

**16 Dec 2025**

## **Item 5.9: Allocation of Taupō District Council's Governance Remuneration Pool**

In reviewing Item 5.9 on elected member remuneration, it's important to clarify that the only difference between the three proposed options is the share of the pool allocated to the Deputy Mayor.

- Option A sets the Deputy's salary at 1.68x the base councillor rate.
- Option B represents the current status quo at 1.6x.
- Option C, which I support, proposes 1.4x.

While this may sound minor, the difference is close to \$10,000, and because we are bound by a fixed remuneration pool, any increase for one person must come at the expense of the rest.

What raises most concern for me is that this Deputy Mayor weighting has already increased significantly. As recently as 2022, it was set at 1.2x the base rate. That means Option A represents a 40% pay increase in just three years - from \$48K when Christine Rankin was in the role, to a proposed \$67K. The significant increase that happened at the beginning of last term was not transparently explained to us new elected members of 2022, and it still has not been explained this time either.

I must acknowledge that during the previous term, the Deputy was required to step up frequently due to the Mayor's health-related absences which he did quite diligently. But we are no longer in that situation.

So I ask: Why should the Deputy Mayor role continue to warrant such a high weighting?

From what I understand, the position's formal responsibilities are limited to filling in for the Mayor or chairing the Water Services Committee when required. That may justify a modest differential - but certainly not one of the highest in the country. Based on a review I did of 2024/25 remuneration data from councils across the country, around 75% of other councils allocate a lower weighting to their Deputy Mayor role than we are being asked to endorse here.

I believe Option C (1.4x) is a fair and principled stance. It still reflects a substantial \$14K premium above the 2022 figure, and recognises the Deputy's additional responsibilities - but without overstating it at the expense of the wider team and thereby also minimising our own contributions. Finally, while this debate is about remuneration, I'd be remiss to not raise a broader concern – and that is the steady increase in influence which has been granted to the Deputy position than the rest of us. Remuneration won't fix that, but getting these numbers right will be a step toward restoring that balance.