



Remuneration Tribunal

2009 Review of Remuneration for Holders of Public Office

Statement

The Tribunal's obligation, under sub-sections 7(3) and 7(4) of the *Remuneration Tribunal Act 1973* (the Act), is to inquire into and determine remuneration and significantly related conditions for offices within its jurisdiction at least annually.

The Tribunal determines remuneration for a wide range of the most senior full-time and part-time public offices, including the federal judiciary. The Tribunal's determinations - available on its website - <http://www.remtribunal.gov.au/> - list all such public offices.

The Tribunal also provides advice, under various statutes, to ministers and others responsible for determining remuneration for a range of offices, including Secretaries of Australian Public Service Departments.

Over recent years, the Tribunal has determined increases in remuneration for offices in its jurisdiction of the order of four per cent. In settling on the quantum of an increase each year, the Tribunal has considered data from various sources, as well as external factors. The Tribunal has detailed this in previous statements.

The Tribunal noted in the Statement on the 2008 review that it would have been disposed to determine a significantly greater adjustment than that decided, had it not been for the challenging circumstances then current.

The Tribunal notes that the Consumer Price Index for the year to March 2009 increased by 2.5 per cent and that the average annualised wage increase in public sector wage agreements, concluded in the December 2008 quarter, was 4.4 per cent.

Remuneration of the Senior Executive Service (SES) of the Australian Public Service (APS) continued to increase in the last reported period, up to December 2007, by between five and six per cent. These figures were provided in the 2007 APS Remuneration Survey. The 2008 Survey has not yet been released - in past years the Survey has been released around July.

The Tribunal has expressed concern previously about the remuneration of office holders in the Tribunal's jurisdiction relative to that of the SES in the APS, and does not wish to make any decision that would exacerbate this. The Tribunal is also of the view that it would not be desirable for the remuneration of office holders in its determinative jurisdiction to be eroded further by inflationary or other pressures, notwithstanding the fact that economic circumstances remain difficult.

The Tribunal has therefore decided to defer any decision on an annual adjustment until after 30 September 2009. This decision will apply to all offices in the Tribunal's jurisdiction, including judicial and related offices.

Parliamentarians

The Tribunal does not have the jurisdiction to determine the basic salary of parliamentarians. Their salaries are linked, presently, by Government Regulation to a particular salary point in the Tribunal's Principal Executive Office remuneration structure.

The Tribunal's decision to defer the annual review also means that there will be no change in the Principal Executive Office structure until after 30 September 2009. As the additional salaries of parliamentary office holders and Ministers of State are expressed as percentages of the basic salary, there will, therefore, also be no change in their remuneration.

Federal Judicial Offices and the Tribunal's Review of Relativities between the Federal Courts

The Tribunal is obliged to review the remuneration of judicial and related offices at least annually. This has been done, without amendment to the current remuneration of these offices, by Determination 2009/07. This Determination will be tabled in Parliament and made available on the Tribunal's website.

The Tribunal mentioned, in its 2006/2007 and 2007/2008 Annual Reports, that it was undertaking a review of relativities between the federal courts.

The Tribunal has noted the Attorney-General's recent announcement of proposed changes to those federal courts concerned primarily with family law matters, consequent upon his review of the family law system. The Tribunal will assess the effect of these proposals (particularly their implementation) in settling its conclusions on appropriate relativities.

Enquiries may be directed to the Tribunal's Media Adviser on (02) 6162 0021 or through enquiry@remtribunal.gov.au.

Remuneration Tribunal
19 May 2009