



## Robert Coombs MP

MEMBER FOR SWANSEA



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13 July 2009

Mr Michael Keating AO  
Chairman  
Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal  
PO Box Q290  
QVB POST OFFICE NSW 1230

Dear Mr Keating

I refer to the review of fares for metropolitan and outer metropolitan bus services from January 2010 being undertaken by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART).

The Hunter Labor Taskforce, comprising State Labor Members of Parliament in the Hunter Region recently met and resolved to lodge its submission concerning the harmonisation of the bus fares in the Newcastle contract region with those of other bus contract regions.

Members support the retention of time based fares in the Newcastle contract region. Many commuters across the Newcastle contract region, particularly in Lake Macquarie travel considerable distances and time based fares – which are universally accepted in the Newcastle contract region – provide a more equitable distribution of travel cost.

The Taskforce understands fares from Caves Beach to Newcastle would be likely to double should section based fares be introduced. The decision of many commuters as to whether they drive or catch a bus is often a marginal choice and is likely to be price sensitive. The Taskforce is concerned patronage would also be adversely affected by the introduction of section based fares.

Taskforce members request IPART support the retention of time based fares and understand that section based fares would have an adverse impact on many Newcastle and Lake Macquarie commuters if the new approach was introduced without a clear reason.

Your consideration of the concerns of the Taskforce by way of submission would be appreciated.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert Coombs'.

Robert Coombs MP  
Convenor