



MEDIA RELEASE: PUBLIC TRANSPORT OMBUDSMAN 2016/17 ANNUAL REPORT EMBARGOED UNTIL 1 A.M. 17 NOVEMBER 2017

PTO REPORTS BIG DROP IN COMPLAINTS ABOUT FINES AND AUTHORISED OFFICERS

The Public Transport Ombudsman (PTO), Treasure Jennings released positive figures today showing a substantial reduction in the number of complaints made by Victorian commuters about transport fines.

The figures, released in the PTO's 2016/17 Annual Report, show that complaints over the past 12 months involving transport fines dropped 32%.

Ms Jennings said 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.

"Although investigations about transport fines do not fall within our jurisdiction, we do provide valuable information and advice to people about the process and lodging appeals, and we look at associated issues like complaints involving Authorised Officers (AOs)," 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 previous report has greatly contributed to the 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 addressing 25 myki improvement opportunities including those relating to automatic top ups for myki, refund delays and the process for considering special circumstances when assessing refund requests," she said.

"These results show that our role, working with community members, transport 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.

As reported in the PTO Annual Report, in 2016/17 the largest increase in complaints was related to service delivery. Ms Jennings said there was an increase in concerns about reliability of services, insufficient replacement services and cancellations.

“Overall complaints about the reliability of services doubled, and bus travellers drove the largest increases,” 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.

“This shift in complaints was expected 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 major transport 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.”

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

In Metropolitan Melbourne the top ten suburbs with the highest number of complaints and issues raised with the PTO last financial year were Melbourne CBD, St Kilda, Chelsea, Bentleigh, Reservoir, Ashburton, Werribee, Preston, Coburg and Doncaster.

The top five issues raised by commuters in metropolitan Melbourne were matters involving transport staff, myki, infrastructure and rolling stock, service delivery and the issuing of infringement notices.

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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