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Maximum fares for rank and hail taxi services from 1 July 2025

Final Report

May 2025

Transport »



Acknowledgment of Country

IPART acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands where we work and live. We pay respect to Elders both past and present.

We recognise the unique cultural and spiritual relationship and celebrate the contributions of First Nations peoples.

Tribunal Members

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The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal

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1 Executive Summary

Taxis caught from a taxi rank or hailed from the street offer convenient and efficient point to point transport for passengers without the need to book a service. However, passengers using rank or hail services do not have the same opportunity to shop around for prices or providers that passengers using booked services do, so the Government sets the maximum fare components that taxis can charge when they are obtained at a rank or by hailing. These regulated maximum fares also apply to trips booked under the Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme (TTSS). Fares for all other types of booked taxi trips are not regulated, but the passenger must receive an estimate of the fare in advance.

IPART was asked to review and make recommendations on maximum rank and hail taxi fares to apply from 1 July 2025. Transport for NSW (TfNSW) will consider IPART's recommendations when setting new maximum fares through a fares order to apply from 1 July 2025.

IPART aims to drive more efficient, effective, affordable and sustainable services for the people of NSW through our reviews. While we acknowledge the change and disruption the taxi industry has faced and continues to face, we also note the opportunities this presents for innovation and alternative ways of doing business.

This review has highlighted the importance and timeliness of industry adaptation to market factors. We encourage an openness for change in the coming years, and we promote this evolution before the next fare review takes place.

We have worked to balance the differing views we have heard, with equal regard to passengers and industry. Feedback was the catalyst for making many changes between our Draft and Final Report. We are very grateful for all of our stakeholders' time and input throughout the course of this review.

IPART has made recommendations for urban and country fare schedules, a fixed fare trial for Sydney Airport to Sydney CBD (postcode 2000) trips, annual indexation to adjust fares in future until the next review, time frames for the next review, the application of the maxi taxi surcharge and customer receipts. Our recommendations aim to address the issues we discovered throughout the review process, which include:

- instances of taxi supply and demand imbalance, particularly for
 - wheelchair accessible services
 - services for passengers travelling short distances
 - services for passengers leaving Sydney Airport
- sustainable competition within the taxi industry
- transparency and accountability.

This Final Report sets out our recommendations for rank and hail taxi services and the other matters which arose from our review. It also outlines our findings, our approach and how we have incorporated feedback in the development of our final recommendations.

1.1 IPART was asked to review fares for rank and hail taxi services

IPART was asked to review maximum **rank and hail** taxi fares under section 74(1) of the *Point to Point Transport (Taxi and Hire Vehicles) Act 2016* (the Act). The Terms of Reference (ToR) direct us to prepare a report that provides:

- a pricing framework and methodology for maximum fares from 1 July 2025 and a methodology for reviewing and adjusting fares in future
- a level and methodology for maxi taxi fares, circumstances for applicability and impacts on wheelchair accessible taxi availability.

In making our investigations we must consider, among other things:

- affordability and availability of taxi services for people with disability
- application of different maximum fare schedules for country and urban areas of NSW
- the cost of providing the services, the need for greater efficiency in the supply of services, consumer protections and social impacts, as well as any other matters which we consider relevant.

We have carefully weighed all matters in our ToR to arrive at appropriate recommended maximum fare schedules. You can find our ToR in full at Appendix A to this report. In addition, we were asked to specifically look at the pricing methodology for fares from Sydney Airport to areas such as the Sydney CBD. You can find the letter from the Minister for Transport requesting us to investigate this at Appendix B to this report.

The ways in which we have met the requirements of our ToR have been mapped at Appendix C to this report.

1.2 Our final recommendations and finding at a glance

Recommendations

| | | |
|----|---|----|
| 1. | That TfNSW: | 19 |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. retain two fare schedules for maximum urban and country rank and hail fares b. retain the existing fare components (hiring charge ('flag fall'), peak time hiring charge (urban only), distance rate, night distance rate, holiday distance rate (country only), waiting time (charged when travelling at less than 26km/h)) c. adopt the following maximum fare schedule for the Urban Fare Area – Table 3.1 d. adopt the following maximum fare schedule for the Country Fare Area – Table 3.1. | |
| 2. | That TfNSW increase each maximum fare component and the Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Driver Incentive Subsidy ('lift fee') annually by CPI (All Capitals) from 1 July 2026. | 20 |
| 3. | That the next review of maximum rank and hail taxi fares be conducted: | 20 |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. for maximum fares to apply from 1 July 2030 b. or prior, if circumstances change, or the findings or outcomes of the forthcoming review under section 161 of the <i>Point to Point Transport (Taxis and Hire Vehicles) Act 2016</i> indicate a need for an earlier review of taxi fares. | |

| | | |
|----|--|----|
| 4. | That TfNSW conduct a trial of fixed fares for taxi trips from Sydney Airport to the Sydney CBD (defined as postcode 2000), with regard to the conditions set out in Table 5.2, with a maximum fare set at: | 41 |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. \$60 for standard taxis, and b. \$80 for maxi taxis. | |
| 5. | That TfNSW allow a 50% surcharge to be charged for a rank or hail taxi service in a maxi taxi: | 43 |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. when hired by 5 or more passengers (as is currently the case), or b. when a maxi taxi is requested by the hirer at any of the Sydney Airport taxi ranks, other than for the carriage of a person who requires wheelchair accessible service, c. and that TfNSW ensures there is a clear communication system about the applicability of the maxi taxi surcharge from the airport. | |
| 6. | That the Government require digital or paper receipts provided in accordance with Australian Consumer Law at the conclusion of any rank or hail taxi service to clearly itemise all applicable cost components for the trip's fare, including: | 62 |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the metered fare b. road tolls c. extras, such as the Sydney Airport Ground Transport Access Fee d. Passenger Service Levy e. GST f. any non-cash payment surcharges | |
| 7. | That the Government require digital or paper receipts provided in accordance with Australian Consumer Law, for any taxi service (including booked) to clearly provide the following driver/vehicle identifications: | 62 |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. taxi service provider b. taxi service provider contact number or website c. taxi plate number d. driver ID | |

Findings

| | | |
|----|--|----|
| 1. | IPART endorses the reforms and related funding outlined in the NSW Government's response to the 'Availability of Wheelchair Accessible Services Roundtables' Key Findings Report, including the \$25 standard lift fee and night and public holiday rates. | 40 |
|----|--|----|

1.2.1 We recommend increases to the maximum taxi fare schedules from 1 July 2025

Our recommendation is to retain the existing two fare schedules for urban and country areas, and to retain the existing fare components (e.g. flag fall and distance rate). Our recommended fare schedule incorporates increases to all fare components by various amounts:

- our urban fare schedule recommendation increases flag fall and the distance rate for the first 12km of a trip to encourage drivers to accept passengers seeking short trips
- our country fare schedule maintains our draft recommendation, of an increased flag fall and 2.2% increase in all fare components to reflect 2024/25 forecast inflation.

We recommend that each maximum fare component and the Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Driver Incentive Subsidy ('lift fee') increase annually by CPI (All Capitals) from 1 July 2026. We recommend the next review of fares to occur in 5 years' time, or earlier if circumstances change or the findings of the forthcoming review under section 161 of the *Point to Point Transport (Taxis and Hire Vehicles) Act 2016* indicate a need for an earlier review of fares.

The full recommended maximum fare schedules are set out in Table 1.1 below.

Table 1.1 Recommended maximum rank and hail fare schedules from 1 July 2025

| Fare Component | Urban | Country |
|--|---|---|
| Hire charge (flag fall) | \$5.00 | \$5.11 |
| Peak time hiring charge (payable in addition to flag fall) ^a | \$2.56 | N/A |
| Distance rate/km | \$2.52 (first 12 km) \$2.29 thereafter | \$2.41 (first 12 km) \$3.30 thereafter |
| Night rate/km ^b (and holiday distance rate ^c in country areas) | \$3.00 (first 12 km) \$2.73 thereafter | \$2.87 (first 12 km) \$3.93 thereafter |
| Waiting time charge (when travelling under 26 km/h) | \$65.52/hr (109.2c/min) | \$62.67/hr (104.5c/min) |
| Maxi taxi surcharge | 150% max fare | 150% max fare |

a. Applied in addition to the flag fall, 10pm – 6am on Fridays, Saturdays, and evenings prior to Public Holidays

b. Applies between 10pm – 6am all nights of the week

c. Applies between 10pm – 6am all nights of the week, and all days on Sundays and Public Holidays

d. The maxi taxi surcharge may only be charged if it is hired from a taxi zone or street hail to carry 5 or more passengers. We are also recommending this it is charged if the vehicle is requested by the hirer at the Sydney Airport taxi ranks, other than for the carriage of a person who uses a wheelchair or mobility aid.

1.2.2 We recommend a trial of fixed taxi fares from Sydney Airport to the Sydney CBD

We recommend a trial of fixed fares from the Sydney Airport taxi ranks to any part of Sydney CBD (postcode 2000), set at \$60 for standard taxis and \$80 for maxi taxis, inclusive of tolls, charges and the Passenger Service Levy.

1.2.3 Other observations stemming from our review




In addition to our recommended changes to the urban and country fare schedules, indexation, review period and fixed fare trial conditions from Sydney Airport to the CBD, we have made some additional findings based on our observations:

- The sufficiency of WAT reforms to help address supply imbalances
- Taxi receipt itemisation and identification requirements, to improve transparency and accountability for all passengers.

All our recommendations and findings are described in more detail below.

1.3 What we heard from stakeholders about our Draft Report

We received 15 stakeholder submissions to our Draft Report. Feedback widely varied, but key themes included:

| | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
|  <p>Driver's income too low</p> <p>Cost of living too high</p> |  <p>High flag fall will cause 'meter shock'</p> <p>Draft fare levels disadvantage long trips</p> |  <p>Airport \$55 flat fare too low</p> <p>Impacts of traffic on fare</p> <p>Passenger should choose route</p> |  <p>Competition has decreased taxi demand</p> <p>Low comparative costs of operating rideshare</p> |
|--|--|--|---|

We heard extensive feedback from stakeholders about cost of living pressures and low driver income. Industry sought large fare level increases to improve driver income.

We acknowledge that the cost of living has increased since our last review but note that these changes impact drivers and passengers. Increasing fare components to solely benefit taxi revenue would be at the detriment of passengers' ability to pay. However, taxi fares have become more affordable in real terms over time as they haven't increased substantially in nominal terms in the past 10 years.

We note that taxi driver income is influenced by the differing arrangements and business structures that exist between drivers, taxi networks and taxi service providers (TSPs), in addition to maximum rank and hail fares.

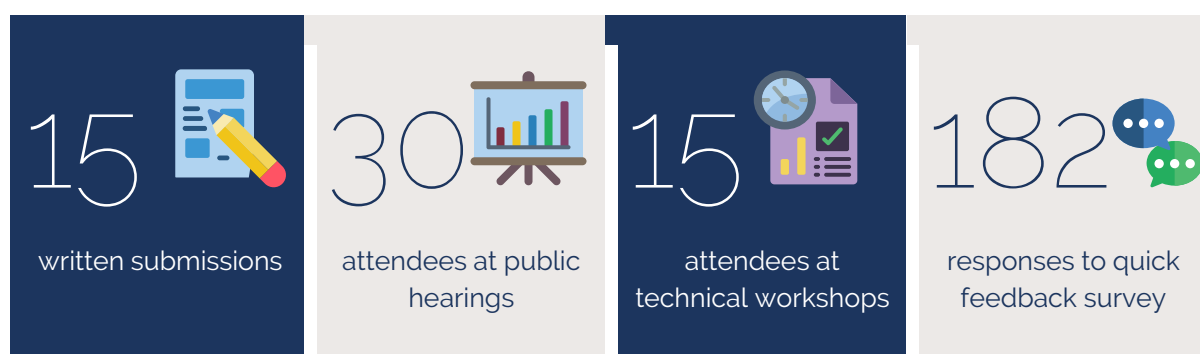
Stakeholders reported that a \$5.11 flag fall would not improve the short fare refusal problem and would cause 'meter shock' to passengers which in turn would encourage increased rideshare and public transport uptake. Stakeholders also suggested a declining distance rate after 12km would penalise drivers who typically take longer trips. There were also calls to extend the night tariff hours to attract more drivers to work at night.

Stakeholders provided commentary on the centralised booking system for WATs and the challenges regarding integration and technology. Some stakeholders welcomed the announcement of driver training but requested it be mandatory and subsidised to increase uptake and benefit wheelchair-using passengers. One stakeholder requested an expansion to night tariff hours and eligible public holidays to increase supply when WAT passengers need it most.

Stakeholders were generally supportive of a trial of fixed fares from Sydney Airport to the Sydney CBD but feedback was mixed on CBD definition, fare inclusions and route preference. The majority of stakeholders indicated our proposed draft fixed fare of \$55 was too low and it did not adequately account for changes in traffic conditions or destinations at the northern end of the city. As a result of this feedback, we undertook additional analysis on the costs associated with providing airport to the city trips.

We also heard that competition via the introduction of rideshare and hire vehicles has decreased demand for rank and hail services. Throughout the review, stakeholders continued to express their dissatisfaction with the perceived inequalities associated with operating rideshare compared to taxis¹.

In addition to the feedback we received on our Draft Report, we engaged with stakeholders across a number of forums at all stages of the review:



1.4 Changes to our recommendations since our Draft Report

In response to stakeholder feedback and further analysis, we have made the following key changes from our draft recommendations to the final recommendations in this Final Report:

- We adjusted our draft recommended urban fare schedule to maintain a relative increase in the price of short fares, but without reducing the price of the longest trips.
- We now recommend that the next review of taxi fares be conducted in 5 years' time (to apply from 1 July 2030), unless circumstances change. Our draft recommendation was for the next review to be in 3 years' time.
- We revised our recommendation for a Sydney Airport to CBD (postcode 2000) all-inclusive fare level be set at \$60 for standard taxis (compared to the draft recommended level of \$55) and \$80 for maxi taxis (compared to the draft recommended level of \$75) to reflect the impact of our final urban fare recommendations and the possibility of changes to tolls and other charges throughout trial duration.

- We clarify that taxi receipts should be itemised, can be paper or digital, and are to be provided in line with Australian Consumer Law.

These, and other changes, are described in more detail below.

1.5 How do the recommended fares compare to current fares?

Our recommendations incorporate increases to all the current fare components to address issues we found through our supply and demand analysis and to reflect feedback which we received through stakeholder submissions.

We are recommending:

- an increase in flag fall for both urban and country fare areas
- a higher distance rate for short fares in the urban fare area, to encourage drivers to take shorter trips
- the introduction of a new two-tiered structure for the standard distance rate for urban fares, whereby there are separate rates for the first 12km and thereafter
- an overall 2.2% increase for country rank and hail fares, to reflect general inflation in 2024/25.

We are also recommending an adjustment of the waiting time rate in both fare schedules to align with the distance rate and the waiting time speed cutoff (26 km/h).

We outline our analysis and considerations in making our fare schedule recommendations in Chapter 3.

1.5.1 Urban fare schedule

Table 1.2 below compares our recommended maximum fare schedule with our draft recommendation, and the current Fares Order for urban fares.

Table 1.2 Recommended maximum fare components for urban rank and hail taxi services compared to current levels

| Fare component | Current fares | Draft recommendation | Final recommendation |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|---|
| Hire charge (flag fall) | \$3.60 | \$5.11 | \$5.00 |
| Peak time charge ^a | \$2.50 | \$2.56 | \$2.56 |
| Distance rate/km | \$2.29 | \$2.34 (first 12 km) \$2.11 thereafter | \$2.52 (first 12 km) \$2.29 thereafter |
| Night rate ^b /km | \$2.73 | \$2.79 (first 12 km) \$2.51 thereafter | \$3.00 (first 12 km) \$2.73 thereafter |
| Waiting time | \$56.68/hour (94.4c/min) | \$60.85/hr (101.4c/min) | \$65.52/hr (109.2c/min) |

a. Applied in addition to the flag fall, 10pm – 6am on Fridays, Saturdays, and evenings prior to Public Holidays

b. Applies between 10pm – 6am all nights of the week

The recommended urban fare schedule adjusts maximum fares so that:

- maximum fares for short trips (less than 12km) will be slightly higher (between \$2 and \$5)

- maximum fares for longer trips (above 12km) will be higher by around \$5.

1.5.2 Country fare schedule

In addition to the 2.2% inflation increase, the final recommended country fare schedule incorporates a small increase to the flag fall from the existing rate but no change from the Draft Report. Overall, the recommended fare schedule means that maximum rank and hail fares for all trips in the country fare area will be around 3-9% more than their current levels, depending on the length of the trip. Table 1.3 below compares final recommended maximum fare schedule with the current Fares Order for country fares.

Table 1.3 Recommended maximum fare components for country rank and hail taxi services compared to current levels

| Fare Component | Current level | Draft and final recommendation |
|-----------------------------|---|---|
| Hire charge (flag fall) | \$4.10 | \$5.11 |
| Distance rate/km | \$2.36 (first 12 km) \$3.23 thereafter | \$2.41 (first 12 km) \$3.30 thereafter |
| Night rate ^a /km | \$2.81 (first 12 km) \$3.85 thereafter | \$2.87 (first 12 km) \$3.93 thereafter |
| Waiting time | \$57.65/hour (96c/min) | \$62.67/hr (104.5c/min) |

a. Applies between 10pm – 6am all nights of the week, and all days on Sundays and Public Holidays

1.6 Fares should be set so that passengers can get rank and hail services in a timely fashion at an appropriate price

If passengers have to wait a long time to get a rank or hail taxi service, it suggests that fares are not high enough to attract sufficient taxi service providers at current levels. On the other hand, if passengers do not have to wait, but taxis spend a long time waiting for a fare at a rank or while cruising, it suggests that fares are too high and potential passengers are seeking alternatives such as booked trips in hire vehicles, public transport, or not travelling at all.

We recommend fares that allow passengers to get rank and hail taxi services in a timely fashion at an appropriate price. Therefore, our approach to the review considered evidence about the balance of supply of and demand for rank and hail taxi services at current fare levels, as well as considering the other matters in our ToR. This includes the costs of providing services, need for efficiency, consumer protection and social impacts.

In a competitive market, fares should adjust to a level that meets the efficient costs of providing services. Fares for booked services in taxis are no longer regulated so taxi service providers already have the opportunity to innovate and compete with each other and other forms of point to point transport on fares as well as service quality in the booked trip market. We also considered the availability of substitutes to see whether there is enough competition for rank and hail services to suggest that these fares could be deregulated as well.

1.7 We found that supply of and demand for rank and hail taxi trips is mostly in balance at current fare levels

We looked at evidence about passenger waiting times for rank and hail taxis from a range of sources and we found that, on the whole, supply and demand for rank and hail taxi services are in balance. This suggests that the current level of fares is on average about the right level to induce a sufficient supply of rank and hail taxi services to meet passenger demand.

We discuss our analysis of supply and demand in section 3.6.1.

1.7.1 We found 3 situations where supply of and demand for urban rank and hail taxi services are not balanced

In the following situations we found that there was either excess supply or excess demand for taxi services:



Wheelchair accessible services

There is significant unmet demand and excessive waiting times for passengers who need a wheelchair accessible taxi (WAT).



Services for passengers travelling short distances

There was undersupply caused by drivers refusing to supply services.



Services for passengers leaving Sydney Airport

There is an excess supply of taxis, as evidenced by taxis sometimes waiting hours for a passenger, and evidence of over-charging behaviour by taxi drivers.

We therefore considered ways to adjust fares as well as other approaches to address these issues. We discuss our analysis of these 3 types of supply-demand imbalance in section 4.6.2.

1.8 We considered other factors when developing fare schedule recommendations

We discuss how these additional considerations fed into our fare recommendations in Chapter 3.

1.8.1 We compared NSW rank and hail taxi fares with taxi fares in other states, and prices for other transport services

We found NSW taxi fares are comparable to **other Australian jurisdictions** in terms of level and structure. For most trips, NSW taxi fares are either on or slightly above the average across equivalent trips. However, flag fall in NSW is among the lowest, and distance rates among the highest.

Although not part of the fare, we looked at the Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Driver Incentive Subsidy (WATDIS or 'lift fee') that the NSW Government pays to the taxi driver for each TTSS wheelchair job. The NSW WATDIS payment was previously \$15, which was lower than most similar schemes in other jurisdictions across Australia. However, in December 2024, the NSW Government announced, and in March 2025 implemented, an increase to the payment to \$25 (with additional rates during nights and public holidays), which brings the lift fee in line with most other jurisdictions.

We analysed **rideshare fares** for various trips in the Sydney metro area. Fares were overall lower than taxis apart from during surge events. For standard fares during the day, rideshare was 20-40% lower than the equivalent taxi trip depending on the route.

We found that **booked taxi fares** were very similar to our estimates using the rank and hail fare schedule.

1.8.2 We considered the affordability of rank and hail fares and found that it has improved

NSW taxi fare components have been largely unchanged since 2014. In January 2023, fare components increased by 10c/km on each of the distance charges (in response to a spike in fuel costs).

Other price changes for passengers include changes in tolls over time, and the addition of the Passenger Service Levy (now \$1.32, incl GST) that funds taxi industry adjustment.

Nevertheless, taxi fares are considerably more affordable than they were in 2014, as both CPI and wage inflation have outpaced taxi fare increases.

1.8.3 We found that substitutes for rank and hail taxi services are becoming more readily available

Rank and hail fares are regulated on the basis that consumers still require protection from price-gouging when they are not in a position to shop around for alternatives. However, substitutes for rank and hail services are more readily available through mobile phone apps and rank and hail work is reported as decreasing in importance to the industry.

1.8.4 We found that the costs of providing taxi services are structured differently from 10 years ago, but are unlikely to have increased overall

Rank and hail taxi service providers and drivers incur costs to provide services, including fuel, tolls, radio network fees, vehicle purchase, fit-out and maintenance, insurance, and registration fees. The different arrangements between drivers and operators determine how these costs are shared. Revenue from fares must also cover the cost of driver and taxi service provider labour.

We gathered data on costs of providing taxi services via our annual point to point transport survey. While not always directly comparable to previous surveys due to methodology differences, we found that costs in real terms are unlikely to have increased. For example, licence fees used to be a significant cost category (around 20% of total costs), which has now been reduced to \$200 per year due to regulatory changes.

1.9 We developed fare schedule options to address supply and demand issues

Following our analysis of the level and structure of fares, we developed options for changes to fare components from 1 July 2025. Our main objective was to address the supply and demand issues we identified throughout our review by making short trips relatively more expensive and long trips relatively cheaper. We also used our comparison of fares in other jurisdictions, suggestions made in submissions and our analysis of affordability and costs to supply to inform the options we developed.

1.9.1 We considered the impact on individual taxi trips

We tested the outcomes of fare changes for different trip distances and different trip types and decided on our proposed options for draft recommended fare schedules. We considered if the changes in what customers would pay for different types of trips was appropriate and if fares maintained affordability. We also accounted for the overall balance of fares for different trip distances and how this may help to encourage drivers to accept short fares.

1.9.2 We considered the impact on the overall Sydney taxi market

We modelled the impact of urban fare schedule changes on the Sydney taxi market using our taxi industry model. We considered certain outputs projected by the model, including changes in passenger demand, industry participation levels, and changes in overall and individual drivers' revenue.

1.9.3 Our urban fare schedule recommendation should help alleviate problems with short fares

Our recommended fare schedules reweight the current fare components to increase the relative appeal of short trips for taxi drivers, without penalising those that take longer trips.

1.9.4 Our country fare schedule recommendation should address any problems with short fares

We found that the supply of rank and hail taxi services in the country fare area is generally sufficient to meet passenger demand. We also noted that the majority of taxi trips in the country are booked services. Our recommended country fare schedule increases the flag fall to \$5.11 to alleviate any issues with short fares, this is the same recommendation we proposed in our Draft Report.

1.10 We consider that the Government's recent package of reforms will improve taxi services for wheelchair users

The NSW Government's [response](#) to the [Availability of Wheelchair Accessible Services Roundtables' Key Findings Report](#), which was released in December 2024 proposes a set of actions and related funding to improve wheelchair accessible services. We consider the Government response appropriate and endorse its measures, in particular the introduction of a standard \$25 Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Driver Incentive Subsidy (lift fee) (an increase from \$15) and two new rates to apply at nights and public holidays.

We outline our considerations and findings on taxi services for wheelchair users in Chapter 4.

1.11 We recommend fare schedules be indexed annually by CPI

We found that fares are roughly at the right level and our proposed adjustments in our fare schedules should reflect a consumer's ability and willingness to pay for rank and hail taxi services in 2025/26. Our recommendation is to increase fare components annually by CPI from 1 July 2026, until fares are next reviewed. We recommend fares be reviewed again in 5 years' time for application from 1 July 2030 or prior, if circumstances change.

We also recommend that the lift fee is indexed in a similar manner.

We discuss our recommendation for indexation in Section 3.2.

1.12 We make recommendations to address issues at Sydney Airport

Our recommendation is for a trial of fixed fares for taxis caught from the Sydney Airport taxi ranks to any location within the Sydney CBD (defined as postcode 2000). We recommend that the all-inclusive fare level be set at \$60 for standard taxis and \$80 for maxi taxis. The Passenger Service Levy (PSL), the Airport Ground Transport Access Fee (airport access fee) and any road tolls incurred are included in the fixed fare, and no additional costs (apart from any non-cash payment surcharge) are to be passed onto the passenger.

We also make a recommendation to allow maxi taxis to charge the maxi taxi surcharge when one is requested at the Sydney Airport taxi rank, whether or not there are 5 passengers or more.

We outline our considerations and conditions for a fixed fare trial, as well as how we determined our recommended level for a fixed fare in Chapter 5.

1.13 We recommend itemised passenger receipts

We recommend additional requirements for customer receipts, so that passengers are in a better position to understand what they are being charged for and who is charging them. We are recommending these changes to increase transparency for all passengers and accountability for drivers and the taxi industry. We detail our recommendations in Chapter 6.

2 Our approach to the review

Maximum rank and hail taxi fares remain regulated, unlike fares for booked trips in taxis or other forms of point to point transport, to protect consumers who are not in a position to shop around for alternative services or different prices.

Our objective, then, is to recommend fares that ensure consumers are able to get the rank and hail taxi services they want at an appropriate price. The review also encompasses fares for booked trips under the Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme (TTSS), because taxis are also required to use the maximum rank and hail fare schedule for these trips.

Our approach to the review was to focus on an assessment of the balance between supply of rank and hail taxi services and demand for them at current fare levels, complemented by benchmarking against similar services, and consideration of affordability for passengers, consumer choice, competition and alternatives to rank and hail taxi travel, the costs of supplying services, and the needs of specific passenger groups.

Figure 2.1 Our key considerations for this review



Our review commenced with an initial call for submissions for feedback on the key issues being faced by the taxi industry and information on the level and nature of competition in the rank and hail market.

We received stakeholder views through 3 rounds of submissions, at our public hearings, technical workshop, meetings and through our annual point to point passenger survey. We used this feedback together with cost inputs, passenger queue data and other information provided by stakeholders to complete analysis and modelling. We published our Draft Report in March 2025, held a public hearing and technical workshop as well as inviting written submissions. We considered what we heard from stakeholders in preparing our Final Report. The timeline of key activities is presented below.



The sections below set out our approach to the review in more detail. The following chapters then discuss our analysis, findings and recommendations.

2.1 We assessed the balance of supply and demand at current fare levels

We considered data from a range of sources to assess whether the supply of and demand for rank and hail taxi services is in balance at the current fare levels. We looked at waiting times for passengers, waiting time for taxis, and feedback from passengers and taxi service providers about whether and where it is easy or difficult to get a taxi or get a passenger.

If there is excess demand for taxis (that is, passengers have to wait a long time to get a rank or hail taxi service), it would suggest that fares are not high enough to attract sufficient taxi service providers at current prices. On the other hand, excess supply of taxis (that is, passengers do not have to wait, but taxis might spend a long time waiting for a fare at a rank or while cruising) would suggest that fares are too high and potential passengers are seeking alternatives such as booked trips in hire vehicles, public transport, or not travelling at all.

2.2 We looked at fares in other jurisdictions and for other point to point transport services

Benchmarking is one way to assess whether prices are appropriate. We compared NSW rank and hail taxi fares to taxi fares in other Australian states and internationally, as well as to rideshare prices in Sydney.

2.3 We considered the affordability of rank and hail taxi fares

Affordability varies depending on individuals' financial and other circumstances. To assess the relative affordability of taxi fares we looked at the change in fares compared to inflation over the past 10 years.

2.4 We considered consumer choice and competition

Rank and hail fares are regulated on the basis that passengers do not have the opportunity to shop around. However, the advent of smart phones has meant that in most cases passengers who are at a rank or looking for a taxi in the street have the option to book a trip in a taxi or other hire vehicle. If alternatives are readily available, there is less need for regulation of fare levels.

2.5 We considered the cost of supplying services

For a rank and hail taxi industry to continue to exist, taxi service providers must be able to cover the costs of providing those services. We can observe whether this is the case as part of the supply-demand assessment – if fares are not at a sufficient level to cover costs, drivers and taxi service providers will reduce or withdraw their supply. We also collected data and considered submissions on the costs of providing services and how they have changed over time.

2.6 We considered the needs of specific passenger groups

While our supply/demand analysis gives us information about the average outcomes for passengers at the current average level of fares, we also considered the needs of specific passenger groups, including:

- people with disabilities, particularly people in the TTSS and people who use wheelchairs
- people in regional communities where there are fewer transport alternatives
- people with financial or other vulnerabilities
- passengers leaving Sydney Airport, including those who want maxi taxis.

2.7 We considered the structure of fares and how fares should be adjusted in future

As well as making an assessment about the current level of fares and whether and how they should change, we considered the structure of fares, including whether or not to retain two separate fare schedules for urban and country fares, and whether or not to change the current fare components or fare calculation methodology.

We also considered how fares should be adjusted in future.

2.8 We assessed the impacts of different fare schedule options

Following our analysis of the level and structure of fares, we developed options for changes to fare components from 1 July 2025 to ensure that consumers are able to get the rank and hail taxi services they want at an appropriate price.

We considered the impact on individual taxi trips

We tested the outcomes of those fare changes for different trip distances and different trip types and decided on our proposed options for draft recommended fare schedules. We considered if the changes in what customers would pay for different types of trips was appropriate and if fares maintained affordability. We also accounted for the overall balance of fares for different trip distances and how this may help to discourage drivers from refusing short fares.

We considered the impact on the overall Sydney taxi market

We modelled the impact of urban fare schedule changes on the Sydney taxi market using our taxi industry model. We considered certain outputs projected by the model, including changes in passenger demand, industry participation levels, and changes in overall and individual drivers' revenue.

2.9 We analysed data and considered feedback throughout the review

During the review we analysed data from various sources including:

- our annual point to point transport survey
- the Point to Point Transport Commissioner's Smart CCTV taxi ranks
- Sydney Airport
- State Insurance Regulatory Authority (SIRA)
- Wheelchair Book & Ride service operated by Spinal Cord Injuries Australia (SCIA).

We engaged with many stakeholders during our review process. For this review we have:

- called for and received 84 initial written submissions, including an additional round of submissions on fares from Sydney Airport
- met with stakeholders
- attended the NSW Taxi Conference in March 2025
- held public hearings in October 2024 and March 2025
- held a technical workshop in March 2025
- received 182 responses to our Draft Report "quick feedback" survey
- called for and received 15 written submissions on our Draft Report

We considered stakeholder feedback and used it to inform our draft and then final recommendations.

3 Setting fares so passengers can get rank and hail services when they want at an appropriate price

Our Terms of Reference (ToR) require us to recommend a pricing framework for maximum fares for rank and hail taxi services. Our recommendation is to retain the existing two fare schedules for urban and country areas, and to retain the existing fare components and the times at which they apply. Our fare schedule recommendations include increases to all maximum fare components (by varying amounts) to address our findings outlined in this chapter and in response to stakeholder feedback.

Our ToRs also require us to consider a methodology for reviewing and adjusting maximum fares in the future. We recommend that TfNSW index fares by the all-group all-capitals quarter-on-quarter (CPI) starting from July 2026.

Our approach to recommending fares included an analysis of supply of and demand for taxis across NSW. We considered data from surveys, as well as evidence from our consultations to determine if current fare levels are effective in encouraging sufficient taxi services to meet passenger demand. We considered quantitative and qualitative information from our consultation, which included inputs from industry. We also investigated taxi fares in other Australian and international jurisdictions, and considered competition and the costs of providing taxi services.

In response to feedback on our Draft Report, we have made changes to the recommended maximum fare schedule for urban fares. The recommended maximum country fare schedule is the same as in our Draft Report.

This chapter sets out our analysis and the findings that led us to develop the recommended fare schedules.

3.1 Recommended maximum fare schedules

Table 3.1 below sets out our fare schedule recommendations for both the urban and country fare areas.

Table 3.1 Recommended maximum rank and hail fare schedules from 1 July 2025

| Fare Component | Urban | Country |
|--|---|---|
| Hire charge (flag fall) | \$5.00 | \$5.11 |
| Peak time hiring charge (payable in addition to flag fall) ^a | \$2.56 | N/A |
| Distance rate/km | \$2.52 (first 12 km) \$2.29 thereafter | \$2.41 (first 12 km) \$3.30 thereafter |
| Night rate/km ^b (and holiday distance rate ^c in country areas) | \$3.00 (first 12 km) \$2.73 thereafter | \$2.87 (first 12 km) \$3.93 thereafter |
| Waiting time charge (when travelling under 26 km/h) | \$65.52/hr (109.2c/min) | \$62.67/hr (104.5c/min) |
| Maxi taxi surcharge ^d | 150% max fare | 150% max fare |

a. Applied in addition to the flag fall, 10pm – 6am on Fridays, Saturdays, and evenings prior to Public Holidays

b. Applies between 10pm – 6am all nights of the week

c. Applies between 10pm – 6am all nights of the week, and all days on Sundays and Public Holidays

d. The maxi taxi surcharge may only be charged if it is hired from a taxi zone or street hail to carry 5 or more passengers. We are also recommending this it is charged if the vehicle is requested by the hirer at the Sydney Airport taxi ranks, other than for the carriage of a person who uses a wheelchair or mobility aid.

Final recommendation



1. That TfNSW:

- retain two fare schedules for maximum urban and country rank and hail fares
- retain the existing fare components (hiring charge ('flag fall'), peak time hiring charge (urban only), distance rate, night distance rate, holiday distance rate (country only), waiting time (charged when travelling at less than 26km/h))
- adopt the following maximum fare schedule for the Urban Fare Area – Table 3.1
- adopt the following maximum fare schedule for the Country Fare Area – Table 3.1.

3.2 We recommend a CPI methodology to index fares in the future

We considered how to index the fares set out in our recommendation, and we recommend TfNSW index fares by the all-group all-capitals quarter-on-quarter CPI starting from July 2026.

While in previous reviews before 2012 we calculated a Taxi Cost Index (TCI) that reflected the specific costs of service provision and used it to adjust fares every year, we have since shifted away from a cost-based approach. We analysed other indexes to inflate fares in between reviews and selected the CPI as it accurately reflects changes in economic conditions for drivers as well as passengers' ability to pay for taxi services, while being transparent and easily understood by the public.

We propose to adjust fares by CPI starting from 1 July 2026 each year for 5 years. Our fare recommendations in this report already include an adjustment to inflate fares to the June quarter CPI for 2025. We also recommend adjusting the Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Driver Incentive Subsidy (WATDIS or 'lift fee') in a similar manner to maintain its relativity with fare levels.

We also recommend that the next review of maximum rank and hail taxi fares be undertaken in 5 years' time, for maximum fares to apply from 1 July 2030. We note that the outcomes of the forthcoming review under section 161 of the *Point to Point Transport (Taxis and Hire Vehicles) Act 2016* or other potential industry changes may warrant a different time frame for future reviews of maximum rank and hail taxi fares.

Final recommendations

2. That TfNSW increase each maximum fare component and the Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Driver Incentive Subsidy ('lift fee') annually by CPI (All Capitals) from 1 July 2026.
3. That the next review of maximum rank and hail taxi fares be conducted:
 - a. for maximum fares to apply from 1 July 2030
 - b. or prior, if circumstances change, or the findings or outcomes of the forthcoming review under section 161 of the *Point to Point Transport (Taxis and Hire Vehicles) Act 2016* indicate a need for an earlier review of taxi fares.

3.3 We consider that rank and hail fare regulation is still warranted

The TfNSW Fares Order sets the maximum fare components for rank and hail taxi services such as flag fall, distance rates, peak time charge and waiting time. This means that taxi service providers and drivers are not allowed to charge anyone who catches a taxi from a rank, or who hails a taxi from the street, more than the maximum allowable fare. They can, however, set their rank and hail fares at a level below the regulated maximums, or charge less than the metered fare.

Prior to the NSW Government's reforms to the point to point transport industry, all taxi fares were regulated to prevent passengers from being overcharged for what was then a monopoly service with restricted supply. As the supply of hire vehicles and taxis is no longer restricted, and there are multiple providers in the booked trips market, booked trips in taxis and hire vehicles are not subject to maximum fares. Booked trip providers are free to set fares in any way they like. A fare estimate must be provided to the passenger prior to the trip.²

Passengers can shop around and choose a point to point transport booking service provider that suits their needs and willingness to pay. However, rank and hail taxi fares remain regulated by the government as a mechanism to protect customers in situations where their ability to shop around is limited, and only taxis can pick up at ranks or in response to a hail.

Effective competition should provide the best outcomes for customers

In markets where competition is effective, firms compete with each other to provide services to customers. If firms set prices too high, competitors (both existing and new entrants) can provide the services for lower prices. If firms do not offer the services that customers want, competitors can win customers by providing those services. This competition is the best form of customer protection and reduces the need for government intervention and regulation.

The point to point transport market in NSW is sufficiently competitive, as there are much lower barriers to entry to operating a taxi service, with the removal of licence supply restrictions and high plate lease fees. Existing taxi service providers and new entrants can compete on rank and hail pricing below the regulated maximums or compete on service quality or availability.

We have observed industry participants taking advantage of growth and revenue opportunities through better access to competition – for example:

- new authorised taxi service providers entering the market³
- taxi service providers operating hire vehicles in markets where there is excess demand for booked point to point services but little demand for rank and hail⁴
- taxi service providers adjusting the price of booked trips to better balance supply and demand (such as different night tariffs)⁵
- taxi service providers offering fixed fare routes for commonly booked trips⁶
- taxi service providers offering lower fares or repeat customer discounts
- taxi drivers entering the market as owner-drivers rather than bailee drivers
- taxi service providers providing superior service (such as luxury vehicles).⁷

In a competitive market, maximum rank and hail fare regulation serves only as a consumer protection, so passengers accessing a taxi from a rank or street are not excessively overcharged. Regulated maximum rank and hail fares in a competitive market should not serve as prescribed fares for *all* taxi services (including booked) but rather act as a protective price ceiling for rank and hail passengers who do not know in advance what price they are going to pay for their trip.

Box 3.1 The point to point transport market is now more competitive

The point to point transport industry has evolved rapidly. The introduction of rideshare services has led to increased competition in the market for point to point transport services, as passengers are now able to choose different options other than rank and hail trips. Similarly, passengers are able to compare and access point to point transport options much more easily and quickly through mobile phones and internet booking services.

We found that passengers have more choice than ever before, and their preferences appear to be moving away from rank and hail taxis. The proportion of supply and demand from each point to point transport mode varies across areas, and different populations have different attitudes towards rideshare, booked taxis and rank and hail taxi trips. According to our 2024 point to point transport passenger survey⁸, younger people have an overall preference for and satisfaction with rideshare services whereas older people prefer and are more satisfied with taxi services. Respondents from households with lower annual incomes expressed a preference for taxis over rideshare (despite the former being generally more expensive), whereas respondents from high income households expressed a very strong preference for rideshare. This suggests that price-point is not the primary element influencing a consumer's point to point transport preference and that other factors such as availability are at play.

Source: IPART 2024 Point to Point Transport Survey

3.4 We consider that the current fare structure is still appropriate

Rank and hail taxi fares in NSW use a flag fall plus 'time or distance' structure. This type of fare structure applies an initial hiring charge upon entry to the taxi, a per km rate for additional distance travelled above a certain speed, and a per minute rate for time incurred when travelling below a certain speed. This is an appropriate way to vary fares depending on distance and traffic conditions and is consistent with taxi fare structures in other states and countries.

However, the current fare structure for rank and hail services means that passengers will not know the fare that they will pay until their trip concludes. It is also difficult for consumers to easily estimate the fare they will pay as they need to consider how much they travelled above and below the 26 km/h speed threshold.

Other fare methodologies such as 'time and distance', where per km and per minute rates are levied on the *entire* distance and *entire* duration of a trip, are used for rideshare and in some other overseas cities. This fare structure is also more intuitive for passengers to understand and may be more cost-reflective (i.e. separating the driver labour time component and marginal vehicle cost component).

We asked stakeholders about the current fare structures and possible alternatives in our initial call for submissions and our Draft Report. No submissions were in favour of adopting a new fare structure or methodology. During our consultation, industry also noted that it would be difficult to transition to a new fare structure in the short term, but professed an openness to explore more significant change in the longer term. We welcome this position.⁹

3.5 We consider that urban and country fares should remain on separate schedules

The current Fares Order sets maximum fares separately for urban areas and country areas. There are also some towns near the NSW/Victoria border which are exempt from rank and hail fare regulation.¹ Most tariff components are currently higher in the country fare area, apart from the Friday/Saturday night peak charge which is only applied for urban fares.

Urban and country taxis have historically been subject to different fare schedules due in part to the operating area restrictions applied under the taxi industry's previous licensing structure. We considered whether free entry between the urban and country taxi markets may warrant all fares to remain under the same structure.

Different fare schedules can help to reflect the different costs of operating a taxi service in the urban vs country fare area. Although cost structures differ between the areas (for example, fuel is typically more expensive in the country, but country taxis face less equipment requirements), costs are also likely to differ within zones, so our fare setting approach does not specifically account for the differences in cost structures.

However, we note that the nature of trips in the country are different to those in the urban fare zone, and the respective fare structures reflect this. For example, a higher distance rate is levied for country fares after 12 km to account for 'out of town' trips where a driver is unlikely to find a return fare. Most trips 'within town' in the country tend to be shorter than trips in the urban fare area. We also note that most country taxi trips are booked, and not subject to rank and hail fare regulation.

Similarly, we heard that issues such as short fare refusal are typically encountered in Sydney in particular, and our maximum fare schedule recommendation for the urban fare area reflects that.

We consider that it is still appropriate for urban and country fares to remain on separate schedules, and our adjustments to the current schedules reflect the different issues identified in respective zones. This was generally supported by the little feedback we received on our Draft Report country fare recommendations.

How taxi services differ in regional communities

In regional areas where public transport options are limited, taxis or hire vehicles are generally the only transport services available for those who do not drive a private vehicle.

¹ The maximum non-cash surcharge (5%) still applies for taxi services in the Exempt Fare Area.

We heard that country taxi service providers have found it difficult to attract drivers to provide services during quiet periods such as weekday nights.¹⁰ Some have addressed this issue by rostering drivers across busy and quiet periods, reducing driver pay-ins, or by introducing no-show penalties. However, many noted that drivers are still not willing to work for the low pay available (derived from fares) compared to other industries such as hospitality¹¹ or other professional driving vocations (e.g. bus driving).¹²

While rank and hail fares are still regulated in the country fare zone, country taxi service providers report that rank and hail only makes up 5-25% of all work.¹³ This aligns with the results of our 2024 passenger survey, where regional passengers were much more likely to use a booked taxi service than their urban counterparts. In this scenario, taxi service providers are able to adjust their booked fares to better match labour supply and passenger demand. Some taxi service providers we engaged with noted that they use different tariffs for booked work but do not deviate far from the Fares Order. For example, they will use the metered rates but extend the hours that the higher night tariff applies, have increased the flag fall, or charge a booking fee that increases the fare.

3.6 We considered whether current fare levels were adequate in encouraging a sufficient supply of rank and hail services

To understand the current state of the rank and hail taxi market, and to identify any issues where adjustments to the fare schedules could alleviate issues for passengers or the taxi industry, we undertook a supply-demand approach. We considered the current overall landscape of the taxi market for both the industry and passengers to:

- understand whether the current fare levels were adequate in encouraging a balanced supply of taxis to meet passenger demand, and
- identify key issues where there are supply or demand gaps.

We also considered:

- current fare levels in NSW compared to those in other states and jurisdictions
- our modelling of aggregate impacts on the taxi industry and passengers in Sydney.

From our analysis, we found that taxi supply is sufficient at current fare levels, and that the current fare levels are comparable to those in other states and territories. Our recommendations increase fare levels and potentially allow for taxi service providers to compete on price (by setting one or more rank and hail fare components lower than the regulated maximums) or service quality (by improving the level of service at the maximum price).

3.6.1 We assessed the balance of supply and demand at current fare levels

We used a supply-demand approach to assess if current fare levels for rank and hail services are appropriate. We used a similar approach in our 2015 and 2018 taxi fare reviews. Prior to 2014, we reviewed fares annually using a Taxi Cost Index methodology.

We have decided to move away from a cost-based approach due to taxi licensing reforms and other changes in the point to point transport sector which have reduced barriers to entry and introduced competition to the market. In a competitive environment, maximum rank and hail fares serve mainly as consumer protection to ensure passengers are not being excessively charged for services. Effective competition means that in the long run, prices should reflect the efficient costs of providing services. Our assessment considers whether current fare levels are effective in encouraging a sufficient supply of taxi services to meet passenger demand.

In both urban and country fare areas, supply and demand for rank and hail taxi services is mostly in balance

Overall, from the results of our annual point to point transport survey¹⁴ and available passenger queue data, we have concluded that standard taxi supply is generally able to meet passenger demand across NSW, with some exceptions which we cover in section 3.6.2. Passengers are usually able to access the point to point transport services (including rideshare) that they want across all hours of the day and throughout the week. Passengers are also very confident that taxi service coverage is sufficient to successfully meet their needs.

The results from our 2024 passenger survey show strong recovery in usage post-COVID and high rates of consumer satisfaction, showing that overall, fares were around the right level in 2024. To find out more, you can read our [Information Paper](#) and [Consultant's Report](#) on our website.

Passengers are generally satisfied with their wait times for rank and hail services

From the passengers we surveyed who caught a taxi from a rank, most were able to access one quickly, with 53% waiting less than 5 minutes. Passengers who hailed a taxi tended to wait longer in comparison, with 34% reporting that they waited for under 5 minutes. Wait times were slightly longer for passengers who used booked services compared to both rank and hail, with 18% waiting for less than 5 minutes and 41% waiting between 5 and 10 minutes.

We consider that for most passengers, rank and hail waiting times are satisfactory and supply can effectively meet demand for rank and hail services

3.6.2 We identified 3 instances of supply and demand mismatch

Although we found that taxi service levels were sufficient to meet passenger demand overall, there were 3 specific scenarios where we found clear issues through our research, analysis, and consultation:

Undersupply of wheelchair accessible services for passengers who use wheelchairs

We found that people that use wheelchairs (and more broadly, people with disabilities) tend to have greater difficulties in accessing wheelchair accessible taxis than the overall population. Often, wheelchair accessible taxis are the only accessible door to door transport service for people who use wheelchairs.

Through our consultation, research and engagement with peak disability advocacy bodies, we found that there were many issues for people who require wheelchair accessible service. These included:

- excessive wait times (upwards of 2 hours) for bookings to be fulfilled
- bookings not being fulfilled at all, leaving passengers stranded¹⁵
- unsafe passenger handling practices (e.g. passengers not being appropriately secured).¹⁶

This is supported by the results from our 2024 passenger survey where wheelchair users have much longer wait times and many more “no show” experiences than users of standard taxis.¹⁷

Through our consultation, we found that passengers have difficulties accessing WATs through these booking channels. This suggests that driver supply of existing WATs performing wheelchair accessible work is currently lacking, and that lack of appropriate driver supply of these services plays a key role in the undersupply for passengers.

IPART supports the additional ‘lift fee’ incentives and other reforms to encourage WAT drivers to prioritise passengers who require wheelchair accessible services.

Undersupply of services for passengers travelling short distances

Six submissions out of the 24 we received from our initial call for submissions noted an issue with short fares. Three were from taxi service providers or drivers who told us that short fares were too low, 2 of which specifically mentioned Sydney Airport, and the other 3 were from peak disability bodies who noted that their members are often refused service for the short trips that their members typically make.¹⁸ The short fare issue was highlighted by drivers again in our second call for submissions regarding fares from Sydney Airport.

Most feedback was about short fares being too low given waiting times, which are exacerbated at Sydney Airport where drivers often queue for hours. Although short fares are not financially unviable for taxi drivers (making many short trips is generally more lucrative than a long fare without a return journey), many drivers are not willing to take short fares due to a widespread perception that short fares are undesirable.

Many passengers have also complained about drivers refusing to take them short distances, requesting excessive fixed fares, and overcharging them for rank and hail services.¹⁹

Excess supply of taxis queuing at Sydney Airport

Sydney Airport is the most popular place for taxi drivers to pick up and drop off passengers. While taxis can easily access the departures floor to drop off departing passengers, they must wait in a holding bay and queue to access the arrivals hall rank. Queue data from Sydney Airport shows that taxis can queue for an extended period of time (sometimes upwards of 3 hours), with up to 5000 taxis accessing the waiting areas each day.

We conducted consultation specifically on fares from Sydney Airport. Both taxi drivers and passengers noted issues with fares taken from the airport. Most issues fell into 2 categories:

- drivers overcharging passengers (particularly tourists) by not running the meter and demanding excessive fares at journey's end, or by adding unwarranted additional charges either to the meter or on top of the existing fare at the end of the journey
- drivers refusing short fares, abusing short fare passengers, or demanding illegal fixed payment for short fares.

We discuss these issues further in Chapter 5.

3.6.3 We looked at fares in other jurisdictions

We compared rank and hail fares in NSW to fares in other jurisdictions in Australia and overseas. We found that taxi fares in NSW are comparable to other jurisdictions for both country and urban fares. Our maximum fare schedule recommendations make taxi fares in NSW slightly higher than other states and territories, reflecting that the Fares Order stipulates maximum fares and not prescribed fares.

Urban taxi fares across Australia

Taxi fares in NSW are currently comparable to other Australian jurisdictions in terms of level and structure. The fare structure in all jurisdictions provides some form of premium for night and/or weekend trips, either by increasing the flag fall, the distance rate (or both), or by adding a surcharge (Table 3.2 and Table 3.3).

The current flag fall in NSW is among the lowest in Australia, while its distance rate is relatively high (Table 3.3). For most trips, NSW taxi fares are either on or slightly above the average across equivalent trips.

Our final maximum fare schedule recommendations bring urban NSW taxi fares to a level that is on the higher end compared to other states and territories.

Table 3.2 Taxi fare components in other urban jurisdictions

| State | NSW | VIC | QLD | SA | WA | NT | ACT | TAS |
|-------------------------------------|----------|----------------|-----------|---------|----------|---------|---------|---------|
| Weekend/night additional flag fall | - | ✓ ^a | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | - | - |
| Friday/Saturday night surcharge | ✓ | ✓ | - | - | ✓ | - | - | ✓ |
| Higher night distance rate | ✓ | ✓ ^b | - | ✓ | - | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Higher weekend distance rate | - | - | - | ✓ | - | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Higher night waiting time | - | ✓ ^b | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Times Tariff 2 applies: | 10pm–6am | 5pm–9am | 7pm – 7am | 7pm–6am | 6pm–6am | 6pm–6am | 9pm–6am | 8pm–6am |
| Times peak night (Fri/Sat) applies: | 10pm–6am | 10pm–4am | - | - | 12am–3am | - | - | - |

a. Only applied at nights

b. Additional rates applied on top during peak nights (Friday, Saturday, nights before public holidays)

Table 3.3 Urban taxi fares across Australian jurisdictions

| Jurisdiction | Flag fall | Distance rate | Waiting rate |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Australian Capital Territory | \$5.85 | \$2.45 | 101.2 c/minute |
| New South Wales (current) | \$3.60 | \$2.29 | 94.4 c/minute |
| New South Wales (recommended) | \$5.00 | \$2.52/\$2.29 | 109.2c/minute |

| Jurisdiction | Flag fall | Distance rate | Waiting rate |
|--------------------|-----------|---------------|----------------|
| Northern Territory | \$5.70 | \$1.90 | 113.2 c/minute |
| Queensland | \$3.60 | \$2.62 | 98.0 c/minute |
| South Australia | \$3.90 | \$2.19 | 76.7 c/minute |
| Tasmania | \$4.60 | \$2.29 | 69.2 c/minute |
| Victoria | \$5.10 | \$1.982 | 69.4 c/minute |
| Western Australia | \$5.40 | \$2.13 | 101.7 c/minute |

Sources: IPART analysis; Transport for NSW, Essential Services Commission (Victoria), Department of Transport and Main Roads (Queensland), [SA.gov.au](https://www.sa.gov.au) (South Australia), Department of Transport (Western Australia), [NT.gov.au](https://www.nt.gov.au) (Northern Territory), ACT Legislation, Tasmania Legislation.

Country taxi fares across Australia

We compared the fares policies for regional/country taxi fares across Australia. We found that the current fare structure (with no additional weekend or night flag fall, but a higher distance rate for nights, Sundays, and public holidays, and a higher distance rate after 12km), was very different to most other states. However, we did not find any evidence or hear from submissions that NSW's unique country fare structure was an issue for passengers or taxi service providers.

We recommend maintaining this structure as it best reflects the types of trips made in the country. We also note that we found that most trips in country NSW are in the deregulated booked market, where fares can best adjust to the specific conditions of the town (for example, geographic and demographic).

Table 3.4 Taxi fare components in other regional/country jurisdictions

| State | NSW | VIC | QLD | SA | WA | NT |
|--|--|--------------------|-----|--|----|----|
| Weekend/night additional flag fall | - | ✓ (nights only) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Friday/Saturday night surcharge | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Higher weekend and night distance rate | ✓ (Sundays, public holidays, nights after 10pm) | - | - | ✓ (Weekends, public holidays, nights after 7pm) | - | - |
| Increased distance rate after certain distance | ✓ (after 12km) | - | - | - | - | - |
| Country running rate | - | - | - | ✓ | - | - |

3.6.4 We looked at fares for competing point to point services

As part of the broader suite of analysis, we investigated rideshare fares for various trips in the Sydney metro area. Fares were overall lower than taxis except during surge events. For standard fares during the day, rideshare trips were 20-40% cheaper than the equivalent taxi trip, depending on the route.

We note that rideshare business models are different to taxi business models, especially in terms of their willingness to activate surge pricing and other innovative techniques that result in overall lower fares. We exercised caution when comparing rideshare fares and costs against rank and hail taxi services. We note that some submissions requested we take a more forensic investigation into the rideshare industry,²⁰ however this is beyond the scope of our terms of reference.

We also analysed a basket of typical fares in the Sydney metro area quoted from various taxi service providers' online booking services. As expected from what we heard in our consultation, we found that booked fares were very similar to our estimates using the rank and hail fare schedule.

3.6.5 We considered the aggregate impacts on the taxi market in Sydney

As a part of our review process, we used the Sydney Taxi Model which we used previously in our 2013, 2014, and 2015 reviews of taxi fares and taxi licences. We updated the model to reflect the changes in the taxi industry since then, including the removal of supply restrictions, and the changes in passenger demand profiles and taxi cost structures that have occurred since then.

We provided more detail on the model and how we used it in our [Technical Paper](#), and sought feedback from stakeholders in a [Technical Workshop](#). We have tested the sensitivity of the model with regards to feedback from stakeholders, including on:

- our use of an average booking percentage share to reflect that taxis do both rank and hail and booked work
- our waiting time setting to calibrate the average taxi trip iterated through the model.

We found that these changes resulted in quantitative (magnitude) changes to the model outputs; however, the model responded with the same *direction* of outputs.

Our modelling suggests that the taxi industry could still benefit from lower overall fares, which could result in:

- increased passenger demand for taxis
- increased revenue for taxis
- better utilisation and occupancy rates of vehicles
- better overall consumer welfare for passengers who take taxis.

However, stakeholder feedback continued to emphasise a desire for higher fares which they consider will lead to higher revenue. We are on balance recommending higher maximum fare components, which could help competition to flourish in different ways, for example:

- individual taxi service providers could offer different flag fall/distance rate combinations
- allowing viability for businesses to offer higher service quality, such as
 - offering more premium services, such as luxury vehicles or chauffeur service
 - better availability for passengers, with higher fares meaning that more taxis are unoccupied at a given time.

3.7 We assessed the costs to operate a taxi service in 2024-2025

For this review, similarly to our last review in 2018, we are not adopting a marginal cost approach. That is, we are not calculating a cost index to reflect the marginal cost of providing taxi services, and we are not setting fares based on such an index. Instead, we are assessing the state of the point to point market supply and demand and determining whether fares are appropriate.

However, we investigated the cost of operating a taxi service to gain a better understanding of the market. In conjunction with the 2024 passenger survey, we surveyed taxi drivers and operators on the costs of providing rank and hail services. We received 187 full and 543 partial survey completions. We did not assess the costs associated with providing a rideshare service as it was beyond the scope of our terms of reference.

We collected and analysed cost and revenue data from drivers and operators, including revenue (total fares) and takings (what the driver keeps after expenses), and daily, weekly and shift costs such as fuel, operator costs, tolls, fees & levies.

We found that in real terms (i.e. accounting for inflation), driver revenue is lower in 2024 than in 2014, while driver takings are higher. We note that prior to licence deregulation, licence costs accounted for a significant proportion (around 20%) of the total costs of operating a taxi service. That cost is now negligible (\$200 per year).

The highest category of variable costs is fuel, especially for country drivers who do not typically pay many tolls. The variety of arrangements between drivers and operators also has an important impact on the costs of providing a taxi service. For example, drivers who are not operators pay fees to their operators; driver-operators and operators incur several annual costs such as insurance and registration.

3.8 We considered feedback from stakeholders

We heard a wide variety of feedback on fare settings from stakeholders through responses to our Call for Submissions and Draft Report. We factored in feedback from industry to form our final fare schedule recommendations. Summarised below are key points which we heard throughout both consultation periods:

Figure 3.1 Key stakeholder issues from consultation



'Meter shock'

Some stakeholders noted that passengers would react negatively to our proposed urban flag fall increase (from \$3.60 to \$5.11) and use taxis less in future.²¹



Encouraging drivers to take shorter fares

Some submissions noted that our proposed urban flag fall increase (from \$3.60 to \$5.11) would not be enough to encourage drivers to take shorter trips.²²



Drivers who typically service longer trips

We heard that our proposal of a lower distance rate after 12 km would adversely affect drivers who service areas where longer trips are typically made (for example, outer and Western Sydney).²³



Ensuring viability of bailee driver earnings

Drivers and peak bodies noted that bailee driver incomes were typically low and a larger increase in fares would improve this.²⁴



Competitive pricing and passenger demand

Some stakeholders suggested that typical taxi passengers are less price sensitive and that fare increases wouldn't price out consumers.²⁵

3.9 We recommend increases to all fare components

Our analysis considers taxi supply and passenger demand in 2024/25, and our re-weighting of flag fall and distance fare components is based on this analysis. Our recommendations also include forecast inflation to allow for the fact that the fares will not apply until 1 July 2025.

We have made changes to our fare recommendations for urban fares since the Draft Report in response to stakeholder feedback.

3.9.1 We recommend a higher flag fall and short-run distance rate for urban fares to address issues with short fares

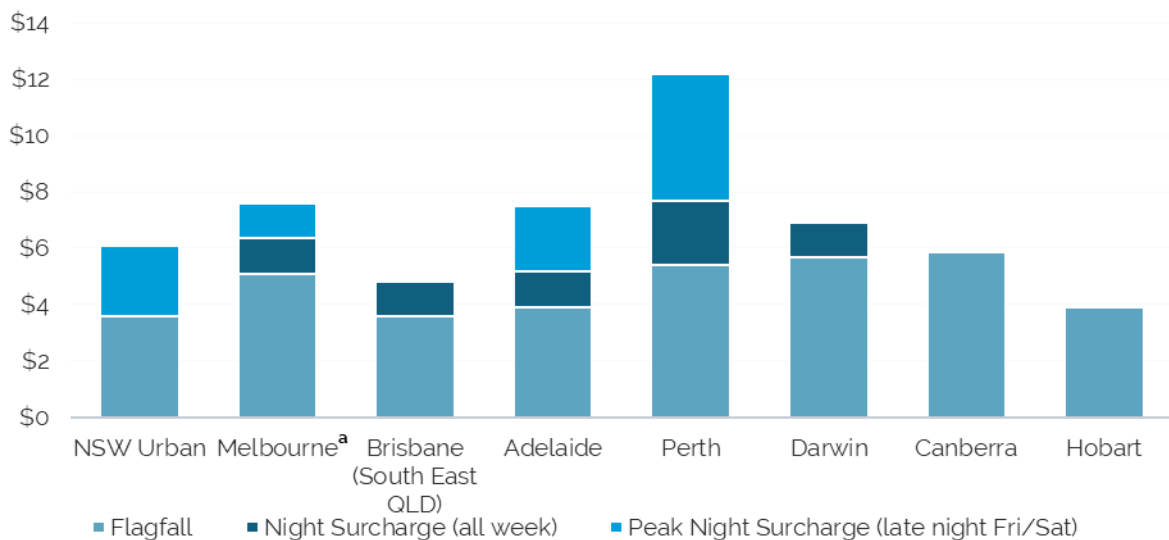
Our urban fare schedule recommendations reweight the current fare components to shift incentives for drivers towards shorter fares. To do this, we increased the flag fall and the distance rate for the first 12 km.

We recommend increasing maximum flag fall to \$5.00

Our urban fare recommendation increases flag fall from \$3.60 to \$5.00. An increase in the fixed flag fall component (which is applied to every fare) nominally increases the price of short fares, and represents a greater increase proportionally (percentage wise) for short fares compared to longer fares. This aims to address short fare refusal wherever it occurs.

Our recommended maximum flag fall level also brings flag fall in line with other jurisdictions.

Figure 3.2 Urban flag falls across Australian jurisdictions



a. Night surcharge is applied all day on weekends for all states except Victoria

Source: IPART analysis: [Transport for NSW](#), [Essential Services Commission \(Victoria\)](#), [Department of Transport and Main Roads \(Queensland\)](#), [SA.gov.au](#) (South Australia), [Department of Transport \(Western Australia\)](#), [NT.gov.au](#) (Northern Territory), [ACT Legislation](#), [Tasmania Legislation](#).

We note that our recommendations are for *maximum* fare components

We heard feedback on our draft recommended urban flag fall of \$5.11, with many stakeholders noting that it would cause “meter shock” for passengers. Our final recommended \$5.00 flag fall is slightly lower than the Draft Report. We also note that our final recommendations (where all maximum fare components are higher) allow taxi service providers to adjust certain fare components downwards to a level that best suits their business needs.

We recommend a 10% increase in the urban distance rate for the first 12 km

Our final recommendation proposes a split distance rate, set at:

- \$2.52/km for the first 12 km, and
- \$2.29/km thereafter.

We developed the split distance rate recommendation by applying a 10% increase to the current \$2.29/km distance rate. This visibly signals to drivers that short fares will become higher, and should incentivise drivers' willingness to take these types of trips. We have changed this from our draft recommendation, where we initially proposed a 2% higher distance rate for the first 12 km, and an 8% lower distance rate thereafter. We heard stakeholder feedback that this would unfairly treat taxi drivers who typically make longer trips due to passenger demographics or geographic conditions (for example, trips in outer or Western Sydney)²⁶. Our final recommendation does not decrease the distance rate, so no long trips will be penalised. However, short fares increase proportionally by a higher amount, which is intended to help address short fare refusal.

We intend for our recommendation for a split distance rate in tandem with the increased flag fall encourages drivers to preference shorter fares as opposed to waiting for a longer fare (and refusing short trips in the process). We consider that our proposed rebalancing of the fare component levels does not heavily penalise passengers taking short fares, and still fairly compensates drivers for making longer trips.

3.9.2 We recommend a small overall increase for country fares

Our final recommendation is the same as our draft recommendation for country fares. We did not receive substantial feedback on our draft recommendation for country rank and hail fares and note that rank and hail makes a small proportion of taxi trips in the country.

Our recommendation incorporates an increase in the country flag fall to \$5.11, which aligns it to flag fall levels in other states. We also applied a 2.2% increase to other fare schedule components to account for inflation between financial year 2024-25 (when we undertook our analysis) and financial year 2025-26 (when the new fare schedules will apply).

3.9.3 We recommend rebalancing waiting time to match the threshold speed

The waiting time rate is applied as a per minute 'time' charge only when the taxi is travelling below 26 km/h. The rationale behind the waiting time rate is to compensate drivers for time spent in heavy traffic or at traffic lights.

We consider that the waiting time rate should be equivalent to the standard distance rate at the threshold speed (26 km/h). This relationship was disrupted when the waiting time rate was not changed alongside the 10c distance rate adjustment applied on 1 July 2023.

Our waiting time recommendation preserves this relationship with our recommended standard distance rates for urban and country trips. Our recommendation to increase fare component levels annually by CPI ensures this ratio is maintained until fares are next reviewed.

3.9.4 We considered stakeholder suggestions for other fare components

Many stakeholders presented alternative or new ideas for fare schedule items. We investigated the merits of these suggestions, however, we are not recommending any changes to the current components in the Fares Order, or when they apply, for simplicity and ease of transition.

We do not recommend removing the peak time hiring charge

The peak time hiring charge is currently a \$2.50 maximum fare component applied for urban fares between 10pm and 6am on Friday and Saturday evenings, and evenings before public holidays. IPART recommended the charge in our 2013 review of taxi fares and TfNSW added it to the Fares Order in 2013. The rationale behind the charge is to make more taxis available at times of high demand, and also to increase services for passengers taking short trips during these times.

We do not recommend changes to the current arrangements. Our analysis of data from our annual Passenger Survey and data from the Point to Point Transport Commission shows that on average, service levels during the peak night period are around the same as overall service levels²⁷. We did not identify excessive wait times for passengers during these periods. We also did not hear any issues with the level of taxi or point to point transport services on Friday and Saturday nights during our consultation.

We received one submission which suggested removing the peak time charge due to passenger perceptions of high flag fall.²⁸ We note that the \$2.50 is a *maximum* charge and taxi service providers or drivers can charge less than this amount if they choose to.

Our CPI adjustment to the charge takes our current recommendation to a maximum level of \$2.56, to apply from 1 July 2025.

We are not recommending an extension of the peak time charge to country fares

We do not recommend extending the peak time charge to the country fare area or allowing for an optional night surcharge for nominated regional locations, as suggested by stakeholders including the NSW Taxi Council. Although we did hear through our consultation that some country taxi services have some difficulty in attracting drivers for night shifts, these issues were generally centred around quieter evenings like Monday nights.²⁹ We also heard that businesses were exercising structural reforms to address this driver supply issue, by lowering bailment fees for certain shifts, or rostering drivers to ensure an even split of busy and quiet nights.³⁰

We also heard through consultation that trips during these peak periods are typically booked journeys for many taxi service providers.³¹ Ease of booking (for example, through mobile phone) allows for fares to adjust during these peak periods and provides a better passenger service compared to waiting outside at a rank or attempting to hail a taxi in the street.

We also considered fares policy in other jurisdictions' country zones. Although most other states and territories have an additional flag fall component at night, most do not increase their distance rates at night unlike NSW (see Table 3.3). We consider our recommendation for a small increase to overall flag fall, as well as the increased night rates as appropriate for country fares.

We are not recommending a minimum fare

Throughout our consultation, we heard calls for a minimum fare from stakeholders from the taxi industry. We heard suggestions for:

- a minimum fare specifically for trips *from* Sydney Airport, to compensate for extended queuing times
- a minimum fare for all taxi services.

We also heard many suggestions on what level a minimum fare should be – ranging from about \$15³² to \$35.³³

We are not recommending a minimum fare on the basis that it is unfair to passengers travelling short distances. Our recommendations for a higher flag fall for both urban and country fares make fares slightly higher for those travelling short distances.

We also note that a minimum fare may exacerbate the queuing issue at Sydney Airport, and that these issues are best resolved through queuing arrangements at Sydney Airport (for example, a short fare queuing system, communication of queue capacity, or penalties).

We are not recommending a surcharge for special events

Some stakeholders told us that major or special events often come with increased passenger demand for point to point transport services. The submission by the NSW Taxi Council and others indicated that taxi service providers were interested in variable pricing for certain special events or venues to encourage taxi supply.³⁴

We considered passenger activity for major events and noted that most high occupancy events (such as sports matches and concerts) have additional public transport services which the majority of patrons use to exit event venues, compared to private vehicles, taxis, and other hire vehicles. We also found that surge pricing for rideshare is sporadically applied to various trips and quickly subsides to standard pricing once rideshare supply is sufficient to meet passenger demand.

Overall, we did not find evidence to suggest unmet passenger demand during events and on balance we found the drawbacks of a separate event surcharge to outweigh any perceived benefits. The key drawbacks include:

- Difficulties in communicating variable pricing and conditions to potential passengers
- Difficulties in implementing surcharge boundaries for certain events and certain locations
 - Highly patronised events such as New Year's Eve and Mardi Gras are not confined to a central location unlike sports matches and concerts
- Creating additional opportunities (i.e. possible surcharges) to incentivise poor driver behaviour
- Potentially encouraging an excess supply of taxis where they aren't demanded at special event venues, and additional traffic concerns.

3.10 How our fare recommendations affect typical taxi trips

We considered the impacts of our recommended fare changes on a selection of different taxi trips. We also looked at how different communities might be affected by changes to taxi fares.

3.10.1 We considered the impact of our recommended urban fare schedule on typical taxi trips of different lengths

Our urban fare schedule adjusts fares for different types of trips so that drivers are encouraged to provide services particularly for shorter trips. We aimed to minimise the impact on overall fare levels so as to not impact overall driver take-ins and to minimise the financial impact on passengers taking short trips. Most short trips will have maximum fares that are around \$2-\$3 higher than current levels, whereas longer trips will become around \$4-\$5 more expensive. Table 3.5 shows how maximum fares will change across a variety of urban trips.

Table 3.5 How our final recommendation affects current urban fares

| Trip | City trip (2km, 10min waiting) | Shopping trip (4km) | Night trip home (15km) | Average trip (8km) | Medium trip (25km) | Long trip (54km) |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| 2024 levels | \$18.94 | \$15.02 | \$50.26 | \$26.07 | \$65.95 | \$133.30 |
| 2025 levels recommended | \$22.28 | \$17.49 | \$55.25 | \$29.76 | \$70.70 | \$138.20 |
| \$ change | \$3.34 | \$2.47 | \$5.00 | \$3.68 | \$4.75 | \$4.90 |
| % change | 18% | 16% | 10% | 14% | 7% | 4% |

Source: IPART analysis

3.10.2 How our fares affect typical country taxi trips

Our country fare schedule recommendation adjusts the flag fall and also applies a CPI increase to all fare components, so maximum fares for short trips ('within town') are around \$1.40 higher, and longer trips are approximately 2-3% higher overall. This remains unchanged from our draft recommendation. Table 3.6 below outlines the change in maximum fares for a variety of typical trips.

Table 3.6 How our recommendation affects country fares

| Trip | Short trip (3km) | Day trip in town (6km) | Night trip in town (6km) | 12 km trip | 30 km trip | 70km trip |
|--------------------------------|------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| 2024 levels | \$14.42 | \$20.54 | \$23.24 | \$35.66 | \$93.80 | \$223.96 |
| 2025 levels recommended | \$15.75 | \$21.94 | \$24.70 | \$37.44 | \$96.84 | \$229.89 |
| \$ change | \$1.33 | \$1.40 | \$1.46 | \$1.78 | \$3.04 | \$5.92 |
| % change | 9% | 7% | 6% | 5% | 3% | 3% |

Source: IPART analysis

3.10.3 We consider that our maximum fares maintain affordability

We considered the affordability of taxi fares to ensure that passengers, especially those from vulnerable communities and those who cannot access alternatives, are protected from excessive prices. We found that fares in NSW are generally affordable as they have increased less than incomes and pensions and are in line with other jurisdictions.

Since 2014, when we first recommended a fare freeze in nominal terms, fares have only changed once for the fuel adjustment in 2023, when they were increased by 10c/km on each of the distance charges. In addition, since 2018 all point to point transport service providers have been required to pay a Passenger Service Levy, which has increased in 2023 to \$1.32 (inc. GST) per trip. It is up to the service providers to decide whether they pass the levy on to passengers.

In the past 10 years, fares have increased by much less than CPI and wages, meaning they are lower in real terms in 2025 than in 2014. Our recommended fare schedules proportionally increase shorter fares more than long fares due to our recommended increase in flag fall for both urban and country fares. On the whole, our recommended changes maintain affordability across all types of trips, as the nominal increase in fare levels is well below inflation from 2014 to 2025.

4 Taxi services for wheelchair users

For many people with a disability, taxis are an essential form of transport to get to crucial medical appointments, employment and broader social occasions. While many people with disability can ride in standard taxi vehicles, some rely exclusively on wheelchair accessible taxis (WATs).

Existing pricing and regulatory considerations include the Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme (TTSS), with 11,793 wheelchair participants in 2023/24, the WATDIS incentive, interest free WAT loans, and TfNSW's centralised Wheelchair Book & Ride booking service. However, the [Availability of Wheelchair Accessible Services Roundtables Key Findings Report](#) and its contributors recognised that these may be insufficient to incentivise and satisfy the required service level for passengers.

This chapter discusses our findings on taxi services for wheelchair users, the proposals in the recently released [NSW Government Response to the Key Findings Report](#), and the onset of reform implementation which we consider sufficient to address some of the issues that have been identified regarding the shortage of taxi services for people who use wheelchairs.

4.1 Wheelchair accessible taxis are not currently meeting the needs of passengers

Our survey results and stakeholder submissions indicate that wheelchair users have much longer wait times and many more 'no show' experiences than users of standard taxis.^{35 36} We have also heard that the rollout of the centralised booking system has been problematic due to poor system integration, limited app functionality and driver behaviours.³⁷

Some evidence suggests that the shortage of services may be due to a reduction in the number of WAT licences on the road. The overall number of registered WAT licences in NSW has decreased from 731 in September 2022 to 649 in September 2024.³⁸ Although the number of WAT licences has decreased, there also appear to be other factors impacting supply of services.

WAT drivers are legally required to preference wheelchair users over non-wheelchair passengers,² and WAT service providers must engage with a wheelchair accessible taxi booking service that is approved by the Point to Point Transport Commissioner.³ However, through our consultation with peak bodies, we found that wheelchair users experienced issues of fare refusal (for short trips or trips that require tying down their wheelchair),³⁹ and frequent 'no shows' for their bookings.⁴⁰

Data from SCIA suggests that many WAT drivers do not connect to the Wheelchair Book & Ride during shifts and continue to preference non-wheelchair passengers or maxi taxi trips. SCIA advised that, on average, only 28.6%⁴¹ of registered WATs in metro Sydney log in to the Book & Ride portal during a month, suggesting there are a large number of WATs registered but not being made available to the passengers who rely on them.

² *Point to Point Transport (Taxis and Hire Vehicles) Regulation 2017* (NSW), Clause 65(1)

³ *Point to Point Transport (Taxis and Hire Vehicles) Regulation 2017* (NSW), Clause 43

4.2 We welcome reforms and commitments to improve services for wheelchair passengers

The Availability of Wheelchair Accessible Services Roundtables Key Findings Report was published in October 2024. The NSW Government's response was published in December 2024 and offers a \$15 million package of short-term actions over 12 months to maximise the capacity of the existing wheelchair accessible fleet.⁴² Key reforms and commitments commenced in March 2025 and include:

- an increase to the Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Driver Incentive Subsidy (see below), including an increase to the standard rate from \$15 to \$25, and 2 new rates for nights and public holidays
- additional funding for the WAT Interest Free Loan Scheme
- exploring booking service capabilities
- exploring other models to provide wheelchair accessible transport services.

IPART endorses the reforms and considers them as a key step in ensuring that wheelchair accessible transport service levels are safe, reliable, and sufficient to meet passenger demand. We acknowledge that SCIA has also welcomed the reform agenda and intends to work with the government over the next 12 months to support development and implementation.⁴³

4.3 We consider the new \$25 WATDIS as appropriate

The Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Driver Incentive Subsidy (WATDIS, commonly referred to as a lift fee) is an incentive paid to WAT drivers who pick up eligible TTSS passengers that require use of a wheelchair. The incentive is paid for by TfNSW and not the passenger.

The WATDIS increased from \$15 to \$25 in March 2025 under new reforms. We heard through our consultation that the previous level was insufficient to encourage WAT drivers to prioritise wheelchair passengers compared to picking up other fares. The key reason that was cited was the additional time taken to safely load and unload a wheelchair passenger into a vehicle, which was not included in the fare. Stakeholders told us that this process can add around 15-30 minutes to the total trip time.⁴⁴ We consider that an appropriate level for an incentive payment should reflect the forgone potential income from the additional time taken to safely load and unload a wheelchair passenger (such as the practical distance travelled within that time or the waiting time rate for that duration). We consider the new \$25 lift fee is sufficient to account for a driver's time and we would subsequently expect to see a positive change in WAT supply because of the increased fee.

Throughout the review, we also heard that issues for wheelchair passengers are exacerbated at nights, public holidays, and on special occasions such as Mother's Day. SCIA report that Wheelchair Book & Ride's busiest day is Christmas Day, with passengers experiencing extreme wait times and unfulfilled bookings.⁴⁵ However we consider departure from gazetted NSW public holidays, or differing night tariff times for different types of taxi services, may add confusion and complexity to the fare schedules, and create opportunities for fare non-compliance. We are therefore not recommending changes to times where the night rate applies within the fare schedule, or the days where the public holiday lift fee applies.

We consider that the new lift fees announced in the NSW Government's package, set at:

- a standard rate of \$25,
- \$30 at nights (between 10pm and 6am) excluding public holidays, and
- \$50 flat rate on all public holidays

are appropriate in encouraging WAT drivers to prioritise wheelchair passengers, as they better reflect the additional time (relative to taxi fares) taken to safely load and unload a passenger. We note that NSW's lift fee rates are now comparable with similar incentive schemes in other jurisdictions, and that the increased rates on public holidays will help to encourage sufficient services to improve social inclusion outcomes for people with disabilities. We also recommend that these payments are increased by CPI annually, alongside fares, so they maintain their relativity to fare levels.

4.3.1 We heard from stakeholders on the new WAT reforms through our Draft Report

Similar feedback on WATs and the government reforms were reiterated during our Draft Report consultation stage with all stakeholders welcoming an increase to the lift fee and penalty rates. Some indicated the increased lift fee and rates didn't go far enough and should be at parity with Victoria's (\$31.10)⁴⁶ or even as high as a \$50 flat rate.⁴⁷

Stakeholders were also vocal about the planned training intentions under the reforms, which are aimed at making quality customer service a feature of the system⁴⁸. One stakeholder at our Draft Report public hearing stated that educational activities would be redundant unless the training is financially subsidised and another stakeholder suggested the training be mandatory for all WAT drivers.⁴⁹

We note that TfNSW plans to work with people with disability and the taxi industry in both the development and delivery of the new training modules.⁵⁰ We consider this collaborative approach necessary in the successful development and delivery of WAT training.

Finding



1. IPART endorses the reforms and related funding outlined in the NSW Government's response to the 'Availability of Wheelchair Accessible Services Roundtables' Key Findings Report, including the \$25 standard lift fee and night and public holiday rates.

5 Sydney Airport taxi fares

On 28 October 2024, the Minister for Transport wrote to IPART to request that we consider the pricing methodology for taxi fares from Sydney Airport to areas such as the CBD as part of our review of maximum rank and hail fares. Currently, fares for all taxis caught from the Sydney Airport taxi ranks are subject to the same fare regulation as other rank and hail trips; the meter must be activated and the fare charged may be below the metered fare but cannot exceed it.

We are making a recommendation that the Government trial a fixed fare specifically for trips originating from the Sydney Airport taxi ranks to destinations within the Sydney CBD.

5.1 Our recommendation is a trial of fixed fares from Sydney Airport to the CBD

Our recommendation aims to address driver compliance issues and the excessive airport queuing problems whilst also providing passengers with clarity and certainty. We propose a 12-month trial of fixed fares from Sydney Airport to the CBD, for all passengers travelling to the CBD (postcode 2000), with the following specifications:

- the maximum fare level set at **\$60** for standard taxis and **\$80** for maxi taxis
 - taxi service providers and drivers may set their fares at a lower level.
- for this type of fare to apply for any trips departing from both the T1 International terminal or T2/T3 Domestic terminals' taxi ranks to any destination in the Sydney CBD
 - the Sydney CBD defined by any address in the 2000 postcode
 - passengers to choose their preferred route to the destination (i.e. to use or not use toll roads)
- for the maximum fare levels to apply at all times of the day (i.e. no separate night tariff)
- for the Passenger Service Levy not to be passed through to the passenger(s), in addition to the fixed fare
- for incurred road tolls and the airport ground transport access fee not to be passed through to the passenger(s), in addition to the fixed fare.

We are recommending no change to the fare methodology for other taxi trips departing Sydney Airport, which we outline below in Table 5.1. We make a recommendation on various conditions of the trial, set out in Table 5.2. Further analysis on what we considered to make these recommendations is contained in this chapter.

Final recommendation



4. That TfNSW conduct a trial of fixed fares for taxi trips from Sydney Airport to the Sydney CBD (defined as postcode 2000), with regard to the conditions set out in Table 5.2, with a maximum fare set at:

- a. \$60 for standard taxis, and
- b. \$80 for maxi taxis.

Table 5.1 Recommended fare methodology for trips from Sydney Airport taxi ranks

| Origin | Destination | Maximum Fare Methodology |
|---|---|--|
| T1 or T2/T3 taxi ranks | Any address within postcode 2000 ^a | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$60 fixed fare for standard taxis, inclusive of airport access fee, Passenger Service Levy, and any road tolls incurred \$80 fixed fare for maxi taxis, inclusive of airport access fee, Passenger Service Levy, and any road tolls incurred |
| T1 or T2/T3 taxi ranks | All other destinations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standard metered maximum urban rank and hail fares (no change) Airport access fee, Passenger Service Levy, and road tolls may be passed through to the passenger in addition |
| Booked taxis from Priority Pickup Zones | All destinations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not subject to maximum fare regulation (no change) |

a. Fixed fare methodology on a trial basis, until the trial concludes

Table 5.2 Recommended conditions for the Sydney Airport fixed fare trial

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Condition 1 | <p>The following is developed by Transport for NSW prior to trial commencement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a clear set of intended and measurable trial outcomes, including the effects of taxi queueing trends in complaints and compliance data any effects on WAT availability (across Sydney, not just at Sydney airport) methods for collecting data against trial outcomes agreement on setup and incidental costs an independent post trial evaluation plan. |
| Condition 2 | The trial to only include trips departing from the T1 International and T2/T3 Domestic terminals' taxi ranks to any destination in the 2000 postcode. The trial permits the taxi driver and passenger(s) to discuss optimal choice of route, with the passenger(s) ultimately having the ability to decide. |
| Condition 3 | The trial fixed fare level to be set at \$60 for standard taxis (including GST and Passenger Service Levy), as a maximum fare in the Fares Order. Maxi taxis to have a maximum fare of \$80. |
| Condition 4 | Road tolls and Sydney Airport ground transport access fee NOT to be passed through to the passenger in addition to the fixed fare. |
| Condition 5 | The trial fixed fare should NOT increase using the same proposed CPI methodology as urban fares but should remain fixed until the trial ceases or Transport for NSW reviews taxi fares. |
| Condition 6 | Taxi drivers must activate the fare 'on-meter', and the fixed fare should be visible on the fare calculation device at all times. |
| Condition 7 | Signage and information on the fixed fare trial be readily available in plain English at all airport terminals to educate passengers on the maximum payable fare and inclusions. Information to be available online in other languages and easily accessible (for example, via QR code). Point to Point Transport Commission representatives be present at the ranks for the period of the trial. |
| Condition 8 | The trial run for a period of 12 months, followed by an independent post trial evaluation. |

5.2 We are recommending a change to the maxi taxi fare conditions

Under the current regulation, the maxi taxi 50% surcharge can only be applied for rank and hail taxi services when there are 5 or more passengers hiring the vehicle. Booked fares in maxi taxis (apart from those under the TTSS) are not regulated.

We are making a recommendation that the maxi taxi surcharge should also be allowed to apply when a maxi taxi vehicle is specifically requested by a passenger(s) at the Sydney Airport taxi ranks, other than for the carriage of a person who requires wheelchair accessible service (for example, to carry luggage). Our recommendation aims to align fares with previous regulations, where the surcharge could be applied for booked services when the maxi vehicle was specifically requested.

Our recommendation only applies to trips from Sydney Airport, and we are proposing no change to the '5 or more passengers' rule for all other rank and hail trips. We consider that most passengers who require a larger vehicle (e.g. for additional luggage space) are more likely to book a service compared to searching for a maxi taxi at a rank or finding one to hail in the street, except when departing from the Sydney Airport taxi ranks.

Final recommendation

5. That TfNSW allow a 50% surcharge to be charged for a rank or hail taxi service in a maxi taxi:
 - a. when hired by 5 or more passengers (as is currently the case), or
 - b. when a maxi taxi is requested by the hirer at any of the Sydney Airport taxi ranks, other than for the carriage of a person who requires wheelchair accessible service,
 - c. and that TfNSW ensures there is a clear communication system about the applicability of the maxi taxi surcharge from the airport.

5.3 We heard from stakeholders on the proposed fixed fare trial from Sydney Airport

Our consultation on a proposed Sydney Airport fixed fare trial included a targeted call for submissions and a pulse survey on Sydney Airport fares in November 2024, a second pulse survey largely focusing on the proposed Sydney Airport trial in March 2025, and broader consultation on our Draft Report (including a Public Hearing and our formal submission process).

While there was broad support for a fixed fare arrangement from Sydney Airport to the CBD, stakeholders expressed concerns with some of the trial parameters, especially the fare levels and the fare inclusions.

The main concerns we heard in response to our draft recommendations on the Airport trial were:

- The proposed fixed fare amount (\$55/\$75 in the Draft Report) is too low, especially for trips at peak hours where traffic is significant, and for trips to the northern end of the CBD.⁵¹

- The fixed fare is too high, since the trip is fairly short and public transport and rideshare options are significantly cheaper.⁵²
- Tolls should not be included in the fixed fare as they do not represent revenue for the drivers and they vary depending on the choice of route.⁵³
- Domestic and International terminals are located at different distances from the CBD, so the fares should be different.⁵⁴
- Passengers should be able to choose the preferred route, consistent with other rank and hail trips.⁵⁵

Feedback on our maxi taxi recommendation and on other trial conditions has been limited and mostly supportive.

We undertook additional analysis to reflect stakeholder feedback when developing our final recommendations, detailed in Section 5.6.

We considered issues for passengers and taxis at Sydney Airport

Sydney Airport is a popular place for taxi drivers to pick up and drop off passengers and hosts the busiest ranks in NSW. While taxis can easily access the departures floor to drop off departing passengers, for passengers arriving at Sydney Airport, taxis must first wait in a holding bay and queue to access the arrivals hall rank. Taxis are charged an airport access fee of \$5.80 for using the airport ranks which they can pass through to passengers in the fare.

Wait time data shows that airline passengers arriving at Sydney Airport have access to adequate taxi services. In fact, there is often an excess supply of taxis at the airport, as indicated by taxis spending hours waiting in the holding bay. This leads to problems such as traffic congestion in and around the airport caused by taxis queued out of the holding bay, and incentives for bad driver behaviour like refusing short fares or overcharging. The Minister requested IPART to consider airport fares at the same time as announcing tougher penalties for "the minority of drivers who are doing the wrong thing" and committing fare-related offences.

Sydney Airport is also popular among maxi taxi drivers as there are more opportunities to get hired by groups of 5 or more people which triggers the maxi taxi surcharge, or by people with large amounts of luggage that won't fit in a standard taxi (although luggage on its own does not currently trigger the maxi taxi surcharge). This has the potential to incentivise maxi taxi drivers to incorrectly add the surcharge when passengers at the rank choose them over a standard due to luggage volume and not passenger capacity.

According to data supplied by Sydney Airport, taxis have been a declining mode of ground transport since the introduction of rideshare.⁵⁶ Passengers also utilise other modes of transport to travel to and from the airport, such as public transport, hire vehicles (including rideshare), or private vehicles (including family/friends pick-up). Sydney Trains provides frequent train services to the CBD via the T8 Airport Line for a \$21 fare.⁴

⁴ Domestic Terminal to Town Hall at peak time, one-way, for a single Adult Opal traveller. Includes \$17.34 Airport Link station access fee.

While public transport provides a cheaper, more sustainable and convenient option for many passengers, point to point transport options best meet the needs of some categories of passengers, such as big families, elderly people, people with disabilities, and passengers with luggage.

The Taxi Council has suggested that offering fare certainty to would-be passengers could increase demand for taxis at airport ranks.⁵⁷ The Taxi Council is also concerned to address poor driver behaviour.

5.3.1 We conducted additional consultation about taxi trips from Sydney Airport

As part of our consultation for this review, we called for written submissions on taxi trips from Sydney Airport, met with and obtained data from Sydney Airport Corporation, and met with other groups, including Les Clefs d'Or (the association for hotel concierges). We also issued 2 short pulse surveys that received 101 and 188 responses respectively, and IPART staff conducted fieldwork by catching taxis from Sydney Airport to different CBD destinations. We considered all feedback to our Draft Report and its recommendations on the Airport fixed fare trial, including submissions and our March 2025 Public Hearing.

5.3.2 We found that oversupply of taxis at Sydney Airport creates long queues of taxis and incentives for bad driver behaviour



Excessive queueing

We heard that Sydney Airport is a very popular destination for drivers, who are attracted by the potential for long trips and associated large fares, as well as the high volume of potential passengers which essentially guarantees a fare.⁵⁸ Data from Sydney Airport showed that many taxis choose to queue for a fare, with up to 5000 taxis accessing the waiting areas each day.⁵⁹ The long time spent waiting to pick up a passenger means that drivers prefer a substantial revenue on the trip to compensate for the time spent idle.

We heard from Sydney Airport that the long queues create strain on the existing airport queue infrastructure and cause congestion that blocks access to the airport for departing passengers. Sydney Airport also noted that the behaviour of drivers dwelling in the holding bay due to low kerbside demand has resulted in increased pollution in these areas, which poses a safety risk, with concerns of bird strikes stemming from rubbish in the T2/T3 holding bay situated adjacent to a runway.⁶⁰ Sydney Airport is investigating anti-congestion measures including the introduction of queue reduction targets, which intend to encourage drivers to avoid using the airport as a waiting area.⁶¹

Refusing short fares

We heard from both passengers and drivers that there are issues associated with short (less than 5-10km) trips from Sydney Airport to surrounding suburbs or airport hotels.⁶² 80% of drivers who responded to our pulse survey noted that they had issues with short fares specifically from the airport. Our survey results suggested that drivers would generally be unhappy with a fare less than 5-10km from the airport, as they consider the associated revenue is too low to compensate them for the time spent waiting in the queue. While taxi drivers are required to take their passenger's journey (unless they are at the end of their shift and the destination is far from their base), we also heard from Sydney Airport's management⁶³ and through our research⁶⁴ that drivers may refuse or attempt to refuse a short trip or be abusive towards passengers who request one.

We understand negotiations between Sydney Airport Corporation and industry are under way to reintroduce a short fare system where drivers can queue in a shorter line specifically for passengers taking shorter fares. We discuss this further in section 5.4.3. We support any practice that improves services for passengers and creates more equity and fairness for drivers.

Overcharging

We heard from industry and passengers that overcharging is a particular problem at Sydney Airport,⁶⁵ where passengers may be new to Sydney, unaware of correct fare procedures or appropriate fare amounts to their destinations, unfamiliar with the currency or otherwise more vulnerable to overcharging. Online reviews on Google and on sites such as Tripadvisor have numerous examples of passengers reporting taxis overcharging them for trips from Sydney Airport. Les Clefs d'Or concierge and doormen have reported that CBD hotel guests often get charged in excess of \$100 from airport to city hotel trips and often complain about fraudulent charges.⁶⁶

As noted above, the Government announced a new law in December 2024 to disqualify drivers convicted of committing a fare-related offence, on 2 separate occasions to combat such behaviour. The Minister for Transport also asked IPART to investigate a fare methodology from the airport to address airport specific issues.

We conducted fieldwork by taking taxi trips from both terminals to several destinations in the CBD. Although the intent of the fieldwork was to validate our modelling approach used for estimating typical fares from the airport to the CBD, we experienced overcharging in 7 out of the 10 trips that we took. Types of overcharging we encountered include:

- additional toll/extra charges,
- additional manual inputs on the meter,
- meter already activated (and accruing waiting time charges) before we entered the vehicle,
- inefficient routes increasing both distance and waiting time charges,
- improperly calibrated meters (excessively high fares given the distance travelled and time taken).

We consider that our recommendation to trial fixed fares from Sydney Airport to the CBD will help to address issues regarding overcharging by providing certainty to customers on what they should be paying.

5.4 Our recommendations address issues for passengers and taxis at Sydney Airport

Our recommendations aim to address the most common issues for passengers at taxis at Sydney airport, such as short fare refusal and fare overcharges.

5.4.1 A fixed fare reduces opportunities for drivers to overcharge passengers

We are proposing the trial of a fixed fare from all terminals to the CBD (defined as the 2000 postcode). A fixed fare, especially if well-signposted at the airport, can give passengers clarity on what they can expect to pay for their trip, especially if they are unfamiliar with Sydney's geography, fares, and currency. This reduces the scope for bad driver behaviour, such as fare refusal and fare overcharging if passengers are more aware of what they should be charged. Our proposed fare is also inclusive of all tolls (if any toll applies to the trip) and fees (except the non-cash payment surcharge), limiting drivers' ability to charge additional unjustified fees.

5.4.2 Fare component adjustments make short trips more appealing for drivers

Our recommendation for a split distance rate in tandem with an increased flag fall is intended to increase the relative appeal of shorter trips for drivers, compared to the current fare schedule. This is especially important at Sydney Airport, where we heard that a lot of passengers are refused short trips to surrounding suburbs or to airport hotels.⁶⁷ The proposed fare schedule would encourage drivers to accept short trips rather than wait for longer trips.

5.4.3 We considered alternative suggestions from stakeholders

Prior to our Draft Report, we received 61 responses to our targeted Sydney Airport submission process. This consultation included a short pulse survey, which received 101 responses, almost all from industry. As part of our Draft Report consultation process, we received 15 submissions from 12 stakeholders and issued a second pulse survey, mostly focusing on the Airport trial.

Throughout the review process, we have engaged with Sydney Airport directly and met separately with GM Cabs and 13cabs, the 2 largest taxi networks in NSW, as well as the Taxi Council.

In addition to various fixed fare proposals, our engagement offered some alternative solutions to improve the issues identified at Sydney Airport.

A minimum fare from Sydney Airport

Many stakeholders were in favour of a minimum fare from Sydney Airport to compensate for the prolonged queue wait time of drivers.⁶⁸ We do not recommend implementing a minimum fare from the airport and consider other measures, such as our recommended rebalancing of fare components, the short fare queuing system, and compliance activity as more appropriate methods to address issues identified with short fares.

There was no consensus on how much a minimum fare should be, or how it should be effectively implemented. Suggestions for a minimum fare level ranged from \$25 to \$45.⁶⁹ One submission suggested to implement the minimum fare component as a \$20 flag fall instead.⁷⁰

We consider that a minimum fare from Sydney Airport unfairly impacts passengers and residents that wish to travel a short distance from the airport. It also unfairly rewards drivers for work they have not necessarily undertaken. A minimum fare is likely to encourage further taxi queuing at the airport and result in drivers feeling unfairly remunerated for the additional queue time. We do not recommend financial incentives at a passenger's expense, as an appropriate solution to problematic driver behaviours that could be curbed in other ways.

Fixed fares to other significant destinations

We received submissions from stakeholders that suggested fixed fares from Sydney Airport to other destinations, such as Parramatta, North Sydney, Sydney Olympic Park, and Manly.⁷¹

Our current recommendation is to not implement or trial fixed fares from the airport to any other locations apart from the Sydney CBD. We consider that a trial will help to uncover any issues or other considerations that will better inform TfNSW if similar fixed fare approaches are appropriate for other destinations.

We investigated proposals for other destinations but decided against recommending their inclusion in a trial due to:

- lack of significant tourist passenger demand
- low perceived demand for trips directly from the airport (for example, Olympic Park and Macquarie Park)
- boundary setting issues and clear communication of who the fixed fare applies to.

Fixed fares to these destinations were also not popular with industry participants who completed our first airport fares pulse survey, with most rather expressing interest in nearby destinations (see below).

Respondents to our second pulse survey did not argue for significant change to our proposed fixed fare zone (i.e. the 2000 postcode).

We also note that implementing fixed fares to other destinations can create confusing boundary effects which are hard to communicate to passengers and drivers. For example, if fixed fares applied to Strathfield and Ashfield, but not for Burwood and Croydon in between, passengers may feel like their trip is unfairly priced and drivers may feel unjustly remunerated if the metered fare differed from neighbouring fixed fares.

Other jurisdictions with successful fixed fare systems, such as Vancouver, Toronto, and Tokyo, address this issue by setting multiple fixed fare zones with clearly defined boundaries which apply across the entire city. We consider that this is difficult to implement with Sydney's geography and not suitable at a trial stage. We also consider that this solution can be overwhelming and unwieldy for passengers to easily understand.

A fixed fare for destinations near Sydney Airport

Through our airport fares pulse survey, we received keen industry interest in fixed fares to suburbs close to the airport. After the Sydney CBD, the most popular suggested fixed fare zones were:

- Airport surrounds (e.g. Alexandria, Marrickville, Brighton-Le-Sands)
- Airport neighbours (e.g. Mascot, Arncliffe, Tempe)

We consider that these proposals have a similar rationale to the minimum fare proposals, and we recommend against implementing them for similar reasons. We consider that other measures such as compliance activity, a short fare queuing system (see below), and discouraging queuing at the airport are more appropriate ways to address short fare problems which do not unfairly penalise passengers needing to travel short distances.

A short fare queuing system

We received commentary from stakeholders that were in favour of some sort of system that shortened queuing time for taxis who take short trips. Most respondents to our pulse survey preferred a short fare queuing system to address their issues with short trips.

In 2019, Sydney Airport decommissioned their automated short fare system which allowed drivers taking short trips to re-enter the T2 and T3 airport queue in a priority position. The short fare system employed GPS and number plate recognition technology to allow taxis who travelled within a certain radius and returned to the airport precinct within 40 minutes (extended from the original 26 minutes) to bypass the queue.

Reasons given for the decommissioning of the short fare system include inappropriate driver behaviours which had negative impacts on passenger safety and experience. Due to the timed nature of system, drivers were reported to drive unsafely to/from the airport and drop off passengers not at their intended destination. The extension of the return timeframe was intended to address these issues, but instead, extended the feasible short trip distance for a driver to make within the return time frame. However, 68% of respondents to our pulse survey cited that the removal of the short fare arrangements were a key reason why they had issues with short fares from the airport.

Our consultation with the NSW Taxi Council and the 2 largest Sydney taxi networks (13cabs and GM Cabs) rendered support to reintroduce a similar system, in the form of a specific queue for drivers that are willing to take short fares rather than a queue-jump for their next trip. Sydney Airport is working with industry to determine the appropriateness of this arrangement.

5.5 Our final recommendations for a trial of fixed fares from Sydney Airport to the Sydney CBD

Our recommendation aims to address driver compliance issues and the excessive airport queuing problems whilst also providing passengers with clarity and certainty. Industry responses to both of our airport pulse surveys were in favour of some type of fixed fare arrangement but opinions differed on what fixed fares should look like.

We sought feedback on any technical (fare calculation device/meter) barriers to implementing a fixed fare and did not receive any suggestion that technical barriers exist. We propose a 12-month trial with the following specifications, to test fixed fare appropriateness and conditions:

5.5.1 A maximum fare level of \$60 for standard taxis and \$80 for maxi taxis

We propose a trial of fixed fares from Sydney Airport to the Sydney CBD, with the fare set at a maximum level of:

- \$60 for standard taxis and
- \$80 for maxi taxis.

This fare accounts for extra charges including the Passenger Service Levy, the airport ground transport access fee, and has allowance for road tolls to be incurred during the trip. This fare is higher than what we proposed in our Draft Report to account for our updated recommended urban fare schedule. Our recommendation is to use the fixed fare as a single maximum fare component, and for taxi service providers to be able to set their airport to CBD fare at lower than the specified level.

Our fare level is around the average price for a trip from the airport to the CBD

We considered fares for typical trips from either airport terminal to various destinations in the Sydney CBD, and our \$60 fare level reflects the average price for a trip inclusive of road tolls, the airport access fee, and Passenger Service Levy. Our fare modelling accounts for standard traffic conditions, and provisions for city traffic, appropriate use of tolled roads, and passenger loading time into the car. We also looked at the distribution of trips across different ends of the CBD, and updated our model to reflect changes to the urban fare schedule. We confirmed our fare modelling by undertaking a variety of trips from either airport terminal to various destinations in the Sydney CBD.

Our maxi taxi fare level of \$80 represents 150% of the standard fare components for an average typical standard taxi trip from the airport to the CBD, including tolls, the airport access charge, and Passenger Service Levy.

See section 5.6.1 for further analysis on how we determined the levels for our fixed fare.

Our proposal has one fixed price for all hours of the day

The urban taxi fare schedule has a night distance rate that is 20% higher than the daytime distance rate and applies from 10pm to 6am. Our recommendation proposes one fixed price each for standard and maxi taxis for trips from Sydney Airport to the Sydney CBD that does not vary during different times throughout the day. We consider that a simple fare structure without variation will help achieve our intent of increasing passenger certainty and addressing driver compliance issues.

We also note that Sydney Airport is subject to a curfew between 11pm and 6am and most arriving passengers would be using the taxi ranks during the standard tariff hours (6am – 10pm). As driver supply is typically beyond the levels required to meet passenger demand, we expect that the lack of a night rate would not adversely impact supply levels to a point where passengers cannot access taxi services. We suggest this outcome to be monitored throughout the trial period.

5.5.2 The airport access fee, Passenger Service Levy, and any road tolls to NOT be passed through to the passenger in addition to the fare

We recommend that the fixed fare levels should not allow for additional charges, and that the airport access fee, Passenger Service Levy, and any road tolls incurred are NOT passed through to the passenger in addition to the fare. We recommend that these additional charges should not be applied in addition to the fare as:

- passengers receive greater clarity on what they should be paying
- tourists are likely to be unfamiliar with Sydney's toll roads and if they are being charged the correct amount
- drivers can no longer add extra additional charges beyond the tolls they incurred (an identified issue)

We consider that passengers should be paying only the \$60/\$80 fare, with the only variation to the fare being the maximum 5% non-cash surcharge if the passenger chooses to pay by card.

We have priced the airport access fee, possible road tolls, and Passenger Service Levy into our recommendation

Our \$60 fare level already accounts for the \$5.80 airport access fee, the \$1.20 Passenger Service Levy (not to be passed through to customers for this type of trip), and appropriate use of road tolls for a trip from the airport to Sydney's CBD. See section 5.6 for more details on our pricing considerations when developing our fixed fare recommendation.

We consider that this pricing structure encourages drivers to take an optimal route

Our fixed fare already accounts for the possible toll roads that a driver may use to access the CBD from Sydney Airport. We consider that this pricing structure better encourages drivers to use the most optimal route, which is aligned with a customer's preferences, compared to an approach that adds road tolls on top of the fare. See Box 5.1 for our analysis on this topic.

5.5.3 We recommend that the fixed fare levels are not indexed with other taxi fares

Our recommendation proposes that maximum rank and hail taxi fare components are annually indexed by CPI from 1 July 2026. We are recommending no indexation to the maximum fare levels set for the trial of fixed fares from Sydney Airport to the CBD. We consider that fare indexation mid-trial would cause passenger confusion and require significant investment to alter signage and any media communicating the trial to passengers.

5.5.4 We recommend that the trial fare applies for trips from either airport terminal's taxi ranks to all destinations within the 2000 postcode

After considering a range of different geographic boundaries, we consider the postcode 2000 destinations as the most appropriate representation of Sydney's CBD for trial purposes. Postcode boundaries are recognisable and finite. A destination's postcode is easy to identify, especially for tourists and those not familiar with Sydney's geography.

We acknowledge that the 2000 postcode is a large zone where current fares vary

Trips from Sydney Airport to the Sydney CBD can range from about 7.5km to 16km in total distance depending on terminal and destination. In typical traffic conditions, trips can range from 15-30 minutes and between \$38-63 depending on which route is used. Our recommendation for a \$60 fixed fare means that some trips will become more expensive while other trips will become cheaper. However, passengers gain clarity on the fares that they should be paying and are more immune to overcharging from drivers under a fixed fare arrangement.

We consider that a smaller zone is more difficult to define and communicate to passengers and the industry and would also create confusion for whether a fixed fare should apply or not. We also consider that a split zone would also create boundary issues and be more difficult to communicate without clear geographic boundaries such as a river, motorway, or grid street system.

We also note that fixed fares from airports apply for much larger geographic zones in other cities, such as:

- John F. Kennedy (JFK) Airport to Manhattan (one fare covers 59 km²)
- Charles de Gaulle (CDG) Airport to Paris city limits (two fare zones cover 105 km²)
- Milan Malpensa (MXP) Airport to Milan city limits (one fare covers 181 km²)

compared to the 2.8 km² that the Sydney CBD covers.

We propose that this fare option is only available in one direction

Our recommendation is to trial this new fixed fare methodology only for trips from Sydney Airport to the Sydney CBD, and for the trial fixed fare not to apply for the reverse trip. We note that:

- bi-directional pricing is more difficult due to the asymmetry of tolls and charges
 - the airport ground transport access charge (\$5.80) and Eastern Distributor (\$9.82) toll roads are only levied outbound from Sydney Airport, so pricing for an inbound fare would likely have to be at a lower level
- fares from the CBD to Sydney Airport are more likely to be booked, whereas taxi passengers who are departing the airport would generally use the ranks as they are more convenient
- it is easier to communicate the fixed fare trial to passengers departing Sydney Airport
- trial monitoring and logistics are streamlined with one location for passengers to depart, rather than the many spots a passenger could leave from in the CBD.

Through our consultation, we heard that passengers might be confused or concerned about why their fare might differ for an outbound trip compared to an inbound trip.⁷² We note that while a rank and hail fare from the CBD to Sydney Airport would most likely be below the proposed fixed fare level due to the asymmetry of extra charges, taxi service providers could advertise the same fixed rate for their equivalent booked fares.

We propose that the same fixed fare apply to trips from both Sydney Airport terminals

We heard from some stakeholders that the fixed fare should vary between the international and domestic terminals, as they are located at different distances from the CBD.⁷³

We maintain that minimising variations in fares is an important element of our recommendation for a fixed fare. We consider that simplicity in the fixed fare structure is key for both passengers and the taxi industry in ensuring an effective trial.

We also undertook analysis on the difference in prices for typical trips from both the international and domestic terminals to various destinations in the Sydney CBD. We found that the price differential between trips from the international and domestic terminals was not significant enough to warrant two separate fixed fares. We also found that for most trips that use the newly opened Sydney Gateway-M8 WestConnex tunnel, the price differential between trips from either terminal is minimal.

5.5.5 We recommend that taxi passengers should be able to determine the trip route

For the purposes of the trial, we recommend the passenger(s) be able to determine the trip route, as in all other standard rank and hail taxi trips. This is different from the recommendation in our Draft Report to allow drivers to choose the route.

We believe that having the same choice of route conditions between the fixed fare trial and all other metered rank and hail trips is simpler for passengers, as noted by stakeholders during our consultation.⁷⁴ Drivers, who might often be more familiar with traffic and route conditions than their passengers at the Airport, still have the option of discussing route choice with their passengers, suggesting a route, or selecting one if the passengers do not express a preference. We consider that our toll-inclusive fare structure aligns passenger and driver incentives to select the most time-efficient route, as we discuss further in Box 5.1.

5.5.6 We recommend a change to maxi taxi fare conditions at Sydney Airport

Under the current Fares Order, the maxi taxi 50% surcharge can only be applied for rank and hail taxi services when there are 5 or more passengers hiring the vehicle. Booked fares in maxi taxis (apart from those under the TTSS) are not regulated.

Our recommendation is to allow the maxi taxi 50% surcharge to be charged when the vehicle is specifically requested (e.g. by lining up in the maxi taxi queue) at the Sydney Airport taxi ranks regardless of the number of passengers, other than when the passenger requires a wheelchair accessible vehicle. Our recommendation aims to align fares with previous regulations, where the surcharge could be applied for booked services when the maxi vehicle was specifically requested.

Our proposed recommendation only applies to trips from Sydney Airport, including for the fixed fare trial to the Sydney CBD, and we are proposing no change to the '5 or more passengers' rule for all other rank and hail trips. We consider that most passengers who require a larger vehicle (e.g. for additional luggage space) are more likely to book a service compared to searching for a maxi taxi at a rank or finding one to hail in the street, except when departing from the Sydney Airport taxi ranks.

One recommended trial condition is that TfNSW monitors the effects of this policy change on the supply of wheelchair accessible taxi services.

5.6 What we considered when making our final recommendations for Sydney Airport fares

Our recommendation is for a trial of fixed fares for taxis caught from the Sydney Airport taxi ranks to any location in the Sydney 2000 postcode, subject to the recommended conditions in Table 5.2. In developing the trial parameters, we analysed trip costs, toll implications, risks, benefits and the impact on passengers and industry.

5.6.1 We compared typical fares for trips from Sydney Airport to various destinations in the Sydney CBD

Our recommended fixed fare of \$60 for trips from Sydney Airport to the Sydney CBD is derived from an average of typical trips from both airport terminals to various destinations across the Sydney CBD, inclusive of all extra charges.

We considered 5 zones in the 2000 postcode, namely CBD South (around Central Station), CBD West (Darling Harbour and Barangaroo), Mid CBD (between Town Hall and Martin Place), CBD North (around Circular Quay), and Barangaroo. We considered the optimal route for each of the trips we modelled and applied the Eastern Distributor (ED) or WestConnex M8-M4 Link (M8) road tolls when they resulted in an optimal journey. We also accounted for the airport access charge, the Passenger Service Levy, and waiting time.

We averaged the basket of hypothetical fares, inclusive of all tolls and charges and rounded to the nearest \$5 to reach our recommended fixed fare of \$60 for standard taxis. Our average is weighted to evenly represent the 5 zones we considered. We then applied the 50% maxi taxi surcharge to the average fare (excluding tolls and fees) and rounded to the nearest \$5 to reach our \$80 recommendation for maxi taxis.

We found that typical trips under our recommended fare schedule range from \$39 to \$75 across peak and off-peak conditions, inclusive of road tolls, the airport access fee, and Passenger Service Levy. We considered the typical average fares for each destination, factoring in typical fares in peak and off-peak traffic.

Table 5.3 Typical average fares from Sydney Airport to the CBD, including tolls and extra charges

| Destination | Toll road | Domestic | International |
|--------------------------------|-----------|----------|---------------|
| CBD South | | | |
| Haymarket/Central Station | N/A | \$42 | \$52 |
| Mid CBD | | | |
| Kent and Bathurst St | M8 | \$56 | \$62 |
| Pitt and Market St | M8 | \$57 | \$59 |
| CBD West | | | |
| Darling Harbour | M8 | \$56 | \$57 |
| Barangaroo | M8 | \$59 | \$60 |
| CBD Northeast | | | |
| Macquarie St (at Martin Place) | ED | \$59 | \$69 |
| Sydney Opera House | ED | \$64 | \$71 |
| CBD North | | | |
| Hunter and Bligh St | M8/ED | \$60 | \$62 |
| Walsh Bay | M8 | \$62 | \$63 |
| The Rocks | M8 | \$64 | \$65 |

Source: IPART analysis

While consulting on our Draft Report, we heard that the draft recommended fixed fare of \$55 was too low, especially for trips at peak hours where under a fixed fare regime drivers aren't compensated for time spent waiting in traffic, unlike with metered trips. Drivers also do not pass tolls through to customers under our fixed fare recommendation. Some stakeholders also told us that the majority of trips in our fixed fare trial zone would be towards the northern end of the CBD.⁷⁵

To reflect this feedback, we expanded our fixed fare modelling and included traffic analysis and trip distribution in our basket of fares. When applied to our draft recommended fare schedule, our new methodology, which accounts for peak and off-peak conditions and destinations further into the CBD, results in an average slightly above \$55. However, the changes in our urban fare schedule recommendation bring our recommendation for a fixed fare to \$60.

Fares in peak traffic

We expanded our selection of trips and considered trips that happen at various times throughout the day, including during peak hours (using TfNSW's Opal system peak hours of 6:30 am to 10 am and 3 pm to 7 pm).

We found that typical morning peak conditions make a journey cost on average \$5 more than at other times of the day. Fares do not increase by the same proportion as time, so a trip could take double the time at the morning peak, but the fare would increase by less than double. Fares can increase by much more during extreme conditions (such as major traffic accidents), but we found these instances to be very rare. We also note that there are now multiple routes a driver/passenger can utilise to get to the CBD should traffic or an accident affect a particular route.

We looked at Sydney Airport data on taxi holding bays to determine what proportion of trips happen at peak times and found that 55% of taxis exit the holding bays at peak times. We reweighted the average fare to reflect this distribution and found no material change from the original \$55 value.

Fares for destinations in the upper north of the CBD

We did not receive any data from stakeholders to substantiate the claim that there are more taxi trips to the northern end of the CBD specifically as opposed to the southern end. We looked at Opal data for train trips between the Airport and different stations within the CBD as a proxy to test whether our average fare would change based on trip distribution. We found that applying these weights to our fare modelling changed the average fare by negligible amounts.

We also expanded our original list of sample trips to the CBD by including more destinations in the northernmost part and found that these fares were around \$60-\$65 in typical trip conditions. These fares are not much higher than those to the lower north end of the CBD we had originally sampled.

Fares under our new recommended urban fare schedule

Our draft \$55/\$75 fixed fare was based on our draft recommended urban fare schedule. We re-calculated the fare (including all the adjustments for peak hour and trip distribution explained above) under our final recommended urban fare schedule, which yields fares that are higher than our draft recommendation. This results in a higher average fare, and we adjusted the fixed fare recommendation accordingly.

5.6.2 We considered the impact of tolls and different routes

Our fixed fare recommendation for trips from Sydney Airport to the CBD does not allow drivers to pass road tolls through to the passenger, unlike all other taxi trips.

Stakeholders generally opposed this recommendation, noting the high cost of tolls which can erode driver takings.⁷⁶

We note that the average fare we calculated does include all possible tolls that a driver is likely to use to enter the CBD from Sydney Airport, and we have factored this into our recommended fixed fare price.

We consider that inclusion of tolls in the fixed fare level will:

- provide passengers with further certainty on the fare that they should be paying,

- encourage drivers to suggest the most time/toll-efficient route for themselves at the time of day,
- reduces opportunities for drivers to overcharge unknowing passengers by adding unwarranted additional charges on top of the fare (an issue we identified through our research).

On the other hand, a fixed fare onto which tolls may then be added is likely to:

- add variability depending on which toll roads are used
- add confusions as to which extra charges should apply to a journey (e.g. Passenger Service Levy and airport access fee)
- remunerate drivers for the additional time taken for using non-tolled roads if a passenger elects to forgo tolls.

We acknowledge that there are many routes a driver can use to get from the airport to the CBD. Our fare level accounts for either the Eastern Distributor (ED), WestConnex M8-M4 Link (M8), or no toll to be incurred for a journey from the airport to the CBD. We did not account for the Cross City Tunnel (CCT) as its use is likely to be substituted with the M8 toll. We note that some routes generally use tolled roads, whereas some do not; the Eastern Distributor is most appropriate for the northern end of the CBD, the M8 is better for Darling Harbour and Barangaroo, whereas Botany Road/O'Riordan Street (no toll) is better for destinations near Central Station. We consider that toll inclusion should generally encourage drivers to use the most optimal route at the time (see Box 5.1).

While allowance for a toll is factored into the fixed fare level, it could be viewed as unfair for non-tolled journeys. A fixed fare regime necessarily implies that some actual trips would have been cheaper with a meter, and other more expensive, but that on average the fixed fare is reflective of the price of a trip from Sydney Airport to the CBD, with the added benefits of improved customer transparency and clarity.

Box 5.1 Toll inclusion generally encourages drivers to use optimal routes

Different parts of the CBD are accessed best through certain routes which have exits closest to their locations, to reduce the need to drive through slower city traffic.

For example, a driver heading from T1 International to Darling Harbour in typical daytime traffic conditions has the option to use either:

- the M8 link (\$4.99 toll) (16 minutes)
- the ED and Cross City Tunnel (\$9.82 toll + \$7.04 toll) (20 min)
- local roads (32 min).

Box 5.1 Toll inclusion generally encourages drivers to use optimal routes

The most price/time efficient route is the M8 link. During quieter periods, drivers may elect to use local roads if a tolled route is not much faster than a non-tolled option. We consider that drivers would choose the toll/time optimal route for themselves at the time of journey, which typically aligns with a passengers' interests.

Unlike with metered trips, under our toll-inclusive fixed fare route choice is not revenue neutral for drivers, since they do not pass on the tolls to passenger. However, the time trade-off still exists whereby drivers travelling tolled routes can get to their next trip faster than non-tolled routes (especially at peak hours) and maximise their revenue for their shift. Under the proposed toll-inclusive regime, traveller and passenger incentives to select the most price/time efficient route are better aligned.



5.7 We assessed the benefits and risks of a fixed fare trial

When considering the suitability of a fixed fare trial from Sydney Airport to the CBD, we were mindful of the possible consequences for passengers and industry. On balance, we determined that the benefits of a trial outweighed the risks.

We consider that a fixed fare improves clarity for passengers, reduces the scope for illegal driver behaviour, and could improve the demand for rank and hail taxi trips from Sydney Airport, for which we found there is ample supply. The risks and challenges of a fixed fare regime include the complexity in establishing a single price for trips that can vary considerably, the effects of such fare on driver behaviour and service supply, and the importance of communicating fixed fare conditions clearly to passengers.

IPART's proposed trial would cover many taxi trips which share an origin point but can otherwise vary greatly when it comes to other elements, such as length of route, traffic conditions, and use of tolls. We undertook rigorous analysis to consider all of these elements and develop a fare that is reflective of what a metered trip would cost on average. However, setting a fixed fare necessarily means striking a balance where some trips would be cheaper, and some more expensive than the metered fare.

Condition 8 of our proposed trial parameters (see Table 5.2) calls the need for a robust post-trial evaluation which will uncover the actualised risks and benefits. The evaluation will be crucial to determine whether TfNSW will then be able to make an informed decision as to whether fixed fares are appropriate longer term.

5.7.1 Impacts of a fixed fare trial for passengers

Fixed fares would provide passengers with certainty and simplicity. It would allow passengers to make a price-informed decision about which ground transport mode to take to the CBD by having all costs available ahead of time. An all-inclusive fare offers transparency because it removes the opportunity for drivers to add erroneous or extra charges at the end of the trip because the fixed fare is non-negotiable.

If a CBD trip or specific location within the postcode 2000 is viewed as undesirable by a driver for any reason, the driver may refuse the fare, express dissatisfaction towards the passenger or drop them at a more convenient CBD location than the one that was requested. This could result in a negative experience for the passenger.

The impacts would likely be compounded for passengers who aren't familiar with Sydney's geography and who may have language barriers. We have heard that taxi trip issues stemming from Sydney Airport are well known, cause reputational damage to Sydney and NSW as a safe and trustworthy destination and lead the tourism and hospitality sectors to encourage pre-paid taxis or rideshare for their clientele.⁷⁷

5.7.2 Impacts of a fixed fare trial for industry

Almost all industry stakeholders we engaged with were in favour of a fixed fare from Sydney Airport to the CBD but without consensus on what trial parameters should be.

Fares from the airport to the CBD currently vary depending on the terminal origin, time of day, route, traffic, tolls and CBD drop-off point. This means that some fixed fare trips will be more lucrative to industry than others.

If industry sees the fixed fare as insufficient to account for the probability of a CBD trip against the time spent waiting at the airport, there is potential for a reduction in the excessive queuing currently occurring. This should go toward correcting the supply/demand imbalance we identified at the airport.

Some stakeholders have argued that fixed fares have the potential to return airport transport market share back towards the taxi industry. We anticipate passengers to be receptive to the increased transparency and certainty of fares but what impact that will have, if any, on consumer behaviour remains unknown.

5.7.3 Guardrails to better protect passengers

A fixed fare trial brings a substantial change to the way taxis operate to and from the Sydney Airport precinct. To encourage a smooth transition, a collaborative partnership between the airport, industry and government will be required. We are interested in hearing from stakeholders on how best to implement a trial and how to ensure conditions are implemented and maintained.

To protect passengers, we consider compliance measures a key component for trial success. Industry and passengers need to know the parameters for transparency and clarity. Clear signage explaining the fare inclusions should be visible and communicated in simple and accessible language. We recommend a Point to Point Transport Commission presence on site to shepherd the trial's establishment and an increase in compliance activity for its duration.

5.7.4 The importance of evaluation

To thoroughly assess the successes and pitfalls, we recommend the trial occur over a 12-month period. This will allow the capture of impacts across all times, days and months of the calendar year, especially the changes seen across tourism peaks.

There are many complexities but also many potential benefits to a fixed fare from the airport to the Sydney CBD. Evaluating the trial after 12 months will be vital to understanding what has and hasn't worked. It will provide evidence of the effectiveness and impact of the trial and assist TfNSW in determining whether fixed fares from Sydney Airport should be continued, expanded or ceased.

We consider that feedback from Sydney Airport, the taxi industry, but most importantly passengers, are key metrics in evaluating the effectiveness of the trial.

A post-trial evaluation (Condition 8) should be conducted independently and measure the trial's performance against outcomes agreed prior to the trial's commencement (Condition 1).

6 Our recommendations for clearer receipts

Throughout our review, we heard from passengers that they have experienced overcharging for their taxi trips, especially from Sydney Airport. Passengers, especially if unfamiliar with Sydney's geography, can find the multiple components that add up to a taxi fare complex, such as different tolls (which may only apply in one direction), the passenger service levy, and the airport access fee for trips originating at the Airport and find it hard to check whether they have been charged the correct fare.

These issues can be exacerbated when receipts aren't clear or transparent on these cost components. We found that even when a passenger is aware of being overcharged, it can be hard to follow up with the taxi driver if extra charges or fare components aren't explicitly set out in the receipt, or with the taxi service provider if identifying information (such as plate number or driver ID) isn't correct.

To ensure fare transparency for passengers, we are making a recommendation for rank and hail taxi receipts to include a clear breakdown of the fare and other cost components. This is in line with Australian Consumer Law which requires businesses to:

- Provide consumers with a receipt for anything that costs over \$75
- Provide consumers with a receipt if the consumer asks for it for anything under \$75
- If the consumer asks for it, provide them with an itemised bill (showing how the price was worked out, the number of labour hours and hourly rate if relevant, and materials used and the amount charged for them if relevant).

Improved identification markers will assist service providers and passengers in reviewing trip details in the case of queries or complaints. More generally, we note that passengers of any taxi service would benefit from additional information on receipts such as information on the taxi service provider and their contact details, driver, and taxi plate. We are making a recommendation for all taxi service (rank and hail and booked) receipts to include identification components to increase accountability across the suite of taxi services in NSW.

Figure 6.1 below provides conceptual art of what a taxi receipt may look like under our recommendations.

Figure 6.1 What taxi receipts might look like under our recommendations

| ***CUSTOMER COPY*** | ***CUSTOMER COPY*** | ***CUSTOMER COPY*** |
|---|---|---|
| TAX INVOICE | TAX INVOICE | TAX INVOICE |
| DATE: 13/04/25 | DATE: dd/mm/yy | DATE: dd/mm/yy |
| TIME: 14:00 | TIME: 14:00 | TIME: 14:00 |
| TAXI SERVICE: XYZ CABS | TAXI SERVICE: XYZ CABS | TAXI SERVICE: XYZ CABS |
| TAXI NO: T0001 | TAXI NO: T0001 | TAXI NO: T0001 |
| DRIVER ID: D123 | DRIVER ID: D123 | DRIVER ID: D123 |
| FARE INC GST: \$68.86 | AIRPORT TO CBD | AIRPORT TO CBD |
| TOLL (M2 MAINLINE): \$10.05 | MAXI FLAT FARE*: \$80.00 | STD FLAT FARE*: \$60.00 |
| TOLL (LANE COVE TNL): \$4.09 | | |
| PASSENGER SERVICE | | |
| LEVY INCL GST: \$1.32 | | |
| FARE SUBTOTAL: \$84.32 | FARE SUBTOTAL: \$80.00 | FARE SUBTOTAL: \$60.00 |
| GST INCLUDED: \$7.67 | GST INCLUDED: \$7.27 | GST INCLUDED: \$5.45 |
| SERVICE FEE TOTAL: \$4.22 | SERVICE FEE TOTAL: \$4.00 | CASH PAYMENT |
| SERVICE FEE GST: \$0.38 | SERVICE FEE GST: \$0.36 | |
| TOTAL: \$88.54 | TOTAL: \$84.00 | TOTAL: \$60.00 |
| | *AIRPORT TO CBD FLAT FARE IS INCLUSIVE OF TOLLS, LEVIES, AND OTHER CHARGES | *AIRPORT TO CBD FLAT FARE IS INCLUSIVE OF TOLLS, LEVIES, AND OTHER CHARGES |
| THANK YOU FOR CHOOSING XYZ CABS xyz_cabs.com.au | THANK YOU FOR CHOOSING XYZ CABS (02) 5555 5555 | THANK YOU FOR CHOOSING XYZ CABS (02) 5555 5555 |

Final recommendations

6. That the Government require digital or paper receipts provided in accordance with Australian Consumer Law at the conclusion of any rank or hail taxi service to clearly itemise all applicable cost components for the trip's fare, including:
 - a. the metered fare
 - b. road tolls
 - c. extras, such as the Sydney Airport Ground Transport Access Fee
 - d. Passenger Service Levy
 - e. GST
 - f. any non-cash payment surcharges
7. That the Government require digital or paper receipts provided in accordance with Australian Consumer Law, for any taxi service (including booked) to clearly provide the following driver/vehicle identifications:
 - a. taxi service provider

- b. taxi service provider contact number or website
- c. taxi plate number
- d. driver ID

Appendices

A Terms of Reference

Point to Point Transport (Taxis and Hire Vehicles) Act 2016 Section 74(1)

Referral

I, the Hon. Jo Haylen MP, Minister for Transport, with the approval of the Hon. Chris Minns MP, the Premier of NSW, administering the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal Act 1992, pursuant to section 74(1) of the *Point to Point Transport (Taxis and Hire Vehicles) Act 2016*, refer to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) for investigation and preparation of a report containing recommendations on the maximum fares for rank and hail taxi services in New South Wales to apply from 1 July 2025.

Pursuant to section 74(2)(b) of the *Point to Point Transport (Taxis and Hire Vehicles) Act 2016*, IPART is to consider the following specified matters when making its investigations for the purposes of its report:

1. A pricing framework for maximum fares for rank and hail taxi services including:
 - A methodology or level for fares from 1 July 2025
 - A methodology for reviewing and adjusting fares in future.
2. Level and methodology for determining fares for maxi-taxis, the circumstances in which this fare is to be charged and any impacts on the availability of wheelchair accessible taxis.
3. Ensuring affordability and availability of taxi services for people with disability.
4. Application of different maximum fare schedules for country and urban areas of NSW.
5. The forthcoming review under section 161 of the *Point to Point Transport (Taxis and Hire Vehicles) Act 2022*, which will assess the effect of the commencement of the:
 - deregulation of taxi licence supply; and
 - removal of operating area restrictions
 - and their impacts on innovative and competitive services as well as on customer satisfaction.
6. IPART is also to consider the following matters in making its recommendations:
 - the cost of providing the services
 - the need for greater efficiency in the supply of services so as to reduce costs for the benefit of consumers and taxpayers
 - the protection of consumers from abuses of monopoly power in terms of prices, pricing policies and standards of service
 - the social impact of the recommendation
 - the impact of the recommendation on the use of the public passenger transport network and the need to increase the proportion of travel undertaken by sustainable modes such as public transport
 - standards of quality, reliability and safety of the services (whether those standards are specified by legislation, agreement or otherwise)
 - the effect of the recommendation on the level of Government funding
 - any other matter IPART considers relevant.

IPART should publish a draft report containing its preliminary recommendations and consider public submissions in response to its recommendations.

IPART is to deliver a final report to the Minister for Transport within nine months from the date of receiving these Terms of Reference.

Signed: 

The Hon. Jo Haylen, MP
Minister for Transport

Date: 26/5/24

Approval of Referral

I, the Hon. Christopher John Minns, MP, Premier, as the Minister administering the *Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal Act 1992*, approve this referral under section 74(1) of the *Point to Point Transport (Taxis and Hire Vehicles) Act 2016*.

Signed: 

The Hon. Chris Minns, MP
Premier

Date: 21/6/24

B Letter from the Minister for Transport

The Hon Jo Haylen MP
Minister for Transport



28 October 2024

Ms Carmel Donnelly PSM
Chair
Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal
PO Box K35
Haymarket Post Shop NSW 1240

Re: Section 13 requirements for the review on maximum fares for rank and hail taxi services in NSW

Dear Ms Donnelly,

I write to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) regarding the review of the appropriate maximum fares for rank and hail taxi services in New South Wales that is currently underway.

Taxi trips are an important mode of travel for people accessing Sydney airport. Equally, they are also an important component of work for the taxi industry. The Government understands that there is significant interest in determining fares for these trips, including the potential for fixed fares.

To that end, pursuant to section 13(1)(c) of the *Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal Act 1992*, I am writing to seek consideration of the pricing methodology for taxi trips commencing from Sydney Airport to areas such as the Sydney CBD as part of the current review. The consideration of these trips is timely, as I understand this was last investigated in IPART's review of taxi fares in 2010.

This direction will maintain IPART's independence, while ensuring that the NSW Government is well informed to consider IPART's recommendations.

I look forward to receiving IPART's report.

Sincerely,



Jo Haylen MP
Minister for Transport

C How we have met the requirements of the Terms of Reference

| Requirement in ToR | How we meet the requirement |
|---|--|
| Investigate and prepare a report containing recommendations on the maximum fares for rank and hail taxi services in NSW from 1 July 2025. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This Final Report contains recommendations on maximum fares for rank and hail taxi services in NSW. |
| IPART is to consider the following matters: | |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A pricing framework for maximum fares for rank and hail taxi services including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a methodology or level for fares from 1 July 2025 a methodology for reviewing and adjusting fares in the future | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This Final Report contains recommended fare schedules to apply from 1 July 2025, retaining the current fare structure and fare components. We are recommending an annual CPI inflation methodology for future years We are recommending the next review in 5 years time (fares to apply from 1 July 2030). |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Level and methodology for determining fares for maxi taxis, the circumstances in which this fare is to be charged, and any impacts on the availability of wheelchair accessible taxis. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are recommending no change to the 50% surcharge We are recommending that the 50% surcharge be applied: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> when there are 5 or more passengers (current rule) or when specifically requested at the Sydney Airport taxi ranks (new recommendation) We are supporting the NSW Government's WAT reform package, especially the increased lift fee (and extra night and public holiday rates) as ways to better increase the availability of WATs for wheelchair passengers. |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring affordability and availability of taxi services for people with disability. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We considered the effects on affordability (fare increases for passengers taking short local trips – which are more common among people with disability) We are supporting the NSW Government's WAT reform package, especially the increased lift fee (and extra night and public holiday rates) as ways to better increase the availability of WATs for wheelchair passengers. We are making an additional recommendation to index the lift fee annually by CPI, to ensure that it maintains its relativity with standard rank and hail taxi fares. |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Application of different maximum fare schedules for country and urban areas of NSW. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We recommend maintaining separate and different urban and country fare schedules for rank and hail services to better reflect the circumstances impacting country services compared to urban services. |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The forthcoming review under section 161 of the Point to Point Transport Act 2016, which will assess the effect of the commencement of the <ol style="list-style-type: none"> deregulation of taxi licence supply removal of operating area restrictions their impacts on innovative and competitive services as well as on customer satisfaction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We considered the effects of licence supply deregulation on the supply of taxis in the market and the types of operating models that are used We noted that innovation and competitive services are starting to be adopted by industry. |

| Requirement in ToR | How we meet the requirement |
|--|--|
| 6. IPART is also to consider the following matters in making its recommendations: | |
| a) The costs of providing the services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We considered the costs of providing services through our driver/operator survey. We outline that although some cost components have increased, costs are unlikely to have increased overall in the past 10 years, due to the removal of high (licence) plate lease fees. We also note that sufficient supply indicates that the current level of costs can be met by revenue |
| b) The need for greater efficiency in the supply of services so as to reduce costs for the benefit of consumers and taxpayers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We highlight that the current Regulation and maximum fares allow for industry innovation and alternate business models that could be more efficient |
| c) The protection of consumers from abuses of monopoly power in terms of pricing, pricing policies, and the standards of service | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulating maximum fares protects consumers We note that increased competition with other forms of point to point transport and with booked taxi trips gives consumers other options We recommend additional measures for receipts to ensure consumers know what they've paid for, and how to best contact the taxi service provider Our recommended flag fall increases should reduce the prevalence of short fare refusal Our recommended Sydney Airport flat fare trial may help reduce the likelihood of unlawful charging for trips to the CBD. |
| d) The social impact of the recommendation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We considered the impact of our recommendations on affordability for different groups of passengers |
| e) The impact of the recommendations on the use of the public passenger transport network and the need to increase the proportion of travel undertaken by sustainable modes such as public transport | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We note that for many types of trips, public mass transit serves as a more sustainable and efficient means of transportation, including from the Airport to the CBD We are not recommending special event surcharges and note that public transport adequately (and efficiently) covers these events |
| f) Standards of quality, reliability, and safety of the services (whether those standards are specified by legislation, agreement, or otherwise) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Point to Point Transport Commission regulates safety and undertakes industry compliance and enforcement We note that competition between taxi service providers should encourage better service standards without needing government intervention |
| g) The effect of the recommendation on the level of Government funding | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We note that any change to the rank and hail fare schedules could impact the level of government funding required to support the TTSS. We note that our recommendation of annual indexation of the lift fee will require additional government funding |
| h) Any other matter IPART considers relevant. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We recommend Itemised receipts for enhanced consumer protections and increased transparency over fare components |
| IPART was also asked by the Minister for Transport to: | |
| Consider a pricing methodology for taxi trips commencing from Sydney Airport to areas such as the Sydney CBD (Attachment B) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have recommended a trial of fixed fares for taxi trips from Sydney Airport to the Sydney CBD |

D Glossary

| Term | Description |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Affiliated taxi service provider | Provides a taxi service under the brand of an authorised taxi service provider. |
| Airport access fee | Sydney Airport charges a Ground Transport Access Fee (airport access fee) to taxis and other hire vehicles who access the taxi ranks and priority pickup areas on the airport premises. It is currently \$5.80 per vehicle. |
| Authorised taxi service provider | Provides a taxi service, sets their own fares, has their own branding, and makes their own arrangements for safety and security. They must be authorised by the Point to Point Transport Commissioner. |
| Booked service | A point to point transport service in a taxi or hire vehicle that is obtained by making a booking through a booking service provider. |
| Booking service provider | Takes bookings for taxis and hire vehicles to provide passenger services. They must be authorised by the Point to Point Transport Commissioner. |
| Country Fare Area | All areas in NSW excluding the Urban and Exempt Fare Areas. |
| Exempt Fare Area | The townships of Moama, Barham, Tocumwal, Mulwala, Barooga and Deniliquin. |
| Fares Order | Transport for NSW can make a fares order under section 76 of the Point to Point Transport Act. The current fares for rank and hail taxi services commenced 1 July 2023. |
| Flag fall | The fixed charge payable for the hiring of a taxi and payable at all times. Also known as the 'hiring charge'. |
| Hire vehicle | Under the Point to Point Transport Act, a hire vehicle means a motor vehicle that is used to provide a passenger service that is not a taxi service. Includes vehicles that were previously regulated as hire cars (HC licence plates) or tourist vehicles (TV licence plates) as well as rideshare vehicles. |
| Maxi taxi | A taxi vehicle which can carry 5 or more passengers (in addition to the driver). Maxi taxis can carry up to 11 passengers depending on the vehicle. |
| Passenger Service Levy | Taxi service providers and booking service providers must pay a Passenger Service Levy of \$1.20 per passenger service transaction to fund the Government's industry assistance package. It can be passed on to customers, and if so, it is subject to GST (\$1.32 including GST). |
| Point to Point Regulation | <i>Point to Point Transport (Taxis and Hire Vehicles) Regulation 2017</i> |
| Point to Point Transport Act | <i>Point to Point Transport (Taxis and Hire Vehicles) Act 2016</i> |
| Point to Point Transport Commissioner | The industry regulator for taxis and hire vehicles in NSW (since 1 November 2017). |
| Rank and hail taxi service | A service provided by a taxi that is hired at a taxi rank or from the street. |
| Sydney CBD | The Sydney central business district (CBD) is Sydney's historical and main commercial centre. It does not have a fixed definition, but for the recommended fixed fare trial we propose to define it as locations within the 2000 postcode (the suburbs Sydney, Haymarket, Barangaroo, Millers Point, Dawes Point, and The Rocks). This region ranges from Central Station to Sydney Harbour, and includes parts of Darling Harbour. |
| Taxi service | Under the Point to Point Transport Act, a taxi service means a passenger service where the transport is by a motor vehicle that plies or stands for hire on a road or road related area or is authorised to do so. |
| Tolls | All road, bridge, ferry, tunnel and airport tolls and charges that apply to a journey. |
| TTSS | The Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme, which provides support for NSW residents who are unable to use public transport because of a disability. The subsidy covers 50% of the total fare with a maximum subsidy of \$60 per journey. |
| Urban Fare Area | The Urban Fare Area includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metropolitan Transport District (Sydney) • Newcastle Transport District • Wollongong Transport District • Blue Mountains Local Government Area |

| Term | Description |
|------------------------|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Central Coast Local Government Area• Shellharbour Local Government Area, and• the townships of Cams Wharf, Fern Bay, Minmi, Toronto, Williamstown, Medowie, Campvale, Ferodale, Raymond Terrace, Fassifern, Hexham, Maitland, Beresfield, Fullerton Cove, Tomago, Camden, Picton, Thirlmere, Tahmoor and Bargo. |
| WAT | Wheelchair Accessible Taxi |
| WATDIS (lift fee) | The Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Driver Incentive Subsidy (WATDIS, also commonly referred to as a 'lift fee') is an incentive payment paid to wheelchair taxi drivers when they carry passengers in wheelchairs who are TTSS participants. The payment is made to WAT drivers at no cost to passengers. |
| Wheelchair Book & Ride | Wheelchair Book & Ride is the centralised booking service for wheelchair accessible taxis in Sydney. Bookings can be made either through the phone or online. Wheelchair Book & Ride is operated by Spinal Cord Injuries Australia (SCIA) and is funded by Transport for NSW. |

E The point to point transport industry

The point to point transport industry plays an integral role in supporting the state's broader transport infrastructure system. It is defined as any passenger service (other than a bus) that can take passengers on the route they choose, at the time that suits them, for a fare⁷⁸. Generally, it includes those that provide rank and hail services (taxis) and booked services, including offerings from within the taxi, hire car and rideshare sectors.



A **taxi** is a vehicle marked with a TAXI sign on its roof. Taxis can take booked passengers and passengers who hail them on the street or at a taxi rank.



A **hire vehicle** service provides a vehicle with a driver to transport passengers from one point to another for a fare. A hire vehicle can only take booked passengers.

- **Rideshare** includes services such as Uber, Ola and Didi.
- **Limousines and other hire vehicles** include other booked transport services with a vehicle and driver

E.1 Industry at a glance

The point to point transport industry has returned to pre-pandemic service levels, with more than 68 million point to point trips undertaken in the 2022-23 financial year which was an increase from the 48.5 million trips the previous year. The Point to Point Transport Commissioner's data⁷⁹ shows an increase in rideshare trips and a 5% growth in the number of licensed taxis since August 2023.

There have been some new WATs entering the Sydney market; however, there has been a decline in the availability of wheelchair accessible services across NSW. The supply of wheelchair accessible transport services and especially WATs remain a focal issue for TfNSW. As at 30 June 2023 there were:

- 148,822 drivers with a passenger transport (PT) licence code
- \$327.7 million in passenger service levy collected⁸⁰.

E.2 The taxi industry has undergone significant changes in the last decade

Regulatory reforms to point to point transport commenced in 2009 and accelerated in 2015 in response to the entry of new business models into the point to point transport sector. In 2017, the Point to Point Transport Act and the Point to Point Transport Regulation commenced. They provide a regulatory framework for service providers in the point to point transport industry, including taxis, rideshare, and hire vehicles.

2001 IPART first reviewed taxi fares

2015 Rideshare services were legalised

2017 New Point to Point Transport regulatory framework commenced

2018 Industry adjustment assistance package established

2018 IPART's last review of taxi fares

2020 Independent Review of Point to Point Transport

2023 Removal of taxi licence restrictions and financial assistance scheme established

E.2.1 Taxi supply in NSW

Since taxi licence supply deregulation in 2023, the supply of WATs has decreased but the supply of standard taxis has slightly increased.⁸¹ Barriers to entry have significantly decreased since industry deregulation removed high licence costs and operating area restrictions.

The low barriers to entry to the standard taxi market means that over time, the supply of standard taxis should adjust itself to meet market demand.

Table E.1 Taxi licences over time

| Licence Type | February 2022 (pre licence deregulation) | January 2025 |
|--|--|--------------|
| Standard Licences ^a | 5,643 | 5,929 |
| WAT Licences | 1,032 | 748 |
| Total Licences (including WATs) | 6,675 | 6,677 |

a. Some WATs are under a standard taxi licence

Source: Point to Point Transport Commissioner

References

- ¹ Various, Submissions received for Initial Submissions, September 2024 (for example W24/2005 & W24/1917 & W24/1934). IPART [initial Public Hearing transcript](#), October 2024
- ² *Point to Point Transport (Taxis and Hire Vehicles) Act 2016* s79
- ³ For example, [Country Cabs Lismore enters the local taxi market](#), January 2025
- ⁴ NSW Taxi Council and NSW Country Taxi Operators Association, Submission Workshop, September 2024
- ⁵ NSW Taxi Council and NSW Country Taxi Operators Association, Submission Workshop, September 2024, IPART [Draft Report Public Hearing transcript](#), March 2025
- ⁶ For example, [Southern Highlands Taxis](#).
- ⁷ For example, [Diamond Service \(St George Cabs\)](#), [GM Signature](#), [Silver Service](#).
- ⁸ [IPART annual survey of Point to Point Transport Use](#), December 2024
- ⁹ NSW Taxi Council, meeting with IPART, March 2025 (D25/7125)
- ¹⁰ NSW Taxi Council and NSW Country Taxi Operators Association, [Submission to IPART review](#), September 2024
- ¹¹ NSW Taxi Council Roadshow – Western Region (Orange), 3 October 2024
- ¹² Dubbo Radio Cabs, [Submission to IPART review](#), September 2024, p5
- ¹³ NSW Taxi Council and NSW Country Taxi Operators Association, [Submission to IPART review](#), September 2024, p 13
- ¹⁴ IPART Survey of Point to Point Transport Use 2024, [Point to Point Transport Survey | IPART](#), December 2024
- ¹⁵ Physical Disability Council of NSW, meeting with IPART, September 2024
- ¹⁶ Sydney Morning Herald, [Taxi driver caught on film abusing, ripping off disabled passengers](#), February 2025
- ¹⁷ IPART Survey of Point to Point Transport Use 2024, [Information Paper](#), December 2024, p 5
- ¹⁸ Anonymous (W24/1917, W24/1931, W24/1941), [People with Disability Australia](#), [Vision Australia](#), [Spinal Cord Injuries Australia](#), [Submissions to IPART review](#), September 2024
- ¹⁹ IPART desktop research, various public online reviews, September 2024 – January 2025
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