

# **TCO REVIEW**

**1 SEPTEMBER 2007 – 29 FEBRUARY 2008**

**Michael Arnold  
Transurban Customer Ombudsman**

# TRANSURBAN CUSTOMER OMBUDSMAN REVIEW

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## Introduction

This is the third six-monthly review in my capacity as the Transurban Customer Ombudsman. As the Transurban Ombudsman I deal with complaints in relation to customers of CityLink in Victoria and Hills M2, Roam and Roam Express in New South Wales.

It is encouraging to note that complaints coming to me remain at a relatively low level, which is an indication of the level of customer service provided by the respective tollway operators.

## Complaints

### *Metallic Windscreens*

Issues have been raised in a recent complaint concerning metallic windscreens in customer vehicles and the application of accounts when vehicles are fitted with such windscreens. These windscreens can affect the operation of e-TAGS.

In the Everyday account guide available to customers on its website and provided when an account is activated, CityLink advise the following:

*“If your vehicle has a metallic windscreen you will need to place the e-TAG holder in a certain position on the windscreen to enable proper detection of your e-TAG or you may be charged an administration fee per trip. Your vehicle manufacturer or distributor should be able to advise where to place the e-TAG holder.”*

It is apparent from this guide that customers should seek assistance from the vehicle manufacturer/distributor or CityLink if there is any difficulty in regard to metallic windscreens. It may be timely for this information again to be drawn to the attention of customers by the tollway operators in a bulletin that accompanies accounts.

### *Account Information*

Complaints are still being received from customers who do not understand the terms and conditions relating to their accounts. It would appear that further misunderstandings arise when telephone contact is made with the tollway operators. Brochures are forwarded to customers when accounts are opened and summaries are available on the website, however, dissatisfied customers should have further written reinforcement of these terms and conditions, as telephone conversations are often misunderstood.

### *CityLink Infringement Notice Disputes*

Following changes to the Infringements Act 2006, CityLink is unable to respond to Infringement Notices disputes directly. There are limitations as to my jurisdiction and powers to deal with complaints once an Infringement Notice is issued.

Infringement Notices issued by Victoria Police are now handled by Civic Compliance Victoria. A number of customer service difficulties have arisen due to this because of the respective roles of CityLink and Civic Compliance Victoria.

Improved liaison between CityLink and Civic Compliance Victoria would facilitate a closer understanding of their respective systems. This could assist with the provision of information and assistance for customer service issues once Infringement Notices are issued.

### *Repeat Offenders*

There are complaints that relate to the liability of customers for multiple breaches of the terms of usage of the tollways. Consideration should be given to the introduction of an early warning system into CityLink's system to detect repeated and rapid breaches of its account requirements. Consideration should be given to an innovation that flags such breaches. A flag could be put on the system so that once outstanding amounts exceed a certain level the customer is contacted directly, if possible. I understand issues of privacy limit the sources from which a tollway operator can access a customer or road user's current address. This problem should be addressed promptly so that a tollway operator can better service the users of their roads.

### *Information*

It might be timely that more hardcopy information be passed on to customers to ensure they have a better understanding of Transurban's policies and practices. A pack could be put together which is updated regularly. Included in this pack should

be maps of motorways covered by Transurban, information regarding various accounts, and questions and answers regarding the tollway operators' customer resolutions group most common questions and misunderstandings. In this Q&A the Ombudsman's view in relation to debris on the roadway and any other important determinations should be included.

### *Tolling*

A CityLink e-TAG account covers travel Australia wide. This is an advantage over other accounts. Customers can travel on M1, M2, M4, M5 and Westlink M7 motorways in New South Wales and Queensland motorways, as well as CityLink roadways in Victoria. I understand a 10% service fee applies to interstate travel, however, there still may be a need for a shorter term Transurban wide pass available (without tag). There has been call from motorists to have this introduced particularly as signage to the different motorways has proved confusing. A multi motorway Transurban option may assist these particular customers. Difficulties arise when customers have to contact multiple motorways and such a system may prevent unnecessary penalty.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Arnold', written in a cursive style.

**Michael Arnold**  
**Transurban Customer Ombudsman**

**March 2008**

	Sept 07	Oct 07	Nov 07	Dec 07	Jan 08	Feb 08
Billing/Tolling					1	
	4		1	2	4	
						1
Infringement/ Late toll invoice	9	5	1		2	
Damage to Vehicle		1	1		1	
Vehicle Classification				1		
Service levels						
		1				
Traffic Management	1					
Account Management	2	2	1	3		6
	2	2	6	2		2
					3	
Website		1				
Enquiry/Copy to TCO only		2				
				2		
					1	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>
	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>
	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>
Resolved/Closed by Customer Resolutions	11	8	1	3	2	3
	6	3	7	3	4	2
					3	1
Pending	1	1	2	1	2	3
			7	1		

**KEY**

CityLink
Roam
Roam Express