

Car rental association will not register for toll until concerns addressed

The Southern African Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association's (SAVRALA) members, representing over 450 000 vehicles, have agreed not to register their vehicles for e-tags until their concerns over toll roads have been addressed.

At its AGM, held last week in Johannesburg, these concerns included the lack of clarity regarding the enforcement of tolling; the burden of additional administrative costs on Gauteng road users and the risk posed to road users by cloned registration plates, stating that these present as yet undetermined consequences to both its members and all Gauteng road users.

SAVRALA welcomes the recent instruction by the Minister of Transport to 'halt all processes related to the tolling of national roads'. The minister's view that the 'consultative processes should be allowed to take place to offer concerned parties an opportunity to share their views on the toll road program' is warmly supported and long overdue. The intent, however, to implement tolling in Gauteng, should also be halted.

In addition, the firm statement given this week by the Finance Minister, Pravin Gordhan to his government to 'use the resources we have, far more effectively', strongly resonates with the association's concerns about the planned implementation of urban tolling in Gauteng. The expected administrative costs, conservatively running into billions, could be replaced almost overnight by an additional fuel levy without any wasteful administrative costs. Funds raised by the fuel levy could be allocated to key national infrastructural projects, such as the Gauteng Freeway Improvement Project (GFIP).

The association remains ready at all times to engage with SANRAL and the Department of Transport to address the current road infrastructure funding challenges. The lack of an effective consultation structure between the various transport related stakeholders and government remains an important opportunity to be fulfilled.

Given the dynamic and fluid nature of the current tolling national debate, the association's members will again review their position on the implementation of planned urban tolling in Gauteng within the next month.

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