



HON BRYAN GREEN MP
LABOR LEADER

21/10/2015

Dear Commissioners,

Tasmanian Labor welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the *'Inquiry into Parliamentary Salaries and Allowances by The Full Bench of the Tasmanian Industrial Commission'* Issues Paper.

Parliamentary salaries are a sensitive issue in the community.

Labor respects the independence of the Industrial Commission and has confidence that it will conduct this inquiry in a fair and considered manner.

The Labor Party believes that elected representatives should be appropriately and fairly remunerated for the important work that they do, however we do not want to see salary increases that are out of step with community expectations.

The suggestions in this submission are concerned with avoiding a significant mismatch between increases in Parliamentarian's and public servant's pay.

Basic Salary

Labor has a long standing view that salaries for Members of Parliament should be tied to the public service.

This position was put forward in the Labor Government's submission to the last salary review in 2013. It is also consistent with correspondence sent to the President of the Industrial Commission, Tim Abey, in June this year.

In our view the Tribunal should identify an appropriate reference salary within the General Stream of the Tasmanian State Service Award so that the basic salary of a Member of Parliament moves in line with any variation to that reference salary.

That means the quantum of increases permitted by the State Service Wages Policy, which apply to the majority of public servants, would also apply to movements in the basic salary for Members of Parliament.

At a time when public servants, including teachers, health workers and park rangers, are being asked to accept wage restraint of 2 per cent, we believe it would be a perverse outcome for politicians to be awarded a higher percentage increase.

There has been an argument that tying parliamentary salaries to the public service would give Members of Parliament direct control over setting their own pay. We believe those concerns are unfounded.

It is absurd to suggest that wage negotiations and enterprise bargaining with the majority of the public service would be manipulated for the sole purpose of securing financial gain for Members of Parliament.

We would contend that a link to the public service is the fairest and most transparent method for determining parliamentary salaries because it establishes a level playing field for all.

Electoral Allowance

The Labor Party is not advocating for a change in the way Electoral Allowances are calculated.

However, we do wish to reiterate the comments contained in the Labor Government's 2013 submission relating to Electorate offices.

The entitlement to Electorate offices for Members of Parliament should be clarified and expressed in a documented Electorate Office Policy.

The Electorate Office Policy should confirm that the House of Assembly is to manage all Electorate offices for its Members, the Legislative Council is to manage all Electorate offices for its Members, and the Department of Premier and Cabinet should be responsible solely for Ministerial offices.

Consideration should be given to the appropriateness and safety of single-staff electorate offices and allowing for backfilling positions while staff are on leave. The appropriate structure should be determined independent of politicians and, as such, the Labor Party has not determined an alternate model. By way of comparison with other smaller Australian jurisdictions, South Australian Members of Parliament receive two full time electorate offices, Northern Territory Members receive one full time staff member and a part time staff member for up to six hours per week and ACT members receive a \$232,913 annual salary allocation to spend on staff.

Other matters

The Labor Party requests that the TIC consider establishing formal leave arrangements for Members of Parliament, including paid parental leave and domestic violence leave.

More Information

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact the Tasmanian Labor Party on 6212 2127.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bryan Green", with a large, sweeping flourish extending downwards and to the left.

Bryan Green MP
Leader of the Opposition