

Dear Susan Stone and Steven Bailey,

My name is Klaus Albert and I represent Satellic Traffic Management in Australia/NZ (www.satellic.com). Satellic is a 100% subsidiary of Deutsche Telekom in Germany. Deutsche Telekom is a shareholder of TollCollect (45%) and has developed the technology behind the German Maut system.

Satellic has been established in Berlin in January 2006 and is offering the German Satellite based Traffic Management/Maut System technology to interested parties outside of Germany.

Only last week I heard about the “Productivity Commission Report on Road and Rail Infrastructure Pricing”. I have read through the 500 pages draft with great interest and was very pleased about the German Maut scheme being mentioned in your report.

I believe however that the information provided would require some update. I understand that the timeline for submission is over, but I feel that it is important to reconsider particular sections of your report before you publish the final version of your report:

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“Transport Certification Australia (sub. 24) contends that the German system is more flexible than others (for example Switzerland). In contrast, the NTC (sub. 17, p. 91) observed:

One of the biggest problems of the German system is its high degree of inflexibility. The German government specified its requirements to its consultants at a very high level. The System has been developed to deliver only those requirements. It does not allow for changes to be easily made.”

“Whether these changes will be possible in practice remains to be seen. For example, it is unclear how readily the network could be extended to include other roads given the gantry system that is in place —

The German Government is now seeking to extend the charging regime to other roads and is prevented from doing so (except at very high cost) by the limitations of the system. (NTC, sub. 17, p. 91)”

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“ ...The potential to expand the German system has come at considerable cost, however.”

Here are some comments from our experts in Germany:

“The discussion about extending to other roads has been of purely political nature so far – and subject to discussions between the German Federal Government and the State Governments. It mainly focused on the following issues:

- Which non-motorway roads are experiencing considerable trucks traffic caused by truck drivers trying to avoid the motorway toll?*
- Which impact would the inclusion of certain non-motorway roads into the tolling scheme have on regional and local businesses?*
- Whether or not to include non-motorway roads into the tolling scheme or to close roads for heavy truck traffic?*

Only in autumn 2006 a political decision was reached to include a number of pre-identified roads into the tolling scheme as of 1. January 2007.

Currently new tariff schemes are being discussed, including a change in the base tariffs, more spread between emission (=pollution) classes and time based charges (high rates during peak times, lower rates off peak / night time rates). All these changes could be rolled out by uploading new geo and tariff data to a server in TollCollect's data centre, from where it will be distributed in a fully automated fashion to all truck OBUs over the air. All functionality required for this process is already built-in into the system. The OBU software itself can be updated in the same way. These processes have been and are routinely used for maintenance and optimization of the system and its performance. For all these tariff changes to take place the German Government needs EU clearance. Standard release management including test data for new tariffs and geo data updates need to happen to ensuring the performance of the German system today.”

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“Table D.1 Comparing road user charging systems

New Zealand, Switzerland and Germany.”

Here are the comments from our experts in Germany:

Please carefully consider statements on operational costs when comparing road charging systems. In many cases only the core system cost is taken into account. The German system operator TollCollect however in addition to having developed and implemented the system is running the whole scheme, manages contracts, provides customer service and financial services and even enforcement. When comparing different systems the range of services provided needs to be taken into account. When looking at the costs of other solutions sometimes enforcement services are handled by public agencies or authorities and do not appear on the costing side.

In Germany only about 2% of road network is subject to a road charge. In other countries like e.g. in Switzerland every meter driven is tolled, including off-road or roads on private property. And while the average toll is about 0.12 Euro/km for Germany it is between 0.26Euro/km and 0.48Euro/km in the other schemes. Both criteria mentioned above have a significant impact on the actual revenue base that is used to calculate the operating cost.

Please provide me with some feedback or even further questions that you may have.

For your information I have attached the latest statistics from TollCollect in Berlin:

<<TollCollect_stats_oct06.pdf>>

Kind Regards

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