

North Melbourne motorists face some of Australia's slowest commutes

24-month review of country's busiest routes show state of traffic congestion in major cities

2 August, 2011 - Motorists from the North of Melbourne may face the city's most arduous trip to work, according to the country's most comprehensive commuter study of Australia's busiest roads.

The study, which uses hundreds of millions of speed readings on Australia's busiest roads over a two-year period, found motorists travelling in peak hours between Thomastown and the Melbourne CBD had an average travel speed of 18kph – the slowest of any commutes in the Melbourne analysis.

Intelematics, the company behind SUNA Traffic Channel, has undertaken an analysis along major commuter routes to the CBD in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth and Adelaide to provide an overview of the traffic conditions in each capital city.

The study also found while drivers travelling from the North had a particularly slow run, those coming to the CBD from Frankston had the fastest average speed of 54kph during peak periods. Those a bit closer in coming from Mentone did not fare as well as Frankston, only managing an average 30kph, still considerably faster than those coming in from Thomastown.

The study is the most extensive of its kind undertaken in Australia and uses the SUNA high density traffic service content as its data source. Hundreds of millions of actual speed measurements are collected by Intelematics and analysed at the SUNA Operations Centre in Melbourne. Traffic flow samples for each road segment were taken approximately every 30 seconds and averaged at 15 minute intervals covering all motorways and arterial roads over a two-year period.

Adam Game, Chief Executive Officer, Intelematics Australia, said the daily commute can be stressful and frustrating for some drivers, and being well-informed about traffic patterns such as which days to allow more time to complete their journey into work can help them have a better driving experience.

“By analysing major commuter routes we were able to determine how much peak traffic periods slow down a journey compared with non-peak travel periods, with Sydney and Brisbane drivers having the highest increase of all cities involved in the study with increases in travel times of around 100% for some routes.”

Melbourne was not far behind with Laverton to the city having an increase of over 95% in travel between peak and off-peak. Box Hill and Mentone were next with a peak to off-peak travel time difference of around 85%.

“Travelling to the airport can vary by up to 15 minutes on average depending on the time of the day, so it’s important that arrival time estimations are accurate and that they reflect the time of the day and day of the week in which the journey is being taken,” said Game.

Other key findings from the study include:

- The peak hour commute from Laverton had the largest decrease in speed compared to non-peak hour travel for all other locations. The fastest travel time averaged 76kph while at the slowest time drivers only averaged 38kph. As a result drivers from Laverton spend around 15 minutes longer getting into the city during peak commuting times
- When travelling from Laverton, the worst time to leave is around 8am where a trip to the CBD will take around 35 minutes, leaving at 6.30am cuts that to around 25 minutes while early birds leaving at 5.30am can make the trip to the CBD in around 20 minutes
- In general Melbourne’s peak traffic build up starts around 6am and is at its worst at between 7.30 and 8am
- Driving home from work is a slightly faster trip for all routes when compared with the journey into work except for Mentone
- The biggest difference in speed when comparing the journey into work with the journey home from work in peak times is from Box Hill, with a difference of 8 minutes. The quickest being CBD to Box Hill taking approximately 37 minutes while Box Hill to the CBD takes around 45 minutes
- The slowest journey into the CBD for Melbournians most typically occurs on Tuesday
- The slowest journey home from the CBD occurs on Friday, as it does in all other cities analysed

- Generally between around midday (10am and 1pm) the roads are just as busy on a Saturday as they are on weekdays and only a bit faster at this time on a Sunday
- Between midnight and the early hours of the following morning traffic is slower on Saturday/Sunday than any other day with drivers generally driving 5 to 10kph slower and this does not appear to be related to traffic slowing them down

City commuter snapshots

If you want the quickest commute to work in the morning you need to leave around 3.30am, no matter which city you live in. Not much is gained by leaving at this time compared with 6am but after 6am traffic really starts to build and slow down the commute. The time to avoid leaving for the city is between 7 and 8.30am, this is the peak wave that moves into the city and has the longest travel times.

Sydney

- Popular Sydney routes measured were Parramatta, Epping, Manly, Dee Why, Hornsby, Bankstown and Sydney Airport
- The highest average speed across these trips was 66kph while this slowed to 34kph during peak times, this was for Bankstown
- The slowest off peak average travel speed was 33kph for trips from Manly and this slowed to 18kph in peak hours

Melbourne

- Popular Melbourne routes measured were Box Hill, Dandenong, Frankston, Mentone, Laverton, Thomastown and Melbourne Airport
- The highest average speed across these trips was 78kph while this slowed to 53kph during peak times, this was for Frankston
- The slowest off peak average travel speed was 40kph for trips from Thomastown and this slowed to 24kph during peak hours

Brisbane

- Popular Brisbane routes measured were Darra, Eight Mile Plains, Nudgee, Samford Village, Gold Coast and Brisbane Airport
- The highest average speed across these trips was 71kph while this slowed to 36kph during peak times, this was for Eight Mile Plains
- The slowest off peak average travel speed was 50kph for trips from Samford Village and this slowed to 30kph during peak hours

Perth

- Popular Perth routes measured were Freemantle, Martin, Bellevue, Kingsley, Scarborough, Peppermint Grove and the Airport. The highest average speed across these trips was 75kph while this slowed to 46kph during peak times, this was for Freemantle
- The slowest off peak average travel speed was 45kph for trips from Martin and this slowed to 30kph during peak hours

Adelaide

- Popular Adelaide routes measured were Crafers, Port Adelaide, Seacliff, Mt Barker, Tea Tree Gully and the Airport
- The highest average speed across these trips was 70kph while this slowed to 43kph during peak times, this was for Mt Barker
- The slowest off peak average travel speed was 38kph for trips from Port Adelaide and this slowed to 23kph during peak hours

SUNA is Australia's first digital traffic information service that broadcasts detailed information on traffic congestion and other road conditions directly to compatible GPS devices and in-vehicle satellite navigation systems. SUNA uses its extensive data and coverage to provide both real time traffic services and historic data, called SUNA Predictive. SUNA Predictive is a database of statistically normalised travel speeds for main roads that supports the prediction of future speeds or travel times based on historical averages.

Real-time traffic updates from SUNA have already been adopted by the majority of the leading GPS device manufacturers. Aside from the high-volume PND market, Intelematics has also developed significant partnerships within the in-car satellite navigation space. SUNA is now available in Ford, Holden, Honda, Mercedes Benz, Nissan, Subaru and Toyota as well as aftermarket in-car navigation brands like Pioneer, Eclipse and Alpine.

More information on Intelematics and SUNA Predictive can be found at

www.intelematics.com.au

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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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