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Anti-Gillard convoy a flop: Brown

22nd August 2011

Tags bob brown, convoy, parliament house, truck

ABOUT 80 trucks are on their way to Parliament House in Canberra in the first phase of a convoy of no confidence against the Gillard government.

But the convoy protest did not all go according to plan on Monday morning.

A 5.30am (AEST) start was delayed until about 6.15am because of insufficient numbers.

The first line of trucks is travelling along Northbourne Avenue, the main northern approach route to the city centre.

They will cross Lake Burley Griffin before using State Circle, which encircles Parliament House, to make their protest.

Later, a rally on the lawns in front of the parliament will be addressed by Opposition Leader Tony Abbott.

The convoy protest comes as parliament sits for four days and Prime Minister Julia Gillard, whose stocks are sagging in opinion polls, faces community anger over her broken promise on the carbon tax and changes to the diesel fuel rebate.

A petition will be presented calling for a double-dissolution election even though there has been no legislative trigger for such an option.

Mr Abbott, who joined the convoy at Marulan 120km north of Canberra on Sunday, said the convoy comprised "salt of the earth Australians who feel they are being ripped off by a bad government".

The convoy has caused little or no disruption to Canberra's peak-hour traffic.

Police had advised motorists to allow more time to get to work on Monday, expecting long delays on the main commuter routes.

But it appears the number of vehicles taking part in the convoy is fewer than organisers and police expected.

Mick Pattel from the National Road Freighters Association says there has been minimal disruption because organisers had worked well with local police.

"It was very important that we didn't disrupt the lives of Canberra people," he told ABC Television, adding the protest was aimed at the government, not residents.

But he warned there could be disruption when more vehicles joined the convoy at 9am, after peak hour.

Australian Greens leader Bob Brown said the convoy seemed "like a bit of a flop" adding for every truck that had turned up another five had stayed away.

"It hasn't blockaded anything," he told reporters.

"But it has got the moaners' brigade in town to moan about everything in general and nothing in



About 80 trucks are headed to Parliament House in a convoy of no confidence against the government.

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particular."

Senator Brown said the low numbers were a reflection on Mr Abbott.

"This is Tony Abbott's flop, but they're being led on by him because he wants an election. That's why the truckies are in town."

The protesters did not have any common thread of complaint, Senator Brown said.

"It's just a general smorgasbord of whingers."

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