

## MEDIA RELEASE

### PUBLIC TRANSPORT OMBUDSMAN

Monday 21 October 2019

## 2019 ANNUAL REPORT

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### PUBLIC TRANSPORT OMBUDSMAN REPORTS 21% INCREASE IN COMPLAINTS

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Data released by the Public Transport Ombudsman Ms Treasure Jennings today shows an overall increase in complaints to her office of 21% over the past year.

Ms Jennings said that the rise was largely attributable to complaints about Public Transport Victoria, Metro Trains and V/Line, while complaints about Yarra Trams and bus operators have stabilised. Many of the complaints were in relation to interactions with public transport staff, who play an increasingly important role in delivering information and assistance to passengers when public transport services are disrupted. The Ombudsman also noted a 54% increase in complaints about public transport disruptions over the past year.

Ms Jennings said that while the increase was understandable given the unprecedented amount of works and planned disruptions right across the network, her office was looking at how public transport operators and PTV may be able to handle unplanned disruptions better.

*“People who are caught up in unplanned public transport disruptions need to be provided with clear and consistent information about what is going on and their alternative travel options,”* Ms Jennings said.

*“Everybody’s needs are different. We want to make sure that when things go wrong people are kept up to date and have all the information they need to make decisions that are in their best interest. People need consistent information across all channels and well-informed staff on the ground to help them,”* Ms Jennings said.

Dissatisfaction with public transport staff overtook service delivery as the number one issue in complaints to the Public Transport Ombudsman. Ms Jennings explained that the figure of 2036 staff issues, up from 886 the previous year, was largely due to changes in the way the Ombudsman’s office now records staff complaints, as well as the increased pressure on staff during periods of disruption and works.

*“While improvements to our reporting processes make it difficult to compare this year’s figure to last year’s, the fact that staff is now the number one issue indicates that public transport operators have room for improvement in how they train and support their staff. Complaints about staff include concerns about conduct, customer service failings and a lack of responsiveness to complaints”.*

Ms Jennings also reported that the Public Transport Ombudsman’s office underwent an independent review in the past year, which found that it continued to meet its obligations to provide a fair, independent and accessible service to people with complaints about public transport in Victoria.

More information can be found in the 2018/19 PTO Annual Report, which is available at:  
[www.ptovic.com.au/about-us/publications](http://www.ptovic.com.au/about-us/publications)

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

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

The PTO office is open during standard business hours, or enquiries can be lodged out of hours via our website. Visit [www.ptovic.com.au](http://www.ptovic.com.au), call 1800 466 865 or search ‘Public Transport Ombudsman’ on [Facebook](#).

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