

# **TCO REVIEW**

**1 MARCH – 31 AUGUST 2012**

**Michael Arnold  
Tolling Customer Ombudsman**

# TOLLING CUSTOMER OMBUDSMAN REVIEW

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## Introduction

The Tolling Customer Ombudsman (TCO) is pleased to present a further review of its activities. The review has been slightly delayed to encompass the commencement of AirportlinkM7 as part of the TCO scheme.

AirportlinkM7, after allowing a period of free travel on its toll road, now has its toll charging system operational.

## *Publicity*

There is an ongoing need for toll operators to continually advertise and publish the terms of the usage of their toll roads. Complaints continue to be made by interstate and country motorists not accustomed to the use of toll roads.

In addition to current avenues of publicity, articles in automobile organisation publications are a very useful outlet for those who travel outside of their home State or Territory.

## *Communication*

There is a theme in a number of complaints in recent times that relate to telephone contacts and the failure by toll road operators to return calls. It is commonly accepted that customers get frustrated over poor telephone communication and a failure to meet a commitment to return a call is the most aggravating.

Politeness and timeliness in responding to a customer, no matter how difficult, is a stance that must be maintained.

This is a staff training issue that should be regularly revisited, with some shadow-shopping by the toll road operators themselves in order to maintain standards.

## *Delivery of toll notices or invoices*

Problems have arisen in relation to the delivery of toll notices or invoices to current home addresses of toll road users. I recently took up the issue of delivery by Australia Post in connection with an incompletely addressed notice. Australia Post responded as follows:

*"I refer to your recent letter concerning policies for delivering insufficiently addressed articles.*

*At the outset, please note that Australia Post makes every effort to ensure all articles are delivered correctly as per our customers' expectations. It is however,*

*the responsibility of the sender to ensure that a letter is addressed accurately to enable Australia Post to deliver to the intended recipient.*

*Australia Post has an obligation to deliver mail as addressed – regardless of the name on the article, except where it is sent via the Person-to-Person service. Nevertheless, where an article’s address is not clear, delivery staff will attempt to determine the correct particulars for the article by seeking advice from other staff or consulting the White Pages or Electoral Roll. Such items should be endorsed “Try” and opened in the presence of Australia Post staff if possible. While it is not possible to be certain what occurred with your article – as it was sent via a non-trackable service – it is our belief that this would have occurred. Where it is not possible to identify the intended party, the item is Returned to Sender.”*

Australia Post’s response is most encouraging but care should be taken by toll operators who post or contract with a third party to post on their behalf that processes are in place to correctly address mail.

### *Signage*

There have been complaints made about the location and quality of information provided on signage on toll roads and the entry points to toll roads.

The issues have centred on the frequency and location, clarity and visibility and information about contact and payment methods. Concerns have been expressed about the ability to read such signage whilst travelling at speed.

I note that the RACQ carried out an assessment of the quality of signage on toll roads across Australia, comparing signs on South East Queensland roads to those in other States. Without commenting on its findings contained in the report, I believe that this was a most commendable exercise and well worth an examination by toll road operators throughout Australia.

### **Conclusion**

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



**Michael Arnold**  
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CityLink
EastLink
Go Via
Roam
Roam Express



Category	March 2012	April 2012	May 2012	June 2012	July 2012	August 2012
Account Management	21	16	17	8	17	21
		2	3	4	5	2
	8	9	10	14	15	6
	5	5	1	6	7	6
	3	3	1		2	3
Billing/Tolling	5	6	10	15	8	7
	5	1	4	3	7	2
	8	12	10	13	10	15
	2	2	1	3	1	3
	1	2	4	7	2	1
Infringement / Late toll invoice		1				
					1	
Infrastructure/ Signage						
				1		
Service /Website		1		1		
		1		1		
Vehicle Classification						
			1			1
			1			
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>28</b>
	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>4</b>
	<b>16</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>22</b>
	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>
	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>
Resolved/Closed by Customer Resolutions	26	24	27	24	25	27
	5	3	7	7	13	4
	16	22	21	29	25	22
	7	7	2	9	8	7
	4	5	6	7	4	4
Pending						1
						1