

INDEPENDENT PRICING AND REGULATORY TRIBUNAL

NSW TAXI FARES REVIEW WORKSHOP

Held at Meeting Room 2, Level 2
44 Market Street, Sydney NSW 2000

On Friday, 6 June 2003, at 9.35am

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1 DR PARRY: Good morning. For the record it is Friday 6
2 June and the tribunal is holding, not a hearing but a
3 forum, into our review of taxi fares.
4
5 I would like to remind people, and thank you for those
6 who have come to help us with the forum, that we were asked
7 by the previous minister, and that no doubt applies in the
8 terms of the interests of the current Minister for
9 Transport, to make recommendations to the minister for
10 changes to taxi fares, if there are to be any changes, for
11 the year 2003/04; and this is to be a five-year annual
12 process. In addition, the then Minister asked us to make
13 an assessment of the cost items used in the cost index
14 model submitted by the Taxi Council as a basis for
15 establishing taxi fares. We have also been requested to
16 make recommendations regarding the specific changes to
17 components of fare structure, that is flag fall, waiting
18 time and radio, and the relationship to patronage.
19
20 What we hope to achieve through this forum - and again
21 I thank those people who are here and I thank those who
22 have put in what are very helpful submissions - what we are
23 hoping to achieve is to gain some better understanding of
24 the components of the cost index that has been used
25 historically in either determining by the minister or
26 recommending by the tribunal changes in taxi fares as well
27 as looking for the first time at the specific question of
28 the variations or any changes in the key components of
29 those fares and to try to form some view about the likely
30 impact on patronage.
31
32 Being entirely selfish, this exercise today is
33 designed to help Ms Cifuentes and myself - Mr Cox will be
34 back from leave no doubt in time for the finalisation of
35 the process - but to help the tribunal today to better
36 understand what it is we have been asked to look at in
37 framing our recommendations.
38
39 I think it is very important to stress, as I know the
40 secretariat has stressed with the players, that the
41 tribunal is not involved in any way in determining the
42 buy-in by taxidriver. That occurs in another place. We
43 are not addressing, and we have not been asked to address,
44 questions of industry structure; we have not been asked to
45 address questions of relative returns; we have not been
46 asked to address questions of regulation beyond fare
47 setting. That is not the purpose of this exercise.

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1
2 Having said that, obviously issues that do relate to
3 the components of the fare index, the cost index rather,
4 are of interest to us and, to the extent that the
5 submissions have helped shed some light on that, we welcome
6 those.
7
8 The format for today is a workshop. It is designed to
9 really assist us. We are here to listen to discussion but
10 very precisely on the topic for us. The secretariat will
11 make a presentation essentially against the areas of
12 interest this morning before a very short break for morning
13 tea, they will then make a presentation on the cost index,
14 we will then have a round table, and I will ask people to
15 formally identify themselves in a moment.
16
17 After the morning tea, again there will be a
18 presentation by the secretariat on fare structures, round
19 table, and then there will be a brief presentation on any
20 other issues outstanding. We will finish at 10 past 12.
21 We have to finish then as I do need to be in another place,
22 so it is very important that we abide by the rules of
23 engagement, which is that after the secretariat has
24 finished its 20 minutes in the first session - and I will
25 stop them at 20 minutes, no more - every participant around
26 the table will have five or six minutes for something to
27 say on that topic. No interruptions while they talk.
28 Then, if we keep tightly within our time, there will be an
29 opportunity to raise any specific issues that might not be
30 covered.
31
32 What I might just do before I hand over to Dennis
33 Mahoney and his team to do the secretariat's presentation
34 on the first topic, the cost index, is I will ask everybody
35 for the record to identify themselves and when we actually
36 do come to the round table parts, I will ask you to
37 remember that have a transcriber, so please don't talk to
38 rapidly so he can get down all the pearls of wisdom that we
39 can pore over. Phillip, if you will start, who you
40 represent.
41
42 MR STANFIELD: Phillip Stanfield, and I'm representing 546
43 drivers who signed a petition to the minister, a copy of
44 which has been submitted to the tribunal.
45
46 MR JOOLS: Michael Jools, and I am actually representing
47 the TWU here, even though the nameplate puts me out as an

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1 individual. We have put in a fairly extensive submission
2 to the tribunal. I would appreciate if our representative
3 could be at the table similar to the Taxi Council's
4 representative.
5
6 DR PARRY: What is the story?
7
8 MR MAHONEY: Mr Chaudry from the TWU, who is the official
9 delegate, wished to be at the table and since I had already
10 arranged it, I declined to accept that request.
11
12 MR CHAUDRY: Why do we have so many people from the Taxi
13 Council?
14
15 MR MAHONEY: Mr Ramshaw has actually snuck a little
16 forward. He is assisting Mr Bowe.
17
18 DR PARRY: Please, only the one person from each
19 organisation at the table.
20
21 MR MAHONEY: We have a metropolitan and a country taxi
22 association.
23
24 DR PARRY: Thanks.
25
26 MR HERD: Dougie Herd, I work for the Physical Disability
27 Council of New South Wales.
28
29 MR WADIWEL: Dinesh Wadiwel, from the NSW Council of
30 Social Services.
31
32 MR SIMPSON: Phillip Simpson, I represent the Taxi and
33 Hire Car Bureau of the Department.
34
35 MR WILKINS: Brian Wilkins, representing the New South
36 Wales Country Taxi Operators Association.
37
38 MR RAMSHAW: Peter Ramshaw, I represent the New South
39 Wales Taxi Council.
40
41 MR MAHONEY: Thank you, and good morning again, ladies and
42 gentlemen.
43
44 The three sessions, I thought we would start with the
45 objectives of this first session and in increasing order of
46 breadth it seems to me they are to consider the taxi cost
47 items and the outcomes for this review, to assist the

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1 tribunal consider the limitations of the taxi cost index,
2 both its weights and the data that it purports to bring
3 forward, and then comment on some alternative approaches.
4
5 The taxi cost index is an attempt to gauge the
6 movement in costs from last year to this year. It's a
7 backward looking index and it assumes that the current
8 costs are appropriate to the fare setting index. It makes
9 no allowance for possible productivity improvements within
10 the industry or changes in such things as patronage levels.
11
12 With those limitations, we start by looking at the
13 cost index itself. In the notes that we distributed to the
14 participants at the round table a few days ago we had
15 several appendices. The first appendix was all the detail
16 of the urban taxi cost index, appendix 1, submitted by the
17 Taxi Council; and appendix 2 was all the detail of the
18 country taxi cost index, again submitted by the Taxi
19 Council. The overall increase proposed by the Taxi Council
20 on the urban side was 5.31 per cent and also the Taxi
21 Council suggested there be no change in the fare structure,
22 that the relative components of the fares pretty much
23 remain the same or as close to the same as possible
24 consistent with an increase of 5.31 per cent in the overall
25 index.
26
27 In the country, the Taxi Council's cost index rose by
28 6.97 per cent. The secretariat is in the process of
29 looking at those individual cost items and of course in the
30 future we will be presenting to the tribunal some
31 recommended changes and the basis for them. But
32 effectively if we have a look at the list of items that the
33 secretariat thinks may be up for adjustment, the vehicle
34 lease costs, there is a prospect I think that interest
35 rates haven't gone up quite as much as the interest rates
36 submitted to us by the Taxi Council.
37
38 We are very much aware that it is difficult to get
39 accurate quotes on interest rates because the interest
40 rates aren't quoted publicly and daily and we have actually
41 attempted to present some different interest rates in
42 appendix 3 of the notes that were circulated to the
43 participants which indicates that most interest rates in
44 fact have gone down. The one that is probably closest to
45 the Taxi Council and the lease costs would be the secured
46 personal loans advanced by the banks at variable interest
47 rates, and they certainly have gone up, so most of the rise

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1 in interest rates is attributable to the rise in the lease
2 costs as per the Taxi Council cost index, perhaps with a
3 little bit of a shading of that interest rate, but a mere
4 10 basis points. Instead of going up by three quarter of
5 one per cent, it would go up by just under that.
6
7 We also looked at the plate lease costs. We are
8 concerned that the 20 per cent rise in the price of plate
9 lease costs in the country seems a very large rise. When
10 we look at the number of actual transactions it seems quite
11 small and also variations quite large. So I think we will
12 be proposing to use, because that is the best available
13 data, the rise in the Sydney plates. We have had
14 preliminary talks with the Taxi Council about that but that
15 would, of course, modify the rise in the taxi cost index
16 for country.
17
18 We have had a look at cleaning and tyres and the ones
19 we have down there - establishment costs. Without going
20 into the detail, we think there will be some small
21 modifications to those cost increases as well. The one
22 that possibly is of more concern, because it is a larger
23 item in the index, is what the tribunal has been in our
24 issues paper calling drivers' notional wages - and may I
25 say it is drivers' notional wages and not notional drivers'
26 wages. The "notional" applies to the wages, not to the
27 drivers. The driver is real. And so as a result we have
28 put forward a case to say that we should not be increasing
29 those wages or notional wages by average weekly earnings
30 for reason that the statistician discontinued weekly
31 publication of such figures and the statistician has also
32 said that average weekly earnings are a very distorted
33 basis and has recommended across the board that we use the
34 wage cost index. When we do that, that will reduce
35 somewhat the rise in drivers' notional wages and therefore
36 also the operators' notional salary. Both of those will be
37 reduced.
38
39 The secretariat will also be drawing to the tribunal's
40 attention the fact that in the June quarter when we come to
41 think about fuel costs, in the June quarter we had a 10 per
42 cent rise in the Australian dollar. We also had a 10 per
43 cent fall in the world price of oil, so that it is very
44 likely when we see the consumer price index for the June
45 quarter fuel costs will be down about 20 per cent. Of
46 course, we will come back to the Taxi Council and ask for
47 their best estimate of what has happened to LPG prices but

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1 our suspicion is they will be down, therefore instead of an
2 annual average, as they do in the urban cost increase, of
3 about 5.3 per cent, they are more likely to rise by 3.5.
4
5 What that means overall, we are yet to present all
6 this to the Tribunal, but to give you some indication, what
7 that implies is that instead of the urban cost index going
8 up by round about 5.3, it is more likely to be closer to
9 4.5. Obviously we have to finalise that with further data
10 to come in.
11
12 On the country taxi cost index, instead of the rise
13 being around 7 per cent, it is more likely to be just a
14 little bit above that 4.5, primarily because of the quite
15 big reduction in lease plates, instead of the rise of 20
16 per cent, more likely 8.5 per cent.
17
18 I should have explained this next picture but after I
19 put it in it looked rather complicated. It shows that
20 petrol prices in Australian indices in the index tend to go
21 up and down with the world price of oil corrected for the
22 currency. Some of you actually have that as a handout, so
23 we will move on rather than worry about the picture. I was
24 proud of the picture but I now realise it is not
25 appropriate for this forum. I only half apologise for
26 putting it in.
27
28 I have dealt with one of three issues in this session,
29 the overview of the taxi cost index and what changes might
30 mean. The second issue is slightly broader, that is that
31 from the TWU and other people the weights have been
32 questioned in the past on the taxi cost index so we have
33 considered that, looked through the submissions that we
34 have received and the comments that we have received on the
35 weighting of the taxi cost index. We don't believe that we
36 can do a full reassessment in this review but we do think
37 it is worthwhile asking the question from a tribunal point
38 of view, what would it do to the increase in the urban taxi
39 cost index if we were to apply the weights that the TWU
40 says ought to apply to operators costs if we were to apply
41 those costs to the increases in costs as given to us by the
42 Taxi Council.
43
44 Then we have made somewhat I think reasonable
45 assumptions for the drivers' costs as well. The answer is
46 that the taxi cost index for urbans would go up about 4.4
47 per cent, no, it is 5.26 per cent. In other words,

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1 currently the urban taxi cost index rises 5.31. If we
2 apply the TWU and secretariat weights, the rise is 5.26.
3 From the tribunal's point of view I would have thought
4 those numbers are effectively the same and so a large part
5 of the dispute between the operators and the drivers, that
6 is an important dispute for those two groups, from a
7 tribunal's point of view in fact washes out in determining
8 the cost rises in relation to fares - just for the fares
9 side.
10
11 Where I got the 4.4 from, by the way, was what if we
12 make all those changes that we have talked about as a
13 secretariat and were to use the TWU's weights, there is
14 again almost no difference in the overall implied fare
15 rise. Would the fare rise be consistent with the cost
16 index rise for the urbans? There were no weights suggested
17 by the TWU for the country, so the taxi cost index for the
18 country stands.
19
20 Of course, because the weights are so different, I
21 think that does raise an issue perhaps for future reviews
22 about looking again at reweighting the taxi cost index.
23 That is for discussion.
24
25 That is really points one, two and three on that
26 overhead. Then the third issue this session is the
27 alternative approach we might take, instead of looking at a
28 taxi cost index at all and just using the rise in the CPI.
29 For the whole of Australia the CPI went up just over 3 per
30 cent for the transport subgroup, it went up just over 2 per
31 cent, or we could argue about instead of the overall CPI
32 what about the CPI for Sydney? The same numbers there, a
33 bit lower in both cases, but again this is part of the
34 alternative approach, discussing whether we should do this
35 instead of a cost index approach.
36
37 Then the other ones, the productivity adjustment.
38 That is up for discussion. I think to help the tribunal,
39 that might be a very tough ask within this industry, let
40 alone the idea of efficient costs.
41
42 I think that is it from the secretariat, other than to
43 put up the key issues, to say they are the three issues up
44 for discussion in the first session.
45
46 DR PARRY: Thank you. You are ahead of time, you have
47 done well. For no particular reason, but this round we

1 will start on our left, 5 or six minutes, please, no
2 interruptions, and on this particular topic.
3
4 MR MAHONEY: Can I suggest we start with the Taxi Council,
5 because it is their costs.
6
7 MR RAMSHAW: I guess I will run through just a quick
8 response to the notes which Dennis has just gone through in
9 his presentation. The first item there related to the
10 interest rates applying to car leases, vehicle leases, and
11 I take on board Dennis's comments. It is difficult to
12 define an answer that is completely defensible, but we
13 would like the opportunity to try to go back to get a more
14 definitive quote than what we provide. We provided some
15 supporting evidence for the figure we have used, but I take
16 on board that the change that Dennis has just flagged is
17 also not that significant to be a major issue.
18
19 The establishment costs, again we believe that the
20 current figure that we provided in the supporting evidence
21 has been substantiated. I guess if they are saying it has
22 been overestimated then that must mean that the previous
23 year was understated. Again, I am not sure what the
24 quantum of the change that you are proposing there is, I
25 guess we need to revisit that as well if the opportunity
26 arises.
27
28 The changes relating to more recent information as it
29 becomes available, which applies to the CPI and also to the
30 fuel costs, we certainly flagged that in our submission,
31 that it was our intention, so we are quite comfortable with
32 that.
33
34 The issue to do with the wage cost index is an
35 interesting one but it is probably very difficult to argue
36 against the Australian Bureau of Statistics advice, I
37 think, so I'm not sure about that. I believe that the
38 average weekly earnings has been used in the past, so we
39 have used it in terms of a matter of consistency. It is
40 whether there is some adjusting factor from switching to
41 one index to another that needs to be considered. I am not
42 sure about that.
43
44 The plate lease costs for country taxis I will leave
45 to the Country Taxi Operators Association, but at this
46 stage we have not - there are weaknesses that we flagged in
47 the data that is available and it may well be more sensible

1 to adopt data that is more reliable or more consistent from
2 year to year.
3
4 The issue of the weightings for the cost index is a
5 problem that is inherent in the methodology that has been
6 chosen. We have used fixed weights, or the tribunal has
7 really adopted a fixed weights model.
8
9 DR PARRY: No, we have been asked to use that index. We
10 have not adopted anything.
11
12 MR RAMSHAW: Asked to use that, without adjusting - whilst
13 obviously acknowledging that the costs move relative to
14 each other from year to year. No adjustment is taken into
15 account, so it does seem inconsistent but it's really a
16 problem inherent with the methodology rather than anything
17 else that we have presented.
18
19 I note that I guess in making changes it is a matter
20 of substantiation, that becomes the key issue there, and
21 again I note that the difference between the TWU weights
22 and our weights, the impact on the final outcome is
23 negligible. I am not sure why one would be adopted over
24 the other if based on substantiation, so why any emphasis
25 would be put on weights proposed by the TWU, for instance,
26 than what we have substantiated?
27
28 In the matter of alternative approaches, that again is
29 really a question in my mind as to whether there is a
30 degree of circularity if we are looking at other regulated
31 fares. As an index as a measure to adjust another
32 regulated fare, I am not sure how that sort of flows on or
33 how much sense there would be in doing that. That was one
34 of the approaches that was flagged. We certainly would not
35 agree that a private vehicle cost index, that was also in
36 the notes I believe, is reflective of taxi costs in anyway
37 really. There is no factor for labour included, for
38 instance, drivers' labour or anyone else's, our insurances
39 are completely different, so I think that that would be
40 diverging away from reality, a long way.
41
42 We also agree with Dennis's observations that trying
43 to use a productivity adjustment, or even worse an
44 efficient cost approach, is really far too daunting and
45 completely impractical to really come up with any reliable
46 method that we would have confidence in.
47

1 They were the points.
2
3 DR PARRY: There will be an opportunity to come back at
4 the end on a second round for a minute or so.
5
6 MR WILKINS: Just following on from Peter, I certainly back
7 the remarks he has made. From the point of the view of the
8 country operators, the fuel cost, currently LPG gas in most
9 country areas is anywhere between 12 and 16 cents a litre
10 dearer than what it is in the metro area, and that was just
11 checking again this morning coming down from the South
12 Coast. I regularly talk to people in the west and once you
13 are over the mountain it is the same. The fuel costs are a
14 big thing in country operations.
15
16 The leasing - I think the reason that we suggested a
17 20 per cent increase in leasing is because with all the
18 talk of deregulation that has been going on for the last
19 couple of years there have been very, very few taxis that
20 have been sold and things have been at a fair sort of a
21 standstill. We are not particularly perturbed one way or
22 another on that because in the report commissioned by the
23 Department of Transport in 1999/2000 about 83 per cent of
24 country taxis are owner operated, so there is a small
25 number of drivers and for that reason there is a very small
26 number of leases so it is very hard to get a handle on just
27 exactly how many taxi plates are out on lease. But, of the
28 900 country taxis, I would say that there would not be 100
29 of those that are on lease. That is a hard figure.
30
31 Spare parts are another thing. Unless you are in a
32 fairly large town you have got freight charges on top of
33 your spare parts, which again gives you a different picture
34 than you are getting. And tyres are in a similar
35 situation.
36
37 Apart from that, I think there is some good
38 constructive criticism has come out of Dennis's report on
39 the rest of it. Again, as Peter says, it is very hard, we
40 have taken six areas throughout country New South Wales to
41 get our costings from and our pricing from. Before the
42 Department of Transport decided that they were going to
43 tidy up the fare structures in country New South Wales
44 quite a few years ago there were 93 different fare
45 structures throughout country New South Wales, because they
46 were all set by the local councils. Nobody knew from one
47 town to another what they would be paying for a taxi.

1
2 We finally succeeded in getting them all to the one
3 level, and there were some winners and losers out of that,
4 but we got them back to one level. What we felt was that
5 if we took six areas and each time we looked at what the
6 cost structure was, whether it was for their two-way radio
7 service fee or whatever it was, that we stayed consistent
8 on those six. We have tried to give a true picture because
9 certainly the attitude, not only in Sydney but the country
10 areas, is we don't like to look at too heavy an increase.
11 The industry has been very, very aware over the last 40-odd
12 years of making sure that we remain efficient and in
13 remaining efficient there has been a lot of money put into
14 infrastructure.
15
16 From that point of view the last thing a lot of
17 taxidrivers, when you start mentioning fare increases, they
18 start to shake because most country areas you have an aging
19 population and these people are very, very aware of what it
20 will cost them if your fare increases too much. That is
21 one of the reasons why the radio booking fee in country
22 areas is less than what it is in the city. A lot of those
23 people are unable to walk to a taxi rank and they are
24 ringing for taxis. We try to keep those things down.
25
26 We are very cognisant of the interests of the public
27 when looking at fare increases but, I have to say, as I say
28 to all my fellows, if you are going to go broke, you may
29 have as well go broke sitting at home rather than wearing
30 your car out.
31
32 What we want is an increase that is moving with the
33 costs of the operation and at all times naturally between
34 ourselves and the department trying to remain efficient and
35 cut our costs down where we can.
36
37 DR PARRY: Can I just ask a question of clarification, and
38 I think I know the answer, that it is not open to any
39 country operators to not impose an increase?
40
41 MR WILKINS: They can, and certain towns do it.
42
43 DR PARRY: Do you get the problem you just told us you had
44 some difficulty getting away from, having a whole range,
45 you are reintroducing different fares?
46
47 MR WILKINS: What happened, we had a couple of occasions

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1 where people have said, "Look, my town at the moment can't
2 stand it, it may be the middle of winter with a fare
3 increase coming in" - I will use the town of Moruya, a town
4 that is very quiet in winter, that operator did not modify
5 his meters until November.
6
7 DR PARRY: It is a timing factor?
8
9 MR WILKINS: Yes, he felt if he had put it on then, the
10 department - we have not put pressure on anybody. You
11 can't push somebody into a corner and knock their business
12 around. It is the case in actual fact with the taxi
13 industry we have to negotiate with the Department of
14 Veterans Affairs and the Education Department on long
15 school runs and those sorts of things. You have got to, if
16 you are getting consistent work, sharpen your pencil at
17 times. On your basic rate you have to look at something
18 that will cover your overheads.
19
20 DR PARRY: I appreciate that.
21
22 MR SIMPSON: No comment.
23
24 MR WADIWEL: The Council of Social Service has expressed
25 concern in its submission around using just a cost index
26 model and the reason for that is it does not take into
27 account the social impact of fare increases. That said, we
28 believe it is fair enough for taxi operators to be
29 recompensated for any fare costs that they have incurred as
30 a result of cost rises.
31
32 The issues paper proposed some outside cost indicators
33 as an alternative to fare setting. NCOSS would be
34 interested in seeing whether some social indicators could
35 be used as outside cost indicators and that would ensure
36 that people who make frequent use of taxis from
37 socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds such as people
38 with disabilities or elder people, their interests can be
39 taken into account too.
40
41 I draw the tribunal's attention to the recent
42 submission NCOSS made to the Senate Inquiry Into Poverty
43 and Final Hardship as that goes through some of the issues
44 around poverty and some of the potential indicators of
45 that.
46
47 The issues paper also raised the performance question.

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1 I take the point of a number of speakers here that that is
2 very hard to measure in terms of performance improvements.
3 We would certainly be interested in supporting something
4 that actually improved the quality of service, particularly
5 for older people and people with disabilities, improved
6 service for them in terms of driver training and skills.
7
8 DR PARRY: Can I just ask you, in terms of the community
9 transport functions, health, welfare and the like, I
10 suppose this might relate to the school student transfers
11 in the country, can you in a minute, it does go beyond the
12 index so I apologise to the tribunal for straying but, just
13 because I have an interest, can you tell us what you think
14 might still be happening to improve the use of the taxi
15 industry as a part of community transport functions?
16
17 MR WADIWEL: I guess it is beyond my authority to comment
18 on community transport and I would be hesitant to make any
19 kind of statement about that. Certainly the Taxi Council
20 made a comment in its submission that they do perform a
21 role providing transport to certain parts of the community.
22 Community transport also does perform a role but, as
23 everyone here would know, it is under-resourced and
24 particularly in rural areas isn't as responsive as it could
25 be because of that lack of resources, so I guess that
26 impacts upon taxi fare rises as well.
27
28 DR PARRY: Thank you.
29
30 MR HERD: Thank you, Chair. I don't have very much to say
31 about the mechanism. IPART might agree about fare
32 structure but I think I do have to say something about the
33 effect or the consequences of the mechanisms that are
34 chosen, particularly for the people that we represent.
35
36 The Australian Bureau of Statistics has been mentioned
37 already as an unchallengeable force in the land by the Taxi
38 Council and they also tell us that four out of five of the
39 people we represent are on fixed incomes, they are at the
40 lower end of the socio-economic scale, and yet for many of
41 them, particularly people in wheelchairs but not just
42 people in wheelchairs, many of them are disproportionately
43 reliant on taxis for their mobility because of failings
44 elsewhere in the system. So whatever mechanism is used we
45 obviously are going to want to say to the tribunal it
46 should have the least possible effect upon the disposable
47 income of those people on those fixed incomes because they

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1 rely upon taxis not just as most of the population do in
2 the way in which they use taxis but in a quite unique set
3 of circumstances and so keeping the prices as low as
4 possible is something our constituency is always going to
5 want the tribunal to agree to, but I recognise that creates
6 a tension for both drivers and owners.
7
8 DR PARRY: I am sure we will come back to you on the fare
9 structure because there are some specific things there
10 about fees that no doubt you will have views on and we will
11 be very interested in those.
12
13 MR JOOLS: Unfortunately we feel that as the TWU we have
14 to take a bit more of a holistic approach to the industry
15 as a whole.
16
17 DR PARRY: So I have noticed in your submission.
18
19 MR JOOLS: Historically around the country, and according
20 to New South Wales industrial law, the taxidriver should
21 get half the amount of total fares. The other half goes
22 normally to the operator for his costs - fuel, washing, and
23 his profits. With the GST, that is a simple percentage, it
24 has dropped to 45 per cent each, that is fine. This
25 percentage, this 50/50 split, was determined from our
26 method one pay-in, which I know you referred to as not part
27 of what we are talking about, but anyhow, that goes back to
28 the Beattie report back in 1968 which was a fundamental
29 part of New South Wales industrial relations.
30
31 Method two pay-ins, which most taxidrivers pay, which
32 is a fixed pay-in, was supposed to reflect that split,
33 without disadvantage to either party. Over time, and we
34 would say due to the monopolistic power of the Taxi
35 Council, the balance has shifted against the driver. We
36 are now, instead of half a share, getting a notional 36 per
37 cent of the operating costs of the taxi - the operating
38 costs, not the actual revenue.
39
40 MR MAHONEY: 36 per cent of costs, yes. You have been
41 talking about fare sharing, now, are you talking about
42 revenues or costs, please?
43
44 MR JOOLS: We were supposed to get 50 per cent of fares.
45 We are now, according to IPART and the Taxi Council's
46 index, getting 36 per cent of costs.
47

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1 DR PARRY: How does that translate?
2
3 MR JOOLS: The different is that in a situation where taxi
4 plates are selling for \$300,000 a year, we would assume
5 that revenue from fares is actually greater than costs. I
6 think that is a reasonable assumption. Therefore, we are
7 actually getting significantly less than 36 per cent of
8 revenue. So the problem we have is not just with the Taxi
9 Council's index and IPART's index and everybody's indexes
10 and numbers, not just with the numbers but the effect of
11 those numbers.
12
13 DR PARRY: Before you proceed, I hear what you say, and I
14 will not cut you off, I know where you are heading because
15 I have read all your submissions, but how does that
16 translate to what might be our limited task of recommending
17 to the Minister using what is clearly not an ideal index
18 for fare change? How do we get to your issue?
19
20 MR JOOLS: We are essentially pointing out that what we
21 are looking at here, as Dennis said, is the notion of a
22 cost index as a movement over time and it is backwards
23 looking. That is never going to functionally assist what
24 we consider to be 85 per cent of the workforce in this
25 industry, the bailee taxidriver. Because it is backward
26 looking, we can never actually logically demonstrate an
27 increase in costs. That is the crux of our problem.
28
29 Yes, we would like to demonstrate in the first
30 instance the correctness of the costs and that is why we
31 have distributed for the meeting the cost index model on
32 page 14, but we have attached to it a listing of the dollar
33 figures of those two models, demonstrating what we have
34 got, whilst the effect is 5.26.
35
36 MR MAHONEY: That is the page that was separate that
37 didn't make it into the notes sent around. It was only
38 available today and it is headed "taxi cost index and
39 extension", that is the two pages Michael is referring to.
40 Logically that should fit at the back of our notes that we
41 circulated, a mythical pages 15 and 16, if you like.
42
43 MR JOOLS: Whilst it is perfectly true that whether we
44 look at the costs this way or that way, the increase is 4.5
45 per cent or 5.26 per cent or 5.31 per cent, and that is not
46 precisely the issue that we are talking about. Fine, the
47 numbers come out the same, but the base on which those

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1 numbers are judged is enormously different.
2
3 If we go back for want of a better word to the
4 evidence that was given to you in 1999 and which the
5 secretariat seems to have taken heed of, operating costs
6 were then determined at something around \$50,000. We don't
7 think they have moved a great deal from that. We are faced
8 with a figure of \$97,000 and we say, "Hey, this is not just
9 right!". The impact of that is the weightings that then
10 follow get distorted.
11
12 Having said all of that, what we are saying is that
13 actual taxi operating costs are \$50,000 a year, plus
14 \$20,000 lease fees. The Taxi Council says it is 90,000.
15 We have figures to fix that that we feel are correct. We
16 say it is \$50,000, plus lease fees, total 70,000. We also
17 say that the bailment that is received from those 80 per
18 cent of drivers out there is a figure that adds up to
19 70,000 a year. Hey, the figures actually click. We are in
20 a situation where the operating costs over 47 weeks is
21 matched by the bailment he receives from drivers.
22 Everything is fine.
23
24 That is when we ran into problems methodologically.
25 In order to make everything fit effectively, we also have
26 to define a few factors. What are the average weeks? What
27 are the average shifts? What is the average distance? The
28 average fares? All those sorts of things. We have done
29 that. We have come up with figures that say that the total
30 fare income is around \$152,000 a year, which is what IPART
31 intimated could be a valid figure in the issues paper. We
32 say that pay-ins are 71,000, which equals operators'
33 operators' costs. We have to use the double word,
34 operators' operators' costs. Fuel and wash, 17,000.
35
36 What hasn't been put forward in any of the discussion
37 papers other than our submissions thus far is the fact that
38 a driver as a small business also has business expenses.
39 We say they are 7,600. We also would note the GST that the
40 driver has to pay of about 5,000. It hits the driver much
41 more than it hits the operator because in terms of GST--
42
43 DR PARRY: Those figures, the 7 and the 5, are exclusively
44 paid by the driver?
45
46 MR JOOLS: Yes, which leaves the driver from that 152 with
47 a total of 51,000 a year. Split it over the two drivers

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1 that are notionally part of the 47-week cycle and you come
2 out at 9 bucks an hour. That is unfortunately the dilemma.
3 We are stuck with \$9 an hour for drivers. We can't say,
4 and we cannot substantiate to you, that logically our costs
5 have increased, because they have not, because we are
6 getting the leftovers.
7
8 Unless IPART goes beyond the historical analysis of
9 what was and looks forward to what should be, we as drivers
10 are never going to get anywhere. We are the guys out there
11 at the sharp end of the stick doing the driving round the
12 country side. The way it is working, we will never get out
13 of this downward spiral.
14
15 DR PARRY: Can I try and distil, given your time and
16 trying to make it pertinent to the index, you are really
17 saying that there is a cost item which is not in the cost
18 index at the moment, being drivers' costs?
19
20 MR JOOLS: We have actually worked that out.
21
22 DR PARRY: That is what you are saying?
23
24 MR JOOLS: It is not there.
25
26 DR PARRY: It should be there.
27
28 MR JOOLS: The idea of notional wages should in fact be
29 broken into - three items; GST, drivers' expenses and
30 driver retention.
31
32 DR PARRY: You are saying there is a missing index in the
33 cost index?
34
35 MR JOOLS: No, the item classified as notional wages is in
36 fact three items, being GST, drivers' business expenses and
37 driver retention.
38
39 DR PARRY: Driver retention is?
40
41 MR JOOLS: What one could otherwise describe as drivers'
42 income or wages or whatever. To say that the drivers'
43 notional wages is the total takes no account of the fact
44 that from that he has to pay GST and he has to pay his
45 expenses.
46
47 DR PARRY: What are the expenses?

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1
2 MR JOOLS: His expenses vary. There was a list in our
3 submission.
4
5 DR PARRY: Just so we get it on the table?
6
7 MR JOOLS: Some are specific items, some are in the same
8 context as the operator salary opportunity costs. In terms
9 of opportunity costs we have such things as downtime,
10 washing time, the preparation of the administrative
11 activities. In terms of actual costs we have fare
12 evasions, we have the cost of meals, we have other
13 incidental costs that occur on the way through. We have
14 detailed those.
15
16 We figure that they are probably between \$15 and \$20 a
17 shift. We have put them down as \$15 a shift. We feel that
18 it is fine to charge, say the item for cleaning the cab is
19 \$10 a wash, what happens to the driver's time in the same
20 period? It is not accounted for.
21
22 DR PARRY: I just want to be clear so that it is on the
23 table. We might have to move on.
24
25 MR JOOLS: What we are trying to do, if I can conclude, is
26 to get a situation where the driver can have a reasonable
27 expectation of earning 12 bucks an hour. We don't want a
28 minimum wage, we are not looking for that, we want the
29 expectation of being able to achieve that figure.
30 Critically we ask for IPART to keep on pushing to get to
31 the real numbers, the proof of what this industry is all
32 about.
33
34 Three years ago you were told by Mr Kermode, President
35 of the Taxi Council at that time, that all the information
36 was available at the press of a button - and it is in the
37 transcripts. We have never seen that information.
38
39 DR PARRY: I don't think we found the button!
40
41 MR JOOLS: We never found the button, and apparently we
42 still haven't found the button. We as the TWU were very
43 energetic in terms of trying to get a survey done about
44 taxis. It was meant to be here for this meeting. It still
45 is not here. We have not got that information. The
46 Department of Transport has the survey to hand. It has not
47 released it.

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1
2 DR PARRY: We have might ask about that in a second.
3
4 MR JOOLS: What overlays all of that is the mythical
5 industry standards, the service standard for networks and
6 operators which were meant to be out in the year 2000, have
7 been dillied and dallied around and they remain buried at
8 Transport New South Wales and we suggest they are still
9 captured by the Taxi Council.
10
11 DR PARRY: We will deal with that in section 3. Before I
12 move to Phillip; the survey, where is that?
13
14 MR SIMPSON: The survey has been completed. We only got a
15 small number, I think 107 replies out of 15,000
16 questionnaires that were distributed, and we are currently
17 waiting for approval from the Director-General. We have
18 just changed Director-Generals only a fortnight ago and we
19 don't have approval yet to release those.
20
21 DR PARRY: We will follow that up. .
22
23 MR STANFIELD: I have no comment other than to say I would
24 like to speak on an issue which is the move to have two
25 classes of taxis, therefore the possibility of a
26 differential fare structure, and I ask when is the best
27 time to address that?
28
29 DR PARRY: I know the letter to the Minister, the
30 petition, if that is the word, and so I think fare
31 structure, the next session.
32
33 MR MAHONEY: Yes. Or other issues.
34
35 DR PARRY: We will certainly cover it. It is certainly
36 relevant to fare structure because you want to
37 differentiate the so-called premium; and thank you for
38 seeking advice on the best place to do it. It is best for
39 the next session.
40
41 We will now go around again for a maximum of three
42 minutes to deal with issues that have been raised on the
43 table, then, if there is time, if there are any issues that
44 anybody from the floor wishes to raise.
45
46 MR RAMSHAW: Thank you very much. I will respond to a
47 couple of those speakers. On the social services side, we

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1 don't really have a issue with the need, I suppose, or the
2 client's perspective. Where the issue lies is in who pays
3 and whether or not it is reasonable to expect a commercial
4 operator to cover what I would see as a community service
5 obligation, so we don't really have an argument about the
6 issue itself, it is just a matter of how it is covered. We
7 would think it would be more effective to directly
8 subsidise the service rather than try to achieve that
9 outcome by regulating the whole fare for everyone.
10
11 With the issue of the Disability Council requesting
12 that the fare review consider a minimum impact on those
13 with disposable income, they need to also consider the
14 other side of the equation of the impact on the
15 availability of service. The incentive needs to be there
16 for the service provided from drivers to make themselves
17 available and the risk is that, if the price isn't right,
18 the fares might be cheap but you may not have anyone to
19 come and pick you up, so there is a trade-off between those
20 two things.
21
22 The matters raised by Mr Jools, I'm not sure how to
23 cover those things. I got a little bit lost in going
24 through his submission. I only looked at his model this
25 morning.
26
27 DR PARRY: The decomposing of the driver expenses into
28 three components.
29
30 MR RAMSHAW: I am not sure what the effect on the index
31 might be.
32
33 DR PARRY: It might have an effect in another place.
34
35 MR RAMSHAW: It really takes a bit more consideration of
36 that. That is new to me, I am afraid.
37
38 The issue about hourly rates and what drivers earn, we
39 don't know how many hours are worked. That becomes an
40 intractable problem in trying to divide, if we do have
41 revenue data, trying to translate that into an hourly rate,
42 which I think is probably beyond the tribunal's brief
43 anyway.
44
45 DR PARRY: But we are interested.
46
47 MR RAMSHAW: Until we work out how many hours a driver

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1 works, there is no basis to work out an hourly rate. Any
2 demand for a minimum or a reasonable rate is really
3 dependent on which hours they choose to work. Working on
4 Friday night you will earn far more than working on Monday
5 morning or Tuesday morning, so how do you apply that across
6 a week when drivers work when it is profitable and tend not
7 to work when it is not.

8
9 MR WILKINS: Back to Mr Wadiwel regarding the service
10 supplied in country areas, the handicapped and
11 disadvantaged, transport disadvantaged people, are covered
12 a lot more in country areas, albeit if there is a community
13 transport service in those towns, between the taxis and the
14 community transport. In fact, whereas in the city a driver
15 may pick up a passenger today and never see them again, in
16 country areas we are picking the same people up every day
17 so your customers become more like family and there are so
18 many instances right throughout country New South Wales
19 where people that are doing it tough and who are on the
20 transport subsidy, in a lot of cases the operator will just
21 take the transport subsidy document if they know they are
22 doing it tough, and not take the money.

23
24 From the point of view of the Disability Council, and
25 Phillip will back this up, there has been a reluctance for
26 people to take up these WATS licences. They have been
27 available at a very, very peppercorn lease for some time
28 and there are still a lot of those that have not been taken
29 up. One of the reasons is the Government has been
30 reluctant to offer the drivers a lift fee similar to
31 Victoria, and in fact one of the few things that I will
32 agree on with Michael is this is where drivers' earnings
33 are down, because these people, it is nothing to go to pick
34 somebody up in a wheelchair and they have got a colostomy
35 bag they have to have hooked up and all this takes a lot of
36 time, so again unless it is an owner driver - and it is
37 very hard and it is a special type of person who is
38 prepared to do this type of work.

39
40 We can't have it pruned down to the mere minimum
41 earnings because we will never get anybody to drive these
42 vehicles and supply the service. We have to try to find a
43 happy medium, and that is what all of the groups in Sydney
44 have tried to do by offering packages, attractive lease
45 packages, to potential operators to get involved in it.
46 That is one of the presentations to IPART in our five-year
47 plan. Number one was to improve the service levels and

1 then increase the numbers of wheelchair accessible taxis,
2 so that is well and truly on the agenda. You can rest
3 assured that our industry, both metropolitan and country
4 areas, are certainly keen to follow that up.

5
6 Michael, Phillip said the word, there were 107 replies
7 out of 15,000. Up until five years ago I was CEO of
8 Premier Cabs and had been involved in the cab industry for
9 44 years. On quite a few occasions since the driver set
10 pay-in system came in we went back to drivers and asked
11 them would they like to go back to method one or two. We
12 had a form, and I know it is still current at Premier Cabs,
13 when the drivers first come in to apply for a position as a
14 taxidriver where they have got the option of taking method
15 one or two. I can tell you now that the small percentage
16 of people that you are representing in the TWU is not the
17 voice of the average taxidriver out there that does not
18 want to go back to method one.

19
20 Peter hit on it a short while ago when he said that we
21 don't know, there is such a gap between a Monday and
22 Tuesday night and a Saturday night, that we don't know
23 exactly what the drivers are taking in taxis working on a
24 set pay-in because short of receiving the information and
25 getting that information, and it is not always correct any
26 how because people may not turn the meter on or have
27 multiple hire, whatever, so we don't know exactly what a
28 driver takes, but I know this, I have been involved for a
29 long, long time. You talk to the average rank and file
30 taxidriver and he is quite happy to work on his set pay-in
31 system, on his set pay-ins, not on a method one commission
32 basis, and that is most of the groups in Sydney.

33
34 DR PARRY: That goes beyond our particular interest in the
35 cost index.

36
37 MR WILKINS: I am trying to pick up the point. Michael
38 got a couple of points in, I thought I would like to do the
39 same. I just feel it was indicative, only 107 replies
40 coming in.

41
42 MR SIMPSON: The only point I should just make is what the
43 department does do in recognition for the carriage of the
44 disabled. Licences for wheelchair accessible taxis are
45 free of charge through the country and there is no limit on
46 the issue of those licences. We also have a \$30,000
47 interest free loan scheme to either purchase or modify a

1 vehicle and we are currently spending some \$14m a year in
2 subsidies for the disabled, so just for the record I
3 provide that.

4
5 MR WADIWEL: I take the point of the Taxi Council about,
6 you know, as I said when I delivered the points that of
7 course taxi operators have an expectation that they will be
8 compensated for genuine cost increases. I do want to ad,
9 of course, that this is a regulated fare as opposed to an
10 unregulated fare. It is not regulated by the market and it
11 is an opportunity to take into account the social impact of
12 fare increases.

13
14 Further, just in reply to the Country Taxi Operators,
15 I wasn't really commenting on the quality of service. I
16 recognise that taxis do perform that function of providing
17 transport to people who otherwise have difficulty accessing
18 other forms of transport. I guess the other side of that
19 of course is that, again, fare increases do have an impact
20 on those people.

21
22 As to the lift fee question, I will just defer that to
23 the next session.

24
25 MR HERD: Nothing to add.

26
27 MR JOOLS: I never actually suggested that we have any
28 preference of pay-ins between methods one and two. I
29 recognise very much that most drivers are ambivalent and
30 most drivers thus far in Sydney have said they will stick
31 with method 2. I have not raised that as an issue, what I
32 raised was the notion that when method one and two were set
33 up that one was meant to reflect the other. That was the
34 issue, not whether drivers should be on one or two.

35
36 I do take some issue - if I can just make one comment
37 on the WATS issue - in the notice that came out last week
38 which I have supplemented by the insertion of our
39 submission in relation to WATS, we did make a submission in
40 relation to that and the crux of our point there, which I
41 would like to take up probably in a bit more detail--

42
43 DR PARRY: We will deal with WATS later on. We are
44 dealing with the lift fee and the other questions.

45
46 MR JOOLS: We feel that the index that is there has to
47 reflect reality. The basic commonsense problem that we

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1 have is if taxi operating costs are so far in excess of the
2 revenue that an operator receives from bailing his taxi to
3 his drivers, something is wrong with the numbers. That is
4 why we want to have a rationalisation or reassessment of
5 the cost index.

6
7 We do believe that the hours are known to the various
8 networks. They have documented records of the hours worked
9 by wage drivers. I have documents I can submit on that
10 basis. They know as to the individual what his hours are.
11 From the vast array of statistical information that the
12 networks have we can see no particular reason why they
13 cannot produce a figure of hours worked on average. We can
14 see no reason why they can't produce figures of hours
15 actually vacant and hours actually for hire. We can't
16 produce from the computer records the distances travelled
17 but we have offered to the tribunal fairly extensive data
18 which we believe is true which we have done on the basis of
19 sample surveys and which on certain particular items, if we
20 may now or later ask the Department of Transport, is it
21 consistent with the figures that have been derived from the
22 survey so far?

23
24 We have offered figures that we believe to be correct.
25 Peter's comment, "we don't know as hours go up and down",
26 is perfectly true. We said that a day driver, an average
27 day driver, his effective hourly rate is \$8.40. On a
28 Monday night, the night driver gets \$5.70. On Tuesday,
29 \$6.21. On Friday and Saturday he gets \$15. Sure, there
30 are nights when people make more money. We have detailed
31 that. That is part of our submission and we believe that
32 those numbers are valid and correct. In the absence of
33 anything else, why don't we work on those numbers?

34
35 DR PARRY: Thank you.

36
37 MR STANFIELD: I have nothing to add.

38
39 DR PARRY: Any last comments from the table, questions?
40 An opportunity for any individual, on this topic,
41 questions, comments, from the floor, and please identify
42 yourselves.

43
44 MR AHMED: Faruque Ahmed, I am here representing the New
45 South Wales Cabbie Welfare Association, probably similar to
46 the employer group. There are two groups and I was
47 surprised how come two groups of bailees were allowed.

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1 Anyway, we can move on, but from attending this session and
2 looking at the papers there is some missing component in
3 the cost index. A couple of other - one of the missing
4 components is cost, the other is that--
5
6 DR PARRY: What are the missing components.
7
8 MR AHMED: I am coming to that. The missing component in
9 the costing index, and some part of the index is enjoying
10 protection, which is very unfair and probably should be
11 unlawful under various laws. That has not been considered.
12 Some subsidy factors, also enjoyed by some sides of the
13 industry, that has not been taken into account. There is
14 inefficient operations being encouraged to stay alive in
15 the brave new world of commercial rationalisation. Also,
16 in response to Mr Wilkins's comment, the compulsory
17 unionism - we have seen big fights.
18
19 DR PARRY: Can I ask you to confine your comment briefly
20 to the first one, which is relevant to this topic.
21
22 MR AHMED: The first one is that we are living in the real
23 world, to cost any product of the cabbies one must consider
24 all the components involved including operating costs and
25 capital investment and the labour component. I noticed
26 over the last few years that labour components are missing
27 out of the cost. I wonder who can agree, how can labour be
28 left without proper income, or basically some assumed
29 income or something like that? We would like to see an
30 informed figure from the tribunal, asking the various
31 parties, what is the actual labour cost in the industry,
32 what portion goes to whom and what is the fair one and what
33 is the driver's income? That is the first one.
34
35 When I say subsidisation is driving this down, there
36 are so many taxi plates given to some taxi networks,
37 companies, co-ops, whatever -
38
39 DR PARRY: That goes outside this inquiry. It goes
40 outside the index. The first one is relevant, thank you.
41 Any other questions or comments from the floor, relevant to
42 this topic?
43
44 MR CHAUDRY: I am from the Transport Workers Union. Just
45 another remark, the specifics have been covered quite well
46 by Michael. We have raised -
47

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1 DR PARRY: You are welcome to sit behind him.
2
3 MR CHAUDRY: That is fine, there has been a bit of a punch
4 up, I don't have an issue with that. One issue that we had
5 raised also which I think is pertinent with respect to
6 taxidrivers is in terms of this reference rather flawed,
7 with respect, to the issues. We had raised this - I will
8 be very brief.
9
10 DR PARRY: They are not our terms.
11
12 MR CHAUDRY: When we did have meetings with the Taxi
13 Council, which was facilitated by Transport New South Wales
14 and the Taxi and Hire Car Bureau, because the time frame
15 had expired for us to actually make representations to this
16 we had actually - we took that on board and we will make
17 representations to the Premier's office next year, but I
18 think doing that will take into account and address a lot
19 of the issues that Michael has mentioned and other members
20 have raised, that it does not give due consideration to all
21 the factors involved. I think as far as --
22
23 DR PARRY: Let me comment. These were the terms of
24 reference conveyed to us by the then Minister. That is
25 what we work to. We have expressed some concerns about the
26 use of the index. There are certainly issues that go
27 beyond the very narrow fare setting exercise that we have
28 been asked to do. We understand that, obviously. There is
29 another place which might more immediately address some of
30 the issues raised and if through our process we can
31 enlighten that other place, we are obviously very happy to
32 do that, but it would involve or require a reference from
33 the Minister or the Premier to take us to those issues. If
34 we get that, we would be happy to take that on board.
35
36 You have all done very well as far as time. We will
37 take a short break for morning tea and then resume.
38
39 SHORT ADJOURNMENT.
40
41 DR PARRY: Thank you very much, we resume with session
42 on fare structure and balance. The same procedures as last
43 time, a brief presentation by the secretariat, then a round
44 table discussion, and, if there is time, any brief comments
45 from the audience. This is on fare structure and balance,
46 so we will confine ourselves to that.
47

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1 I thank everybody for getting through the first
2 session on time and it certainly did raise some issues that
3 I are newish and relevant to the cost index.
4
5 MR MAHONEY: This session, no fancy overheads. The
6 objectives for the session as I see it are to assist the
7 tribunal consider any changes in the fare structure, first
8 of all in the light of interstate comparisons and any
9 evidence we can find on the effect that changing the fare
10 structure might have on patronage and other considerations.
11 Fare structure is a bit of a vague term because there are
12 some items that are not actually within what we call the
13 average fare but nevertheless we are required to look at.
14
15 Just let me make few points. Those industry
16 participants that have the notes, we included interstate
17 fares for most of the capital cities around Australia and
18 compared it with the fare components for Sydney and for
19 country New South Wales. By and large they are very
20 similar, broadly similar. If anything, you would say that
21 the flag fall in Sydney is a little bit low relative to the
22 distance rate and the flag fall in Sydney is a little bit
23 low relative to the radio booking fee; but broadly speaking
24 the fare structures are pretty similar across the capital
25 cities of Australia. I do not know that the interstate
26 evidence helps us consider any changes that might be mooted
27 on the different relative components of the fare structure.
28
29 Related to this is the concept of the average fare.
30 If the tribunal is going to raise fares by 5.3 per cent or
31 3.5 or whatever the percentage might be, it has to know
32 what that increase applies to. Of course, if it doesn't
33 change the fare structure ever then presumably every
34 component can be put up by X per cent or at least as close
35 to X per cent as the increments will allow. But if there
36 is any change in the fare structure then I think it is
37 significant that we use the concept of average fare to
38 convey what that change in structure might mean.
39
40 We in the secretariat still think the concept is a
41 good idea, although as the Taxi Council rightly pointed out
42 if we never changed the relativities in the components then
43 it is a fifth wheel on a car really, it is not needed.
44
45 That really deals I think from the secretariat's point
46 of view of raising issues for discussion on item one in
47 this session on fare structure.

1
2 On item 2, evidence on the response to patronage from
3 changes to the fare components, the Minister asked us to
4 look at this but, as we noted in the notice issue paper,
5 there is no evidence available on how it would affect it.
6 We had a consultant assigned to this issue and he could not
7 unearth anything for us. Anecdotal evidence, of course,
8 can be helpful. The taxidrivers tell us - the secretariat
9 went to a meeting of taxidrivers a few weeks ago and the
10 concern was if you have a sharp rise in the flag fall then
11 that puts customers off. That is, for what it is worth, an
12 anecdote, and we would invite more comments on that.
13
14 We also indicated what the fare structure would look
15 like under the proposals of the Taxi Council cost index and
16 just as a way of comparison put in the TWU proposal, which
17 of course was a much bigger fare increase, but just looking
18 at the structure. I think the notes I sent you were
19 incomplete because I should have shown under that table the
20 relativities as we did for the interstate comparisons, so I
21 apologise for not doing that.
22
23 I think because the changes were so big in the fare
24 components that I thought it would be difficult to use them
25 as a basis for talking about relativities and we were
26 therefore better off sticking with interstate comparisons,
27 but that is open for discussion.
28
29 A couple of other things that are not in the fare
30 structure, Ms Cifuentes reminded me about superannuation
31 that Michael talked about for the drivers, that maybe there
32 is a new component that ought to be thought about for the
33 fare structure, however it might be incorporated in it.
34 Likewise, the issue of two tiers of taxis and whether there
35 should be different fares, that is a structure issue, but
36 Mr Stanfield might talk to that.
37
38 On other charges, the Transport Workers Union
39 suggested abolishing the luggage fee. The Taxi Council
40 says it is hardly ever charged anyway, although there was a
41 suggestion of paying it on weight. Again, the tribunal may
42 want to make a ruling on that.
43
44 The late night tariff surcharge, or the tariff 2 as it
45 is called, the TWU recommended that there be no claim to
46 that 20 per cent surcharge but extending it for urban
47 drivers to Sundays and public holidays, as is done for the

1 country cabs. The Taxi Council suggested that the
2 surcharge should apply to all components and not simply the
3 distance rate.

4
5 MR RAMSHAW: That is right.

6
7 MR JOOLS: We said distance and waiting time.

8
9 MR MAHONEY: There is some discussion needed there. The
10 question of the "extras" button, again, several people
11 pointed out that you actually can't have a standard. There
12 is a button and you can't - because of the fact that the
13 tolls around Sydney don't ever match up to some simple
14 figure, let's have some discussion on that. The Taxi
15 Council also suggested changing the drop from 5 cents to 10
16 cents. I assume that is a "click" over on the distance
17 rate, but there was talk about the "extras" button, so
18 there is quite a bit for to us discuss. I know it is a bit
19 minutia but it is important for the participants to
20 discuss.

21
22 DR PARRY: And I have noted that you have given us, or
23 that those around the table, less time than the first
24 session, so I think five minutes is an absolute maximum on
25 the fare structure and balance.

26
27 MR STANFIELD: I would like to first of all thank you for
28 agreeing to a meeting which Dr Mahoney and Sheridan
29 attended and I would also like to thank the secretariat for
30 inviting me to take part in this workshop.

31
32 I would like to speak on an issue which is causing a
33 great and growing degree of unhappiness amongst drivers
34 whom I am here representing and before I do I would like to
35 acknowledge the fact of the existence of a maximum fare.
36 I'm aware of that, but I appreciate the opportunity to
37 raise an issue which addresses not only matters of fare
38 structures but also issues of customer service and how the
39 whole issue of service can be understood.

40
41 I seek your permission to read a prepared statement?

42
43 DR PARRY: If it is going to be more than 5 minutes -

44
45 MR STANFIELD: No, it will not.

46
47 The current structure of the taxi industry - the

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1 latest manifestation of which is the emergence and growth
2 in VIP vehicles - has to do not only with the wills and
3 intentions of those who run the industry but as much with a
4 failure in driver representation and input.

5
6 The so-called VIP taxis result not from the
7 development of a public service but of an investment
8 strategy from which the public benefits on behalf of the
9 plate owners, an increasing number of whom, as the IPART
10 issues paper notes, live overseas and who have no interest
11 in the industry per se. And it is done with no regard for,
12 and entirely at the expense of, the drivers of the
13 "standard" taxis.

14
15 It has been argued by those who support VIP taxis that
16 they are a stimulus to the industry, that by the very fact
17 that they have taken all the good work, they act as a
18 pressure on the "standard" cabs to lift their act. But far
19 better pointers to understanding the function of VIP cabs
20 are a whole range of abuses and breaches of the law over
21 decades, which amount to many millions of dollars, by
22 owners and operators.

23
24 In the Public Review of the Taxi Cab and Hire Car
25 industries in 1998, you questioned the advocacy of a
26 premium fare for a premium product, that is, a VIP service,
27 to which Ms Chesterton for the Premier replied, "It would
28 be desirable because of the costs incurred". Yet nothing
29 has been done to fairly address the issue. The "premium
30 price" should be on the meter of these vehicles and not
31 reflected in the discriminatory loss of earnings by the
32 drivers of the "standard" taxis.

33
34 In their very operation, these vehicles are
35 discriminatory. Over years, although the radio fees are
36 the same for "standard" and VIP taxis, they have been given
37 the cream of the work. If a driver has one complaint
38 against him or her, he or she cannot drive a VIP taxi, yet
39 these people remain authorised to drive the "standard"
40 cabs. I report now that the network for which I have
41 driven for 21 years will be holding a meeting for the
42 drivers of these vehicles next week, yet I am not allowed
43 to attend.

44
45 The New South Wales taxi industry is based on a degree
46 of exploitation and therefore a degree of driver turnover
47 well addressed in the TWU submissions for this year.

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1 Driver turnover may not be of concern to those seeking
2 maximum profits but it indicates a malaise for which this
3 industry's service to the public and their perception of us
4 also suffer.
5
6 In the review in 1998, Mr Ward, a member of the
7 tribunal, put a question to the Director-General of the
8 Department of Transport, Mr Murray, which went to the heart
9 of the issue of customer service: "In focusing on the
10 public interest, how broadly or narrowly do you define the
11 public interest; as purely the consumer of the service or
12 of the various levels of provider from plate owner through
13 to driver", to which Mr Murray replied, "I could perhaps be
14 educated there...simply because some sort of career base
15 seems to add to stability and therefore enhances
16 performance".
17
18 The stability and enhanced performance of a career
19 base in the taxi industry is found not only in the quality
20 of a vehicle but in respect and what respect entails across
21 the employment spectrum from those who own, oversee and
22 operate taxis towards those who drive them.
23
24 On behalf of 546 drivers who have signed a petition to
25 the Minister regarding the operation of VIP taxis, a copy
26 of which I have submitted to this year's taxi fare review,
27 I ask IPART to consider this matter.
28
29 Dr Parry, and again with flare, in the 1998 review,
30 and on the issue of plates, asked, "How do we compare with
31 the rest of the known civilised world". To contribute to
32 IPART's understanding on this issue regarding VIP taxis, I
33 have included copies of email exchanges with the relevant
34 authorities in London and New York.
35
36 The work of IPART, the government and the departments
37 should incorporate looking back to learn from what has
38 happened in this industry, in order to use those lessons in
39 looking forward and shaping a future direction for us.
40 Thank you.
41
42 DR PARRY: I think I was referring to Melbourne when I
43 said the rest of the civilised world. If I understand it
44 correctly, you are really saying that in terms of fare
45 structures there should be a premium charge on what are
46 called VIP taxis?
47

1 MR STANFIELD: Yes.
2
3 DR PARRY: In the plate or somewhere?
4
5 MR STANFIELD: I am asking for the matter to be looked at.
6
7 DR PARRY: Thank you.
8
9 MR JOOLS: Fare structure: on the notes that came with
10 it, one little point we still have a little bit of
11 confusion with, the secretariat also seems to have some
12 confusion, is that waiting time actually cuts in when the
13 vehicle is doing faster than 22 kilometres.
14
15 DR PARRY: Faster or slower?
16
17 MR JOOLS: The meter is actually set the other way round,
18 it is always on waiting time but when it goes faster than
19 22 kilometres it goes on to distance rate.
20
21 DR PARRY: If you are crawling along in Sydney traffic, as
22 one does, at 20 kilometres, it is only a waiting time
23 charge, no distance?
24
25 MR JOOLS: Yes.
26
27 DR PARRY: I didn't realise that.
28
29 MR JOOLS: What we have called the crossover speed is
30 actually the rate at which you are being charged for when
31 you go at this waiting time. You get charged as if you
32 were going at 25.8 kilometres an hour, but it only happens
33 when you are going less than 22 kilometres an hour. It is
34 an extraordinarily complex little number. That is how it
35 works.
36
37 We had a little confusion because the secretariat also
38 said that the waiting time does not apply other than in New
39 South Wales and Victoria and yet you have crossover speeds
40 for the other States.
41
42 DR PARRY: We will get that clarified.
43
44 MR JOOLS: That does not matter because we are not in the
45 other States. Our concept in terms of the fare structure
46 was for several parts. We started off with a need to have
47 a bit of simplicity, which is always desirable, and make

1 things work. We thought that because of the problem with
2 the "extras" button, that was the first thing to go for.
3 We thought that because in driving across the Harbour
4 Bridge at the moment I can charge, in pressing that
5 "extras" button as it stands, I charge the passenger \$3.75.
6
7 DR PARRY: I know what the "extras" button is, but how do
8 you nominate the specific amount?
9
10 MR JOOLS: It is preset by the meter, when the meter chip
11 is changed.
12
13 DR PARRY: What does one push?
14
15 MR JOOLS: In most cases it is currently \$1.25 when you
16 press it once. Some cabs work on 55, but most are on the
17 \$1.25. If I press it three times, bingo, \$3.75.
18
19 DR PARRY: Rather than \$3?
20
21 MR JOOLS: Yes.
22
23 DR PARRY: I didn't know that. I am never getting a taxi
24 again - that was a joke!
25
26 MR JOOLS: A lot of drivers don't even press it.
27 According to the Department of Transport regulations we can
28 only charge the metered fare, so we have to put it on the
29 meter to charge it. We thought, let's try and get simple
30 and have it set. Recently the Eastern Distributor has gone
31 from \$3.30 to \$4, because whoever they are, whether
32 government or private, they said it was simpler to have
33 less coins, so it went up to \$4. Our solution is, bring
34 the "extras" button down to \$1 because then you hit it
35 three times and then you are done. That would also mean
36 bringing the radio fee down.
37
38 DR PARRY: What happened if the bridge toll goes up to
39 \$3.50?
40
41 MR JOOLS: It is unlikely, because now they have got a
42 precedent from the Eastern Distributor to go up in leaps of
43 \$1. The consumer, after all, will pay.
44
45 DR PARRY: Don't other places add the amount without
46 pushing a button?
47

1 MR JOOLS: Yes, but theoretically that is improper under
2 our system because we are meant to charge the metered fare.
3 We arrived at a figure of a \$1 booking fee. We thought
4 that was a bit unfair, so we took 20 cents off the existing
5 \$1.25 and put that on the surcharge on the flag fall. It
6 is historically and anecdotally correct that as the flag
7 fall goes up more than the fare, people resist coming into
8 the cab and seeing a high flag fall. They don't mind if
9 the fare goes up because they can't see it, it only goes up
10 in 5 or 10 cent leaps, but the big one is the first one.
11 We thought that should be kept to a minimum.
12
13 We also brought in the question of superannuation and
14 75 cents was put on the flag fall for a superannuation
15 component. This is a rather complex one because we feel
16 that drivers deserve superannuation as much as any other
17 worker in the community. Can't that 9 per cent that is the
18 requirement be funded out of existing fares? It has to be
19 a supplement. We tried to work out how best it could be
20 applied. We figured, if it were to be a percentage figure
21 it would be inordinately complicated in terms of paper work
22 to do it, so we said, okay, 75 cents on the flag fall,
23 which is \$10 a day for a day driver, \$15 for a night
24 driver, end of story.
25
26 Then we got to the waiting time. Historically this is
27 a really complicated number. Previously it was around, it
28 has always cut in at the 22 kilometres per hour but it used
29 to be, and in some other jurisdictions still is, set at the
30 rate of, it ticks over as if the vehicle were going at 35
31 kilometres an hour but it cuts in when the thing is going
32 less than 22. Because in the past the increases that IPART
33 has recommended and everybody has taken up have been
34 disproportionately awarded, that is, in 2001 it was 0.007
35 per cent and last year 0.7 per cent, which in money terms
36 was 16 cents and 25 cents, the relativities weren't
37 maintained, so this 25.8 kilometres per hour that we now
38 are crossing over at used to be more than that.
39
40 What we are seeking by fixing a parity of at least in
41 this session 30 kilometres an hour is to get that parity
42 back to what it used to be so that in slow traffic the
43 driver is not unduly penalised. He normally rushes along
44 at 60 kilometres and breaks all the speed laws in the
45 country, but in slow traffic this is a halfway measure to
46 at least give him a bit of a decent income.
47

1 DR PARRY: Why the 30 rather than the original set,
2 whatever it was, 25?
3
4 MR JOOLS: It was originally 35. I don't know how it was
5 arrived at, some science way back when. That meant that if
6 the distance rate were to be \$1.60 then the waiting time
7 rate would have to be, to maintain that parity, 08 cents a
8 minute. If you decide to recommend say \$1.50, then the
9 waiting time rate to maintain the parity would have to be,
10 according to my calculation –
11
12 DR PARRY: We will check it. I understand the principle.
13
14 MR JOOLS: That is how it was done. From then we said,
15 okay, what is the right distance rate. From all our
16 calculations of fares, hours and all the other stuff that
17 nobody believes, we calculate that \$1.60 per kilometre will
18 in fact create the reasonable expectation of the average
19 taxidriver earning 12 bucks an hour. That is our
20 rationale.
21
22 DR PARRY: Thank you, that is helpful. I will indulge.
23 Don't other places have little sheets which say you must
24 pay tolls rather than buttons? Do other places not have
25 this "extras" button but the ability for the driver to say,
26 "Well, it was \$3 across that bridge, so with \$4 it is \$7
27 total"?
28
29 MR WILKINS: In Queensland they do.
30
31 DR PARRY: There are other places they do it. Thank you.
32
33 MR HERD: I am not sure that I can add much to the fare
34 structure component except these two observations. One is
35 that I think the passengers that I represent want
36 transparency. They want to know what it is they are
37 getting and it is a bit of a revelation to discover that
38 waiting time actually kicks in or doesn't kick in at what
39 most people regard as moving.
40
41 DR PARRY: Slow moving.
42
43 MR HERD: Waiting 10 minutes, that is a big issue for
44 people with a disability, and so just looking at the
45 consequences of the differences to structure suggested
46 between the Taxi Council's proposal and the TWU's proposal,
47 the big increase is if the structure were to be

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1 reorganised, and it comes precisely at the area that is of
2 interest to people with a disability so we have a raised
3 eyebrow there.
4
5 To be perfectly honest, I have absolutely no idea what
6 our constituency of interest thinks about differential fare
7 structures between the premium service and the standard
8 service, if that is what it is called, but I do hear an
9 alarm bell ringing at the back of my brain. I am sensitive
10 to what people are saying but we already experience I think
11 as a community frustration, and I put it no stronger than
12 that, although some people might, that there are honey pots
13 in the service and that there is not consistency of service
14 across the metropolis and certainly not across the state,
15 and it is not the fault of anybody particularly in the
16 industry, but we know that the honey pots are North Sydney,
17 the CBD on this side of the bridge and the airport and the
18 corridor that runs between those three locations, and there
19 is just a little suspicion in the back of my brain that
20 something that reinforces this notion of there being an
21 elite service and a standard service will concentrate some
22 of that service in and around the honey pots to the expense
23 of people who don't make use of the honey pot because they
24 don't come in to work in the CBD.
25
26 We already know that if you are a person with a
27 disability and you want to get a taxi at Penrith,
28 Campbelltown or the northern beaches, you can wait almost a
29 lifetime to get one. I don't have a view, we don't have a
30 view, but we would be cautious or urge the tribunal to be
31 cautious about recommending anything that further
32 influenced or drove services into that. There is a
33 perception that there is lots of money out there in these
34 great big canyons of the city and there is not enough work
35 out in the western suburbs so taxidrivers may be reluctant
36 to be out in the western suburbs, but the population of
37 people I represent live out in the western suburbs because
38 that is where cheap, or lower cost, affordable housing is.
39 But they still have to move around the city and they are
40 dependent upon taxis.
41
42 They are the only comments I would want to make,
43 unless I hear something else that makes an alarm bell ring,
44 but simply that whatever you decide it should be clear to
45 everybody that is what they are paying and we would want
46 not to do anything that further concentrates activity in
47 the area where activity already seems to be concentrated.

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1
2 DR PARRY: We will deal with the WATS later.
3
4 MR WADIWEL: I again don't feel equipped to comment in
5 depth about the details of the fare structure. In
6 addition, I realise we will be talking more about
7 wheelchair accessible taxis and the waiting times impact on
8 that, so I guess I will defer my comments until then.
9
10 I will note, however, that New South Wales appears to
11 have the highest waiting time rate comparatively to the
12 other States and that is an issue that should be taken into
13 consideration.
14
15 I further note that there are social costs associated
16 with significant increases in the booking fee. The booking
17 fee will be paid by people who aren't able to get out on
18 the street and hail a cab so that affects, for example,
19 older people or people with disabilities. It will also
20 affect people who need to use taxis frequently to attend
21 important appointments such as medical appointments. They
22 need to get taxis to get there at a particular time, so I
23 just hope the tribunal is able to note that too.
24
25 I again am hesitant to comment about the issue of
26 whether there should be a premium fare for VIP services. I
27 would echo Dougie's comments that there needs to be
28 consistency of quality of service to all people and a level
29 of equity as well.
30
31 DR PARRY: Thank you very much.
32
33 MR SIMPSON: Just a few points of clarification. A few
34 years ago the Government increased the flag fall by \$1 for
35 about 18 months to pay for the 1996 reforms. Certainly the
36 Department and the Minister did get a number of complaints
37 from people who said that they were disproportionately
38 affected on the basis of short trips but again that is
39 anecdotal evidence only.
40
41 In regard to the "extras" button and how it is set up,
42 the department's taxi meter specifications, whilst they
43 currently allow for 5 cent drops on distance, provide for
44 no specification in regard to the "extras" button and how
45 that works, and increments by which the "extras" button
46 works is purely a matter for the meter manufacturers to
47 determine, so we have made no determination on that.

1
2 We don't get complaints from people on the basis that
3 many drivers don't push the "extras" button for tolls but
4 just say to the person, well, the fare on the meter and
5 they add on the few dollars and they just quote it, and
6 many drivers don't use the "extras" button for that purpose
7 and we don't get complaints.
8
9 We do recognise that WATS passengers are
10 disproportionately affected by the waiting time component
11 because we allow drivers to charge the full waiting time to
12 load the wheelchair into the taxi, so that component of the
13 fare affects them more than other people.
14
15 The department's policy to date in regard to fares for
16 VIP vehicles is still that a taxi is a taxi is a taxi. We
17 have halved the licence fees for hire cars. Hire cars are
18 very cheap to run compared with a taxi. A lot of major
19 costs that you have with taxis don't apply to hire cars,
20 and most of the VIP cars in Sydney qualify in terms of
21 vehicle size and type to be a hire car. Our current view
22 is, well, if they want to charge whatever they want,
23 because we don't regulate the hire car fares, they are at
24 liberty to be a hire car, but for the time being while they
25 are a taxi we will only have one taxi fare.
26
27 DR PARRY: Just on extras, is there any reason why you
28 might not just get rid of the "extras" button and accept
29 the schedule of toll charges?
30
31 MR SIMPSON: We could. The regulations require the driver
32 to tell the passenger what the extras are. They don't have
33 to tell them what the fare is, the distance and the flag
34 fall, but it specifically says that the passenger must be
35 told what the extras are.
36
37 MR WILKINS: I just had a query with Michael on the
38 waiting time and when it cuts in. We have a meter expert
39 here. I wonder if we might ask Bob if he can give us an
40 opinion on it. I was of the opinion that the current
41 \$3.35, that it was only that, would only cut in if the
42 revolutions that your taxi meter was doing wasn't going to
43 bring that revenue in to the driver. I just wonder whether
44 we can ask bob.
45
46 DR PARRY: Just identify yourself, and be really quick.
47

1 MR GOLLAN: Bob Gollan, from Vertel, who do digitext taxi
2 meters in Australia. The changeover speed is round about
3 that rate but it is not how far the car goes, it is just a
4 calculation of once you hit it, what you are saying, Brian,
5 if you go faster does it change over?
6

7 MR WILKINS: No, I am just saying that Michael was saying
8 that the driver is missing out because we have come back to
9 2.55 - I am sorry, come back to revolutions, 25.8, and we
10 are losing out. I just wonder whether that is correct,
11 that is why I am asking you as the expert?
12

13 MR GOLLAN: It will not change until you reach that speed.
14

15 MR WILKINS: Okay. The point of view, you mentioned
16 before about waiting time is more expensive in Sydney than
17 any of the other States, but New South Wales is the worse
18 grid-logged state in Australia and one of the problems that
19 the waiting time is higher is because the driver otherwise
20 would be losing out even more again. That is one of the
21 reasons why we have kept the waiting time up to something
22 close to what we would expect that the driver can take in
23 an hour on a shift. If he is stuck in traffic, that is the
24 biggest problem.
25

26 Again, we have to look at the economics of it. We
27 have enough trouble getting people into the industry now.
28 We have tried to encourage drivers to make a lifetime
29 profession of the taxi industry. We are forever trying to
30 lift the image to do that, but it is not always practical,
31 and if a driver has had a day struck in traffic, imagine
32 when they have had some of these holdups here in Sydney. I
33 am not in the city as much now, but I can imagine the
34 drivers' earnings must be right down the gurgler, so that
35 is one of the reasons for that.
36

37 I agree, flag falls are a worry if there is a big
38 hike. With that \$1 when Minister Langdon put that on, I
39 reckon 20 to 25 per cent of the taxi businesses dropped
40 off. Even the smallest of increases, particularly in
41 country areas, are noticed by the consumer because they are
42 low income, low socio-economic areas, and that is the
43 reason why you have to try to keep them pruned to whatever
44 is a reasonable figure for what your costs are.
45

46 I think that is about all I need mention - I am sorry,
47 the VIP taxis. I don't know whether Phillip meant with the

1 VIP taxis that the rate would be a standard, for instance,
2 if they had an increased flag fall that that would be for
3 normal hire or the client. There should be a surcharge on
4 VIP taxis, but only if the client rings up and asks for
5 one. If somebody is sitting out here on the Market Street
6 rank and you walk up, the rate would be the normal rate.
7 What we said was, if I wanted to get to the airport and
8 wanted to be sure that the taxi would turn up right on the
9 time I booked it for, the driver knew where the airport
10 was, that we could get across there and that journey would
11 be carried out, and the council on two occasions has
12 applied to the Minister and the Director-General to look at
13 that, but I still feel that a taxi is a taxi. If you are
14 plying for hire on the road and someone hails you, you
15 should not have to look at the fare.
16

17 DR PARRY: For a booked fee you contemplate a surcharge?
18

19 MR WILKINS: For clients ringing and asking for a taxi.
20

21 DR PARRY: I will get a reaction at the end to that.
22

23 MR RAMSHAW: The first point is really the relevance I
24 suppose of interstate comparisons. I realise we are not
25 relying on them, but if we were in terms of adjusting the
26 flag fall then I would question, I mean, I agree
27 wholeheartedly with what Phillip said, that we are not in
28 the other States, so I am not sure what the validity of
29 that comparison would be.
30

31 On the issue of superannuation, if the tribunal were
32 to consider this point then they would be using their
33 foresight to anticipate a change in some other legislation,
34 which I would imagine you would be reluctant to do seeing
35 as the whole methodology is based on historical costs, for
36 better or for worse.
37

38 The crossover, Brian has covered that point about that
39 speed. In terms of our position on the relativities of the
40 various fare components and wanting to maintain that, it is
41 based on the perception of changes from the public as
42 always generally resisted. If people perceive things are
43 changing, if one thing is going up and others aren't, it
44 tends to be resisted, so there would need to be a very good
45 reason put forward to make any significant change. I have
46 not seen any real arguments for that at this point so I
47 think the status quo should be the default position adopted

1 by the tribunal, unless there are very strong arguments put
2 that there is some better way.
3

4 DR PARRY: Thank you. We have literally got not quite 5
5 minutes, so a maximum of a minute response from around the
6 table, if you have a response.
7

8 MR STANFIELD: Just a very, very brief response. I am
9 aware of the suggestion that Mr Wilkins has made, and I
10 have heard that before. I respond by saying that my
11 motivation in being here is twofold, openness and fairness.
12 Both of those result in inclusion and involvement. I am
13 representing drivers, I am not just expressing my point of
14 view, and I seek openness, fairness and involvement,
15 whichever way that leads.
16

17 DR PARRY: What is your reaction to the proposal that it
18 is a booked fee premium rather than an on-street hail
19 premium for the so-called VIPs, without anticipating the
20 reasons, but your reaction to that?
21

22 MR STANFIELD: My personal reaction is that I would favour
23 a change in the metered rate. That is only my personal
24 reaction, that is all.
25

26 MR JOOLS: I have said enough at the moment.
27

28 DR PARRY: Anybody else around the table have an extra
29 comment?
30

31 MR SIMPSON: Can I just emphasise, because I don't know
32 that everyone is sufficiently aware, even though the
33 Director-General has the power to determine fares, we don't
34 actually use that power. In fact, we only set maximum
35 fees, just to make that clear.
36

37 MS CIFUENTES: Very, very briefly, I am quite interested
38 in the superannuation levy that has been proposed by the
39 TWU and it's a significant increase in that flag fall. My
40 point I would say is that we would need to have a lot more
41 detail on how this would operate for the tribunal to
42 contemplate that - the effect, what legislation might need
43 to be considered, and examples of where you actually have a
44 consumer paying the superannuation of drivers, other
45 industries that may do that, how the tax deductibility
46 question comes in. Given that it is a large component of
47 the flag fall increase that you propose, we would need a

1 lot more detail to be able to analyse that.
2

3 MR JOOLS: Super was one of the items I was going to bring
4 up as an additional issue but we have a little dilemma that
5 when we introduced the proposal through the Industrial
6 Relations Commission, the "other place" we were referring
7 to, we were told that it was inappropriate to bring it up
8 there because nothing had been provided in the fares to
9 allow for superannuation. The comment made in the Taxi
10 Council's reply to my comments on the way through was that
11 there is no point in bringing up superannuation here
12 because it is not provided for in the Industrial Relations
13 Commission, so we have got to bring them forward
14 simultaneously. We have in fact got an application at the
15 moment before the Industrial Relations Commission for
16 superannuation.
17

18 DR PARRY: Can we see that?
19

20 MR JOOLS: I can arrange for it, yes.
21

22 MS CIFUENTES: We just don't have sufficient details.
23

24 MR JOOLS: There is a chicken and egg type situation,
25 unless we both move together simultaneously, it will not
26 happen. One of our justifications is that in terms of the
27 cost index the operators' superannuation is mentioned as a
28 cost item. We feel that therefore it is appropriate that
29 the driver should have the same sort of recognition. It is
30 a difficulty as to where to apply it. If it is not going
31 to come out of existing stuff it will have to be out of
32 that which is extra. But we are reluctant to put it in as
33 a percentage figure because that would have significant
34 other impacts.
35

36 DR PARRY: I understand. We have to move on to session
37 three, but if we could see the submissions that you are
38 making on this to the IRC, we will have to explore the
39 nature of the legislation and the coverage of other
40 industries and other employee categories and just
41 understand that and what powers we have and otherwise, but
42 it is certainly an issue that we are very prepared to look
43 at.
44

45 We have to move on to other issues please, without
46 delay.
47

1 MR MAHONEY: Other issues: three things in this session;
2 to assist the tribunal discuss the WATS issues; to talk
3 about service quality and service standards, including the
4 fact that there seems to be no way the drivers can actually
5 let it be known what the state of the industry is from
6 their perspective; and then a whole catch-all of "other",
7 which I put down as VIP but we have discussed that, so
8 whatever the catch-all "other" happens to be.
9
10 DR PARRY: I stress that the catch-all of "other" is only
11 in relation to what the tribunal is directly involved in,
12 otherwise –
13
14 MR WILKINS: We will be here for a week.
15
16 DR PARRY: No, you will be here for a week!
17
18 MR MAHONEY: The two things under WATS are the restricted
19 waiting time and the issue of the lift fee.
20
21 MR RAMSHAW: Again, we have made our position in the
22 submission and I think we pointed out that we can see no
23 justification for a regulation that has the effect of
24 forcing drivers to work for free. They are required to
25 provide the service but they are not compensated for that,
26 which is the current situation. The risk in the proposals,
27 in minimising costs, are that supply will dry up for
28 wheelchair accessible passengers, which is what I mentioned
29 before. Plates are already available at minimal or no
30 cost, so supply is obviously a very critical issue.
31
32 Other items that we have spoken about, or written
33 about in Dennis's points, relate to some unpublished data
34 that we are not aware of, so I would be interested to know
35 if there is any further enlightenment on that in terms of
36 service quality.
37
38 I would also like to update the tribunal on progress
39 that has been made with the five-year plan, which is
40 focused on service improvements, that the industry is
41 embarking upon. Significant steps have been taken by
42 networks now in agreeing on a handbook that applies to the
43 booking service and delegating some of the enforcement
44 responsibilities, uniform penalties for operators and
45 drivers for WATS vehicles, through the centralised booking
46 service and what have you, so we are making significant
47 steps towards the promises I suppose that we outlined in

1 our submissions, so that is a progress report on that.
2
3 And that is about it.
4
5 MR WILKINS: I cannot add a great deal to that because in
6 country areas, as I said, it is not quite so relevant,
7 mainly because there isn't the parking problems that a lot
8 of the city drivers have. Again, the driver has to be paid
9 and one of the recommendations from the tribunal was that
10 the \$5 pick-up fee be paid to drivers, if such a fee were
11 to be introduced, and the tribunal would need to consider
12 the removal of the waiting time allowance. That is getting
13 5 and taking 10 away, or 7.50 away. That would not be a
14 practical situation. It is just that the council will
15 consider it. Again it is a maximum fare and if the driver
16 is able to turn his meter on, as I said before, a lot of
17 the people we carry, we have to get them organised in their
18 house and get them out of the house, they are not waiting
19 out at the front gate, and although there is no waiting
20 time problems in country areas, because 80 per cent of the
21 operators are owner drivers and so there isn't the problem,
22 and in some of the towns they have, Grafton is a classic
23 example, the WATS vehicles are parked at the back of the
24 taxi rank. The moment somebody comes up, they get into the
25 WATS and it takes them. Similarly with the next booking
26 that comes up.
27
28 Country New South Wales, I don't think there are any
29 problems, or I have not heard of a problem with service
30 problems in country New South Wales as far as WATS licences
31 are concerned.
32
33 We are well and truly aware of that. It is just the
34 fact of the driver being paid for the time they have to
35 spend in carrying out the job, because it is a special type
36 of person and they are not easy to find. We don't want to
37 choke the goose that laid the golden egg by losing those
38 drivers because they feel they are not being rewarded.
39 Thank you.
40
41 MR SIMPSON: Just to clarify, the current charging
42 arrangements, and they are that however long it takes the
43 driver to load the wheelchair into the taxi and secure the
44 wheelchair and passenger, that is chargeable against
45 waiting time. At the other end, the regulations say that
46 in unloading and taking the person in the wheelchair to a
47 ground floor office, flat, house, factory, whatever,

1 waiting time is not chargeable. But if the passenger in
2 the wheelchair wants to be taken in a lift, upstairs in a
3 hospital or a block of home units, that is chargeable.
4
5 That has now been clarified in the most recent
6 amendments to the legislation. We have tried to set out
7 what we think is reasonable for the person to ask for at no
8 cost and what we think is getting beyond reasonable, and we
9 did that because there had been disputes and disagreements
10 in the past as to how much should a driver give of his own
11 time to assist.
12
13 MR MAHONEY: Is there still a 15 minute limit?
14
15 MR SIMPSON: There is no limit.
16
17 MR JOOLS: For unloading.
18
19 MR SIMPSON: We are not talking about unloading.
20
21 DR PARRY: Just to be clear –
22
23 MR SIMPSON: There is no limit for loading. When you are
24 unloading, the requirement is that you can't charge while
25 you are taking the wheelchair passenger to their front gate
26 or the front door, as long as it is ground floor, bus stop,
27 station, you can't charge waiting time. The job stops when
28 the taxi arrives at the destination.
29
30 DR PARRY: To go to ground floor.
31
32 MR SIMPSON: And you are taking to the ground floor. If
33 you ask the driver to take you upstairs in a hospital or an
34 office block in a lift, that is chargeable as waiting time.
35
36 DR PARRY: You do not turn the meter off at any time?
37
38 MR SIMPSON: That is right.
39
40 MR JOOLS: The 15 minute loading time is still there.
41
42 MR SIMPSON: No, it has never applied to wheelchairs. It
43 does not apply to loading wheelchairs.
44
45 MR RAMSHAW: That is not our understanding of the
46 regulation.
47

1 DR PARRY: Well, this is perhaps not the place. We
2 certainly want it clarified but in the interests of
3 transparency it would be very good to sort out the
4 regulation and make sure everyone is well aware of it,
5 including passengers.
6
7 MR WADIWEL: I would certainly be very interested to know
8 about the 15 minute time, whether it exists or it is
9 mythical. As we note in our submission, we think it is
10 quite reasonable for taxidriver to be compensated for the
11 time taken loading a wheelchair, a passenger in a
12 wheelchair. We note further that the training and the
13 experience of the driver can affect the waiting time.
14 Similarly, the accessibility of the vehicle and the vehicle
15 design can also impact on waiting times and therefore
16 impact upon the cost to the passenger.
17
18 We have noted in our submission, and Dougie will go
19 into it from the Physical Disability Council perspective,
20 that wheelchair accessible taxis do receive an extensive
21 subsidy and that should be taken into account by the
22 tribunal in the consideration of this issue.
23
24 We advocate the maintenance of the current system with
25 an emphasis on increasing the training and awareness skills
26 of drivers of wheelchair accessible taxis to minimise
27 waiting times and limit charges to passengers. If a lift
28 fee is to be made payable, we would argue that it should
29 not be met by the passenger but met by the Department of
30 Transport. We also have argued in our submission that it
31 should be tied to some sort of performance outcome similar
32 to the South Australian model and that should ensure that
33 there is an incentive for wheelchair use, an incentive to
34 collect wheelchair users in a timely manner and to ensure
35 that a reasonable quality of service is received.
36
37 Can I comment further about some of the other items?
38 In the submission we kind of made some more comment around
39 some of the social impacts of taxi use. As noted in the
40 issues paper, there is the taxi transport subsidy scheme
41 available, which is very generous. We observe that despite
42 the fact that it is a 50 per cent subsidy, there are some
43 people for whom even this subsidy will not cover all their
44 transport costs, particularly if they have frequent travel.
45
46 Just an example, if somebody has to go to dialysis in
47 a hospital, they require frequent transport up to three

1 times a week. If it is a large distance between their home
2 and the hospital they are looking at \$30 to \$50 a week in
3 transport costs, which is very difficult to meet if you are
4 just on a pension.

5
6 NCOSS further notes in its submission that there are
7 some people who are not eligible for the subsidy but still
8 require the use of taxis for periods of time. The subsidy
9 scheme is currently available to people who can demonstrate
10 a permanent disability and this affects people who have,
11 for example, acute episodes, short acute episodes such as
12 after a stroke who require frequent trips say to medical
13 appointments and rehabilitation.

14
15 Another example is people with HIV AIDS who may suffer
16 severe episodic illnesses in relation to their condition
17 who require frequent trips to medical appointments but are
18 not eligible for the subsidy scheme. For all those sorts
19 of people any fare increase will have a social impact.

20
21 MR HERD: Can I say I am really, really glad that other
22 participants are as confused with waiting times as we are.
23 We read the issues paper. Two-thirds of my committee and a
24 substantial proportion of our membership are people who use
25 wheelchairs and I can say from my own experience of three
26 and a half years living in New South Wales that I hadn't
27 actually been aware that there was a 15 minute waiting fee.
28 I don't remember any driver telling me I have been waiting
29 for you for half an hour but I only charged 15 minutes. I
30 think the metre has just been running. We could not work
31 out whether that was something that was the case or not.

32
33 It was one of my committee members who has longer
34 experience of the services in New South Wales as a
35 wheelchair user who said that she understood that it had
36 been introduced for the reasons that we have outlined in
37 our submission, that there was some measure, unquantifiable
38 by her, of abuse, particularly attributable to the
39 paper-based docket system for the taxi subsidy scheme and
40 that this had been introduced, the 15 minute limit had been
41 introduced in some way to get around that.

42
43 If the department is telling us that it is a figment
44 of everybody's imagination, clearly our recommendation one
45 is pointless because, although we want this 15 minute limit
46 to apply, if it does not actually exist we are asking for
47 something that the tribunal cannot deliver on, so if we get

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1 nothing other than clarification out of this exercise it
2 will be helpful. However, that being said, if there is a
3 15 minute limit, we want it to stay. That is clear for the
4 reasons that we state.

5
6 I will not add any more to that. We are unambiguously
7 opposed to the idea of a blanket lift fee for passengers
8 and we think, despite the Victorian experience, it is in
9 breach of the Disability Act because it results in a less
10 favourable treatment of a particular group by reason of
11 their disability. What it says is, if you have a
12 particular definition - if you are a wheelchair user by and
13 large you get an extra \$5 charge. It does not matter who
14 pays it, you are treated less favourably by consequence of
15 your disability. However, we recognise that there is a
16 problem here and the problem, I have to say, is not
17 experienced mostly by drivers and operators, it is
18 experienced by passengers. Almost nobody with a wheelchair
19 gets picked up at the booked time. I have to say that
20 unless they enter private arrangements and establish a
21 relationship over a long period of time with a named driver
22 whose mobile telephone number they have circumventing the
23 official procedures that have been put in place with the
24 centralised booking system, and we know from what the
25 department tells us and the subcommittee of the accessible
26 taxi committee told us, that as many as 80 per cent of the
27 fares, of the journeys, are now made outside of the
28 official system and it is specifically to get round the
29 problems of waiting and delays that that informal
30 arrangement has now become effectively how the industry in
31 relation to wheelchair taxis operates in New South Wales.

32
33 I think if four out of five journeys have been made
34 circumventing that system, it tells us the system does not
35 exist in reality because nobody trusts it or relies upon it
36 and if you have to go to a doctor's appointment or you are
37 trying to get to school - I am an infrequent user of taxis
38 because I drive, but I know that because I do make use of
39 the old 200 taxi booking service, that I have a tendency to
40 wait longer than people who phone up a driver they know.
41 He gets a lot of phone calls, Woody, and he has a certain
42 set of arrangements or passes it on to other drivers. That
43 creates problems.

44
45 We want to try to get over that by suggesting this
46 incentive fee based on South Australia. It has produced a
47 change in performance. Drivers are turning up more

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1 speedily than they did 18 months ago, we are told, or I am
2 told, but we want to do it in a way that recognises that
3 there is - essentially we have argued in our paper that
4 there is a subsidy already going to operators, principally
5 owners and operators of the plates. You have told us it is
6 about 290,000 in your issues paper. We don't want to add
7 to the subsidy, we want to redistribute it. We think the
8 problem that people have, that drivers have, is that you
9 can pick up a wheelchair accessible taxi licence for
10 nothing, is what you are telling us.
11
12 MR SIMPSON: In the country; 1,000 in Sydney.
13
14 MR HERD: And you can apply for as much trade as you want
15 and there is no real measure whether you are doing
16 wheelchair accessible work or not. We know there are
17 particular problems, some cabs queuing up outside the
18 airport and refusing to take wheelchair users. We think
19 the problem is the large subsidy, which we call a subsidy,
20 not everybody agrees, going directly to the plate holder.
21 The people who really need to get the incentive are the
22 drivers because they are the ones that are out of pocket or
23 seem to be out of pocket if they take the job, so what we
24 suggest is that you introduce the incentive fee, give that
25 directly to the drivers, and we make the person who gets
26 the plate pay a little bit more so that it is not quite
27 self-financing but it begins to be a user pays mechanism.
28
29 We made our other comments about the taxi subsidy
30 scheme, the upper limit on the fare, which has been a
31 particular request made to us by people in country New
32 South Wales, and I am not exactly sure if it is IPART's
33 responsibility but we do need to take the opportunity to
34 remind the industry that there are performance standards
35 associated with the tender document for the booking service
36 as long ago as 1995 which we still haven't seen implemented
37 and we would like to see them implemented.
38
39 The last thing I should say is that all of this is
40 within the context that we need to be reminded that the
41 disabilities discrimination standard says that by December
42 2007 taxis for wheelchair access users should have the same
43 performance standards as the industry as a whole, so there
44 is a window of opportunity for us to do something in the
45 interim but there is an expectation that the industry will
46 behave in an agreed way by December 2007 and that the
47 deadline within which we should all be able to operate will

1 be met. I have nothing else to say at this stage.
2
3 MR JOOLS: We endorse most of those comments. I also add
4 that, as a personal explanation, my brother is a wheelchair
5 user and uses taxis, so apart from the theoretical
6 experience that I have as a TWU person I do have a personal
7 experience of the problems of wheelchair taxis.
8
9 We came up with a very radical notion, we explored
10 some of the background of wheelchair taxis and we noted
11 that some years ago the Department of Transport issued
12 nexus plates, they gave the networks 88 unrestricted taxi
13 plates, 88 unrestricted WATS plates. The purpose of that
14 exercise was that the funding that derived from the
15 unrestricted plates would be applied to running the WATS
16 network. Our conclusions were that if the funds that are
17 available or should be available that have accumulated over
18 time were applied to pay the running costs of each and
19 every WATS taxi from the point of its radio booking to the
20 point of starting the meter, there are funds available to
21 do that.
22
23 There is something like effectively \$2m a year that is
24 the opportunity costs, which we are fond of talking about,
25 of these 88 unrestricted nexus plates. That money would
26 fund 20 bucks a pop for every wheelchair job. It would not
27 come out of a driver's money, out of a passenger's money,
28 it is money that is sitting there that the networks have
29 gained over a period of time.
30
31 DR PARRY: So those networks have the plates.
32
33 MR JOOLS: Had the plates. They were not meant to be
34 transferred, and we have inquiries with the Department of
35 Transport, we have inquiries with the Ombudsman's office,
36 we are pursuing this matter very vigorously because we
37 think it is a public rip off.
38
39 DR PARRY: Just so I am clear, there are 88 plates
40 provided to networks.
41
42 MR JOOLS: Provided to the co-op networks.
43
44 DR PARRY: And a mirror 88?
45
46 MR JOOLS: Mirror 88 WATS plates. Some of those WATS
47 plates are still sitting on the shelf.

1
2 DR PARRY: We will explore that.
3
4 MR JOOLS: If that money were available, many of the
5 problems would be resolved. Three points: if the WATS
6 drivers could make more money, it would encourage those
7 WATS drivers to spend more time on the WATS jobs rather
8 than sitting out at the airport.
9
10 DR PARRY: Would you use that money to put basically WATS
11 drivers on salaries?
12
13 MR JOOLS: No, so that a WATS driver picking up a radio
14 booking would be paid a distance rate, waiting time rate,
15 from the time he got the radio booking to the time he
16 picked up. We would then avoid the whole issue of loading
17 time, whether it is 15 minutes or not at all, because it
18 would be from the time of the radio booking to the time of
19 starting the meter. It would encourage the use of the
20 radio networks because at the moment, as Dougie said, the
21 radio networks are doing something like 4,000 jobs a month
22 out of a total of 19,000. It is being shoved over to the
23 private bookings. This would reintroduce it to where the
24 distribution of taxis could be efficiently organised around
25 the country. It is far better with the GPS systems and all
26 of that distributing WATS taxis to where a passenger is
27 than relying on a private network. It is to the advantage
28 of whoever, I don't know.
29
30 Thirdly, and the most socially significant, is that
31 those disabled passenger would not have to wait the
32 multiple hours they now do. I know from my brother, he
33 waits two or three hours. He is a practising doctor trying
34 to run a practice from a wheelchair and he can't get a
35 taxi. If the drivers were paid out of public funds which
36 exist, maybe things would change, and that does not mean
37 that the driver is out of pocket, it does not mean the
38 owner is out of pocket, it means that the moneys that were
39 set aside by a previous government to fund these nexus
40 plates could be properly applied.
41
42 DR PARRY: I might just ask if the department can inform
43 us at this stage, we will pursue it later, about these 88
44 nexus plates?
45
46 MR SIMPSON: What Michael has said is correct.
47

1 DR PARRY: Do they still exist in the networks as far as
2 you are aware?
3
4 MR SIMPSON: We have been checking with the networks
5 recently and the great bulk are with networks. We believe
6 that a small number have been transferred and a small
7 number where the nexus has been broken, where the
8 unrestricted licence is not necessarily still with the
9 restricted licence, but on the whole they are still
10 together and they are still with the networks.
11
12 DR PARRY: Is the department able to track whether the
13 funds generated through those nexus plates are being used
14 for providing WATS services by the networks?
15
16 MR SIMPSON: We are not able to do that. We have made an
17 attempt at calculating how much revenue has derived over
18 the years, which is naturally an estimate, and it is a
19 substantial amount because these 88 licences were issued
20 quite sometime ago, most of them before and around the time
21 that the current legislation came in, which is 1990, so
22 most of them prior to that, but we are not able to say
23 exactly.
24
25 DR PARRY: We will also explore that. Very briefly,
26 because we are out of time, does the Taxi Council have any
27 comments on the nexus plates?
28
29 MR RAMSHAW: That and some of the other comments.
30
31 DR PARRY: We will hear Phillip first.
32
33 MR STANFIELD: No comment.
34
35 MR RAMSHAW: First of all, the point raised by a couple of
36 people I think was that taxis are subsidised. There is no
37 subsidy for taxis. The passengers are subsidised or their
38 fares are subsidised, there is no subsidy for the taxis
39 themselves.
40
41 We have already arranged for scope for improvement in
42 services for WATS passengers in our submissions and I
43 flagged before that we are taking action against a defined
44 target to improve service levels and we will not wait until
45 2007, we have set 2005 as our target for WATS service to be
46 at least equal to that of regular taxi services. It is
47 probably better - I am happy to take this up with the

1 secretariat at a later date - about the steps and processes
2 involved in doing that.
3
4 With nexus plates, I do not want to get too far into
5 that issue, it is likely to be convoluted and difficult to
6 administer, any system based on that. I think perhaps it
7 is worth bearing in mind that when they were issued they
8 were targeted at encouraging the capital investment rather
9 than funding the ongoing operations I believe, so again it
10 is convoluted as a solution I think.
11
12 DR PARRY: It is certainly something that goes beyond
13 recommending to the Minister on fares, but it is something
14 that we are interested in and we will pursue.
15
16 DR PARRY: Are there any other last comments from around
17 the table?
18
19 MR WILKINS: There have been many hundreds of thousands of
20 dollars paid in over the 80s on work that is hard to cover,
21 paid out by the networks. It was the early 80s when the
22 nexus plates were first issued when there were no other
23 transport facilities available for wheelchair and
24 handicapped people, taxis were it, and we went through lots
25 of teething problems, even finding a vehicle. We had
26 Nissans, we developed the stretch Ford, the industry spent
27 a lot of money developing it in conjunction with the body
28 builders to develop that first stretched Ford, so there has
29 been a lot of money poured in out of network resources
30 already.
31
32 It seems to be a hobby horse that the TWU is getting
33 on regarding the nexus plates, but many thousands of
34 dollars have been spent and I will say that it would be
35 very convoluted to get into that discussion here. You can
36 rest assured that from the point of view of our number one
37 aim, our five-year plan is to improve that service level
38 before December 2005.
39
40 We have tried many times to get the users to go back
41 to the one centralbooking system and the people that pull
42 the most strings are the users themselves, who are very,
43 very happy with the arrangements they have with their
44 individual drivers and there is no way in the world, and I
45 don't blame them, will they part with that. They have a
46 rapport between them and the driver and that is what they
47 want. The ones that are coming on later are having trouble

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1 until we can get more drivers to take these up.
2
3 The networks only take them up because drivers won't
4 take them up. We would be very happy to see owner drivers
5 on every WATS driver in Sydney because I think we would get
6 better performance, as in the country. The networks only
7 take them up to keep faith with the department and the
8 handicapped people, because when they are not taken up
9 nobody is a winner. Premiers have 20 plates that the
10 department has been paid for and they are still waiting
11 there for people. Every month you look at the Taxi
12 Journal, the paper every Saturday, there is an ad offering
13 a business opportunity.
14
15 DR PARRY: We will leave it there because that has been
16 well explored. We have two minutes, if there is anything
17 from the floor on any pointed so far?
18
19 MR AHMED: On behalf of the Cabbies Welfare Association I
20 would like to express my profound disappointment because of
21 this tribunal's attitude and unwillingness to understand
22 the industry. The tribunal has not shown any interest on
23 the different complexities. However, I thank the TWU for
24 their brilliant contribution. There are so many points
25 here should have been discussed, it is disappointing that
26 you have not found the time to discuss those points and,
27 for example, not only the nexus plates, I am talking about
28 the networks, the transparency is not there.
29
30 DR PARRY: We have to leave it there. I thank everybody
31 for their participation and for their submissions, to all
32 who have had an opportunity to make submissions, including
33 the Cabbies Welfare Association, which will be looked at by
34 the tribunal, of course.
35
36 There are some difficult issues, and I am sure people
37 will appreciate our task is to make recommendations on fare
38 changes to the Minister. There are some issues outside of
39 that which may be taken up in another place or indeed by
40 this tribunal in another context, so thank you all very
41 much indeed.
42
43 AT 12.15PM THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED
44 ACCORDINGLY
45
46
47

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