

NSW TAXI OPERATORS & DRIVERS ASSOCIATION Inc

PRESIDENT Anne Turner:

" A Fair Share of a fair fare "

2015 IPART SUBMISSION

BACKGROUND

Over the past decade governments have increasingly used the taxi industry as a cash cow which has put pressure on the price of plates and lower returns on owner's investment. Problems this has caused are as follows

- Forcing driver income to fall on average 30%
- Forcing owners and operators to cut corners to maintain their income.
- Safety has gone out window as people try to make a living
- Suicide rates have increased as people feel trapped in low paying jobs and no way out.
- Increase in short term drivers as long term driver's move out of industry due to poor conditions and poor pay.

Well-intentioned but largely discredited Reports by Professor Alan Fels and Professor David Cousins into the taxi industry has just muddied the water around Australia as these reforms have been proved to be a failure here and internationally.

With advent of illegal ridesharing apps like uber, consternation amongst the taxi industry participants has grown every day as they go on unregulated and illegal with very little government action.

Issues

The IPART Dec 2013 Draft Report proposals were uninformed, destructive and mostly ineffective.

It is considered that TfNSW, as it did in 2013, & 2014; should reject the IPART recommendations unless they are fundamentally revised in the IPART Final Report. Similar to 2013, 2014; IPART's proposals include "reduced" taxi fares by REDUCING taxi driver earnings! - For more efficient services despite many more effective NSW TODA means. It proposes more taxis despite the documented downturn in taxi demand since the 2010 lack of consumer confidence. It proposes more ineffective PAL plates for the political late night problems. And to reduce licence costs with dubious tender procedures which may linger for 25 years instead of IPART's 5 years.

This NSW Taxi Operators Drivers Association Inc submission addresses the following matters in response:

- **NO MORE TAXIS.** The NSW TODA is totally opposed to any more taxi licences. Unless there is irrefutable proof of population and passenger demand growth.
- **IPART PRIMARY Objective:** Improve driver earnings! Morally, ethically, and logically as drivers and operators are the very backbone of NSW taxi services, IPART's first PRIMARY Objective must be the improvement of taxi driver and operator earnings! Yet not a single word on drivers' earnings or being below the Australian minimum wage! Shame!

- IPART Objective: Efficient taxi services. The NSWTDA has always fully supported “greater efficiency in the supply of services”. But strongly opposes IPART’s strategies that brutally further reduce driver earnings yet which are virtually ineffective in achieving any significantly improved passenger service efficiencies.

NSWTDA has recommended 6 positive, quantified, much more effective means of improving taxi services for the public. And which also improve driver earnings!

- IPART Objective: Reduce licence costs. If there is no other way of achieving this objective then IPART must implement its strategy with the minimum of pain on drivers, with minimum delay and maximum expediency and effectiveness. Critiques by others of IPART’s largely ineffective proposals are reported, such as by Mr. D. Cousins from the successful Victorian Fels taxi Inquiry.

It is hard to believe IPART may feel restricted to and unable to negotiate the Govt’s Terms of Reference from only using more licences and fare changes. But it is beyond all belief that IPART cannot make other recommendations and that TfNSW would be unwilling to consider much more effective means of realising the ToRs such as recommended by the NSWTDODA!

Two 2013, 2014; matters are in IPART’s favour. That for the 1st time it has stated its Objectives enabling these now to be clearly assessed together with the related IPART approaches and strategies. And they are clearly seriously deficient but can be achieved much more successfully!

And second, that - for the 3rd time since 2008 (!) - after NSWTDODA President Anne Turner’s roundtable declaration of a “big protest” publicly by drivers, IPART has discarded its time wasting misguided obsession of banning the Harbour Bridge Return Toll which would eliminate legitimate driver cost compensations, while forcing drivers to subsidise North Shore passengers.

Our essential recommendations in summary are:

1. No more plates
2. Improve driver earnings
3. No PAL plates
4. Drop licence costs measures
5. Reintroduce Taxi cost index
6. Ask for changes to terms of reference to include duty of care for drivers.
7. Introduce public holiday tariffs as per rest Australia
8. Introduce legislation to completely shut down illegal activities like uber.

IPART may also ask for changes for terms of reference to include wide ranging cost issues that may then empower IPART to be an effective regulatory body and properly revise the cost factors that it is trying to do with resource.

Kind regards

NSWTDODA
PRESIDENT
ANNE TURNER Australian Taxi Federation President.