

IPART RELEASES DETERMINATION ON BUS FARES FOR RURAL AND REGIONAL SERVICES FROM 2 JANUARY 2011

Embargoed until 14 December 2010 1pm

The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) today released its determination on bus fares in rural and regional areas.

On 2 January 2011, maximum fares for country town services will rise on average by 2.4 per cent. Some fares will not change, but others will rise by between 10 cents and 60 cents for a single ticket. Country town services are typically services within the boundaries of towns with more than 7,500 people.

Maximum fares for rural services will fall on average by 10 per cent. Fares for shorter distance journeys (up to 16 kilometres) will fall by between 20 cents and 90 cents. Fares for longer distance journeys will fall by up to \$2.70 for a single ticket. Rural services are services outside of country towns, in villages and between villages and towns.

These fare changes apply in all areas of NSW other than the Sydney metropolitan and outer metropolitan regions (Blue Mountains, Hunter, Newcastle and Wollongong).

The fare increase for country town services is designed to cover increases in the cost of providing bus services in the past 12 months. The fare decrease for rural services is designed to move the fare level for these services towards that for country town services. Currently rural fares are around 25 per cent higher than country town fares for journeys of the same distance.

Chief Executive Officer, Mr Jim Cox said: "IPART has not found sufficient justification for rural fares to be 25 per cent higher than country town fares. We are moving rural fares downward by 10% to reflect this and will reconsider whether further downward movement is warranted in next year's review."

"IPART understands that many low income individuals and families do not have access to motor vehicles. Buses are a vital transport option for these people, so it is important that bus services are affordable."

"IPART is concerned to ensure that the NSW Government and passengers do not pay more than is required in total to operate rural and regional bus services. While concession fares limit the impact of high rural fares for many passengers, other passengers currently face higher fares than appear to be necessary to support the operation of these services," he said. "Our determination goes some way towards addressing this."

The determination and report, Review of fares for rural and regional buses from January 2010 are available on IPART's website <<http://www.ipart.nsw.gov.au>>.

For further information, contact: Jim Cox, Chief Executive Officer and Full Time Tribunal Member.

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