

TRANSURBAN CUSTOMER OMBUDSMAN REVIEW
1 SEPTEMBER 2011 – 29 FEBRUARY 2012

Transurban response

- **Vehicle Ownership**

This Review considers the situation where tolls are charged to a previous owner of a vehicle as a result of either the previous owner not contacting tolling operators to remove their sold vehicle from an account or due to a delay in the transfer of a vehicle's ownership by the relevant vehicle registration authority.

As outlined in the Review, Transurban businesses have terms and conditions stating it is the account holder's responsibility to contact us to add or remove vehicles from accounts. Additionally, the account balance is considered correct unless customers dispute the balance within 90 days of receipt of their statement.

Currently, if Transurban is contacted by the previous owner of a vehicle disputing tolls charged after the sale / disposal date, depending on the circumstances, the following process is followed in order to resolve this issue:

1. If we're contacted within the 90 day timeframe and the customer provides documentation, all CityLink charges within the 90 day period will be refunded. Without documentation, some or all of the toll charges may be refunded, depending on what is fair in the circumstances.
2. When tolls have been charged to the previous owner of a vehicle, the Review suggested we could pursue the new owner if those details are available. This is not our normal business process given the obligations of account holders outlined above. Having said that, sometimes we do liaise with a new owner of a vehicle for tolls if we believe it's appropriate.

It should be noted quite often the buyer and seller of a vehicle know each other, so these disputes can be resolved by the parties themselves without our involvement.

3. In situations where the vehicle has been correctly deleted from an account, however the previous owner continues to receive toll invoices / notices due to the new owner not updating the registration details with the road authority, we advise the previous owner of the nomination process. Clearly this will only be relevant if the details of the new owner are known to the previous owner. If the new owner's details are not known, we can work with both the previous owner and the roads authority to avoid ongoing tolls being charged incorrectly. The Review

acknowledges this nomination procedure, but highlights a lack of common policy among toll operators.

Transurban will continue to assist customers impacted by this situation, taking into account responsibilities set out in our terms and conditions, and also what is considered reasonable in the circumstances.

- **Recording of Information**

In the Review, there was discussion about the inaccurate registration of vehicles when people purchase a Pass over the phone and online, particularly involving state of registration for hire cars. It was suggested phone operators should be trained to ask about state of registration as well as provision made for this information online. We could also liaise with hire companies to ensure their documentation provides for state of registration to avoid subsequent hire company fees if the incorrect state is recorded. Additionally, it was suggested we could keep a recording when Passes are purchased over the phone, to avoid subsequent disputes.

When purchasing a Pass for travel on the road, Transurban's automated phone systems request the vehicle registration number, state of registration and information relating to the class of vehicle (at a minimum). Our phone operators are trained to obtain the same information when speaking with customers who want to purchase a Pass. I note some additional information is requested in different states (for example, CityLink requests make, model and class of vehicle whereas Roam and Roam Express ask for class only). Similarly, all three websites request vehicle registration, state and class for short term passes, as a minimum. I note Roam Express and CityLink have a separate box to be ticked for rental vehicles and Roam's website has a message advising "*If renting, please check the state of registration*".

In terms of hire car companies, rather than relying on information from customers, Transurban and the RTA has developed tolling products allowing rental agencies to supply data directly to tolling companies, thereby removing the requirement for customers to contact tolling companies directly. In this process, the rental agency provides us with the state of registration. These rental tolling products are now available for approximately 70% of the hire car market, with some smaller rental agencies also expected to adopt the new products.

If customers contact Transurban to make an alternative arrangement for travel in their hire car, it's likely they will use the rental company's documentation to obtain the car's registration details. As this documentation does not always provide the state of registration, the customer could be providing incorrect information to Transurban. We acknowledge this incorrect information can result in toll notices and additional fees charged by the rental company.

In terms of call recordings, in certain situations Transurban is able to retrieve call information when Passes are purchased over the phone to resolve subsequent disputes. If a caller is able to provide the date, time and number they called, we can search our phone

logs to ascertain which menus they accessed via the automatic phone system and whether the call was transferred to an Operator. We generally keep recordings for three months to be used to assist with staff training.

We will review the wording on our CityLink and Roam Express website to determine whether we should copy the reminder appearing on Roam's website, which states, "If renting, please check the state of registration".

We will review our process of retrieving call recordings to assess whether they could be used more regularly to settle disputes. There are currently some issues including call quality that would need to be addressed.

We will liaise with rental companies to request they change their documentation to allow for the state of vehicle registration to be recorded.

- **Customer Service**

The Ombudsman indicated he had seen some issues relating to customers using online services and suggested having some independent testing or "mystery shopping" to comment on whether our websites are customer friendly.

CityLink's new website was launched in late December 2011. Prior to this time, a full review of the previous website was undertaken to ensure our new site would be more intuitive and easier to use. This review also considered suggestions obtained from our customers who had used the previous site. We have received a lot of positive feedback about CityLink's new website, however we do subject our websites to continued review and improvement. The Hills M2 website has also been redesigned to deliver a significant simplification of the customer experience over the last 15 months.

Additionally, we have been progressively modifying sites to improve the user experience for people browsing via mobility devices e.g. smart phones and tablet computers. To this end the ability to pay for travel by the casual user has been made substantially easier. This has been executed for CityLink and Hills M2.

The Roam Express website is currently being updated, with an expected release date mid 2012.

Transurban will continue its ongoing review of its websites and implement changes to improve our customer experience. This may include a future external review.