

Media Release

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Have your say on bus fares in rural and regional NSW

We are reviewing fares for local bus services in rural and regional NSW. We will set the maximum fares that bus companies can charge for these services from January 2021 to December 2025.

"IPART is very aware that people have been doing it tough in rural and regional communities with drought, bushfires and now COVID-19.

"We want to ensure that fares are reasonable and services keep improving," said IPART Chair Dr Paul Paterson.

The review will have a specific focus on people facing transport challenges.

"Our aim is to set fares so that people with limited transport options - such as those who can't drive or can't afford a car- have access to services," said Dr Paterson.

We want to encourage the NSW Government to provide the right transport services and promote the use of buses in communities.

We also want to encourage innovation, while still ensuring that bus companies can cover their costs.

To help us decide what fares should be, we would like to hear what residents in rural and regional areas think of those services and how much they should cost to use.

"We review rural and regional bus fares every few years. Last time, we lowered fares for a range of trips. We also made them simpler by reducing the number of different fares on offer and introducing new daily tickets.

"This time around we will look at the impact of those changes and consider whether more reforms are needed. We will also look at how fares compare with Opal fares in Sydney and with Government-funded coach fares." said Dr Paterson

We are releasing two issues papers as the first step in our review process. We are encouraging anyone who is interested in the review to go to our website (<https://www.ipart.nsw.gov.au/Home/Industries/Transport/Reviews/Rural-and-Regional-Buses/Rural-and-Regional-Bus-Fares-2021-2025>) for more information and to consider filling in the survey or making a submission.

Submissions on the Issues paper close on August 7. IPART will release a draft report on fares in October and will seek feedback on it.

We will also visit a number of regional centres. At the moment we propose to hold public meetings in the Central West, North Coast, New England/North West and Riverina/Murray regions.

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