RACQ Review of Toll Road Signage in South East Queensland

Executive Summary

The primary objective of this review of South East Queensland (SEQ) toll roads was to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of toll road price, payment and contact information signage from a motorist’s perspective. To do this, RACQ travelled on every toll road in Australia and evaluated the quality of signage, as summarised below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Toll road</th>
<th>Signage frequency &amp; location</th>
<th>Signage clarity</th>
<th>Contact details</th>
<th>Price signage</th>
<th>3 days to pay signage (2 days Sydney)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clem7</td>
<td>adequate</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>poor</td>
<td>very poor</td>
<td>very good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go Between</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>adequate</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>very poor</td>
<td>very poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gateway</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>poor</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>very poor</td>
<td>adequate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logan</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>very poor</td>
<td>adequate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AirportlinkM7</td>
<td>adequate</td>
<td>good</td>
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<td>Sydney</td>
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<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>very good</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>very poor</td>
<td>adequate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These findings are based on personal observations. While every effort was made to observe all signage on the roadside, in some cases specific signs may have been missed. This could be the case in instances where the landscape was ‘busy’ and there were a number of different signs clustered together.

Toll roads are big business. Around 330,000 toll trips are made daily in SEQ, generating toll revenue in excess of $1 million each day.

The quality of toll road signage is important because it impacts on a specific issue of concern for motorists: choice. In order for motorists to make an informed choice, at the point of purchase, about whether to use a toll road there needs to be clear signage outlining the conditions and cost of using the road. RACQ’s review found that while there were many signs alerting motorists that they were about to enter a toll road, other aspects of toll road signage such as price information and payment conditions (three days to pay) need to improve.

Toll roads in SEQ rated fairly well in terms of the frequency of toll road signage, although there was no signage in AirportlinkM7 advising the last exit before moving through to the Clem7 toll tunnel. ‘Last exit before toll road’ signage is important because it reminds motorists that they have the choice to exit and seek an alternative route, prior to paying for use of tolled infrastructure.

Toll signage should be highly visible and differentiated from signage on non-tolled roads, so that drivers do not inadvertently enter a toll road. Signage visibility was inconsistent across the toll roads and RACQ noted instances of obscured, faded and poorly differentiated toll signage in SEQ. RACQ also concluded that SEQ toll signage was less clear than toll signage in Melbourne, where a striking colour scheme is used to effectively differentiate tolled from non-tolled infrastructure signage.
Contact website information was good. However, the phone numbers advertised on roadside signage varied between six and 10 digits in length and were not always user-friendly. Toll operator phone numbers should be easy to remember because motorists don’t have the opportunity to immediately stop and write down this information.

Toll prices were not displayed at the roadside and in this respect, SEQ toll roads compare poorly to Sydney. On most Sydney toll roads, drivers can see the toll charges before entering the tolled section of road. RACQ believes toll prices for passenger cars should be displayed before entry to a toll road. As it currently stands, toll roads are one of the few products that consumers are forced to make a purchase decision on without first being told the price of what they are purchasing. Providing price information means that motorists can assess whether the monetary payment for use of the toll road represents value in terms of potential travel time saved or convenience.

RACQ’s review also concluded that payment conditions were poorly signed on most SEQ toll roads. Motorists without a toll account have three days in which to pay a toll. After this, the driver usually incurs administrative fees or late payment fines. It is therefore important that toll roads have clear, permanent signs warning motorists of the three-day payment window. Only Clem7 was found to have clear and reliable ‘3 days to pay’ signage in SEQ.

Along with the need to display toll price and payment information, this report also makes a number of recommendations for improving the frequency, clarity and quality of other toll road signage in SEQ.

The RACQ thanks the NRMA and RACV for their help in conducting the fieldwork.
Recommendations

1. Display the toll price for passenger vehicles before entry to all SEQ toll roads.

2. Provide permanent, fixed ‘3 days to pay signage’ on the Go Between Bridge, Gateway and Logan Motorways, and AirportlinkM7. There are already signs on these roads telling motorists to pay tolls, for example, ‘avoid penalties, pay your toll’. It should be straightforward to update the wording to ‘avoid penalties, pay your toll within 3 days’.

3. Install permanent, fixed ‘last exit before toll road’ signage on AirportlinkM7 to alert motorists of the last exit before they drive into the Clem7 toll tunnel.

4. Ensure toll signage on all toll roads remains visible by pruning trees that overhang the signage.

5. Increase the effectiveness of toll road signage by adopting the toll road colour scheme used in Melbourne. This is highly visible, with gold lettering on a blue background, and it clearly differentiates toll from non-toll road signage. The Melbourne colour scheme could also be extended to pavement markings on Clem7, Go Between Bridge and AirportlinkM7. This would improve the effectiveness of the pavement markings and further highlight the tolled section ahead.

6. If the Melbourne colour scheme is not adopted in the short term (see recommendation 5 above), replace faded and/or damaged TOLL panels on direction signs for all connecting roads / entry ramps and direction signs to the Gateway Motorway Extension to meet current guidelines for tolled facilities. This would ensure that the toll notification remains highly visible and easily identifiable to motorists.

7. Replace eight and 10-digit toll payment phone numbers with six-digit numbers. Given motorists are driving and are unable to write down a number, a shorter phone number is easier to remember.

7.1 On the Clem7, replace the eight-digit toll payment phone number with a six-digit number, or preferably, use the six-digit FLOW phone number already displayed on the Go Between Bridge. Having one, rather than two, FLOW toll payment phone numbers advertised across the network may reduce confusion.

7.2 On AirportlinkM7, replace the advertised 10-digit phone number with a six-digit phone number.
1. Introduction

South East Queensland (SEQ) has five operational toll roads. The newest of these, AirportlinkM7, opened in July 2012. Given this recent toll road addition, RACQ considered it timely to review the quality of toll information provided to motorists at the roadside and assess motorists’ ability to make an informed choice about whether to use a toll road.

In 2009, existing cash-toll booths were removed and SEQ toll roads became electronic, or free-flow, so motorists no longer needed to stop to pay the toll. Around the same time, the number of vehicle classifications was increased and roadside signage with toll charges for cars and other vehicles was removed.¹

In SEQ, the Gateway and Logan Motorways tolls are billed using the go via system operated by Queensland Motorways. Tolls on the Clem7 tunnel and the Go Between Bridge are billed using the FLOW system operated by RiverCity Motorway, and tolls on AirportlinkM7 are billed through AirportlinkM7.² The go via, FLOW and Airportlink tag and account systems are interoperable. This means that they are compatible with all roads and tunnels in SEQ and throughout Australia and motorists therefore only have to sign up for one system.

Changes to the Queensland Government Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) in 2009 facilitated the removal of toll price signage. This document sets the standard for signs and markings on Queensland roads. Prior to 2009, the MUTCD stated that toll charges were to be provided on signs at the roadside and that advance signage of toll charges was to be used on all non-freeway approaches to the toll facility to “ensure that drivers wishing to enter the toll facility are warned in time” (MUTCD 2003 section 26.2). In 2009, the section related to specific toll charges was removed from the MUTCD and price signs on the Gateway Motorway and Logan Motorway disappeared.

2. Methodology

The RACQ’s toll road review was conducted between March and September 2012. South East Queensland toll road signage was observed on 22 March, 5 July 2012, 30 August and 25 September. Sydney toll road signage was assessed on 26 March 2012 and Melbourne signage on 17 April 2012.

A comprehensive sample of toll road signage was observed. RACQ travelled on every toll road in Australia. Signage at on-ramps and off-ramps was sampled, although in some cases, not every entry and exit point was driven.

¹ Free-flow tolling means that motorists on these roads do not have to stop to pay a toll. An automated system records the vehicle’s details and toll charges are determined electronically, either through a tag in the vehicle or through video matching of the vehicle type and registration.

² At the time of writing River City Motorway, the operators of the FLOW tolling system, were in receivership. The company, while not trading on the ASX, continues to manage both the tolling system and the Clem7 tunnel.
3. Specific Objectives and Scope of this Review

The primary objective of this review was to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of roadside price, payment and contact information signage from a motorist’s perspective.

This review sought to determine whether motorists were able to make an informed choice about whether to use a toll road, or an alternative free route, based on the quality of information provided at the roadside.

The placement of toll signage and breadth of information conveyed on toll road signs was assessed. The review looked at:

- signage frequency and location
- visibility and clarity of signage
- contact details
- price signage
- payment information provided at the roadside.

A description of the criteria used to assess toll road signage is provided below:

**Signage frequency and location**
RACQ assessed how frequently toll road signage appeared on the approach to a toll road and the appropriateness of where signs were located. RACQ considered whether signs were placed well in advance of the toll road, thereby giving motorists enough time to choose whether to proceed with using the toll road.

The placement of signage closer to the tolling point was also observed. This included noting any signage indicating the distance to the toll point and signage advising the last available exit before the toll point. This information is important because it gives motorists the choice to exit the toll road and seek an alternative route, prior to paying for use of the tolled section.

**Visibility of signage**
The review considered whether toll signage was clearly visible. Instances where signs were obscured by trees and foliage or were faded and unclear were recorded.

**Contact details on signage**
With no roadside toll booths operating in SEQ, it is important that clear roadside information about how to pay a toll is provided. This is particularly the case for visitors to SEQ who are likely to be casual toll users and may not have a toll account.

Toll operator websites and phone numbers on roadside signage should be user friendly and easy to remember. Motorists don’t have the opportunity to immediately stop and write down this information.

**Toll price signage**
RACQ believes toll prices should be displayed before entry to a toll road. Providing price information means that motorists can assess whether the monetary payment for use of the road represents value in terms of potential travel time saved and convenience. It is difficult to expect
motorists to make an informed choice about using a toll road, if the price of the toll isn’t displayed before the tolling point.

In cases where there are a large number of vehicle classifications, each with a different toll, displaying a list of all prices may make for a busy and confusing sign. However, signage could at least be provided for the majority of drivers by displaying toll prices for passenger cars. Passenger cars comprise around 80 percent of toll road users.

**Notification of time given for payment i.e. 3 days to pay signage**

In SEQ, motorists without a toll account have three days in which to pay a toll. If a driver without an existing toll account has not made arrangements to pay after three days, then additional administrative fees or late payment fines are incurred. It is, therefore, important that SEQ toll roads have clearly signs warning motorists of the three-day payment window. Signs highlighting the three-day payment window also alleviate anxiety for drivers who might be concerned that they had to pay in advance to use a toll road.

When ‘3 days to pay’ signage has been inadequate, some visitors to SEQ have been caught out by the payment period and have incurred additional charges. This could partly be because a three-day period for account settlement is not necessarily intuitive. Many utility bills allow a week or more before payment is required.

As with SEQ, Melbourne toll roads impose a three-day payment period, while in Sydney the payment period is two days.

### 4. Overall Assessment

An assessment of signage on individual SEQ toll roads, along with a general evaluation of Sydney and Melbourne toll signage, is provided below:

<table>
<thead>
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These findings are based on personal observations. While every effort was made to observe all signage on the roadside, in some cases specific signs may have been missed. This could be the case in instances where the landscape was ‘busy’ and there were a number of different signs clustered together.

All toll roads in Australia rated fairly well in terms of the frequency of toll road signage. In SEQ, Clem7 and AirportlinkM7 were marked down because there was no signage in AirportlinkM7 advising the last exit before the Clem7 toll point.
Signage visibility was inconsistent across the toll roads. Toll signage in Melbourne was clearly written and highly visible. In Sydney the visibility of signage was good as was the signage on the Clem7, AirportlinkM7 and Logan Motorway. Less clear were the signs on the Go Between Bridge and the Gateway Motorway. In one instance, signage was obscured by foliage on the Go Between Bridge, while on the Gateway a number of toll signs were faded and not easily visible.

The provision of contact details was generally considered good, except on the Clem7 and AirportlinkM7. All toll roads should display a six-digit phone number for toll queries at the roadside. However, Clem7 had an eight-digit number and AirportlinkM7 a ten-digit contact number. This is a long phone number to expect motorists to memorise while driving. All other SEQ toll roads provided a six-digit phone number.

With the exception of Sydney toll roads, toll prices were absent at the roadside.

The provision of '3 days to pay' signage ranged from very good to very poor, with the Clem7 very good, where it appeared on permanent fixed signage. On other toll roads it either was not signed at all, or it appeared infrequently on variable message signs (VMS).

5. Key Findings

Key findings and general observations of Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne toll roads are outlined below:

Improve visibility and effectiveness of toll signage
It is important for toll signs to be highly visible. In SEQ, the current standard is for the word ‘Toll’ to appear on a bright yellow background. RACQ noted instances of faded and discoloured toll signage, particularly on the Gateway Motorway Extension. These faded signs could contribute to drivers (particularly visitors) inadvertently entering a toll road.

Ideally, SEQ toll roads could adopt the toll signage colour scheme used in Melbourne. The differentiation between tolled and non-tolled infrastructure signage in Melbourne is excellent. Toll roads in Melbourne use blue signage with gold lettering, which contrasts dramatically to the standard green signage with white lettering used for all other roads. This colour scheme could also be applied to existing pavement markings on Clem7, the Go Between Bridge and AirportlinkM7. Exit signs should also clearly indicate the most well known road name and/or landmark, rather than just the official suburb or next regional centre.

Inability for motorists to make an informed choice about whether to use a toll road
Toll roads appear to be one of the few products that consumers are sometimes forced to make a purchase decision on, without first being told the price of what they are buying. Unlike Sydney drivers, motorists on SEQ toll roads are not told the price of the toll at the roadside.

Unless motorists are frequent toll-road users, it is unrealistic to expect them to weigh up the value proposition of paying to use a toll road when they aren’t told the price at the point of purchase.
Toll payment conditions should be displayed at the roadside
If toll operators require toll payment within three days of travelling on the toll road, then it needs to be clearly signed at the roadside. This would help motorists avoid additional fees and late payment charges. At present, the only SEQ toll road with clear and reliable ‘3 days to pay’ signage is Clem7.

Important messages should appear on fixed permanent signage, not variable signs
Important toll information of continued relevance should be displayed on permanent fixed signage, not on variable message signs (VMS). For example, RACQ noted ‘3 days to pay’ notification on VMS on the Gateway Motorway and Gateway Motorway Extension. However, in the event of a traffic hazard, this message would be replaced with urgent information. RACQ also noted instances of two messages being flashed alternately on the one VMS. In this case, some motorists get to read one message, but not the next message.

If a toll payment condition is serious enough that a breach could cost motorists late payment fees and fines, then it is important enough to be highlighted on fixed permanent signage at the roadside. As such, RACQ considers that the ‘3 days to pay’ notification is too important to be relegated to a VMS.

6. Details of South East Queensland Toll Roads

**CLEM7 (The Clem Jones Tunnel)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Owned by</th>
<th>RiverCity Motorway Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Operated by</td>
<td>RiverCity Motorway Group (In February 2011 KordaMentha was appointed Receivers and Managers to the RiverCity Motorway Group, the owner and operator of the CLEM7 Tunnel)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Toll account provider</td>
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<td>Indicative traffic volume</td>
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<td>Toll for cars</td>
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</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Assessment of Signage</th>
<th>Signage frequency &amp; location</th>
<th>Signage clarity</th>
<th>Contact details</th>
<th>Price signage</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>adequate</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>poor</td>
<td>very poor</td>
<td>very good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RACQ reviewed Clem7 toll signage on 22 March, 30 August and 25 September 2012. The tunnel was entered from three locations: Bowen Hills, Woolloongabba and Kangaroo Point.

**Signage frequency and location**
RACQ observed toll road signage upon exit and entry to the Clem7 tunnel. Signs were displayed above and next to the roadside. Signage was sufficient to alert motorists that a toll road was approaching before the decision point prior to most entries, with the exception of the entry from AirportlinkM7.

One of the AirportlinkM7 exits leads straight into the Clem7 toll tunnel, but there was no signage in AirportlinkM7 advising the last exit before the Clem7 toll point. ‘Last exit before toll point’ had been observed on a VMS during AirportlinkM7’s first week of operation, but it seems to have since disappeared. This highlights the temporary nature of VMS notification in comparison to fixed toll signage.

**Clarity of toll signage**
On all signage, the word ‘toll’ was differentiated from other text using a yellow background.

Pavement markings are an effective way to identify specific sections of road and ‘Clem7’ was
marked on the road pavement, along with a directional arrow. The pavement markings could do a better job of alerting motorists to the tolled section ahead if they used the gold letter/blue background colour scheme seen in Melbourne.

Contact details
There was adequate signposting of the FLOW phone number and website. The phone number appeared on permanent signposting and also on variable message signs. The advertised phone number was eight-digits.

The eight-digit Clem7 toll payment phone number for FLOW is more difficult for motorists to remember than a six-digit phone number. It is also a different number to the six-digit FLOW phone number advertised on the Go Between Bridge. Having two different FLOW toll contact numbers advertised may be a source of confusion, especially for visitors to SEQ.

FLOW phone number – Clem 7

FLOW phone number – Go Between Bridge
Price signage
The toll price was not signed.

Payment details (3 days to pay)
There was permanent, fixed mounted ‘3 days to pay’ signage.

Other signage
A VMS was used to advise drivers of a five-minute travel time estimate.

Recommendations
- Clem7, in conjunction with AirportlinkM7, should provide a fixed ‘last exit before toll road’ sign in AirportlinkM7. This would alert motorists of the last available exit before driving into a second toll tunnel.
- Consider adopting Melbourne’s colour scheme (blue background with gold lettering) for toll road signage and pavement markings, to increase the differentiation between tolled and non-tolled roads.
- RiverCity Motorway Group should replace the eight-digit toll payment phone number with a six-digit number. Given motorists are driving, and are therefore unable to easily take down a number, a shorter phone number is preferable. A better option may be to change the Clem7 FLOW phone number to the six-digit FLOW phone number already used on the Go Between Bridge.
- Display the toll price for passenger vehicles.

Go Between Bridge (GBB)

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<tr>
<th>Owned by</th>
<th>Brisbane City Council</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Operated by</td>
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<td>Indicative traffic volume</td>
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<td>Toll for cars</td>
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<td></td>
<td>good</td>
<td>adequate</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>very poor</td>
<td>very poor</td>
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</table>
RACQ reviewed the Go Between Bridge signage on 22 March 2012.

**Signage frequency and location**
RACQ observed frequent toll road signage before entry and after exiting the Go Between Bridge, which was displayed next to, and above, the roadside.

Good roadside signage alerted motorists that they were approaching a toll road before the decision point.
Clarity of toll signage
The word ‘Toll’ on signage was differentiated from other text by a yellow background. Most signage was visible, however, RACQ noted an example of signage obscured by trees in the northbound direction on Hale Street, north of Coronation Drive.

‘GBB’ was marked on the road pavement along with a directional arrow. The pavement markings are good, but they could do a better job of alerting motorists to the tolled section ahead if they used the gold letter/blue background colour scheme seen in Melbourne.

Contact details
Signposting of the FLOW phone number and website was adequate. The phone number appeared on permanent signposting and was six digits, which is easier for motorists to remember than an eight-digit number.

Price signage
The toll price was not signed.

Payment details (3 days to pay)
There was no ‘3 days to pay’ signage.
Recommendations

- Ensure roadside signage remains visible by pruning trees that overhang the signage.
- Consider adopting Melbourne’s colour scheme (blue background with gold lettering) for toll road signage and pavement markings, to increase the differentiation between tolled and non-tolled roads.
- Display the toll price for passenger vehicles.
- Provide permanent, fixed signage to alert motorists that they have three days to pay their toll before incurring additional fees and penalties.

Gateway Motorway (Murarrie Toll Point)

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<tr>
<th>Owned by</th>
<th>Queensland Investment Corporation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Operated by</td>
<td>Queensland Motorways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toll account provider</td>
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<td>Indicative traffic volume</td>
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</table>
RACQ reviewed Gateway Motorway toll signage on 22 March 2012 and again on 5 July 2012.

**Signage frequency and location**
RACQ observed good toll road signage on entries to and along the Gateway Motorway. Toll notification appeared on directional signs, as well as stand-alone ‘Toll point ahead’ signs.
Toll signage was sufficient to allow motorists to choose to exit the motorway prior to paying a toll. For example, there was signage indicating the distance to the toll point, as well as signage advising the last exit before the toll point.

Visibility of toll signage
On some signage, the word ‘toll’ was differentiated from other text using a yellow background. On other directional signs, the background was either a very faded yellow, or white. This reduced the visibility and impact of the toll notification. These faded signs could contribute to drivers (particularly visitors) inadvertently finding themselves on a toll road and unnecessarily paying a toll.
Contact details
Signposting of the go via toll phone number and website was adequate. The phone number appeared on permanent signs and also on VMS. The advertised phone number was a user-friendly six-digit number.

Price signage
Despite no evidence of the toll prices being displayed for motorists, VMS were highlighting toll increases effective 1 July 2012.
There were ‘3 days to pay’ messages on variable message signs. The RACQ considers this to be less effective signage than the permanent, fixed mounted ‘3 days to pay’ signage used on Clem7. The advice to motorists to pay within three days, as it appears on the Gateway variable message signs, may be replaced at any time by a different message. This is particularly the case when traffic incidents occur and the VMS is used to inform motorists of delays.

The inadequacy of displaying ‘3 days to pay’ on VMS was highlighted where RACQ observed VMS flashing alternative messages. On one VMS, the message ‘3 days to pay’ was alternating with ‘Pay your tolls phone 13 33 31’; another alternated with ‘Toll bridge 5km ahead’; and another with ‘pay your tolls www.govia’. Where flashing messages are being displayed alternately, it is likely some motorists would not observe the ‘3 days to pay’ message.

Recommendations
- Adopt Melbourne colour scheme for toll road signage (blue background with gold lettering). If this is not adopted in the short term, replace faded and/or damaged yellow TOLL panels on all direction signs (on and leading to the toll road) to meet the current standard and guidelines for tolled facilities. This would ensure that the toll notification remains highly visible and easily identifiable to motorists.
- Display the toll price for passenger vehicles.
- Provide permanent, fixed signage to alert motorists that they have three days to pay their toll before incurring additional fees and penalties.
**Logan and Gateway Extension Motorways**

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<td>Toll account provider</td>
<td>go via</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicative traffic volume</td>
<td>123,000 vehicles daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toll for cars</td>
<td>Kuraby $2.38, Loganlea Rd $1.53, Heathwood &amp; Paradise Rd $2.52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment of Signage</th>
<th>Signage frequency &amp; location</th>
<th>Signage clarity</th>
<th>Contact details</th>
<th>Price signage</th>
<th>3 days to pay signage (2 days Sydney)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>good</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>very poor</td>
<td>adequate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


RACQ reviewed the Logan Motorway and Gateway Extension Motorway toll signage on 22 March 2012 and 5 July 2012.
Signage frequency and location
RACQ observed good toll road signage on entries and along the motorways. Toll notification appeared on directional signs, as well as stand-alone ‘toll point ahead’ signs.

Toll signage was sufficient to allow motorists to choose to exit the motorway prior to paying a toll. For example, there was signage indicating the distance to the toll point, as well as signage advising last exit before the toll point.

Clarity of toll signage
The word 'toll' on signage was differentiated from other text by a yellow background, and signage was visible.
Contact details
The go via toll phone number and website was well signposted. The phone number appeared on permanent signposting and also on VMS. The advertised phone number for go via was the same six-digit number advertised on the Gateway Motorway.

Price signage
The toll price was not signed on either the Logan or Gateway Extension Motorway.

Payment details (3 days to pay)
There was no fixed or permanent ‘3 days to pay’ signage. On the Logan Motorway there was no ‘3 days to pay’ signage observed at all, while on the Gateway Extension, ‘3 days to pay’ was signposted on VMS at multiple locations.
The billboard below, reminding motorists to avoid penalties by paying tolls, would be more effective if it reminded motorists they have three days in which to pay, before penalties are incurred. It could say ‘Avoid penalties pay your tolls within three days’.

Other signage
Billboards promoting the travel time benefits of toll roads were observed and VMS advertising of the go via website.


**Recommendations**

- Consider adopting Melbourne’s colour scheme (blue background with gold lettering) for toll road signage, to increase the differentiation between tolled and non-tolled roads.
- Display the toll price for passenger vehicles.
- Provide permanent, fixed signage to alert motorists that they have three days to pay their toll before incurring additional fees and penalties. Signage that references paying tolls and avoiding penalties (e.g. the ‘Avoid penalties, pay your toll’ billboard), should also state that motorists have three days to pay.

**AirportlinkM7**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Owned by</th>
<th>BrisConnections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Operated by</td>
<td>BrisConnections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toll account provider</td>
<td>AirportlinkM7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicative traffic volume</td>
<td>74,500 vehicles daily (based on September 2012 volumes)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Toll for cars**

Between Bowen Hills and Kedron $2.00; between Kedron and Toombul $2.00; between Bowen Hills and Toombul $2.50. These are the introductory car toll prices until April 2013. Prices will increase to either $2.90 (for the shorter segments of AirportlinkM7) or $3.75 for the full trip and stay at these prices until October 2013. From November 2013 a toll price of either $3.67 or $4.90 will be charged.

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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>adequate</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>poor</td>
<td>very poor</td>
<td>very poor</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
RACQ reviewed the AirportlinkM7 signage on 30 August and 25 September 2012.

**Signage frequency and location**

RACQ observed frequent toll road signage before entry and after exiting the AirportlinkM7 tunnel. Roadside signage to alert motorists that a toll road was approaching was adequate before the decision point, with the exception of signage directing motorists out of AirportlinkM7 to Clem7.

One of the AirportlinkM7 exits leads straight into the Clem7 toll tunnel. No fixed signage advised motorists of the last exit before the Clem7 toll point, prior to exiting AirportlinkM7 and immediately entering Clem7. Temporary ‘last exit before toll point’ signage had been observed on a VMS during the first week of AirportlinkM7 operating. Unfortunately, on subsequent days that RACQ reviewed AirportlinkM7, there was no VMS warning. This highlights the temporary nature of VMS notification in comparison to fixed toll signage.

**Visibility of toll signage**

On all signage, the word ‘toll’ was differentiated from other text using a yellow background.

AirportlinkM7 was highlighted on the road pavement with either a picture of an aeroplane or with
M7 in gold lettering on a green background. While this is highly visible, the pavement markings could do a better job of alerting motorists to the tolled section ahead if they used the gold lettering/blue background colour scheme seen in Melbourne. Within the tunnel, pavement markings such as ‘F’VAL’, ‘ICB’ and CLEM7” were used to highlight various exits.
Contact details
Signposting of the AirportlinkM7 toll phone number and website was adequate. The 10-digit phone number appeared on permanent signposting, but this is more difficult for motorists to remember than a six-digit phone number.

Price signage
The toll price was not signed.

Payment details (3 days to pay)
There was no ‘3 days to pay’ signage.

Other signage
Directional VMS, for example ‘Stafford/Gympie Rd this exit’, were noted prior to exits and the placement of signs promoting the travel time benefits of using AirportlinkM7 were observed, although these were not functioning at the time of RACQ’s review.

Recommendations
• Provide permanent, fixed signage to alert motorists of the last exit before they move straight out of AirportlinkM7 into the Clem7 toll tunnel.
• Consider adopting Melbourne’s colour scheme (blue background with gold lettering) for toll road signage and pavement markings, to increase the differentiation between tolled and non-tolled roads.
• Advertise a simpler, six-digit phone number at the roadside rather than a ten-digit phone number
• Display the toll price for passenger vehicles.
• Provide permanent, fixed signage to alert motorists that they have three days to pay their toll before incurring additional fees and penalties.
7. Interstate Toll Roads

Sydney Toll Roads

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- **CCT** Cross City Tunnel
  - All tags & toll passes. No cash
  - Toll type: Flat rate

- **ED** Eastern Distributor
  - All tags & toll passes. No cash
  - Toll type: Flat rate, charged northbound only

- **M7** Westlink M7
  - All tags & toll passes. No cash
  - Toll type: Distance based

- **M2** Hills Motorway
  - All tags & toll passes. No cash
  - Toll type: Flat rate

- **LCT** Lane Cove Tunnel
  - All tags & toll passes. No cash
  - Toll type: Flat rate

- **SHB** Sydney Harbour Bridge
  - All tags & toll passes. No cash
  - Toll type: Time of day tolling, charged southbound only

- **SH1** Sydney Harbour Tunnel
  - All tags & toll passes. No cash
  - Toll type: Flat rate

- **M5** South West Motorway
  - All tags, toll passes & cash
  - Toll type: Flat rate
RACQ reviewed Sydney toll signage with NRMA on 26 March 2012. The necessity for clear signage is particularly important in Sydney, where there are a number of different types of toll structure among the nine toll roads. While most of the tolls are a flat rate, the Westlink M7 is a distance-based toll, while the Sydney Harbour Bridge and Tunnel have different toll prices depending on the time of day. In addition, one of the toll roads still has cash booths (the M5 South West Motorway), while the remainder are free flow.

The general observations of all Sydney toll signage are noted below, along with relevant toll-road specific comments.

**Signage frequency and location**

RACQ observed good toll road signage at entries to and along the toll roads or motorways.

In general, Sydney toll signage was sufficient to allow motorists to choose to exit the toll road or motorway prior to paying a toll. For example, at most relevant exits, fixed or VMS signage advised whether it was the last exit before a toll point. The only exception RACQ noted was the M5 South West Motorway, where we didn’t see a ‘last exit before toll’ sign.

**Clarity of toll signage**

The word ‘Toll’ on signage was differentiated from other text by a yellow background, and was generally considered visible.
Contact details
Signposting of the toll phone numbers and websites was adequate. These appeared on permanent signposting and also on VMS. Some were particularly user friendly e.g. 13 TOLL and 13 ROAM phone numbers.

Price signage
Price signage for cars and other vehicles were observed on all Sydney toll roads except the Westlink M7 and the M2 Hills Motorway. Prices were signed on either permanent fixed signage or VMS.
Despite the generally good quality price signage observed on Sydney toll roads, some placements could be improved. For example, on the Eastern Distributor, northbound, the toll price signage was provided prior to the toll point, but after the last exit opportunity, making it too late for motorists to decide whether to continue on the toll road and pay the charge, or instead exit the motorway and use an alternative route.

Similarly, prices on the Military Rd E-Ramp were difficult to read because they were far over to the right hand side of the road and there was not much notice of the prices before having to commit to the toll road. On the M2, prices were displayed near the cash booths on the road, however, there was no advance notice of prices.

Time of day tolling was addressed on the Harbour Bridge and Tunnel with fixed signage advising the peak or maximum toll of $4.00. As this review was performed while driving in off-peak traffic, the lower toll payment charge, of $3.00, was displayed on a VMS.
Motorists using Sydney toll roads are given 48 hours to pay the toll before additional administrative fees or late payment fines are incurred.

Lane Cove Tunnel and Military Road E-Ramp had permanent, fixed mounted ‘48 hours to pay’ and VMS signage. On the Westlink M7 and Cross City Tunnel ‘48 hours to pay’ was observed on VMS. An absence of ‘48 hours to pay’ signage, VMS or otherwise, was noted on the Eastern Distributor, the Harbour Bridge and Tunnel, and the M2 Hills Motorway. Signage was neither evident, nor necessary, on the South West Motorway, as it still had cash booths on the road.
**Melbourne Toll Roads**

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RACQ reviewed Melbourne toll road signage with RACV on 16 April 2012. Melbourne has two toll road operators: EastLink and CityLink. The toll roads are fully free flow with tolls administered electronically.

Eastlink connects the north-east (including Donvale, Ringwood and Mitcham), with the south-east (including Springvale, Dandenong and Frankston). EastLink also has two 1.6 kilometre long tunnels called Melba and Mullum Mullum.
CityLink is a 22-kilometre tollway with two distinct sections: the Southern Link and Western Link. It connects the Tullamarine Freeway, the West Gate Freeway and the Monash Freeway. CityLink includes two tunnels named the Domain and Burnley.

Both EastLink and CityLink have a flat rate toll structure, however, the CityLink toll is time-dependent (peak and off-peak) for commercial and heavy vehicles. A capped price is available for all vehicle types on both toll roads.³

The general observations of Melbourne toll road signage are noted below, along with relevant toll-road specific comments.

**Signage frequency and location**

RACQ observed good toll road signage on entries to and along the toll roads and motorways.

In general, Melbourne toll road signage was sufficient to allow motorists to choose to exit the toll road or motorway prior to paying a toll. For example, CityLink (Western Link heading towards the CBD) had three advance signs informing drivers of the distance to the start of the toll road, or stating that a tollway was ahead. Fixed signage advised the last exit before a toll point on both CityLink and EastLink.

**Visibility of toll signage**

The visibility and clarity of tolled infrastructure is excellent in Melbourne, due primarily to distinctive blue background and gold lettering signage that contrasts with the green and white signage for non-tolled roads.

The RACQ believes this colour scheme is far clearer than the traditional black writing on yellow background ‘TOLL’ marker applied to green direction signs in Queensland and New South Wales.

³ A trip cap is the maximum toll for a single uninterrupted trip.
In general, CityLink used fixed signs while EastLink used a combination of fixed and VMS signs.

CityLink displayed sufficient signage on the toll road (and on exits) to inform drivers of the type of payment accepted (e-TAG or Daypass) and the phone number to ring for toll payment and enquiries (CityLink – 13 26 29). However, very few signs contained website information.

EastLink had similar fixed signage displaying the phone number (EastLink - 13 54 65 or 13LINK). However, there were more signs on the motorway displaying a website contact (www.breeze.com.au) and highlighting that penalties applied for non-payment.
Price signage
Toll prices were not signed.

Payment details (3 days to pay)
On entrances and exits, ‘time to pay’ information was noted only at the start of both tollways.

CityLink had two signs indicating ‘3 days to pay’ prior to entering the Western Link, but none were sighted at the end of this or the Southern Link, or on the tollway. Similarly, a ‘3 days to pay’ sign was noted at the start of EastLink approaching Ringwood, but no other ‘time to pay’ signage was noted on the tollway.

8. Disclaimer

These findings are based on personal observations by RACQ staff. While every effort was made to observe all signage, in some cases specific signs may have been missed. This could be the case in instances where the landscape was ‘busy’ and a number of different signs were clustered together.