



**MEDIA RELEASE: PUBLIC TRANSPORT OMBUDSMAN 2016/17 ANNUAL REPORT – METRO NORTH
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**PTO REPORTS COMMUTERS IN MELBOURNE’S NORTH UNHAPPY WITH
TRANSPORT SERVICE DELIVERY**

The Public Transport Ombudsman (PTO), Treasure Jennings released figures today showing a substantial increase in the number of complaints from Victorian commuters involving service delivery.

Figures released in the PTO’s 2016/17 Annual Report show that there was an increase in concerns about reliability of services, cancellations and replacement services.

Ms Jennings said this was an issue for commuters in Melbourne’s North region, with 17% of all service delivery complaints coming from people living in this area.

“Although service delivery complaints rose across all transport modes, bus operators experienced the largest increase,” she said.

“Transdev, which runs 46 of the busiest routes in the metropolitan area saw complaints about reliability rise from 13 last year to 54 this year and Melbourne’s other bus operators saw an increase of 41% of complaints about reliability.

“The increase in complaints relating to service delivery was not a surprise given the growing pressure on the public transport network, stemming from various sources including patronage growth, increasing traffic and congestion and the disruption caused by the many transport major projects such as the removal of level crossings.

“While providers are doing a commendable job dealing with these challenges, it is important for people to know that they can contact the PTO for advice and assistance if they feel unfairly impacted by these disruptions, including those who live near-by major transport works.”

The other top transport issues identified by consumers in metropolitan Melbourne were – matters involving transport staff, myki, infrastructure and rolling stock, and the issuing of infringement notices.

Across these top issues, 22% of complaints were made from community members in Melbourne’s North. The suburbs of Reservoir, Preston and Coburg were amongst the top ten areas for most complaints and inquiries with the PTO.

In 2016/17 the PTO recorded 3,016 approaches, 1,147 complaints and 312 requests for information and conducted 432 investigations.

Ms Jennings said overall approaches to the PTO reduced last financial year by 7%, with the largest drop involving transport fines, which fell by 32%.

“This was a very pleasing result given the work undertaken by the PTO together with government and transport providers to address issues involving infringement notices,” she said.

“One key area we’ve focused on in the past 12 months has been encouraging and supporting Public Transport Victoria (PTV) to improve AO training, ensuring these staff have the right support and skills to deal with people fairly and with a high level of customer service when issuing fines and providing information.

“I believe the consumer feedback highlighted in my last report has greatly contributed to a 30% reduction in complaints about transport fines and AOs.”

Ms Jennings commented that there were also positive results in other areas including a 12% drop in complaints about myki, which follows a 36% drop in myki complaints from the previous year.

“We have worked closely with PTV on rolling out 25 myki improvement opportunities including those relating to automatic top ups, refund delays and the process for considering special circumstances when assessing refund requests,” she said.

“These results show us that our role, working with community members, providers and government, can produce real tangible benefits and ongoing improvement to the experience of using public transport in Victoria.

“No matter how big or small the issue, if Victorians feel they have been unfairly impacted by issues relating to public transport services or works, reporting it to us can make a real difference,” she said.

More information can be found in the 2016/17 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, call 1800 466 865 or search ‘Public Transport Ombudsman’ on Facebook.

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