

Media Release – embargoed until 1am Friday 23 October 2009

Public Transport Ombudsman Annual Report 2009

Cases to the Victorian Public Transport Ombudsman (PTO) have increased by 4% in 2008-09, according to the PTO Annual Report released today. The PTO handled 1206 cases, including 1180 new cases.

“Our cases are becoming more complex each year” said Ombudsman Simon Cohen when releasing the report. “Many complaints include multiple issues – this year we dealt with 1595 issues about public transport services.” Top complaint issues included:

- infringement notices – 22% (347 issues) – these complaints are referred to the Department of Transport for review
- infrastructure and rolling stock – 16% (255 issues) – issues with public transport vehicles, stations and tracks
- authorised officers (ticket inspectors) – 16% (248 issues) – concerns about the conduct of and communications with authorised officers
- service delivery – 15% (241 issues) – complaints about punctuality, cancellations, disruptions and failing to pick up or drop off passengers
- staff – 15% (236 issues) – complaints about drivers, conductors and station attendants, with concerns about behaviour, passenger safety and the handling of complaints
- ticketing – 10% (165 issues) – issues with faulty machines and tickets, and ticket refunds and replacements.

Where the PTO investigated complaints, 80% were successfully resolved. Outcomes – demonstrated by case studies in the report – included: explanations, apologies, compensation and good-will gestures for commuters; training for public transport staff; and changed operator procedures.

“I have seen an increased commitment from public transport operators this year to work with the PTO. This has included telling commuters they can come to us when they are not satisfied with how their complaint has been handled,” Mr Cohen said.

The Annual Report also includes information about reviews conducted by the PTO, including a report on authorised officer complaints. The report examined trends in complaints – which mostly alleged intimidation and poor communication – and recommended improved guidance for authorised officers about using force, and increased monitoring of use of force incidents. The PTO also recommended providing information to authorised officers about why people complain.

“When someone makes a complaint, it is important to listen to the concerns raised, make proper inquiries, provide a full explanation, and take appropriate remedial action where concerns are proved. My Annual Report shows how complaints can be used to improve services for individuals and the whole community.”

To download the Public Transport Ombudsman Annual Report, go to www.ptovic.com.au.

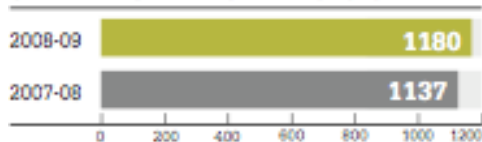
For further information or to arrange interviews, please contact Kristen Barnes on 03 8623 2121.

Key points

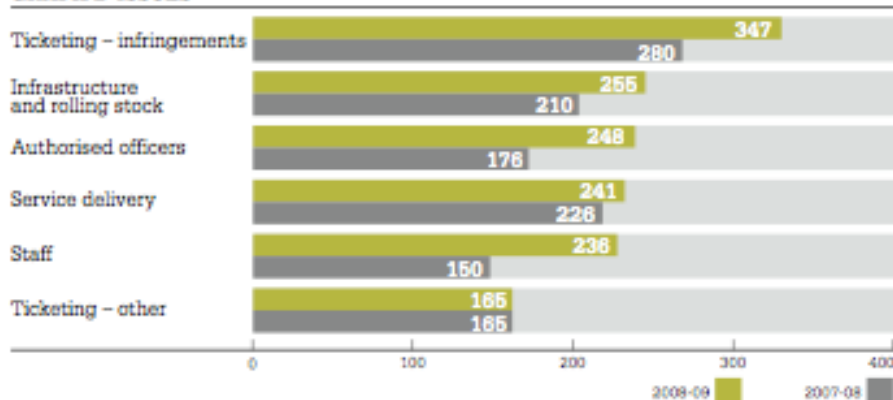
- 1206 cases handled, including 1180 new cases – an increase of 4%
- 1583 complaint issues finalised, including 227 issues investigated and finally determined
 - 90% finalised within 31 days
 - 80% of investigated issues successfully resolved
- 12 case studies about PTO complaints, including complaints about public transport disruptions, authorised officer conduct and disability access
- PTO reviews on complaints management and authorised officer complaints
- PTO information now translated into 7 languages, and available in large text and audio format.

Key graphs

GRAPH 1 TOTAL RECEIVED CASES



GRAPH 2 ISSUES



GRAPH 3 PTO ACTIONS

