

Illawarra/Shoalhaven Transport Development Officer  
c/- PO Box 42  
NOWRA NSW 2541  
June 2003

Dr Thomas Parry  
Chairman  
Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal of NSW  
P.O. Box Q290,  
QVB Post Office 1230

## Review of fares for taxis, private buses and private ferries in NSW - Submission for the Shoalhaven Public Transport Working Party.

Dear Dr Parry,

Please find comments submitted on behalf of the Shoalhaven Public Transport Working Party below.

We would welcome holding a workshop in this region in next year's Fares Inquiry.

The Shoalhaven Public Transport Working Party, can be contacted through Kirk Bendall, on [bendall@shoalhaven.nsw.gov.au](mailto:bendall@shoalhaven.nsw.gov.au) or 4221 2581.

Yours sincerely,

Kirk Bendall  
Illawarra/Shoalhaven Transport Development Officer

## 2.1 Taxis: structure and revenue

The importance of taxis for people without cars, at weekends and for 24 hr /7 days a week personal or medical emergencies should be noted. People with low-incomes are regular taxi users. Especially when a family has to rent housing, transport costs can be a significant financial stress.

Distances involved mean value of Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme is eroded.

## 4 The Current Approach To Price Regulation

**4.1.3** 3.3% of ferry cost is running cars – is this more properly a salary benefit? A return on owners' capital? This questioning is assuming the cars are not used for transporting passengers.

*The Tribunal invites comments on the application of various possible fare-setting approaches to the taxi, private bus and private ferry industries.*

**Long-term sustainability.** The tensions between sustainable businesses for bus operators and affordable public transport for users means structural issues need to be addressed. The Table 4.3 Index postulates fare increases of 4.18%, compared with CPI increase of 2.9%. The CPI is a broad estimate of possible growth in fixed incomes. If this relativity is maintained, over a number of years the affordability of fares will increase significantly. The inequity for transport-disadvantaged people will increase, as the real costs of car ownership and operation decline.

## 5 Fare Levels And Structure

**WAT fare structure**

*The Tribunal invites comment on whether an additional lift fee should apply to wheelchair accessible taxis and how it should be implemented.*

If a flat fee is set, users should not expect to pay more than current competent practice. See attached comment by a user.

## 7 Other Issues

### 7.2 Social Impacts: Personal And Household Incomes

**Social Impacts**

*The Tribunal invites comments on the potential social impacts of fare increases, and how such issues should be considered in the fare setting process.*

In the Shoalhaven people face longer distances than city areas. With 49 towns

and villages in the City of the Shoalhaven the impact of geography on daily life is considerable. In some locations there are higher than average numbers of people not in the workforce in a variety of circumstances. Fare impacts can be high especially where travel is not discretionary in time and destination, for example to meet medical and employment requirements.

### **7.2.4 Taxi fare changes and social impacts**

- The value of the Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme is eroded, both by many 'local' trips costing more than the cap and by fare increases. See attached comment by a user of Wheelchair Accessible Taxis.
- The Bay and Basin area is a 'close' ~ 40 km to Nowra - and growing area, with many services and attractions located in Nowra. The effects of distance on Travel Times and costs exacerbate any economic disparities.
- Significant numbers of low-income taxi users in country areas, often also a reflection of the no-car households.
- Taxis are the only form of only night, weekend and school holiday service for many areas. Walking and hitchhiking occurs as people try to get home at night, including where road shoulders are unsealed and in 100 kmh zones.
- Capacity to pay issue: transport stress (especially when combined with housing expenditures) occurs with high transport costs and low incomes.
- Buying cheap cars may be sub-optimum response to transport needs, as using such vehicles can be both risky and a financial drain.

### **7.2.5 Bus and ferry fare changes and social impacts**

- SSTS is major load and forms basis of many villages having at least a daily service.
- School services don't operate on weekends and school holidays – both school-aged people and other members of the community have little or no transport options at these times. Implications for social exclusion, school completion levels etc are significant.
- Effectiveness measures? Assessment? What is aim and purpose/role of fares in PT system