



Media Release

David Campbell MP

Minister for Transport

Minister for the Illawarra

NEW TRANSPORT COORDINATION GROUP HELPS REDUCE DUST DISRUPTIONS

Wednesday 23 September 2009

Minister for Transport David Campbell said the TCG (Transport Coordination Group) swung into action this morning as a freak dust storm threatened to disrupt transport and traffic in Sydney.

Mr Campbell congratulated staff at the Transport Management Centre for their efforts.

“Despite the dust storm CityRail services ran with 100% reliability this morning,” Mr Campbell said.

“Motorists were taking heed of safety messages and driving slowly while allowing extra travel time to get to their destination, which resulted in no serious crashes across the network.

“The dust storm did force all Sydney Ferries services to be cancelled, however, the TCG showed its worth, once again, through a tight synchronisation of road and public transport services.

“Ferry passengers were able to use their tickets on trains and bus services, and Sydney Buses operated special express Manly to Circular Quay buses to get passengers to work.”

Mr Campbell said the TCG pulled together the efforts of all the transport and road agencies to facilitate:

- Introduction of ticket recognition for ferry tickets on trains and buses
- The operation of 23 Sydney Buses to provide special express services between Manly and Circular Quay, including seven extra-large “bendy” buses
- Supervision of interchange between transport modes, and
- The provision of fast and accurate information to commuters through live internet and radio updates.

Mr Campbell said bus services also ran with little to no disruption.

“The first Sydney Ferries services started to resume at 9am, and were back to their regular timetable by mid morning,” he said.

“Although Sydney Ferries were forced to tie up at wharves as a result of the poor visibility caused by the dust, trains and buses were able to run safely, so most commuters got to work as usual on time today.”

Mr Campbell said today’s extremely unusual conditions with high winds and dust did affect visibility on the roads.

“The M5 East tunnel was closed briefly but other roads and bridges remained open and traffic was normal,” Mr Campbell said.

“Electronic message signs were activated early this morning to advise motorists to reduce speed and use caution.”

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Mr Campbell said visibility is expected to remain poor along some motorways and motorists were advised to reduce speed, switch on their vehicle's headlights and take care on the road.

"While we've seen enough improvements to allow the Ferries to run, we're still waiting for the dust storm to lift entirely," Mr Campbell said.

"At this stage we're not anticipating delays for this afternoon's commute home, but passengers can stay up-to-date during the day by calling 131500 for public transport information or 132701 for roads."

Mr Campbell said public transport and traffic staff put in that extra bit this morning to get commuters where they were going.

"They had a tough job, like many public servants this morning, but they dug in for the good of the commuters," Mr Campbell said.

"As a precaution, CityRail handed out bottles of water to passengers and staff who were in need, and station seats were also dusted for passenger comfort, and I commend them for their thoughtfulness.

"A specialist CityRail team has been on patrol overnight and through the day to allow immediate response to any damage to infrastructure that could have been caused by the extreme weather, such as high winds."

Mr Campbell said drivers and public transport passengers had acted admirably in trying conditions.

"It has been positive to see people acting responsibly this morning, when many would have felt distressed by the unusual conditions," Mr Campbell said.

"I want to thank commuters for their patience this morning, and for their quick understanding of the changing environment."

For the latest public transport information or to use the trip planner passengers can visit 131500.com.au or call 131500.

Visit www.rta.nsw.gov.au or call 132 701 for more details on road conditions.

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