

**SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
BUDGET ESTIMATES 2009-10**

**Outcome** 5

**DEEWR Question No.** EW0145\_10

Senator Brown provided in writing.

**Question**

For each of the past five years how many MPs or senators, or their staff, have been consulted about:

- a. MPs' salaries
- b. electoral allowances
- c. other matters?

**Answer**

The Remuneration Tribunal Secretariat has provided the following response.

The 'base salary' of members is derived, by regulation, from the Tribunal's determination of the classification structure for Principal Executive Offices. The Tribunal has not had the authority to determine 'base salary' of members since 1990. The Tribunal has therefore not sought the views of members about 'base salary'.

The Tribunal determines additional salaries for parliamentary office holders. Since 1999, additional salaries have been specified as percentages of 'base salary'. The Tribunal has not received any submissions about its determination of additional salaries and has not varied their expression generally.

From time to time, the Tribunal has made minor adjustments to its determination of additional salaries for parliamentary office holders. In doing so, the Tribunal seeks to educate the perspectives of the office holders concerned or the appropriate senior parliamentary office holders. In 2008, for example, the Tribunal proposed changes to nomenclature and to rates for certain parliamentary offices. The Tribunal finalised its position after seeking the views of parliamentary parties rather than members generally and relevant office holders.

The Tribunal has expressed views publicly about the remuneration of members in Annual Reports. MPs and senators have not provided the Tribunal with advice or information subsequent to these recent Annual Reports.

Any MP or senator may make a submission to the Tribunal, at any time, about any aspect of their entitlements determined by the Tribunal. The Tribunal's principal determinations set out the relevant entitlements; they are available on the Tribunal's web site at <http://www.remtribunal.gov.au/>

The Tribunal engages directly with any MP or senator who makes a submission, generally responding by providing advice or information in writing. Tribunal records indicate that, since

2005, there has been correspondence between the following numbers of parliamentarians and the Tribunal:

<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
8	21	4	23	10

Some entitlements determined by the Tribunal are of greater relevance to Members of the House of Representatives representing the largest electorates. Charter Allowance is one such example. The Tribunal met with members representing Australia's five largest electorates in 2006, and the six largest electorates in 2009, specifically to discuss their particular circumstances.

The Tribunal consults directly with senior parliamentary office holders representing the majority of members. Such consultation enables the Tribunal to inform itself about relevant parliamentary developments affecting members generally. In this regard, the Tribunal has met with the Chief Government Whip and the Chief Opposition Whip of the House of Representatives on several occasions. The Tribunal also consults with the Minister responsible for the administration of those parliamentary entitlements determined by the Tribunal.

More generally, the Tribunal seeks the views of Ministers - occasionally directly but primarily in writing - about public offices for which they have portfolio responsibility and for which the Tribunal determines remuneration and other entitlements.