

Thursday, 8 May 2008

2008 Review of Taxi Fares in NSW
Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal
PO Box Q290
QVB Post Office NSW 1230

Submission to the 2008 Review of Taxi Fares in NSW Draft Report

Dear IPART,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to make a submission to the 2008 Review of Taxi Fares in NSW Draft Report. This submission is a follow-up to my initial written submission and subsequent in person submission at the public hearing.

Although IPART states in its draft report that the impact of the increasing taxi fares for wheelchair passengers and the subsidy provided by the NSW Government's Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme (TTSS) is outside the IPART Taxi Fare Review Terms of Reference, it is greatly appreciated that IPART is raising the issues about the costs associated with providing the wheelchair taxi service and the impact on wheelchair passengers due to the increasing cost of taxi fares, particularly for wheelchair passengers whose only option for accessible transport are the WATs.

The information contained in 10.5.2 of the 2008 Review of Taxis in NSW Draft Report states;

"While the level of the TTSS is a matter for Government and is outside IPART's terms of reference, the issues raised in submissions are important. IPART has been advised that the Ministry of Transport is currently reviewing the TTSS and the administrative arrangements surrounding it. IPART hopes that the information provided above will assist the Ministry of Transport with its review";

However, I wish to draw IPART's attention to the content contained in the last paragraph of a letter from Mr Jim Glasson, the NSW Ministry of Transport's Director General (received April 2008 although the letter is not dated), in response to a letter that I wrote to the Ministry of Transport in January 2008 in which I was seeking the TTSS to be reviewed and increased.

The attached Director General's letter states that,

"The NSW Government is of a view that the current subsidy remains consistent with the needs of the majority of participants and it is not intended to review the subsidy level at this time".

With consideration to the Director General's response, and the attitude of the NSW Government in not addressing the increasing cost of taxi transport for wheelchair users, as IPART has stated that the issues raised about the WAT service and the related costs for wheelchair passengers are important, I not only request that IPART

keep the issue alive and on the agenda in the annual taxi fare reviews, but for IPART to seek an amendment to the Review of NSW Taxi Fares 'Terms of Reference'.

If IPART does not have the authority to seek a change to the Terms of Reference I would appreciate some feedback on advice on the required process to obtain a change to the Terms of Reference.

Again, thank you for giving me the opportunity to make this submission and I look forward to your reply and anticipate a positive response.

Regards,

Greg Killeen



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Mr Greg Killeen

Dear Mr Killeen,

I refer to your correspondence received by the Minister for Transport regarding the Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Driver Incentive Scheme. The Minister has asked me to respond on his behalf and I apologise for the delay.

Thank you for your views concerning the Government's decision to trial an incentive payment to drivers of wheelchair accessible taxis (WATs) when they carry passengers in wheelchairs.

While the Government already provides incentives to operate WATs (such as lower licence fees and interest free loans towards the purchase of a WAT), this incentive is specifically targeted towards WAT drivers who are responsible for service delivery.

The Government is confident that the trial will result in service improvements based on the results of similar initiatives in other jurisdictions. The trial will be evaluated in line with the new Taxi Network Standards to determine whether the incentive payment has resulted in service improvements and warrants further consideration.

With regard to the matter of the Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme, the average M50 trip subsidy is approximately \$15, which is well below the current maximum subsidy cap. The NSW Government is of a view that the current subsidy remains consistent with the needs of the majority of participants and it is not intended to review the subsidy level at this time.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Jim Glasson
Director General

18 MAR 2008

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