



STRATHBOGIE SHIRE COUNCIL

Notice is hereby given that an Extraordinary Meeting of the Strathbogie Shire Council will be held virtually on Tuesday 29 June 2021, commencing at 4.00 p.m.

Chair: Chris Raeburn (Mayor) *(Honeysuckle Creek Ward)*

Councillors: Melanie Likos (Deputy Mayor) *(Lake Nagambie Ward)*
Laura Binks *(Mount Wombat Ward)*
Reg Dickinson *(Lake Nagambie Ward)*
Sally Hayes-Burke *(Seven Creeks Ward)*
Paul Murray *(Hughes Creek Ward)*

Officers: Julie Salomon Chief Executive Officer *(CEO)*
David Roff Director, Corporate Operations *(DCO)*
Amanda Tingay Director, Community and Planning *(DCP)*
Kristin Favaloro Executive Manager, Communications and Engagement *(EMCE)*

BUSINESS

1. Welcome
2. Acknowledgement of Traditional Land Owners
'I acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we are meeting. I pay my respects to their Elders, past and present'
3. Apologies
Councillor Kristy Hourigan *(Seven Creeks Ward)*
Dawn Bray Executive Manager, Governance and Customer Service *(EMGCS)*
4. Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest
5. Officer Reports
6. Confidential Business

Julie Salomon
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

25 June 2021

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5.1 Review of Mayoral and Councillor Allowances **- Receiving / Hearing of Submissions**

Author: Chief Executive Officer

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the May 2021 Council Meeting, Council resolved to undertake a Section 223 process in accordance with the Local Government Act 1989 (Section 223 hearing), calling for submissions in relation to a review of the Mayoral and Councillor Allowances.

Public notice was given, calling for submissions to the review of the Mayoral and Councillor Allowances. At the close of the submissions period on Monday 21 June 2021, six (6) submissions regarding the review were received. The purpose of the Section 223 hearing is for the Committee of Council to receive the submissions and hear submitters who have requested to address Council in support of their written submission regarding the review of allowances. It is noted that no submitters requested to be heard in support of their written submission.

Officers have also prepared a report for consideration and determination at an Extraordinary Council meeting to be held today, Tuesday 29 June 2021, commencing at 5.00 p.m.

A copy of the submissions received is included in Attachment 1.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1. Note the written submissions received in response to the public advertisement of the review of Mayoral and Councillor Allowances.***
- 2. Note that a report has been prepared in advance by Officers for consideration and determination at a meeting to be held today, Tuesday 29 June 2021, commencing at 5.00 p.m.***

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The purpose of this report is to receive submissions in relation to the review of Mayoral and Councillor allowances.

ISSUES, OPTIONS AND DISCUSSION

One of the overarching governance principles in section 9 of the *Local Government Act 2020* is that Priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations.

5.1 Review of Mayoral and Councillor Allowances
- Receiving / Hearing of Submissions (cont.)

A public notice advising of the review of Mayoral and Councillor allowances was placed in locally circulating newspapers calling for submissions from the general public over a 28-day period from the date of advertisement.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

One of the overarching governance principles in section 9 of the Local Government Act 2020 is that the municipal community is to be engaged in strategic planning and strategic decision making.

Members of the community had opportunity to make a written submission to Council providing their views on the allowance review and to also request an opportunity to make a verbal presentation to the Committee of Council appointed to consider submissions on 29 June 2021.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Council Plans and Policies

The payment of allowances is consistent with the Council Expenses Policy adopted by Council in June 2020.

Regional, State and National Plans and Policies

One of the overarching governance principles in section 9 of the *Local Government Act 2020* is that regional, state and national plans and policies are to be taken into account in strategic planning and decision-making.

The allowance review is in accordance with the Order in Council made by the Minister for Local Government in relation to Strathbogie Shire as a Category 1 Council.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

One of the overarching governance principles in section 9 of the *Local Government Act 2020* is that Council decisions are to be made and actions taken in accordance with the relevant law.

The transition from the 1989 Act provisions relating to Mayoral and Councillor allowances to the 2020 Act is still in progress. Although the 1989 Act's provisions have been repealed, section 39(6) of the 2020 Act allows the provisions of the 1989 Act to remain in force until the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal makes its first determination.

All aspects of the 1989 and 2020 Acts are met through undertaking this review and calling for public submissions through the formal section 223 process. All written submissions will be considered by a Committee of Council prior to setting allowances through a resolution.

Conflict of Interest Declaration

All officers, and/or contractors, involved in the preparation of this report have signed a written declaration that they do not have a conflict of interest in the subject matter of this report.

5.1 Review of Mayoral and Councillor Allowances
- Receiving / Hearing of Submissions (cont.)

Transparency

One of the overarching governance principles in section 9 of the *Local Government Act 2020* is that the transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured.

Decisions made by Council will be:

- Undertaken in accordance with the Act and the Governance Rules; and
- Conducted in an open and transparent forum with information available via Council reports.

Council meetings will be open to the community (virtually or in person) or can be viewed on the livestream (and available as a recording) unless closed for reasons by s.66(2) of the Act.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

One of the overarching governance principles in section 9 of the *Local Government Act 2020* is that the ongoing financial viability of the Council is to be ensured.

Financial considerations will be determined, dependent on the outcome of this review process.

The current 2020-21 budget and draft 2021-22 budget currently out for public comment funds Mayoral and Councillor allowances at the levels identified by this review.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

One of the overarching governance principles in section 9 of the *Local Government Act 2020* is that the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, is to be promoted.

This report is not considered to raise any economic, social, environmental or climate change issues or concerns.

INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

One of the overarching governance principles in section 9 of the *Local Government Act 2020* is the pursuit of innovation and continuous improvement.

This report ensures compliance with former and current legislative requirements for the setting of Mayoral and Councillor allowances.

COLLABORATION

One of the overarching governance principles in section 9 of the *Local Government Act 2020* is that collaboration with other councils, levels of government and statutory bodies is to be sought.

The processes for this review have been prepared in accordance with advice from Local Government Victoria published in February 2021 stating that all councils across Victoria were required to review allowances by 30 June 2021.

5.1 Review of Mayoral and Councillor Allowances
- Receiving / Hearing of Submissions (cont.)

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

There are no significant impacts or consideration arising from this report in relation to the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 aside from the ability of the community to make a submission on the review and receive a fair hearing of their views prior to a decision being made.

CONCLUSION

A review of Mayoral and Councillor allowances is required to be undertaken prior to June 30 and it is considered that the current allowances be maintained until such time that the first determination by the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal is made.

All aspects of the 1989 and 2020 Local Government Acts have been considered and complied with in undertaking this review.

The section 223 public consultation process provides the community with an opportunity to voice their opinions and shape the outcome of the review.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Submissions received to review of Mayoral and Councillor Allowances

ATTACHMENT 1:

Submission No. 1



Mayoral and Councillor Allowances - Submission	
Date submitted	May 24, 2021, 06:45 PM
Full name	[REDACTED]
Preferred Contact	Phone - [REDACTED]
Select one category which best describes you	Business owner
Do you (or someone on your behalf) intend to speak to your submission at the Special Council Meeting at 4pm on Tuesday 29 June 2021?	NO
Submission	<p>Pay them triple. I know that isn't a popular opinion, but my logic is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If paid a proper amount relative to the job required they can dedicate real time to the job. (I know that many currently do this out of their own pocket) - being a councillor would be attractive to a wider segment of the community. Council currently predominantly attracts older people, and financially independent folks (by necessity) due to the financial implications of giving up/going on hiatus from a career to do the job properly. - The old saying goes 'if something is priceless, then it is also worthless', if councillors are paid real money, then proper 'stings' can be attached to it. The level of accountability will be higher, and the scrutiny and competitor the roles will benefit the ratepayers exponentially compared to the increased costs. <p>\$20k a year is not enough to do the job properly; it artificially restricts the candidate pool, dissuades high quality candidates from putting their hands up and burns out the elected councillors. \$60k to be mayor is an utter joke.</p> <p>The abuse, and negativity these poor people cop from people who don't know any better is disgusting, and impossible to stop. But I know I'd be willing to cop more abuse for 100k+</p> <p>Since amalgamation out councillors have generally been retired people, and/or people who are financially independent. This is not a criticism but maybe having the perspectives of younger/poorer councillors could have a benefit to rate payers.</p>

Submission No. 2



Mayoral and Councillor Allowances - Submission	
Date submitted	May 26, 2021, 03:30 PM
Full name	[REDACTED]
Preferred Contact	Email - [REDACTED]
Select one category which best describes you	Community Member
Do you (or someone on your behalf) intend to speak to your submission at the Special Council Meeting at 4pm on Tuesday 29 June 2021?	NO
Submission	<p>I am alarmed that there is going to be an increase in the rates, as I thought there was some agreement around this following the last lot of submissions to council objecting to a rates increase.</p> <p>My understanding is that the role of Councillor in local government is considered to be public service. I do not understand why, on top of the subsidised salaries received, these rather high allowances are being reviewed.</p> <p>As it is, both allowances received by the Mayor and Councillors are at the TOP of the range for a Category 1 council.</p> <p>Are there exceptional circumstances that warrant an increase?</p> <p>Has there been an annual assessment conducted that shows extraordinary movements in population and revenue figures?</p> <p>Have the limits set by the Government changed?</p> <p>The current (maximum) amounts being claimed ensure that if any of the above thing occur - there will be an increase in these allowances.</p> <p>Does increasing the rates increase council revenue, leading to this increase?</p>

Submission No. 3



Mayoral and Councillor Allowances - Submission	
Date submitted	Jun 09, 2021, 04:15 PM
Full name	[REDACTED]
Preferred Contact	Email - [REDACTED]
Select one category which best describes you	Organisation
Do you (or someone on your behalf) intend to speak to your submission at the Special Council Meeting at 4pm on Tuesday 29 June 2021?	NO
Submission	In light of economic post COVID climate and extensive working hours put in by Councillors and Mayor I believe that maintenance of existing salaries is a suitable and just outcome

Submission No. 4



Mayoral and Councillor Allowances - Submission	
Date submitted	Jun 09, 2021, 09:34 PM
Full name	Melinda Watson
Preferred Contact	Email - watson.melinda.j@gmail.com
Select one category which best describes you	Community Member
Do you (or someone on your behalf) intend to speak to your submission at the Special Council Meeting at 4pm on Tuesday 29 June 2021?	NO
Submission	I'd just like to say that councillors don't get paid a lot. It's a very difficult job, there is a lot of criticism involved and potentially a lot of stress. The job eats into personal time and they're expected to be available to community members even when they're having family or social time. I definitely don't think they get paid too much. My only question is, is the mayors increased allowance, proportional with the increase in workload from councillor to mayor?? Thanks

Submission No. 5



Mayoral and Councillor Allowances - Submission	
Date submitted	Jun 16, 2021, 04:03 PM
Full name	Brendan Peterson
Preferred Contact	Email - [REDACTED]
Select one category which best describes you	Community Member
Do you (or someone on your behalf) intend to speak to your submission at the Special Council Meeting at 4pm on Tuesday 29 June 2021?	NO
Submission	Quite happy with that idea - in fact, am surprised that the rates are as low as what they are.

Submission No. 6



Mayoral and Councillor Allowances - Submission	
Date submitted	Jun 21, 2021, 09:54 AM
Full name	[REDACTED]
Preferred Contact	Email [REDACTED]
Select one category which best describes you	Business Owner
Do you (or someone on your behalf) intend to speak to your submission at the Special Council Meeting at 4pm on Tuesday 29 June 2021?	NO
Submission	<p>I have been a long-time advocate for better pay for local government councillors. Elected representatives at all other levels of government are paid at a vastly different level - what I would say is an appropriate wage for their commitment.</p> <p>Unfortunately poor pay rates at a local govt level mean many people simply cannot participate. If the councillor wage was in line with the average take home pay of most professionals we would attract more of the younger demographic and those with diverse skill sets.</p> <p>While the role of councillor is seen as a community 'service' rather than a career choice - we are limiting the pool from which we draw our local leaders. And while dependent on income to supplement the councillor stipend, and reliant on sympathetic and accommodating employers, this role is out of reach for many community members.</p> <p>As well, the role has changed. Compliance and planning matters are now complex - pay rates simply must change to reflect the time and effort required to successfully undertake this extremely demanding yet important role.</p>

6. CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

Nil.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, THE MEETING CLOSED AT P.M.