

WEST ARNHEM REGIONAL COUNCIL

FOR THE MEETING 29 OCTOBER 2025

Agenda Reference:	7.7
Title:	LGANT Submission - Remunerational Tribunal Inquiry Local Government Council and Local Authority Member Allowances 2026
Author:	Katharine Murray, Chief Executive Officer

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with details in relation to the Local Government Association Northern Territory's response to the Remuneration Tribunal's Inquiry into Local Government Council and Local Authority member Allowances for 2026.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT COUNCIL:

1. Accept, receive and note the late report titled *LGANT Submission - Remunerational Tribunal Inquiry Local Government Council and Local Authority Member Allowances 2026*; and
2. Acknowledge and support the Local Government Association of the NT draft submission to the Remuneration Tribunal's Inquiry into Local Government Council and Local Authority Member Allowances for 2026.

BACKGROUND

In September 2025 the Remuneration Tribunal advised LGANT (attached) that was commencing its inquiry into Local Government Council and Local Authority members' allowances for 2026. The Tribunal invited written submissions from Council.

LGANT sought feedback from Mayors and CEOs on Thursday 9 October 2025. LGANT were also successful in their request for an extension on the Tribunal's deadline for submissions.

A summary of LGANT's recommendations is as follows:

Capacity to Pay: Balancing Advocacy and Sustainability

1. The Tribunal's deliberations should be informed by ongoing consultation with councils and supported by annual reviews to ensure allowances remain fit for purpose and sector capacity is maintained. LGANT also recommends that the Tribunal clearly address the funding deficit in its next determination to safeguard the sustainability of the sector.
2. The Tribunal should address the funding deficit in its next determination.

Base Allowances for Elected Members

3. Council categories and associated allowances be reviewed and adjusted to reflect current and projected population growth, ensuring that elected members are fairly remunerated for the increased responsibilities and demands placed upon them.
4. Increase base allowances for elected members to align with the time commitments, complexity and scope of their responsibilities.
5. Inclusion of an explicit provision to allow individual councillors to voluntarily waive part or all of their allowance, should they wish. This option should be available solely at the discretion of each councillor. The provision must be worded clearly to ensure that it cannot be used by councils to mandate a reduction in allowances.

Extra Meeting/Activity Allowance

6. Restore the extra meeting/activity allowance to \$15,000 per annum.
7. Reinstating eligibility for the extra meeting/activity allowance for the following types of meetings and activities:
 - Meetings of subsidiaries established under the *Local Government Act 2019*.
 - Meetings of external agencies or organisations where a councillor has been formally appointed by resolution of council.
 - Each day of attendance at professional development courses or conferences.
8. Introduce provisions to remunerate travel time for remote councillors, particularly where travel exceeds 100km return.
9. Allow principal members to access the extra meeting/activity allowance, ensuring equity with deputy principal members.

Professional Development Allowance

10. Increase the professional development allowance to \$7,000, supporting access to high-quality training and inclusive learning opportunities.

Vehicle Allowance:

11. Replace the ATO kilometre rate with a Territory-specific model that reflects actual travel conditions, including distance, road type, and vehicle wear, particularly for remote and regional councillors.
12. Increase or remove the \$10,000 annual cap or introduce a zonal or tiered allowance structure that accounts for travel intensity and remoteness, ensuring equitable support across different council regions.

Superannuation

13. The Remuneration Tribunal should adopt a supportive position and formally advocate to the Northern Territory Government for legislative amendment to enable elected members to be treated as council employees for the purposes of superannuation. This reform would resolve a long-standing anomaly, align local government remuneration with broader public sector policy, and remove a key disincentive for community members considering nomination to their local council.

Principal Membership Resettlement Allowance: Supporting Transition

14. Introduce a resettlement allowance for principal members in the next Determination, acknowledging the employment risks and leadership demands associated with full-time council service.

Allowances for Local Authority Members

15. Include provision for extra meeting/activity allowance for Local Authority Members in the next Determination, recognising their expanded roles and responsibilities under the *Local Government Act 2019* and ensuring equitable support for their contributions to local governance.

LGANT Board Sitting Fees

16. Address the payment of sitting fees by LGANT to Board Directors in the next determination.

COMMENT

LGANT required Council's final feedback by close of business, Wednesday 29 October 2025.

LEGISLATION AND POLICY

NT Remuneration Tribunal Assembly Members and Statutory Officers (Remuneration and Other Entitlements) Act 2006

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

N/A

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

This report is aligned to the following pillars and goals of the *Regional Plan and Budget*:

PILLAR 6 FOUNDATIONS OF GOVERNANCE

Integrity is at the heart of everything we do. We are leaders of best practice and excellence in governance, advocacy, consultation and administration. Our processes, procedures and policies are ethical and transparent.

Goal 6.3 Council and Local Authorities

Excellence in governance, consultation administration and representation.

ATTACHMENTS

1. NT Remuneration Tribunal Letters to CE Os for 2026 LGC and LA Inquiries 11912 [**7.7.1** - 1 page]



NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA

REMUNERATION TRIBUNAL

**GPO BOX 4396
DARWIN NT 0801**

Telephone: (08) 8999 6539

Ms Mary Watson
Chief Executive Officer
Local Government Association of the Northern Territory

ceo@lgant.asn.au

Dear Ms Watson

The Remuneration Tribunal is commencing its inquiry on Local Government Council and Local Authority members' allowances 2026 pursuant to sections 7B(1) and 7E(1) of the *Assembly Members and Statutory Officers (Remuneration and Other Entitlements) Act 2006* with Councils.

If completed on or before 1 February 2026, the inquiry will lead to a determination that applies to members' allowances from 1 July 2026. I attach to this letter copies of the latest versions of the Tribunal's Determinations.

The Tribunal is accepting written submissions from Councils for the inquiry by 17 October 2025, which should address only questions or issues that your Council would like to raise. Considerations should be made as to any unique circumstances relating to your Council which you may wish to advise the Tribunal. Individual Councillors may also like to provide their own submissions.

While the Tribunal would like to meet with Councils personally, this is not practicable; however the Tribunal will accommodate video conference calls.

It would be appreciated if you could place this letter on the Council's agenda for its next meeting for your Council to discuss its approach. It would also be appreciated for the CEO receiving this letter to provide it to the appointed Mayor of the Council.

Councils should contact the Tribunal's Secretariat via email NTRemunerationTribunal@nt.gov.au for any further queries or to arrange meetings with the Tribunal.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Gary Higgins'.

Gary Higgins
Chair
Northern Territory Remuneration Tribunal
9 September 2025