

# Tolls will keep SA's roads servicable says Cesa

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Engineers have urged Gauteng motorists to pay e-tolls or face the danger of road infrastructure going the way of Eskom - deteriorating to the point that billions of rands are needed to rebuild it.



Cesa's Wally Mayne says that localised taxation is the only way to fund roadbuilding activities in South Africa as the fiscus is already over-burdened and doesn't have the money for the estimated R149bn that needs to be spent on SA's roads. Image: Cesa

Almost R200bn in taxpayers' money is funding Eskom's construction of two power stations and Consulting Engineers SA (Cesa) believes a similar financial fate awaits Gauteng if the opposition to e-tolling continues.

Cesa represents more than 500 firms, some of which, the organisation admitted, were consultants on the initial stages of the R20bn Gauteng Freeway Improvement Project.

These firms stand to benefit from e-tolling, especially if it is extended to other parts of the country.

In a presentation to the e-tolling review panel in Midrand, Johannesburg, Cesa's Transport Liaison Committee Chairman Salani Sithole said R149bn was needed to deal with the backlog in roadbuilding.

Sithole and Cesa's Manager for Contractual Affairs Wally Mayne said the national fiscus was over-burdened and other national projects had taken priority over road infrastructure.

**Fuel levy increase not ideal for roadbuilding**

They said raising the fuel levy was not the ideal way of funding roads infrastructure development because it "spread the burden" of a "highly localised" project to motorists who would not benefit.

"The only pragmatic way to obtain funding for the Gauteng Freeway Improvement Project is through localised taxation and that is e-tolls," said Mayne.

"By derailing this funding model [e-tolling], we are jeopardising future [road] infrastructure projects. We do not want to go the Eskom route," he added.

In a separate development the SA National Roads Agency Limited's bid to be allowed to keep its plans for urban toll roads in Western Cape secret was rejected by the Cape Town High Court.

Sanral and Protea Parkways Consortium - the company that will run the Cape toll roads - tried to block the DA-run council from filing papers in open court that would reveal information about the profitability of the operation.

The company argued that the city's court papers contained information of a "commercial" nature that should be kept from its competitors.

Sanral also claimed that the City of Cape Town would misrepresent the effect of tolling roads and generate widespread public hostility to the project" for political purposes.

Source: The Times via I-Net Bridge

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