

**TRANSURBAN CUSTOMER OMBUDSMAN REVIEW
1 SEPTEMBER 2009 – 28 FEBRUARY 2010**

Transurban response

- **Charges**

The Ombudsman questioned why all toll road operators' do not display charges at one location so customers can compare toll charges. It was suggested operators could post them on the Tolling Customer Ombudsman's website for easier access by customers. In addition, it was noted that improvements in technology and systems should be used by operators to improve all service features, including the payment of fees and contact.

As outlined in the Review, Transurban businesses have separate pricing arrangements for each toll road. These prices are available via the Call Centre, on brochures issued to customers, as well as located on each operator's website. We agree it would be easier for customers to locate toll charges through one location.

Currently, motorists in Sydney can access road tolling information on a website run by the Road Transport Authority. This website allows motorists to enter the start and end of their journey, so relevant tolls can be calculated.

Transurban will add a link to www.sydneymotorways.com and also a link to CityLink tolling information to the Tolling Customer Ombudsman's website. We will also discuss with ConnectEast and add a link to their website's tolling information if permitted. Having the links rather than the information itself would ensure the toll charges are always up to date.

- **Identification of number plates**

In the Review, it was recommended vehicle owners be reminded it is their responsibility to ensure their licence plate number can be clearly read.

The vehicle registration number must be clearly visible and readable from a distance of 20 meters. Any cover must be clear, clean, untinted and flat over its entire surface. The Police enforce these laws if they detect an obscured number plate, or believe someone has fraudulently altered a number plate. The penalties include infringements, loss of demerit points or imprisonment.

Transurban has processes in place to ensure vehicle registration numbers are read as accurately as possible. If charges are applied incorrectly due to a mis-read, we encourage

customers to query this trip with us so we can investigate the details and take the appropriate action.

Transurban will continue to provide training and feedback to its Image Processing staff, to ensure images are read accurately. We will also speak with Road Authorities and explore the possibility of an awareness campaign to remind motorists of the requirement to display readable licence plates.

- **Telephone communications**

In the Review, it was recommended care be taken to provide accurate information about account balances so customers can pay the full amount owing. It was suggested this information should include the date of the last recorded travel and advice in Victoria about any travel that may have proceeded to Civic Compliance. It was recommended we offer customers a contact point at Civic Compliance.

Transurban aims to provide accurate account information to help customers manage their account effectively and avoid account suspension. We do not provide the last date of travel at this time, as this can be confusing for customers when earlier trips on other toll roads do not appear on the account until after the account information is provided.

If a customer calls to check their account balance and do not intend on making a payment immediately, we will ensure the Call Centre staff advise customers to check their balance again prior to payment.

When CityLink customers request their account balance in Victoria, the work instructions prompt staff to ask for a payment as well as check for Late Toll invoices. If Late Toll invoices are still current, we request the customer also pay these immediately to prevent them escalating to Civic Compliance. If the invoices have already escalated and the customer indicates they wish to dispute it, we provide Civic Compliance's address for them to write a plea. Civic Compliance's phone number is generally not provided.

We will review our work instructions to ensure customers calling for an account balance who do not intend on paying immediately, are reminded to check their account balance again prior to payment (as further trips may download onto the account).

At CityLink, Civic Compliance's phone number has been added to more sections of our information management system, to ensure these details can be easily accessed by staff and provided to customers.

- **Timeliness of Clearing Debris from Toll Roads**

As complaints continue to be made about damage caused by debris on toll roads, it was suggested Operators continue to monitor the timeliness of the removal of debris in accordance with their road management plans.

Each Transurban business has targets for the time we take to respond to incidents on our roads, as we understand the importance of ensuring our roads are safe and clear from debris.

For example, at CityLink we report on our indicators every 6 months on our website. From 1 July 2009 to 30 December 2009, we achieved the following results:

- Target - to attend hazardous jobs within 10 minutes
Result - the average time is 4:43 minutes
- Target - to attend non hazardous jobs within 40 minutes
Result – the average time is 7:37 minutes

Transurban will continue to adhere to its road management plans to ensure debris is removed from the road as quickly as possible.

- **Classification of vehicles**

In the Review, it was suggested that toll roads have uniform vehicle classifications throughout Australia to reduce customer complaints.

The vehicle classifications for each toll road are outlined in the separate agreements each toll road has with their State Government. The vehicle classifications vary between agreements, as do the toll amounts themselves. Each Concession Deed with the State is unique, with different rules between Victoria, NSW and Queensland. We agree this causes some confusion.

Complaints about the differing classifications occur mainly in Victoria, where there are additional toll charges for vehicles classified as Light Commercial Vehicles (LCV). The complainants will generally argue this type of vehicle should be charged at the car rate. The rules in Victoria are clear and have been in place for more than 10 years.

The effort to change (in essence, remove the LCV classification), is complex. Transurban has engaged with the State Government in Victoria about this issue, but it has not progressed.

Transurban will continue to discuss the classification issues with the State.