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21 March 2011

NSW residents not optimistic about short-term transport improvements

NSW residents are not confident transport in their local area will improve in the 12 months following this week's state election, the latest quarterly national transport survey from the University of Sydney indicates.

The Institute of Transport and Logistics Studies-Interfleet Transport Opinion Survey (TOPS) shows more than three quarters of NSW residents think transport in their local area will be the same or worse in a year, says Institute Director Professor David Hensher. This has remained fairly constant since the first survey was published last March.

"As NSW looks almost certain to move to a new era with a change in government, the absence of increased optimism about NSW's increasingly squeezed transport systems means significant challenges for a new government" says Professor Hensher. "Transport debate during the campaign has rarely digressed beyond which rail project to build first or freeway extensions, which appears not to inspire much confidence from the public. However the coalition's announcement about Bus Rapid Transit will hopefully start to change this."

More than half of NSW residents think public transport is the highest priority transport issue in Australia.

The latest TOPS survey shows an increase in NSW residents who think states are the branch of government most responsible for transport in Australia.

"Sixty four per cent of NSW residents think the state is most responsible for transport, compared with 57 per cent last quarter," Professor Hensher says. "We saw a similar level in Victoria before that state's election late last year."

Despite the NSW result, the TOPS index of Australians' confidence in transport in their local area has increased from the base of 100 in March last year. Professor Hensher attributes this to the perceived stability of transport outside of Sydney and Melbourne.

The first national survey to measure transport opinions on a regular basis, TOPS is a reliable indicator of Australians' ongoing confidence about transport in their local area and transport in Australia.

The March 2011 quarterly report is at: <http://sydney.edu.au/business/itls/tops>.

The Institute of Transport and Logistics Studies in the University of Sydney Business School provides education and conducts research in transport, logistics and supply chain management. Interfleet Technology is one of the world's leading rail consultancy groups providing strategic, operational, management and technical services to the international rail industry.

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Next TOPS release: Mid June 2011