

Harbour Bridge closure slows traffic on Sydney Roads

19 January 2012 – The second round of Sydney Harbour Bridge closures this weekend is likely to be less disruptive than the first, according to traffic analysts from SUNA Traffic Channel.

This weekend will be the second successive weekend the Harbour Bridge will be closed to repair road surfaces.

The company found the Bridge closure last weekend initially proved challenging for motorists with a 30 per cent increase in the number of reportable traffic incidents across Sydney on Saturday compared to the previous weekend.

However traffic conditions progressively eased throughout the weekend with congestion levels and traffic incidents returning to normal by Sunday afternoon.

SUNA is monitoring traffic during the closure to determine how Sydney motorists cope without their Bridge.

Adam Game, Chief Executive Officer, Intelematics Australia said motorists had adapted relatively quickly to the change in traffic conditions.

“Within 24-hours we saw traffic conditions go from extremely challenging to almost normal levels across the city. Sydney motorists proved to be a lot more adaptable and resourceful than we initially expected,” Mr Game said.

“There may have been a few motorists that were unaware of the Bridge closure last weekend and the clearways that were in place in parts of the CBD and major arterial roads into the city, but with more awareness I think we will see fewer problems this weekend.”

The company is studying traffic during the closure periods to consider the impact on traffic congestion, traffic speed and alternative route choices. SUNA will use data obtained from traffic sensors placed on arterial roads feeding into the Bridge and monitor GPS trackers on a fleet of vehicles travelling in the area.

The number of traffic incidents and congestion levels both increased last weekend. The overall number of incident alerts increased by 23 per cent when compared to the previous weekend.

Main routes into the CBD all experienced increased congestion on Saturday. Hardest hit was the Inner West where motorists on the Iron Cove Bridge in Drummoyne took four times the average to travel along Victoria Rd towards Rozelle. During peak periods between 10am and 2pm on Saturday, it took drivers up to ten minutes to pass through this section, while the same journey took less than 2 minutes on the previous Saturday when the Harbour Bridge was open.

On routes closer to the Bridge, Falcon St, North Sydney experienced a 50 per cent decrease from the average speed for a weekend, with the average speed dropping to less than 10kph when traffic was at its heaviest. Military Rd, the Gladesville Bridge and Burn Bay Rd also recorded increases in traffic congestion.

Most major routes had returned to normal conditions by mid-afternoon on Sunday and remained relatively trouble free for the rest of the weekend, and motorists can expect similar patterns this weekend.

“As a result of good planning and adaptability by Sydney drivers I think the actual impact that closing the Bridge, the single most important arterial connection in Sydney, was less than initially predicted.”

“This weekend, I would recommended motorists that are heading out around lunch time on Saturday allow additional time to complete their journey and to expect the longest delays at this time, particularly if driving into rather than away from the city,” said Mr Game.

Motorists using SUNA via a compatible GPS device or in-car navigation system will be automatically made aware of the Bridge closure and provided alternative routes by the navigation unit to avoid the Bridge as well as roads that have become congested as a result of the closure. SUNA is a real-time traffic information service that broadcasts detailed information on traffic congestion and other road conditions directly to compatible GPS devices, mobile phones and in-vehicle satellite navigation systems.

About Intelematics Australia

Intelematics Australia is a wholly owned subsidiary of the RACV and is a founding member of Global Response – a strategic telematics alliance covering Europe, North America and Australia, with more than 80 million motoring club members.

Globally recognised for innovation, Intelematics Australia’s services include safety and security, fleet and workforce management, real-time traffic information and navigation, together with a range of real-time motorist information and convenience services. Intelematics also provides enhanced remote vehicle diagnostic and eCRM services.

Intelematics Australia is a leading provider of OEM telematics programs within the Asia Pacific region and works in partnership with its clients to create tailored programs that bring benefit to vehicle manufacturers, their maintenance and retail channels, and motorists.

SUNA Traffic Channel, operated by Intelematics, has been adopted by leading brands including Alpine, Continental, Eclipse, Ford, Garmin, Google, Holden, Honda, Mio, Navigon, Navman, Navteq, Navway, ninemsn, Nissan, Nokia, Pioneer, Toyota, Uniden, Mitsubishi, Subaru, Samsung, Mercedes-Benz, Clarion and Pump TV.

The RDS-TMC service now covers more than 95 per cent of the Australian main metropolitan population, with coverage in VIC, NSW, QLD, ACT, SA, and WA. SUNA is Australia’s only digital traffic service broadcast using the international RDS-TMC standard which is supported by most GPS and automotive brands. SUNA content is also offered to developers of online and smart-phone applications.

For more information on Intelematics, visit www.intelematics.com.au

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