

HARBOUR BRIDGE TOLL

Sir/Madam,

I write regarding the IPART submission that the Harbour Bridge toll levied on northbound journeys be rescinded. I have been driving night taxis for 11 years and strongly oppose this proposal.

As this submission has not yet been openly canvassed amongst taxi drivers allow me to explain why drivers will resist this rule change, plus its unintended consequences.

The majority of drivers gravitate to where the bulk of the work is - the City and CBD. Most nights many fares head over the Bridge, often to the lower North Shore for an approximate fare of \$15.

If drivers were required to pay the return \$3 toll this would only leave \$12. Coupled with the fact that the return Bridge journey of 3 kilometres is devoid of street hails makes this fare marginal at best.

Thus during periods of peak demand drivers will be very reluctant to accept short trips over the Bridge, without guaranteed payment of the Bridge toll enabling us to return for more work.

To avoid these jobs drivers will simply avoid the City north precinct, especially the Rocks, Opera House and Circular Quay, from where many lower North Shore fares originate.

Generally North Shore passengers will be extremely frustrated at being rejected due to drivers not being interested in marginal fares when other work is available.

And needless to say, there will be a proliferation of disputes, often involving alcohol and requiring official responses from the relevant bodies.

Finally, if forced to pay the Bridge toll cabbies will feel unfairly penalised when no alternative free route is available to return to the City.

It's this final point – no free return route – that saw the introduction of the compulsory Toll. Until a free alternative is provided then I feel the Bridge toll levy is totally justified.

Yours faithfully,

Adrian Neylan