

MEDIA RELEASE

Public Transport Ombudsman



Wednesday 22 April 2020

PUBLIC TRANSPORT OMBUDSMAN 2020 ACCESSIBILITY BULLETIN

PUBLIC TRANSPORT STAFF NUMBER ONE ISSUE

The Public Transport Ombudsman Ms Treasure Jennings today has released her second annual Accessibility Bulletin highlighting the accessibility issues people face when using public transport in Victoria.

In the 12 months to 31 March 2020 more than 6,900 issues were included in complaints to the Public Transport Ombudsman. With only 165 of those related to accessibility issues, Ms Jennings believes this is not accurately reflecting the experience of people with disabilities or other vulnerable groups, making it vitally important that her office raise the profile of accessibility related issues.

The PTO continues to hear from disability advocacy and support organisations that people who rely on public transport were very often reluctant to complain when things went wrong. These organisations, including the Disability Resources Centre (DRC) tell us that this reluctance to make a formal complaint is an ongoing concern.

Of those who did complain, the largest category of accessibility issues this year was about public transport staff, who play an increasingly important role in delivering information and assistance to passengers. These issues made up almost a third of all accessibility complaints.

Ms Jennings said that this indicates additional training may be needed to assist public transport staff to be more skilled in liaising with people with disabilities, older people or people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

“This result about staff is consistent with our overall complaints in the 2019 financial year, as recorded in our most recent Annual Report, where problems with public transport staff was the number one issue, including poor conduct, customers service failings and lack of responsiveness,” Ms Jennings said.

Ms Jennings said that while the Coronavirus pandemic is significantly affecting the way we all live right now, it is more important than ever to consider those more vulnerable in our community who may need more assistance.

“Public transport is an essential service for many Victorians, particularly for those who experience disadvantage, are vulnerable or people with disabilities. It is so important we recognise that even though everybody’s day-to-day lives have been impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic, for those people who are most vulnerable in our community, this impact could be significant,” Ms Jennings added.

The top five accessibility issues for 2020 were:

1. Staff
2. Stations, stops and land
3. Trams, trains and buses
4. Compliance with disability laws and standards
5. Discrimination / Equal Rights / Human Rights

More detailed information can be found in the 2020 PTO Accessibility Bulletin at: <https://www.ptovic.com.au/about-us/publications-media/bulletins>

In line with the state-wide efforts to contain the spread of Coronavirus, our team are now working remotely. You can still call us on [1800 466 865](tel:1800466865) and leave us a message and we will call you back. Or you can email enquiries@ptovic.com.au with your phone number and a time that is best to call you back between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday.

We can also be contacted via our website contact form [here](#) or you can send us a message via Facebook [here](#). We can also be contacted via [The National Relay Service](#) and [Translating and Interpreting Service](#).

The Public Transport Ombudsman is a fair, free and fast service to sort out public transport complaints in Victoria and help make the system better for everyone.

The members are Public Transport Victoria, BusVic, Metro Trains, Southern Cross Station, Transdev, Skybus, V/Line, VicTrack, Yarra Trams, Level Crossing Removal Authority and Melbourne Metro Rail Authority. Ventura has joined the PTO with effect from 1 July 2019.

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