uralla	Ward B Uncontested
Warren	A Ward Uncontested
Warren	B Ward Uncontested
Warren	D Ward Uncontested
Warrumbungle	Area Uncontested

# Fee Increase – Quantum

For the reasons set out above, an increase in the fees payable to councillors and mayors of at least 4% for all categories is needed to:

1. assist in reversing the fee erosion which occurred under the NSW Public Sector Wages Policy;
2. mitigate economic pressures and the rising cost of living (CPI);
3. ensure that councillors and mayors receive fair and reasonable remuneration for the work they perform; and
4. address the historic undervaluation of the work performed by elected representatives in local government in New South Wales.

## Conclusion

The existing fees payable to councillors and mayors are inadequate and fail to remunerate them for the responsibilities they undertake in serving their communities, such as, supporting local economic development and environmental protection, and providing social, recreational, and cultural services. The Tribunal is empowered, flowing from the repeal of section 146C of the IR Act, to award a substantial increase to the fees in its 2025 Determination. Based on economic data, a comparison with equivalent roles in the NFP sector and QLD local government sector and consideration of changes in the cost of living (CPI), the IPART Rate Peg and the Fair Work Commission's Annual Wage Review, a fee increase of at least 4% for all categories should be awarded.

An increase of this order will address the historic constraints placed on the Tribunal and allow for a fair increase which offsets the economic stressors currently being experienced by elected representatives across NSW. A fee increase of at least 4% will also serve to encourage greater participation in local government and will allow quality candidates from diverse economic, social, cultural and financial backgrounds to contribute more freely and effectively in local government.