

SUBMISSION:

To the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal

2008 Review of Taxi Fares in NSW

Re Draft Report And Draft Recommendations

Dear Sir

My submission shall be brief and concentrated on 1 issue: the return toll on Northbound Sydney Harbour Crossing.

IPART may consider it “no less likely to obtain a return trip from the north (sic) Sydney business district than from any other area toll....”
But another factor weighs in- lack of a financially realistic alternative.

Aside from the likelihood of the prospect of getting a return fare in relation to prospective outcomes when matched to other toll roads, there are dynamics that lend themselves to why taxi cab drivers are better compensated by way of charging for the northbound trip.

In an industry where no guaranteed payment by way of ordinary wage or a guaranteed retention wage exists, drivers are faced with a very timely unpaid journey around the Lane Cove – Hunters Hill area to return to the south side of Sydney Harbour as the only alternative to the ‘Bridge’. Especially so as a overwhelmingly greater number of drivers ply the south rather than the north side for work.

The south side is thus the default repositioning when becoming ‘vacant’. Granted when upon dropping off in say Chatswood a driver will ‘log’ into Chatswood on the taxis radio dispatch mechanism, nevertheless any realistic appraisal of getting worthwhile continuous flow of work lends itself to returning promptly to the south side.

My experience is that of a night driver with a significant focus on that work emanating from the Sydney CBD during the hours from 7pm – 11pm over the business week- and much work emanating from areas

nearby- outside of that same shift time frame. Many trips driving and working thus terminate north of the 'Bridge'. And by far the majority

(a) do not involve a return journey

(b) do not take me anywhere near (as a destination) an area whereby a return trip via the Lane Cove – Hunters Hill route is a financially sensible prospect.

Far from it. A return journey from Gore Hill (Chatswood area) to the CBD can be made in just over 10 mins. (and that's bordering the Lane Cove area!)

Any journeys involving suburbs east of the Pacific Hwy corridor magnify the situation of compelling reason to return expeditiously to the CBD- because there is even less available work there.

When consideration is given to the already low hourly rate that drivers experience and the fact that in order to bring one's earnings up to a level of income frugally commensurate with those in other sectors in the workforce doing comparable work, one needs to work seventy two (plus) hours per week- then one needs not the drop of approximately \$54.00 per week in income that such a proposition as dumping the northbound tolls entails.

Sincerely

Mike Hatrick