



CityLink Customer Ombudsman

Level 3, IBM Tower
60 City Road
SOUTHGATE VIC 3006

Telephone: (03) 9626 2443

Fax: (03) 9626 2455

Email: admin@citylinkombudsman.com.au

Website: www.citylinkombudsman.com.au

CCO REVIEW

1 SEPTEMBER 2005 – 28 FEBRUARY 2006

**Michael Arnold
CityLink Customer Ombudsman**

CITYLINK CUSTOMER OMBUDSMAN REVIEW

1 SEPTEMBER 2005 – 28 FEBRUARY 2006

Introduction

This is the third in the series of my reports as the CityLink Customer Ombudsman since the inception of the service in September 2004. It is a review of activities and the handling of complaints over the last six months.

The Review

Complaints

Fines

The benefit of the introduction of the invoice system in July 2005, whereby invoices are issued to non-CityLink customers using CityLink roadways, has been shown by the reduction in complaints about fines imposed for the non-compliant use of the roadways. There have been a small number of complaints about the administration fee charged in such circumstances by interstate and country visitors who inadvertently find themselves on the roadways, but there is general appreciation of the change.

Hazards

One of the issues that came to my attention related to the level of communication between CityLink and VicRoads in relation to hazards on the roads for which they are responsible.

A complaint was made by a CityLink customer in relation to a hazard on the Eastern Freeway. This freeway does not fall within the responsibility of CityLink but is under management of VicRoads. The complainant had notified CityLink of a hazard on the roadway by way of telephone whilst on the freeway but was directed to call VicRoads. He could not do this whilst he was driving. The complainant had endeavoured to do the correct thing in the matter and it should not have been his further obligation to take down the VicRoads contact number whilst driving his motor vehicle in order to contact it about the hazard.

There is a bigger picture in relation to responsibility for road management under the Road Management Act 2004, particularly where safety is concerned. Accordingly, I believe there should be a protocol or arrangement to ensure that where notice is given to either CityLink or VicRoads of a hazard on one of their respective roads, that such information be relayed to the responsible road authority.

Upon my raising the issue with CityLink there was an initial response that respective telephone operators at CityLink and VicRoads might introduce a system whereby drivers could be assisted in relaying the information by them being contacted at a later stage. This was a possible solution but I believed that there should be a process whereby such a message could be taken by CityLink/VicRoads operators and relayed directly between them.

I was subsequently advised that there is a formal agreement in place between TransLink Operations (who are contracted by Transurban to maintain and operate our roads) and VicRoads. I was advised that its traffic control room regularly communicated with VicRoads control room to relay any road based issues. TransLink's understanding was that its call centre was transferring callers such as the complainant to VicRoads, however, upon investigation it found that its call centre process was to provide callers with the telephone number to notify VicRoads.

In response to my submission, CityLink has reviewed its process. In future, customers to the call centre notifying it of debris on roads managed by VicRoads will be transferred directly to VicRoads. This was an appropriate outcome.

Change of Ownership of Vehicles

Another issue with which I have had to deal relates to fines (previously) and administration fees imposed on CityLink customers for non-compliant use of CityLink roadways after they had sold/transferred ownership of their vehicles. The responsibility at first instance lies on the customer to inform CityLink of any such change but consideration should be given to some publicity by CityLink to reinforce the need to give CityLink notice of such change and the development of an early warning system in relation to some unusual non-compliance by the customer's former vehicle. Such a system will extend to such non-compliance by existing customers.

Conclusion

I must again recognise the prompt and ready co-operation between CityLink and my office. I remain satisfied that CityLink directly resolves virtually all the complaints it receives and makes a genuine attempt to deal with the matters referred to me.

Below is a table of complaints and outcomes for the reporting period.

	Sept 05	Oct 05	Nov 05	Dec 05	Jan 06	Feb 06
Billing		2	3			
Infringement/ late toll invoice	3		1	2	6	3
Damage to Vehicle					1	1
Other Damage						
Vehicle Classification						1
Service levels		1			1	
Traffic Management						1
Account Management	3			1	4	3
Website	1	1				
Pricing						
TOTAL	7	4	4	3	12	9
Answered by CCO						
Resolved by ICR	6	4	4	3	8	4
Pending	1				4	5
Determinations By CCO						



Michael Arnold
CityLink Customer Ombudsman

February 2006