

Blue Mountains Commuter & Transport Users Assoc.Inc.

Ref: IPART Taxi Fare Inquiry.

Date 16<sup>th</sup> May 08.

Reference Taxi Fare Inquiry 2008.

Mr James Cox.

Chief Executive Officer

Independent Pricing & Regulatory Tribunal. **Attn Ineke Ogilvy**

Dear Sir.

I submit this view of Taxi Fares on behalf of the Association Members,

**Taxi Boundaries.**

The Association has endeavoured to obtain Area Maps that stipulate what the Area Boundaries that apply to the Industry but this has not been successful

The Association suggests that there should be a review of this regulation, as it appears to be restrictive.

For example, I was at Glenbrook Station waiting for a taxi from the local Cab Company but a taxi from Penrith was not able to take the fare even though this Penrith Taxi would pass my street.

Another example: The cost of a fare to Penrith from Glenbrook to Penrith is \$37.00 dollars the Glenbrook Can Company cannot pick up a fare in the Penrith Area so a return fare is payed by the Glenbrook Fare.

A mjr cost to the Blue Mountains Community is the cost to the Sydney Airport approx \$200 dollars if the Blue Mountains taxi could pick up in Sydney the cost would be reduced.

The Association suggests that IPART or the Ministry investigate the Boundary System to ascertain whether this system is appropriate for the 20th Century.

The Industry may find with marketing their services people will take the advantage of the taxi and would certainly be a greater incentive for two or more persons taking the trip. **Marketing of Taxi services appears non-existent in the taxi industry it could increase patronage if an entrepreneurial spirit was introduced into Taxi Industry.**

**Cab Charge.**

The Association agrees that 10% charge on Cab Charge is to high especially as normal charge is approx 5% The Association seeks the Taxi Industry to accept EFTPOS from the patron's own cheque or credit account, other credit card.

The Association agrees with the Statement on page 12 of Draft Report "IPART considers that the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission may be well placed to review this issue"

The admission that the Cabcharge owns 45% of the taxi fleet in NSW this is a concern, as we are not sure whether this puts at a disadvantage the Independent Companies. Perhaps IPART could establish if this ownership drives the Industry and maybe holds back entrepreneurial effort by other Companies.

The Association found it interesting that the Cabcharge Company had an approx 20% interest in the purchase of Westbus We feel is this conflict of interest or could the taxi service provide a taxi service at reduced rates to areas where bus services are not viable. E.G a taxi with four people could take the taxi in lieu of bus (more cost effective to both bus and taxi. Companies

**Over 2**

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**Public Transport Ticketing**

With the proposed Integrated Ticketing we expect the Taxi Industry to be part of the this ticketing system We understand that the integrated ticket is an electronic purse where other goods and services can use the service  
The Industry may find an increase in use of taxis if more a broad approach is taken In other words the Fourth Arm of Transport Rail, Bus, Ferry, Taxi (Taxi replacing the car)

Marketing and the Taxi Industry.

(In my early youth arriving at Ashfield Railway Station I would either wait for the bus but if, time was the essence, raining, hot etc. I would take a Cab, as the difference in fare was approximately double the bus fare at that time.

I did do this at Glenbrook Station in the 1960s but this practice was not viable, as the fare got too high. Either walked or rang my wife.

We wonder has the fare structure at present prevented growth of the Industry?

At present the Association is seeking funds for the increase in Commuter Car Parking but there appears to be other alternatives such as encouragement to walk cycling etc but we believe the Taxi Industry should look at the opportunity in this area, especially after 6.00 P.M as in many cases buses are not available.

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**Industry Opportunities.**

We believe the Taxi industry should have representation in Local Forums perhaps we should Should look at the following:

1. Total Cost of Commuter Car Parking in the small town/villages.
2. The Cost of having a vehicle at the car park all day. Depreciation etc.
3. What fare structure the taxi industry could arrive at that provides a competitive price to encourage taxi use
4. Cost of a bus fare in the local area especially after 6.00 P.M where bus services decline rapidly.

With the higher costs of fuel, global warming congestion etc the taxi should come into the orbit of change.

. Disability Taxis.

The Access and Disability Act has influenced that bus industry to supply 25% of bus services to be serviced by low floor buses by 2008 progressing to 100% over a period of time..

The Association requests IPART to establish whether the Access an Disability Act require the Taxi Companies/Cooperatives have the obligation of providing a percentage of the taxi fleet to be wheel chair accessible..

**Contd. Over 3**

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What has become evident that the act has seen improved access for mothers and fathers with prams persons with luggage and smaller children, helpful to other citizens that may not be wheel chair bound but have physical disability (This is not only the aged but also persons who are temporary disability)?

Our thoughts are if taxis are equipped for wheel chair then the taxis so equipped will be able to take prams with child restraints without taking the child out good for short trips especially with children with a health problem.

The impression given in the report the Industry appears to concentrate on the fare structure how much it costs and what increases in fares IPART will recommend to Government fair enough but there does not appear any new initiatives the Industry will introduce especially as there is the changes that will have to take place with Global Warming, Traffic Congestion, etc.etc

Another thought you would think with one Company owning 45% of the taxi in NSW with the economy of scale their costs would be less than the Independent Owners. and would be charging less per kilometre.

The Association therefore suggests the Inquiry look from a lateral approach as we see the Industry has a vital role in Transport it does supply a service to many but there appears to some reluctance to change in approach as we have suggested.

I submit this document for due consideration by the Tribunal and the Taxi Industry.

Yours faithfully

Paul Trevaskis CMILT Hon.Sect.