

## TravelSIM generates \$26.2 million in global roaming savings in 18 months

*Australian mobile phone service undercuts telcos by 80 per cent*

**Australia, February 16, 2012** – TravelSIM®, a mobile phone service for international travellers, has generated \$26.2 million in global roaming savings for its customers in the past 18 months.

A comprehensive internal review of usage delivered the finding which reflects an 80.6 per cent cost difference between TravelSIM's rates and the advertised global roaming rates of conventional Australian telecommunications companies. The sheer size of the number took TravelSIM's management by surprise.

"Frankly, we were amazed at how big the number was. It's not that we weren't aware of the strength of our service at delivering cost containment for Australian overseas travellers – of course we were. But we have been growing so rapidly over the last few years and demand has been so intense that the review just froze us in our tracks because it showed the scope of the savings and the gulf between our rates and standard global roaming," said Jamien Zimmermann, TravelSIM's CEO.

TravelSIM's review compared its total customer spending, broken down by country, against a basket of current advertised rates from Telstra, Optus and Vodafone.

"What also surprises me given these numbers is that the bill shock message and the pitfalls of global roaming still haven't sunk in despite a fair bit of media coverage," Zimmermann said. "Last year's TIO [Travel Industry Ombudsman] report of a significant rise in the number of global roaming complaints show it. You would think that people would instinctively safeguard themselves against what can end up being the single biggest expense of a trip abroad after their airline tickets – in fact, in some cases much more than their airline tickets."

Part of the reason for this, Zimmermann suggested, might be that travellers believe that they will be able to prudently use their mobile devices – unlike those who faced huge phone bills on their return home.

"The problem with that thinking – and we're all guilty of it, by the way – is that the smallest oversights can cost quite a bit of money when it comes to global roaming," Zimmermann said. "A lot of people don't know that you can actually be charged for not answering a phone call with some providers. But more likely you have to make that one long unexpected phone call because of some issue at home and the global roaming damage is done."

While Zimmermann acknowledged that a portion of the savings could be potential, not actual, in the sense that travellers likely would have curtailed phone use in the face of these rates, he said that the savings gap reflects major opportunity costs, both in the leisure traveller's ability to maintain adequate contact with home and the business traveller's loss of valuable communications ability.

Zimmermann said that the increasing use of smartphones and resulting data needs added another pitfall to global roaming costs overseas, but he also emphasised that cost-savings were not the only consideration for TravelSIM.

“TravelSIM is about the total customer experience. We’re not about a race to the bottom, compromising service for cost,” Zimmermann said. “We call it mobile phone preparedness. We want to be there supporting the Australian traveller from the moment they leave our shores until they get back home. That’s why we have an Australian-based customer service.

“It really comes down to two things: 1) giving the traveller more control over call and data spending; and 2) giving them the kind of human service that is adaptable to their needs and makes certain they are confident and equipped with the right information so they can use our service best.”

Zimmermann cited TravelSIM’s Personal Assistant service as another example of the company’s approach. The service is available 24/7, 365 days a year and provides travel information and support, business services, medical assistance and emergency help services to travellers while abroad, as well as live language interpretation services in more than 70 languages.

TravelSIM has extended this service to all TravelSIM customers free of charge until 1<sup>st</sup> July 2012, with customers only paying the normal cost of making a phone call from the country they are in. After 1<sup>st</sup> July 2012, a one-off subscription fee of just \$15 applies for six months of unlimited usage, which is automatically withdrawn from the customer’s account upon first calling the Personal Assistant service.

**Key TravelSIM service facts:**

- TravelSIM saves its users 80 per cent or more compared to the standard global roaming rates of the “Big 3” Australian telcos.
- TravelSIM’s pre-paid SIM cards enable customers to make low-cost voice calls on their mobile phones when travelling overseas. The SIM cards also support text, MMS and data applications.
- Receiving incoming calls is free for TravelSIM customers in 117 countries.
- Calls received via TravelSIM’s 1800 toll free number will continue to be charged a flat rate of just \$0.21 per minute in addition to any cost to receive the call, allowing callers back home to reach TravelSIM customers overseas at no cost from their landline.
- TravelSIM’s Personal Assistant service, a full-range of customer service options for overseas travellers, will continue to be complimentary until 1<sup>st</sup> July 2012, with customers only paying the normal cost of making a phone call from the country they are in.
- TravelSIM users can be contacted free-of-charge by family, friends and business associates via a web-based SMS.
- Australian mobile numbers can be diverted to the TravelSIM service.

- The range of services offered by Personal Assistant (24/7, 365 days a year) includes:
  - Transport, hotel and vehicle information and reservations
  - Live language translation and support in more than 70 languages
  - Country, visa, currency and medical information
  - Personal safety advice
  - Performance of minor tasks such as faxing or emailing with the “Secretary” service
  - Information on booking tables at restaurants and tickets to events
  - Information on local events, attractions and leisure activities
  - Business services such as arranging a meeting or a conference call
  - Medical referrals and ambulance arrangement
  - Information on local legal representatives
  - For an executive summary of these services and more, please visit [www.travelsim.net.au/personalassistant](http://www.travelsim.net.au/personalassistant)
  
- The TravelSIM Personal Assistant service is backed by 28 alarm centres worldwide staffed by doctors, multilingual co-ordinators, security experts and logistics personnel. It has 31 clinics globally, with more than 8,000 employees, including 1,900 medical professionals. It is backed by more than 65,000 accredited network providers worldwide, and provides solutions to 87 of the Fortune Global 100 Companies.

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### **About TravelSIM**

TravelSIM, the mobile phone service for international travellers, is a prepaid service designed to greatly reduce the cost of using your mobile phone when travelling overseas.

With coverage in more than 190 countries, great international roaming rates for calls, text and data, value-added services and dedicated customer support, TravelSIM is an essential tool for leisure and business travellers. Used by more than three million people worldwide and available in more than 2,500 retail outlets across Australia, TravelSIM is the trusted expert in global roaming.

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