



VICTORIAN LOCAL GOVERNANCE ASSOCIATION

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## Media Release – 10 April 2008

### **Disappointed But Willing To Fight On Over Councillor Remuneration**

A peak body for Councillors and community groups today had mixed reactions to announcements by the State Government to increase Councillor Remuneration and Support.

“Only the VLGA mounted a substantial case for a number of elements in today’s decision, the Victorian Local Governance Association’s Acting President Cr Janet Rice said.

“So we are very pleased in winning Superannuation to be paid on top of allowances, a minimum toolkit to allow Councillors to effectively represent local residents, and a willingness of the State Government to consider Workcover coverage for elected Councillors.

“All 79 Local Governments face elections for new four year terms in November this year. Existing Councillors and would-be candidates will be disappointed that today’s announcement does not deliver the progressive and sweeping changes that had been expected. The government has failed to embrace the opportunity presented to it by the most thorough review of these issues in Victoria’s history.

“The government’s rhetoric and today’s sheepish announcement do not align.

“We are seeking clarification on whether adjustments will automatically occur in the future in line with the State Services Authority review of increases that apply to Victorian Statutory and Executive Officers. In the past these have not always been annual increases although they have usually been just above CPI.

These and other elements were recommended by an Independent Panel set up by the State Government to thoroughly review Councillor Remuneration and Support for the first time since 2000, and adopted by Cabinet recently.

“Of course the quantum of increases falls short of our well-researched and argued recommendations, so we are also disappointed about this.

“Our campaign was not just about money. It was also about supporting local communities to better engage in local governance by supporting a fair balance between family and paid work for Councillors. We continue to be concerned that less and less people will be willing to stand as candidates once they become aware of the likely financial and social impacts on them and their loved ones.

“The VLGA will continue to work hard to ensure that research and reviews in the future shine a realistic light on the changing roles of Councillors.

“We will continue to urge others to ‘look through modern 21<sup>st</sup> Century glasses’ when considering Councillor Remuneration and Support. But we recognise that until Australia’s governance system is fundamentally reformed, we have to continue to take 2 steps forward and one step back, “ Cr Rice concluded.

**RELEASE ENDS**

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