



MEDIA RELEASE

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Public Transport Ombudsman Annual Report 2012

Public transport complaints and enquiries to Ombudsman increase by 93%

The Public Transport Ombudsman's office workload doubled in 2011/2012 with complaints about public transport up by 96%, enquiries up by 88% and the number of complaints requiring PTO investigation up by 124%.

The total caseload dealt with by the PTO went from 1,838 in the last financial year, to 3,555 in the 2011/2012 year – up 93% and well exceeding the forecasts for the year. Complaints and enquiries about ticketing issues more than doubled – with most about myki.

In summary, in 2011/2012 the PTO managed:

- Cases 3,555 - up from 1,838 - 93% increase
- Complaint Investigations 568 - up from 253 - 124% increase
- Complaints 2,466 - up from 1,258 - 96% increase
- Enquiries 1,089 – up from 580 - 88% increase
- Ticketing – 2,526 issues - up from 1,570 – 61% increase
- Train, tram and bus operator complaints 994 - up from 644 - 54% increase.

The majority of PTO investigations, 85%, were resolved within 90 days, and most by agreement, 91%.

"We're investigating more complaints, and they are becoming more complex," said Ombudsman Janine Young. "Commuters have sought us out in increasing numbers. Our investigations are well up because complaints were not being effectively dealt with in the first place."

Ms Young said myki complaints centred around a number of issues including poor customer service, delayed or declined refunds and reimbursements, faulty myki cards and lack of information about refund calculations on the myki website. Other issues included the need to mail in myki cards following auto top up failures, the withholding of customer funds following auto top up failures and incorrect estimates about myki pass refund amounts.

"We developed a streamlined investigation process for myki complaints and worked with the Transport Ticketing Authority to remedy the issues we kept hearing about. There is now refund information on the myki website, and a myki contact centre refund calculation tool," she explained.

When it came to complaints about the operators of the various public transport modes, issues ranged from service delivery (punctuality, cancellation and disruption) and customer service through to infrastructure and rolling stock, including accessibility issues, and the approach taken by Authorised Officers.

"We've had a really busy year. Not only has our workload increased significantly, the complexity of issues raised with us has also increased, resulting in resource intensive complaint investigations. While we budgeted for an increase in caseload, we didn't anticipate this level of demand, but we have managed to make it work – and most importantly, to provide an effective independent complaint resolution service for commuters" Ms Young said.

The experience of 2011/2012 emphasised the need for good complaint handling and customer service delivery across the industry.

"Public transport operators have to consider what their customers are telling them. All complaints processes need to be responsive, flexible and adaptable. Consumers are looking for timely and complete responses, to be kept informed during the process, appropriate resolution options and follow up on agreed actions."

Ms Young said the PTO is forecasting an increase in cases for 2012/2013 – with current indicators projecting a modest increase up to around 3,900 cases.

And, she encouraged all commuters to continue to raise relevant concerns and make complaints as this information provides the public transport industry with service improvement opportunities.

"Anyone who has an issue with public transport and is unhappy should complain – first to the operators on 1800 800 007 and if they are dissatisfied with the outcome, they should ask for a review or contact the PTO. We can also provide information to people about their rights and obligations," Ms Young concluded.

The PTO continues to be recognised for its commitment to sustainability. On 29 November 2012, it was awarded, for the second consecutive year, the CitySwitch Signatory of the Year for tenancies less than 2,000 square metres.

The PTO can be contacted by customers in the following ways:

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| Free call | 1800 466 865 | |
| National | 1800 555 677 | TTY - then ask for 1800 466 865 |
| Relay | 1800 555 727 | Speak & Listen - then ask for 1800 466 865 |
| Service | www.iprelay.com.au | Internet Relay - then ask for 1800 466 865 |
| Interpreter | 131 450 | |
| Email | enquiries@ptovic.com.au | |
| Web | www.ptovic.com.au | |

Media inquiries: Elicia Duczmal (03) 8623 2111