



P.O. BOX 29,
PANANIA. NSW 2213
29/4/2010

2010 Review of Taxi Fares,
Independent Pricing & Regulatory Tribunal
P.O. BOX Q290
QVB POST OFFICE. NSW 1230.

Dear sir/madam..

Please consider this submission for IPART's Review of Taxi Fares. I am making this submission as a member of the group Action for Public Transport and with the major consideration of the important part the taxi system could and should play in Sydney's public transport.

The submission is, however, my own, and may not have full concurrence with the ideas of other members of Action for Public Transport.

1. Basic considerations concerning fares.

In IPART's *Discussion Paper; 2010 Review of Taxi Fares in NSW* the question is put to stakeholders, "Is the current fare structure reasonable? Is there a case for raising some fare components by more than others?"

If taxis are to be considered in any way as part of the public transport system, the answers should be self evident. The fares are much, much too high, and the direction should be in the direction of lowering the fares, not increasing them.

This is clear from comparing the taxi industry with other industries which share the role of transporting passengers to their destinations. With both the airline industry and the long distance coach industry, governments long ago decided that the emphasis should be on competition, and providing better and cheaper services. The result has been cheaper services.

With the taxi industry this logic has not been followed, with the result that it can be more expensive taking a taxi ride to a Sydney suburb than a coach ride to Canberra, or even Melbourne.

Taxi services as part of public transport

Basically my reasoning is very similar to that followed by the Warren Centre in its report, Towards a city of cities: sustainable transport in sustainable cities; final report. Warren Centre, University of Sydney, 2002.

The Warren Centre recommends greater flexibility in the taxi industry and a greater role for it in public transport, especially for low and medium demand destinations where mass transit services (buses, and especially trains) are not economic.

It states: "More flexible forms of transport are required. Taxis offer flexible 'anywhere' transport but at a significant cost. Current work practices and regulations mean that taxi transport is not truly 'anytime'. Taxis and similar small vehicles, such as mini-buses, have the potential to fill several roles in the public transport system ... on low-demand routes or at low-demand times, ride-sharing for journeys to work to small employment locations and one-off trips for shopping."

The Warren Centre then recommends a review of the "current regulations applying to the ownership and operation of public vehicles" with a number of objectives including "potential restructuring of the taxi industry to make it a more significant player in urban transport" and "taxis in lieu of buses on low volume routes." (Warren Centre recommendations **Attached**)

The potential a shared-riding taxi or mini-bus type service could play in Sydney's public transport is illustrated by the fact that the NSW Government is reluctant to continue with bus services which are uneconomic.

The Government is thus prepared to axe bus services leaving passengers without a service, whereas it has not considered replacing such services with shared taxi or mini-bus services. It is probably correct that bus services for relatively small numbers of people cannot be justified economically, because buses have been designed to carry loads of 50 or more people, but smaller such numbers if taken up by mini-buses or shared taxis would be quite profitable.

For example the City of Sydney points out that Walsh Bay has about 400 residential dwellings and 60 businesses employing 2,500 people, yet its only bus service was discontinued in 2006. The reason given for the non-service according to the Transport Minister was that "there was not enough demand, despite community calls." (Clover Moore, Member for Sydney. Newsletter 57, April 2010 -**Attached**)

IPART should address its enquiry towards this issue. The Transport Minister might indeed be correct in saying that demand was insufficient to justify a bus service, but this is an area where the Warren Centre recommendations are particularly relevant, i.e. taxis (with shared riding) could be used in lieu of buses on low volume bus routes.

To simply axe services without providing an alternative is no solution at all, when shared taxis could address the deficiency.

Improved taxi services for urban sprawl areas to supplement public transport

It might be argued that if the Government is not prepared to provide a public transport service to an area as close to the City as Walsh Bay, what hope have suburbs in the urban sprawl? The result is a profusion of private cars and all the problems that go with an over-dependence on private cars for urban transport.

The Warren Centre is not alone in calling for better medium demand transport. The former Premier, Morris Iemma, floated the idea of introducing mini-buses and jitneys (shared-ride taxis) to "areas that are poorly served by public transport" just after the visit of Pope Benedict. (Sydney Morning Herald, July 28, 2008 - **Attached**)

Within a month Morris Iemma had been ousted and his proposals have been largely forgotten. But the need for such innovations remain, and IPART should address the issue.

Queueing and late night services

A recent newspaper report has presented the classic late night transport problem.

"it is the curse of the late-night commuter. The last train has left for the suburbs and the only option - other than an expensive taxi - is to wait ... and wait. (Sydney Morning Herald, 21/12/2010 - **Attached**)

The late night Nightride buses are not only crowded but are really only suitable for inner city suburbs. They are painfully slow in taking passengers to outer suburbs.

Shared, multiple-hire taxi services such as the Warren Centre recommends could solve this problem very quickly.

Unfortunately the Government, because of gross over-regulation, has placed obstacles in the way of solving this problem. If queues for taxi services should be reduced the best method would be increased multiple-hiring.

But in fact the Government heavily discourages multiple-hiring by making touting by taxi drivers illegal, and what is more has an army of inspectors who are instructed to catch any taxi drivers who suggest multiple-hiring by addressing queues of waiting passengers with questions such as, "is anybody else going to Parramatta, Liverpool? etc.)

If this practice was legal, queues would be diminished, and fares would be cheaper, and people would get home sooner. And there would also be less street violence around taxi stands. IPART should address this issue.

Better co-ordination with other enquiries.

IPART should consider other enquiries into the taxi industry and co-ordinate its research with them. One of our members of Action for Public Transport attended another forum organised by Mr Scott Leonard of the Dept of Transport and Infrastructure, and held at Price Waterhouse Coopers, Darling Park on March 15, 2010. He made no mention of any participation or representations made by IPART. There has also been a Legislative Council Inquiry.

The Price Waterhouse Coopers forum had representatives from the Taxi Drivers Association and by Mr Michael Joules of the Taxi Drivers Union as well as from the dominant Taxi Council.

I recognize that IPART is governed by narrow parameters in its terms of reference, but it is important that it listens as much as possible and opens itself as much as possible to representations from non-dominant players like the Taxi Drivers Association.

IPART should also examine carefully the recommendations of other government and non-government organizations.

The Government bodies which have examined the taxi industry include the Industry Commission which made a detailed examination of the taxi industry in its report no.37: Urban Transport, 1994.

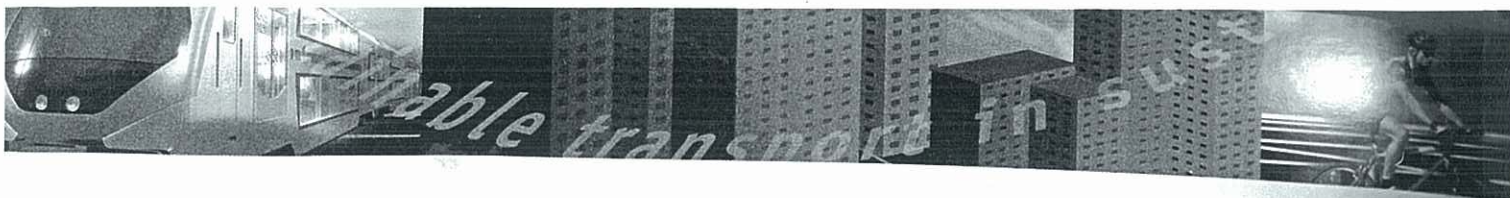
Non-government organizations which have examined the taxi industry include the Warren Centre, which I have already mentioned and the Centre for Independent Studies. The CIS dissected the logic of taxi regulation in its report, On Buying a Job, and has followed this up with articles in its journal, Policy.

Government inertia, and the influence of the Taxi Council have resulted in a failure of implementation of the recommendations from these reports. IPART should consider carefully whether it should allow this failure to continue.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Graham Hoskin', written over the closing 'Yours faithfully,'.

Graham Hoskin,
Action for Public Transport.



WARREN CENTRE

Towards a City of Cities *Continued (2002)*

3d. Improve Sydney's current City Rail system (NSW Government)

Sydney's rail system provides a vital component of its overall transport needs, carrying 13.5 million passenger kilometres each weekday, or almost 10 per cent of total daily travel in Sydney. Over the past 50 years only limited enhancements have been made to the system, although in recent years there has been increased emphasis on infrastructure maintenance, purchase of rolling stock and upgrading of stations. However, the present system is nearing capacity in peak periods on various parts of the network.

The need to invest significant amounts of money in the provision of new public transport equipment and infrastructure to improve public transport's coverage and performance, is discussed under strategy 5. However, in the shorter term, a program of improvement to the rail system needs to be continued and expedited. In particular, improvements to signalling and train control systems and to rolling stock to improve the throughput of passengers in the CBD and near CBD area is required.

3e. Amend regulations governing buses, taxis and demand-responsive transport and conduct trials of new services (NSW Government)

More flexible forms of public transport are required. Taxis offer flexible 'anywhere' transport but at a significant cost. Current work practices and regulations mean that taxi transport is not truly 'anytime'. Taxis and similar small vehicles, such as mini-buses, have the potential to fill several roles in the transport system, such as 'bus' services on low-demand routes or at low-demand times, ride-sharing for journeys to work to small employment locations and one-off trips for shopping.

It is recommended that a major public review be conducted of the current regulations applying to the ownership and operation of public vehicles to encompass such issues as:

- potential restructuring of the taxi industry to make it a more significant player in urban transport;
- combined ownership and better coordination of taxi fleets to facilitate synergy and hybrid service solutions, such as:
 - ▲ taxis used in lieu of buses on low volume bus routes
 - ▲ taxis used in addition to buses on bus routes at high demand times
 - ▲ use of mini-buses as taxis and dial-a-ride vehicles
 - ▲ better utilisation of cab sharing and introduction of new forms of demand-responsive transport, such as 'continuous multi-hire';
- a common 'transit ticket' that could be used for taxis as well as for other public transport vehicles.



Low floor midi-buses can be used for demand-responsive services.

TRANSPORT continued



Sydney bus services are not meeting community needs.

My 'Region 6 Bus Review' submission again called for improved services in Pyrmont and Ultimo and to run cross-regional 352 and 353 services

full-time, but services remain unchanged. Buses should be in a range of sizes, with low noise and low air pollution, have bicycle racks, and allow companion animals on board. Real-time information

should be provided at bus stops.

It is not clear what areas will benefit from the 1,000 additional buses promised in the Metropolitan Transport Plan.

Paddington

residents want a bus link between Fiveways and Edgecliff to connect to the shopping centre and train station. The Transport Minister's response to my questions claims there is no demand, but the last bus review occurred before the Fiveways supermarket closed. If you would use such a service, please call my office on 9360 3053.



Walsh Bay

has about 400 residential dwellings and 60 businesses employing 2,500 people, yet its only bus service was discontinued in 2006. In response to my bus services submission and representations, the Transport Minister again said there was not enough demand, despite community calls.

While future light rail is promised to service Walsh Bay, residents, arts bodies and workers need public transport now. Sign my Walsh Bay transport petition at www.clovermoore.com/main/page/3163.pdf

Don't buy, buy, buy use cars in 2010 target area

Linton Besser
Transport Reporter

PUBLIC transport is booming, with peak-hour use almost at the Government's target level for 2016. Figures produced by the Transport Data Centre show 74.6 per cent of peak-hour trips into the city were on buses, trains and ferries in 2006.

The State Plan set a target of 75 per cent by 2016, and patronage over the past 12 months has soared well beyond the Government's high-growth projections.

In 2006, the proportion of journeys to work on public transport was 22.1 per cent, significantly up on the 20.1 per cent registered in 2004, when 40 per cent of peak-hour CityRail trains were running late.

Experts are divided on the reasons for the increasing use of buses and trains, but the Transport Minister, John Watkins, said yesterday that strong job growth and increasing petrol prices were partly responsible.

"Commuters are telling us they want a better public transport system with better infrastructure, cheaper travelling options and improved customer service," Mr Watkins said. "The State Plan sets am-



Morris lemma... mini-bus solution to shortage. Photo: Channel Nine News

bitious targets, but the lemma Government is committed to meeting them."

But the recent popularity of public transport does not necessarily mean car use will decline in the longer term. Ministry of Transport documents show it is likely to increase by more than 10 per cent by 2016.

And while the patronage figures are promising for the Government, they also present a huge challenge. So many commuters are trying to board trains that the network is reaching breaking point. Trains are sometimes so full they leave passengers behind, and take so long to unload they slow fol-

Cars will eat Sydney, even with \$50

From Page 1
recently completed initial Transport Scenario Modelling for the contribution of a range of current, proposed and potential actions on State Plan targets for transport, land use planning, air and greenhouse...

"Growth in vehicle travel remains the major challenge for meeting the cleaner air target and implementation/acceleration of identified public transport improvement and travel demand management strategies will be needed, together with development of additional new transport strategies, in order to deliver the emission reductions necessary to meet the cleaner air target."

The Greens MP Lee Rhiannon said that the leaked documents showed "the Government is floundering".

"The challenge of leveraging people out of their cars and onto public transport, while critical to combating climate change, seems beyond the capacity of the lemma Government," she said.

The most crucial element of the Government's transport management plan, according to the modelling, is the success of strategic bus corridors. These were to be accelerated, according to the Government's other 2006 glossy document, the Urban Transport Statement.

"Modelling also suggests that failure to implement integrated bus networks would have a significant detrimental effect on performance against targets, as

non-integrated bus service performed worst." It's

The Government has 80 individual bus priority by 2012 to create 43c with bus lanes, electric priority at traffic lights improved bus reliability breakdown provided

Herald late last year showed 17 corridors were in place and only nine showed substantial increase in age since the bus priority measures were put in place.

The Transport Minister Watkins, said: "The State ambitious goals on a range of issues over a decade. "We're working hard those goals, and will continue to do so."

also suggested restricting peak-hour movement carrying containers Botany and increasing of laws prohibiting at intersections.

Mr lemma called yesterday submissions from the ways to improve CBD

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Opposition plays waiting game on the bus

Andrew West
TRANSPORT

IT IS the curse of the late-night commuter. The last train has left for the suburbs and the only option - other than an expensive taxi - is to wait ... and wait.

The State Government runs NightRide buses after midnight to replace trains but the services are infrequent and crowded, often with drunken and rowdy revellers.

Today the NSW Opposition will release the next phase of its transport policy, which includes doubling the number of buses on key routes and introducing services to routes that have been neglected.

"These NightRide buses are crucial in ensuring that people in Sydney are able to get home safely from shift work or following a night out," the Opposition's transport spokeswoman, Gladys Berejiklian, told the *Herald*.

The Greiner government introduced the buses - modelled on the service in London - to a mixed reception in 1989, after axing most after-midnight rail services. Ms Berejiklian said that, over the past 15 years, the NightRide service had been run down.

In the early hours of yesterday morning, she joined the Opposition

Leader, Barry O'Farrell, to meet passengers waiting, not always patiently, outside Town Hall station on George Street, for the NightRide.

"As with most transport in Sydney, the Government has failed to expand the service to meet population growth," she said. "On busy nights of the week, like Thursday nights, commuters can be waiting an hour for a bus home."

Ms Berejiklian said the lack of late-night public transport from the city, especially on traditional party nights of Friday and Saturday, increased the risk of drink-driving because people were impatient at the long intervals between buses.

"The lack of access to public transport can also lead to increased youth crime and anti-social behaviour in suburbs, where young people cannot travel to major centres for entertainment and social activities."

She said a Coalition government would extend the weekend timetable to include Thursday night, doubling the frequency of services that night, and introduce a new NightRide bus for the Richmond line, which has no service.

The four weekend buses that terminate at Blacktown would be extended, with new stops at Ma-



Take a ticket ... the Opposition leader Barry O'Farrell, and the Opposition transport spokeswoman, Gladys Berejiklian, on George Street at midnight

rayong, Quakers Hill, Schofields, Riverstone, Vineyard, Mulgrave, Windsor, Clarendon, East Richmond and Richmond.

She would double weekend services to Macarthur, and extend the current service, which terminates at Liverpool, further south-west to Campbelltown, Leumeah, Minto, Ingleburn, Macquarie

Fields, Glenfield and Casula. A weekend NightRide service would be introduced along the Carlingford Line as well as more buses to Parramatta.

The Coalition is also proposing an hourly service from the City to Carlingford, via Lidcombe, with stops at Clyde, Rosehill, Camellia, Rydalmere,

TONIGHT!
ON TV

Harvey Norman

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Father o
arrives i

Ben Spencer