

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Tollroads](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Submission to tolling inquiry
Date: Tuesday, 7 August 2018 2:18:36 PM

To whom it may concern;

I write this as a person who feels that my situation is not unique, but is harmful.

Over the past 10 or so years my wife and I have, on occasion, needed to use the toll roads around Brisbane for travel purposes. Previously we had a tolling account (and tag), but found that the debits to our accounts from Linkt (formerly transurban) were periods where we were low on funds, and without notice. Consequently we stopped the direct debits.

Being a low income household, the ability to control our spending and payments is paramount. We continued to use tolling occasionally, intending to pay as we used them. Unfortunately, on several occasions, memory failed us both, and we forgot to do so immediately afterward.

I should preface what I mention next carefully so as to not understate it. I have no objections to tolls. I believe investment in infrastructure to be vital for a growing population, and it is valid for there to be a return on that investment - provided it is fair and does not cause distress or undue harm.

Unfortunately in our family, it definitely caused significant hardship, and still continues to do so.

Often after using these tolls, the only time we would receive notice of a demand for payment was when the amount had ballooned to an absurd and unaffordable extreme. It wasn't uncommon to receive a first notification where a then \$2 to \$5 toll was a demand for payment of well over a hundred dollars - an amount we could not remotely afford when it applied 2-3 times over a trip on a single weekend.

Often these notices arrived months later, always citing large fees as administration charges and video matching fees, ironic when our tag was still beeping and therefore our details must have been present in their system.

I work for a company that leases photocopiers to large corporations and departments - I have never heard of costs approaching the administration charges levied simply to print and mail that notification. While I anticipate there would be some nuances to this I am unaware of, I still find those charges to be the most unacceptable thing in the entire process.

Unfortunately the worst part of the process was that, when my wife rang transurban to attempt to discuss the demands, and arrange a payment plan, she was told they would only enter into an agreement of a reduction if it was paid in full within the week. When they were demanding an amount by now well past two thousand dollars (for what would have been originally around \$50-\$70 in tolls), clearly this possibility was absurd, and left us with no ability to remedy the problem.

Transurban then elevated the charges, by passing them onto a council, who added their own administrative fees. The largest I saw was an amount of approximately \$220 for a single use toll.

Council then sent those to SPER. Faced with no avenue to appeal the ridiculous amounts charged, and faced with loss of licence and cancellation of registration, our need to keep a roof over our heads won out.

We have been diligent in paying since, but we are still on a payment plan to SPER years later, with no chance of recourse for these extreme charges. I do not know how much we still owe, but it has caused significant stress and harm in our household that I hope we are someday free of. All for what should have been a small out of pocket expense with a small administrative fee as a reminder for some forgetfulness.

Thank you for reading and considering this. Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions.

Sincerely,
Adrian Smith

