



Remuneration Tribunal

Determination 2014/05

Members of Parliament – Base Salary, Additional Salary for Parliamentary Office Holders, and Related Matters

REASONS FOR DETERMINATION

Legislative Framework

Section 7A of the *Remuneration Tribunal Act 1973* (the Act) requires the Tribunal to notify its reasons for each determination made in relation to members of the Parliament of Australia to the Minister and to publish those reasons on the Tribunal's website.

What *Determination 2014/05* Does

Determination 2014/05 amends *Principal Determination 2013/13: Members of Parliament – Base Salary, Additional Salary for Parliamentary Office Holders, and Related Matters*.

The amendments:

1. Specify the additional salary payable to the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters; and
2. Remove a now obsolete transitional provision put in place when the Tribunal first determined additional salary for shadow ministers.

There has been no change to any other provision of the *Determination*.

The Tribunal's Reasons

The Tribunal has, for many years, determined additional salary for the Chair and Deputy Chair of most parliamentary committees. General membership of these committees is unpaid – or, to put it another way, in setting the parliamentary base salary the Tribunal recognises that committee membership is a normal feature of the work of a backbencher. However, being an office holder in such committees creates an additional workload that justifies, in the view of the Tribunal, an additional component of salary.

Over the years the Tribunal has determined additional salary at 16% of base salary for the Chairs of four joint committees – concerning Public Works; Public Accounts and Audit; Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade; and Treaties. The Deputy Chairs of these bodies are paid additional salary at 8% of base salary. Most other joint committees and single house committees are covered by generic provisions in *Determination 2013/13*,

with the Chair of those committees paid additional salary of 11% of base salary, and the Deputy Chair 5.5%.

The Tribunal considered a submission from Senator the Hon Michael Ronaldson, Special Minister of State, advising that the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters had a workload, and importance to the Australian community, that justified its Chair and Deputy Chair being paid on a par with the other four named committees.

The Tribunal considered the work of various committees and accepted that the Minister's submission was valid. The Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters studies, and makes recommendations on, a subject of interest to all Australians, and one which can affect every Australian when he or she votes. Recent events, such as the necessity to re-run the Western Australian Senate election, demonstrate, in the view of the Tribunal, that 'electoral matters' is something that demands consistent and thorough parliamentary oversight.

The only other change made in this amending determination is the removal of a redundant provision. When the Tribunal first determined additional salary for shadow ministers it limited the number of opposition members who could be paid under this provision. However, in so doing it recognised the then current make-up of the shadow cabinet and agreed to vary the number of opposition members payable until the next (2013) federal election. As this timeframe has now passed the transitional provision is no longer required and has been removed.

The Tribunal's determinations and reports are available on its website - <http://www.remtribunal.gov.au/>.

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April 2014