

IPART SEEKS VIEWS ON REGIONAL TAXI FARES

4 May 2015

The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) will be in Port Macquarie tomorrow to gather more information for its *Review of taxi fares outside Sydney to apply from July 2015*.

IPART is seeking feedback from taxi drivers, licence owners and operators, as well as passengers, local businesses and community members about a draft recommendation released earlier this month to freeze taxi fares in areas outside Sydney at current levels for 12 months from July 2015.

As well as a fare freeze, IPART's draft report recommends reform of the way taxis are licensed outside Sydney to address an undersupply of taxis in some regional areas.

IPART Chairman Peter Boxall said the public forum in Port Macquarie is a valuable input into IPART's deliberations on how to best match the supply of taxis with demand for their services.

"In our draft report, we formed the view that increasing taxi fares in regional areas would only make taxis less competitive against other forms of point-to-point transport such as hire cars, and would not help drivers struggling with low earnings," Dr Boxall said.

"Taxi fares in regional NSW rose every year between 1999 and 2012 by more than the rate of inflation, and more than the average rate of wage increases in the economy, yet there is no evidence that taxi driver incomes increased in the same way."

"In regional areas, the cost of a taxi licence is the main barrier preventing more taxis from entering the market. In many areas, a taxi licence costs more than \$200,000 and in several areas existing licences have transferred for more than \$400,000," he said.

"The Tribunal's visit to Port Macquarie is to help us better understand both the views of those in the taxi industry and the community's views on how they find the cost and convenience of taxis in the region."

"Taxis play an important role in the community and the Tribunal is looking forward to an opportunity to hear first hand what is happening on the ground in Port Macquarie and surrounding areas," Dr Boxall said.

In addition to tomorrow's public roundtable, stakeholders have until 15 May to make submissions to IPART before its recommendations are finalised and provided to Transport for NSW in June. A roundtable will also to be held in Wagga Wagga next week.

The roundtable is being held at Rydges Port Macquarie from 11.00am to 1:00pm Tuesday 5 May. Further details about the review and the roundtable are available on IPART's website <<http://www.ipart.nsw.gov.au>>.

Media Contact

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Media note: Dr Peter Boxall is available for interviews today in advance of the roundtable. Media are welcome to attend the roundtable but may not be able to ask questions. Please direct any media enquiries through the above number.