

Councils making an allowance

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

An allowance is meant to help an elected member discharge his or her duties and is "not intended to amount to a salary", according to the Local Government Act.

Council allowances are set by the Remuneration Tribunal every four years prior to an election, but are increased annually on the date of the last election based on a complex formula in the Local Government Regulations.

Independent MLC John Darley slammed the allowance hikes as "astronomical" and "over the top".

He called on Local Government Minister Stephan Knoll to tether allowance increases to the rate of inflation as part of the State Government's local government reforms.

"They shouldn't get any more than CPI," Mr Darley said. "The Consumer Price Index is based on the increase in the cost of things and if this allowance is to pay for those things, then why should it exceed that?"

Local Government Association president Sam Telfer did not answer questions as to whether the allowance increase was justified – but he said his organisation did not seek an increase from the Remuneration Tribunal last year. He was open to working on a simplified method for determining pay rises.