



MEDIA RELEASE: PUBLIC TRANSPORT OMBUDSMAN 2016 ANNUAL REPORT – METRO WEST

MYKI COMPLAINTS DOWN, AUTHORISED OFFICER COMPLAINTS UP REPORTS OMBUSMAN

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 (AO) have 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 AO's 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 AO's have adequate support and the right skills to interact with the community in an effective and fair way."

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.

Myki remained the main reason why people contacted the PTO, however overall complaint numbers in this area fell again, with a 36% drop last financial year.

Overall in 2015/16 the PTO recorded 5,320 issues within 3,412 approaches and conducted 358 investigations.

Of the 3,412 complaints, 256 were recorded from Melbourne's Western region, which resulted in 30 investigations taking place. The suburbs of Hoppers Crossing, Werribee, St Albans, Wyndham Vale and Belmont were in the top 25 hotspots across metropolitan Melbourne.

Ms Jennings also reported that overall complaints to the PTO last financial year fell 16% from the previous year.

"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 protect and support consumers with concerns or complaints about public transport,” Ms Jennings 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.”

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, call 1800 466 865 or search ‘Public Transport Ombudsman’ on Facebook.

<ENDS>

Media inquiries:
Sarah Bishop, Activate Consulting
Mobile: 0403 214 449; Email: sarah@activatepeople.com