



## MEDIA RELEASE: PUBLIC TRANSPORT OMBUDSMAN 2016 ANNUAL REPORT

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### MYKI COMPLAINTS DOWN BUT AUTHORISED OFFICER COMPLAINTS RISE

The Public Transport Ombudsman (PTO), Treasure Jennings is pleased by another fall in myki complaints in the last year, however expressed concerns today about the rising number of complaints raised by Victorian commuters about the behaviour and conduct of Authorised Officers.

Figures released today in the PTO's 2015/16 Annual Report show issues relating to the behaviour of Authorised Officers (AOs) has increased 16% in the last year.

Ms Jennings said the increase was concerning given the previous three Victorian Ombudsman's investigations and work by Public Transport Victoria to review and improve AO training.

"The majority of complaints to the PTO on this issue were from commuters who viewed the AOs behaviour during their interaction as unwarranted," she said, "several complainants said they felt intimidated."

"More work needs to be done in this area to ensure AOs have adequate support and the right skills to interact with the community in an effective and fair way."

Ms Jennings also reported that overall complaints to the PTO last financial year had fallen 16%.

"We believe this is partly attributed to our members making improvements to their internal dispute resolution systems," she said.

Although this is the case, the Ombudsman remains concerned that this is also due to low levels of community awareness of the PTO.

"It is important people understand that the PTO is the only truly independent umpire and we are here to help resolve consumer concerns or complaints about public transport," Ms Jennings said.

As reported in the PTO Annual Report, in 2015/16, the top five issues identified by consumers were – myki, matters involving transport staff, the issuing of infringement notices, service delivery, infrastructure and rolling stock.

Ms Jennings commented that although myki remained the main reason why people contacted the PTO, it was pleasing to see overall complaint numbers in this area fall again, with a 36% drop last financial year.

“We experienced a significant decrease in the number of myki refund investigations and we believe this is due to improvements put in place by Public Transport Victoria,” she said.

“Looking forward, we are expecting to see an increase in complaints relating to major infrastructure transport projects including level crossing removals and the Melbourne Metro Rail Project. Large projects like these can have significant impacts on both transport users and non-passengers,” Ms Jennings said.

“Both the Level Crossing Removal Authority and Melbourne Metro Rail Authority have joined the PTO scheme in the last 12 months. As the Ombudsman I can also assist with complaints related to public transport construction and works such as noise and other disruptions to homes and businesses.”

In 2015/16 the PTO recorded 5,320 issues within 3,412 complaints and conducted 358 investigations.

More information can be found in the 2015/16 PTO Annual Report, which is available at <http://www.ptovic.com.au/>

The Public Transport Ombudsman is a not-for-profit, independent dispute resolution body providing free, fair and informal service for the resolution of complaints about Victorian public transport operators who are members of the PTO scheme.

The members are Public Transport Victoria, BusVic, Metro Trains, Southern Cross Station, Transdev, V/Line, VicTrack, Yarra Trams, Level Crossing Removal Authority and Melbourne Metro Rail Authority.

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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Media enquiries:  
Sarah Bishop, Activate Consulting  
Mobile: 0403 214 449; Email: [sarah@activatepeople.com](mailto:sarah@activatepeople.com)