

# FACT SHEET

## Survey of taxi drivers and operators

October 2014

Transport for NSW and IPART, assisted by the CIE, are currently conducting a survey of all taxi drivers and operators in NSW to gather information about the costs of operating and driving taxis. This fact sheet provides some background information about the survey and how we will use the information we gather from the survey.

### **Who is IPART?**

IPART is the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal. Among other things, we set maximum prices for public transport on trains, buses and ferries. We are also asked each year to review and make recommendations to Transport for NSW on maximum taxi fares across NSW and the number of new annual taxi licences to be released in Sydney. Transport for NSW makes the final decisions on fares and the number of new licences.

### **Who is The CIE?**

The CIE is the Centre for International Economics. It is a highly respected private economic consultancy based in Australia that provides advice and analysis to clients in Australia and overseas.

### **Why are we surveying taxi drivers and operators?**

We are surveying taxi drivers and operators to gather information about the costs of operating and driving taxis, to help us to recommend fares that take into account all those costs and are fair to passengers. We also use the information to help us to recommend releasing enough new annual taxi licences in Sydney to make it cheaper and easier to catch taxis and cheaper and easier to get a taxi licence.

## How are we doing the survey?

All authorised drivers will receive a copy of the driver survey questionnaire and all active accredited operators will receive a copy of the operator survey questionnaire.<sup>1</sup> A person who is a driver and an operator should get a copy of both surveys, and should fill both out. The questionnaires were mailed out on 17 October and should be received during the week commencing 20 October.

We would like all drivers and operators to fill out the relevant survey or surveys and return them to the CIE. People can fill out the paper survey(s) they receive in the mail and then:

- ▼ Mail it (or them) back in the reply-paid envelope or
- ▼ Fax it (or them) to the CIE.

Alternatively, drivers and operators can fill out the survey(s) online at the Roads and Maritime Services' MyRecords portal accessed from these links:

- ▼ For operators please follow the link [here](#).
- ▼ For drivers please follow the link [here](#).

Taxi Operators/Drivers who have already filled out a paper survey should not fill out an online one as well.

There is no due date on the surveys, but we would appreciate it if people could fill out the surveys promptly and return them as soon as possible.

## What do the surveys ask about?

A copy of each survey questionnaire is available on IPART's website at this [link](#).

The driver survey asks about costs and activities associated with driving a taxi: for example, the cost of fuel, and the cost of the driver's time spent driving the taxi or doing administrative tasks.

The operator survey asks about costs and activities associated with operating a taxi: for example, repairs and maintenance to vehicles, the cost of leasing a licence, and the cost of the operator's time.

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<sup>1</sup> Transport for NSW undertook the mail-out to protect the privacy of drivers and operators. Nobody at IPART or the CIE has had access to personal information about drivers or operators.

## How did we come up with the questions?

We conducted a similar survey in October 2011 and many of the questions are the same. The surveys were originally developed in consultation with Transport for NSW, the NSW Taxi Council, the NSW Taxi Drivers' Association and the Australian Taxi Drivers' Association, and we have consulted those organisations again.

## How will we use the information from the surveys?

This year we are reviewing Sydney taxi fares and licences together. We plan to continue to use our model of the Sydney taxi industry to look at combinations of fares and taxi licences and their modelled outcomes, and will make a judgement about the best combination based on the mix of outcomes predicted by the model and feedback from stakeholders. We will use the data from the driver and operator surveys to update the model with the most recent and accurate data available.

We will also use the information to inform our review of taxi fares for areas outside Sydney. There is currently one taxi fare schedule for all country areas, and one urban fare schedule that is the same for Sydney and other urban areas. This year we want to closely examine data for areas outside Sydney to analyse whether the fare schedules are appropriate, and, for areas where they are not, what the fare schedules should be.

More information about the reviews is contained in two issues papers which are available on our website, [www.ipart.nsw.gov.au](http://www.ipart.nsw.gov.au).<sup>2</sup> We are seeking submissions on the issues papers from interested parties.

The last survey of taxi operators' and drivers' costs was conducted by the CIE for IPART and the Department of Transport in 2011. We need to do a fresh survey now to find out whether and how the costs of operating and driving a taxi have changed since then.

The more responses we get to the survey, the more likely we are to get useful, representative information that allows us to calculate fares at a fair level for everyone involved.

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<sup>2</sup> IPART, *Review of taxi fares outside Sydney to apply from July 2015 - Issues Paper*, October 2014 and IPART, *Review of Sydney taxi fares to apply and new annual taxi licences to be issued in Sydney from July 2015 - Issues Paper*, October 2014.



## **How will we treat the information from the surveys?**

The survey is anonymous. We do not ask for any personal information about drivers or operators. There are no identifying numbers on the survey forms. Forms completed online do not identify the person completing them.

Once we record the information from each survey form, the survey forms will be destroyed.

## **Will we publish the results of the surveys?**

We intend to publish a report on the results of the surveys by the end of 2014. The information we get will only be shown in aggregate form (that is, from lots of responses added together). If we put the individual data from surveys on our website as we did with the last survey dataset, responses will not be identifiable.

## **For more information**

Drivers or operators who have any questions about filling out the survey form should call IPART on 1300 103 271.