

REGION WIDE

Good set of eyes on road

Philip Ly

THE Motorway Control Centre of the completed \$400 million M5 West Widening Project has seen technology play a central role in the management of the improved motorway.

An average of 142,000 vehicles use the 21km motorway from Camden Valley Way at Prestons, to King Georges Rd at Beverly Hills, daily.

The installation of 22 variable message signs, 51 traffic monitoring security cameras, and more than 100 magnetic loop wires feed information to controllers, who monitor and can see the entire motorway.

Rex Wright, manager of Interlink Roads, which also manages the M5 South-West Motorway, said the \$400 million upgrade had ensured the motorway could meet growing demand.

The motorway shifts about 5-10 per cent of traffic off Milperra and Canterbury roads.

Milperra and Canterbury roads were along the slowest in NSW, according to figures from Roads and Maritime Services

A recent study by the



Senior M5 controller Stephen Tonlin at the M5 South-West Motorway Control Centre.

TECHNOLOGY KEY TO MANAGING IMPROVED M5

NRMA also found motorists using the M5 Motorway saved up to 50 minutes on an average trip and used 30 per cent less petrol.

Mr Wright said an extra lane added in each direction

and smart technology meant 50 per cent more capacity for transport capability, and helped shift travel times by 30-50 per cent.

But breakdowns remain the most common problems

and debris the most challenging.

"We do have one full-time safety crew and another on call, but do stress people drive safely," Mr Wright said.

AT A GLANCE

- The M5 West Widening Project cost \$400 million and was completed last December
- It shifts 5-10 per cent of traffic off Milperra and Canterbury roads
- The project delivered a new operational management and control system such as the Motorway Control Centre
- It brings faster responses to motorway incidents