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Ms Holly Kramer

President

Remuneration Tribunal

Dear Ms Kramer

I would like to make a brief comment on the Tribunal's discussion paper on full-time public offices.

The paper much over-eggs the importance of what it calls "relativities across public offices" in the interests of "internal consistency" and "fairness".

While internal relativities can be useful in some circumstances, they do not of themselves provide a satisfactory basis for fixing remuneration. Indeed, they can engender rigidities and inflexibilities that will be inimical to sound and proper remuneration.

To the maximum extent possible, different public offices within the Tribunal's jurisdiction should be treated on their singular merits.

Thus, it would be extremely unwise for the Tribunal to regard, as the discussion paper says, departmental Secretary remuneration as providing "an important upper bound reference."

The fact is that positions such as the heads of the ACCC, APRA and ASIC (and perhaps others) have been and are likely to continue to be filled from the private corporate and legal sectors where levels of remuneration far exceed those in the Commonwealth. While the Commonwealth will likely never be able to match remuneration in those private sectors, if the likes of the ACCC, APRA and ASIC are to attract persons from them, remuneration for positions in these organisations should be set at levels that make it feasible. That may well not be so if departmental Secretary remuneration were to be regarded as an "upper-bound reference". That is to say, where there is a desire to appoint persons from the private sector, the Tribunal should have primary regard to remuneration in the relevant outside markets not internal relativities.

Yours sincerely

Patrick Gourley

24 July 2025