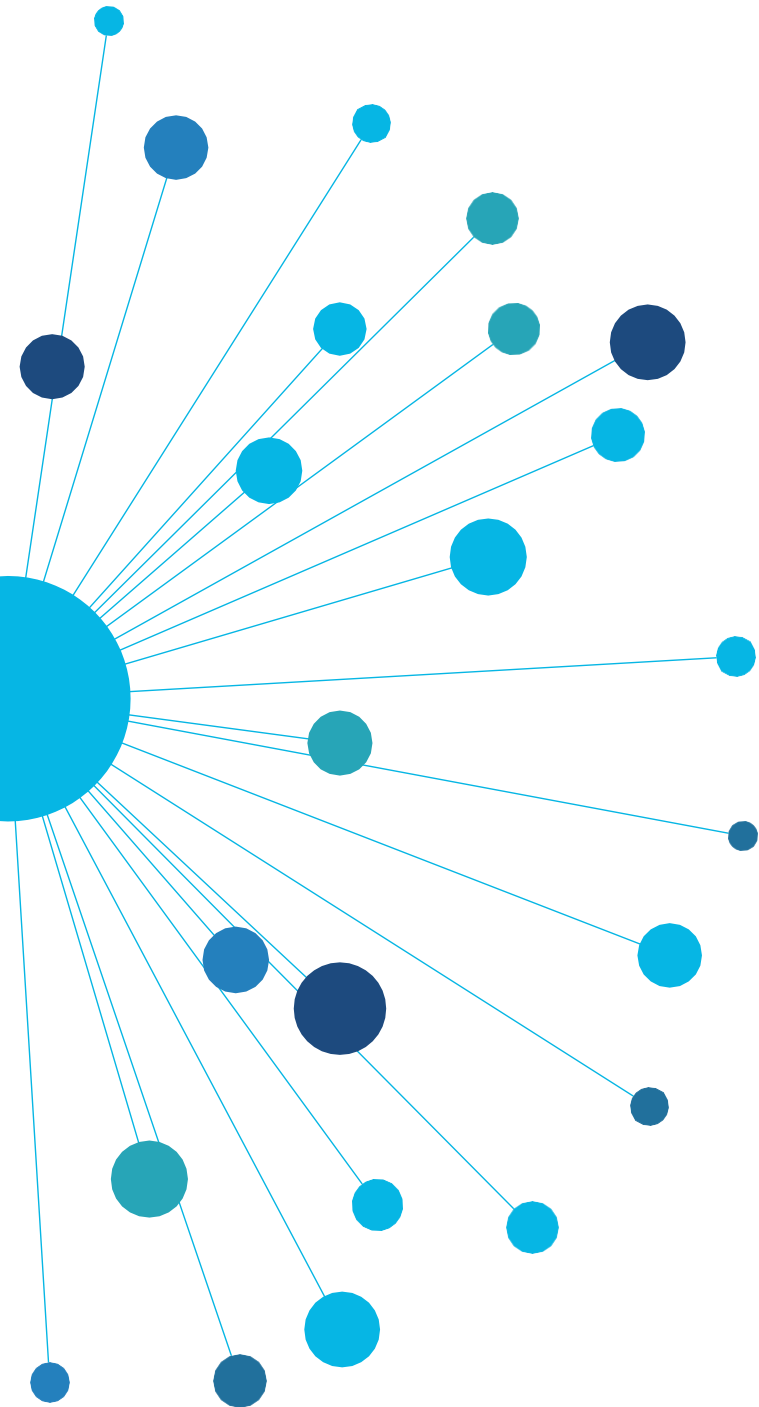


Queensland Independent
Remuneration Tribunal

Annual Report 2023–2024



About the Annual Report

The Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal is required under the *Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal Act 2013* (the Act) to prepare and give to the Clerk of the Parliament a written report about the operations of the Tribunal during each financial year.

The Annual Report provides information on the Tribunal, the Tribunal's key achievements during 2023–2024, its priorities ahead and a summary of the Tribunal's financial operations.

The Annual Report can be accessed online at www.remunerationtribunal.qld.gov.au

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Further information is available at <https://www.remunerationtribunal.qld.gov.au/tools/copyright.aspx>



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Letter of compliance

2 September 2024

Mr Neil Laurie
Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

I am pleased to present the Annual Report 2023-2024 for the Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal. This is the eleventh report issued under section 26 of the *Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal Act 2013* and complies with the provisions of that section.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Dunstan', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Professor Keitha Dunstan
Chair

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Message from the Chair

In 2023-2024, the State Government Entities Certified Agreement (Core Agreement) was certified, requiring the Tribunal to consider the base and additional salary levels for members for members of the Queensland Legislative Assembly in light of the increases in public service employee wages. On 8 December 2023, the Tribunal set annual and additional salary increases in Determination 29/2023. The increases aligned with public service salary increases under the Core Agreement. The salary increases have effect on and from 1 July 2023, 1 July 2024 and 1 July 2025.

Increases in average electoral roll enrolments over the previous 12 month period also led to a consideration of where the electorates sit in the Electorate and Communication Allowance Bands.

The Tribunal also considered the impact of inflationary pressures and cost of living increases on members' remuneration and, in the context of allowances and entitlements, on their ability to effectively service their electorate.

In response to these issues, the Tribunal adjusted the Electorate and Communication Allowance Bands and quantum of allowances paid to members in Determination 28/2023, with effect from 1 July 2023. The Tribunal further increased the allowances and entitlements paid to members in Determination 30/2024 following the Tribunal's annual review of the allowance system.

The Tribunal also considered the implications of fixed term election cycles on pre-paid allowances and made a determination that pro-rata arrangements are to apply to pre-paid allowances in a year in which a State General Election is held (Determination 31/2024).

Once again, I appreciate the contributions and support of my fellow members in undertaking the Tribunal's functions over the past year. I also thank the Clerk of the Parliament, on behalf of the Tribunal members, for his advice and insights provided through the consultation process.

I look forward to 2024-25 and the opportunity to continue to deliver the Tribunal's priorities, together with my fellow Tribunal members.



Professor Keitha Dunstan
Chair

About the Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal

1.1 Establishment

On 13 August 2013, the Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal (the Tribunal) was established as an independent statutory authority under the *Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal Act 2013* (the Act) to review and decide remuneration in connection with members and former members of the Queensland Legislative Assembly.

1.2 Members

Under the Act, the Tribunal consists of three persons appointed by the Governor in Council. The current chair, Professor Keitha Dunstan, Mr James (Jim) Varghese and Emeritus Professor Patrick Weller were appointed as members of the Tribunal for a term of three years commencing on 8 December 2022.

1.3 Remuneration of Tribunal members

In accordance with the Act, Tribunal members are appointed on a part-time basis and are paid the remuneration and allowances decided by the Governor in Council.

The remuneration of Tribunal members has been assessed in accordance with the *Remuneration Procedures for Part-Time Chairs and Members of Queensland Government Bodies* (the Remuneration Procedures) and set by the Governor in Council at Adjudication and Determination Level 2 of the Remuneration Procedures being meeting fees of \$520 for the Chair and \$400 for members (meeting of four hours or less).

1.4 Roles and functions of the Tribunal

Under section 7 of the Act, the Tribunal's functions are to:

- review remuneration in connection with members and former members
- review the additional staffing entitlement of cross bench members; and
- make binding decisions, known as 'determinations', about these matters – known as remuneration determinations and additional staff member determinations respectively.

For the purposes of the Act, 'remuneration' means salary, allowances or entitlements in connection with a member or former member, other than accommodation, services or other entitlements mentioned in section 59D'. Any salary increases are limited to those received by core public service employees under a public service salary decision (see section 31A of the Act).

In making a determination, the Tribunal:

- may inquire into and inform itself, of anything in the way it considers appropriate;
- may seek and receive written or oral statements from relevant entities;

- must have regard to effective and efficient processes in carrying out its functions; and
- must consult with and consider the view of the Clerk.

In making a remuneration determination, the Tribunal must ensure:

- any allowances paid to a member reflect the amount of reasonable expenses incurred by a member in servicing their electorate i.e. expenses to assist constituents;
- the allowances are not a substitute for other remuneration; and
- accommodation, services or other entitlements mentioned in section 59D of the Act are not taken into account.

The Tribunal may consider a range of matters when making a remuneration determination including, but not limited to:

- the value to the community of a member carrying out their role, functions and responsibilities;
- the importance of a member being appropriately remunerated for carrying out their role, functions and responsibilities;
- relevant laws that apply to members; and
- any other matter the Tribunal considers appropriate (e.g. the size of a member's electorate).

Section 59D of the Act provides that the Act (and therefore any remuneration determination) does not prevent a person from receiving the following:

- accommodation and services provided by the Parliamentary Service at Parliament House;
- accommodation and services provided in electorate offices, such as offices, staff, IT infrastructure and other major office equipment;
- entitlements a Minister or Assistant Minister receives to perform that role under *The Queensland Ministerial Handbook* <https://www.premiers.qld.gov.au/publications/categories/policies-and-codes/handbooks/ministerial-handbook.aspx>;
- entitlements the Leader of the Opposition receives to perform that role under *The Queensland Opposition Handbook* <https://www.premiers.qld.gov.au/publications/categories/policies-and-codes/opposition-handbook.aspx>;
- entitlements the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly receives under the *Guidelines for the Financial Management of the Office of the Speaker* <https://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/members/entitlements>; and
- entitlements arising out of a national or international arrangement.

In making an additional staff member determination, the Tribunal may have regard to the following:

- parliamentary resources provided to cross bench members and other members of the Legislative Assembly;
- the composition of the Legislative Assembly and how the composition affects cross bench members;
- the workload and duties of cross bench members for whom the Tribunal is considering to make the determination;
- whether the cross bench members are members of political parties;
- relevant laws applying to members; and
- other matters the Tribunal considers appropriate.

In performing its functions, the Tribunal must also act independently, impartially and fairly. The Tribunal is not subject to direction or control by any entity, including any Minister.

To ensure the Tribunal operates in a transparent manner, it must include written reasons for its determinations, provide a copy of determinations and reasons to the Clerk for tabling in Parliament and make the determination and reasons publicly available. All determinations and reasons are available on the Tribunal website at www.remunerationtribunal.qld.gov.au.

1.5 Code of Conduct

The Tribunal's Code of Conduct (Code) complies with the *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994* and is consistent with the Code of Conduct for the Queensland Public Service. In accordance with the *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994*, the Code has been approved by the Premier as Minister administering the Act.

The Code is part of the Tribunal's publication scheme and is available at <https://www.remunerationtribunal.qld.gov.au>.

1.6 Secretariat support

In accordance with the Act, the Tribunal receives assistance from the Chief Executive of the department that administers the Act (the Department of the Premier and Cabinet (DPC)).

The Secretariat consists of officers from DPC who provide support to the Tribunal on a part-time basis as required. The Secretariat assists the Tribunal in preparing meeting documents, drafting meeting minutes, completing action items, drafting research materials, compiling submissions and drafting determinations and other reports as advised by Tribunal members.

The Secretariat also coordinates support for the Tribunal in relation to the website design, communications, printing and other resourcing needs. This further support is provided in-kind by relevant sections of DPC.

Key activities 2023 – 2024

2.1 Tribunal Determinations 2023 – 2024

During 2023 – 2024, the Tribunal issued four determinations.

All Tribunal determinations including the reasons for the determination are available on the Tribunal's website at

<https://www.remunerationtribunal.qld.gov.au/determinations.aspx>.

Determination 28/2023

On 5 October 2023, the Tribunal determined to adjust the Electorate and Communication Allowance Bands with effect from 1 July 2023, with the allowance paid to members increasing by \$4,200 (band 1); \$4,300 (bands 2 and 3) and \$5,000 (band 4)

The Electorate and Communication Allowance (ECA) is provided to cover a range of expenditure associated with providing constituent assistance and service for the electorate, obtaining and disseminating information to constituents that is relevant to fulfilling parliamentary and constituency responsibilities and meeting incidental costs relating to the operation of a member's electorate office.

The ECA may not be used to meet expenditure for private or commercial purposes or to purchase goods and services where the member, or a connected party is the provider of the goods and services, for political party activity or for electioneering and campaigning purposes.

Electorates are grouped into four bands based on a formula which recognises the impact of both the number of electors and land area on usage of the ECA.

In making the determination, the Tribunal considered the impact of continuing increases in the number of electors and the need to continue to differentiate ECA bands based on both electoral roll figures and area of electorate (km²).

The changes are set out in Determination 28/2023.

Determination 29/2023

On 8 December 2023, the Tribunal determined to increase the annual and additional salary rates of members of the Legislative Assembly by: 4.00% with effect on and from 1 July 2023; 4.00% with effect on and from 1 July 2024; and 3.00% with effect on and from 1 July 2025.

On 23 October 2023, the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission (QIRC) certified the State Government Entities Certified Agreement 2023 (2023 Agreement). The Tribunal considered this a 'public service salary decision' meaning the Tribunal was required to make a remuneration determination about a member's salary entitlement.

In making the remuneration determination, the Tribunal considered the *State Wage Case 2022* and decisions of the Fair Work Commission, as well as economic factors and remuneration arrangements in other jurisdictions.

The Tribunal considered that the salary increases provided to public service employees in the 2023 Agreement were largely consistent with the actual and forecasted rates of inflation. The 4% increase in public service salaries for 2023 was considered by the Tribunal modest in comparison to inflation, and economic indices did not support a decision to set a salary increase lower than that provided to public service employees.

Determination 30/2024

On 19 February 2024, the Tribunal determined to increase all bands of the Electorate and Communication Allowance and the High Enrolment Supplement by 4.0% with effect from 1 July 2023. The Tribunal also determined to increase all bands of the Motor Vehicle Allowance by 3.0% and increase all bands of the General Travel Allocation by 4.0%, with effect from 1 January 2024.

The Tribunal also reviewed members' expenditure of allowances and considered a range of economic indices and reports, previous decisions of the Tribunal, and allowances for members in other jurisdictions.

Determination 31/2024

On 16 May 2024, the Tribunal determined pro-rata arrangements would apply to pre-paid allowances for members when an ordinary general election occurs during the period to which the allowance relates.

The ECA allowance is paid in two instalments annually. The Motor Vehicle Allowance is paid quarterly.

The pro-rata arrangements will apply to the ECA and the Motor Vehicle Allowance for the period affected by the State General election, from 1 July to 31 December 2024. Normal allowance payments recommence from 1 January following the ordinary general election.

The Tribunal noted the potential impacts of pre-paid allowance payments on members in the context of an ordinary general election, where a member may not retain their Parliamentary position, and noted the policy previously set in similar circumstances in Determination 19/2019.

Details of the pro-rata arrangements are set out in Determination 31/2024.

2.2 Tribunal meetings

The Tribunal held meetings on three occasions from 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024. Meetings were usually held in person at 1 William Street, Brisbane, however, when required, members also attended via video conferencing software.

Minutes were produced for each meeting in accordance with the Act.

Tribunal members communicated via telephone and email outside of formal meetings to consider issues, draft and finalise documentation.

Priorities for 2024 – 2025

In 2024-2025, the Tribunal will undertake its annual review of allowances and entitlements to ensure the quantum of the allowances is adequate to enable members to service their electorates and support their constituents. The Tribunal will also consider electoral roll figures and their impact on the allowances as part of this review.

The next remuneration determination is due to be made by 15 May 2025, however the annual review of allowances, entitlements and allocations is expected to be undertaken before that date.

Additionally, under the Act, the Tribunal is required to make an additional staff member determination (for cross bench members) within three months after the Legislative Assembly is next summoned under section 15(1) of the *Constitution of Queensland 2001*.

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Financial summary

The Financial Statement for the Tribunal has been prepared on an accrual basis in accordance with the prescribed requirements. DPC provides secretariat support to the Tribunal. The revenues and expenses recognised for the Tribunal do not include allocations for corporate support and executive management services which are provided in-kind by DPC.

Financial Statement for the year ended 30 June 2024¹

	NOTE	2023-24	2022-23
	2		
Revenue from ordinary activities		\$	\$
Departmental services revenue		8,185	6,345
Total revenue from ordinary activities		8,185	6,345
Tribunal Member Fees and related costs	3	7,793	5,702
Expenses from ordinary activities			
Supplies and services			
Subscriptions		307	-
Other consumables		85	191
Travel costs		-	452
Total supplies and services		392	643
Total expenses from ordinary activities		8,185	6,345
Net Operating Result		-	-

Notes to and forming part of the financial statement:

1. This financial statement for the Tribunal and associated notes has not been audited. Full audited statements will be available in the DPC 2023-24 Annual Report.
2. Comparative data has been included for the Tribunal for the period ended 30 June 2023. This comparative data was for the Tribunal's tenth year of operation.
3. The table below provides total remuneration for members of the Tribunal. The table includes actual payments made to members, not accruals or other state obligations as at 30 June 2024.

2023-2024

Remuneration Table			
Member	Short Term	Post Employment	Total Remuneration
DUNSTAN, Keitha L ¹	\$3,067	\$286	\$3,353
VARGHESE, James C N ¹	\$2,400	\$264	\$2,664
WELLER, Patrick M	\$1,600	\$176	\$1,776
	\$7,067	\$726	\$7,793

1. Includes fees for meeting attended during 2022-23 financial year.