

## Media release – Friday, 10 December 2010

### A year of change leads to an increase in complaints, says PTO Annual Report

Complaints about public transport to the Public Transport Ombudsman's Office (PTO) increased to 1,766 cases in 2009/2010 – up from 1,180 - but newly appointed Public Transport Ombudsman, Janine Young, says that's no surprise given the enormous change in public transport operation in Victoria over the past 12 months.

"It's not surprising in the context of such enormous change in one year, with a new ticketing system and two new operators. Any change requires a settling in period for both public transport users and operators" said Ms Young, who took office in August 2010.

myki was a particular focus in what has been the busiest year for the PTO since the scheme began in 2004. Significantly myki complaints were mostly received early in 2010, and prompt actions by the Transport Ticketing Authority to improve customer service processes resulted in a swift drop in complaints.

"This shows the critical importance of having an independent Ombudsman scheme able to take a 'big picture' view of what is going on and work with operators, government and key groups to develop solutions," said Ms Young.

Most complaints to the PTO were in the areas of service delivery, ticketing and staff. Complaint issues about infringement notices and Authorised Officers were down on the previous year. Many complaints were referred directly back to operators and resolved.

According to Ms Young, independent monitoring and resolution of complaints meant that systemic issues could be identified and addressed.

"We were able to work out very quickly what kind of complaints were prevalent and work with operators to address them – which had an immediate impact throughout the year," Ms Young explained.

Complaints investigated by the PTO were conciliated most often with an apology and/or a detailed explanation to the affected user. Other outcomes included compensation by way of replaced tickets, money or other goodwill offers by the operators.

"We are here to independently investigate when public transport users are unable to reach a resolution directly with operators. If people have a problem, they should complain – first to the operator and if they are not happy, to the PTO.

"Let's face it, it can be cathartic to have a gripe about public transport, it's part of our culture, but when something significant goes wrong, people should raise a complaint and expect resolution. Operators want to know about complaints – because they want to address them. There has never been a better opportunity for Victorians to influence what happens in our public transport system and complaint information provides opportunities for ongoing improvements," Ms Young concluded.

***Media inquiries: Lisa Muir on (03) 8623 2111***

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## Summary of complaints data 2009/2010

### Cases Received



#### New Cases Received By case category, these included:

Requests for Information	270
Referred Complaints – no further PTO action	1,138
Escalated Operator Complaints – PTO Resolution Review	211
PTO Investigated Complaints	147
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,766 cases</b>

### Issues Received – many cases have more than one complaint issue

Issues Received - 2,389 in total - top issues:	No. of Issues
<b>Service Delivery - 676 issues in total - top 4:</b>	
Account information / Privacy	198
Website	177
Punctuality / Reliability	92
Cancellation / Disruption / Platform Change	74
<b>Ticketing - 442 issues in total - top 2:</b>	
Ticket Replacement / Refund	197
Information / Conditions	125
<b>Staff - 372 issues in total - top 2:</b>	
Customer Service	174
Driver	139
<b>Infrastructure and Rolling Stock - 251 issues in total - top 2:</b>	
Trains / Trams / Buses	129
Platform / Shelter / Tram Stop / Bus Stop	52
<b>Infringement Notices - 265 issues in total - top 2:</b>	
Fine	217
Ticket	38
<b>Authorised Officer - 188 issues in total - top 2:</b>	
Behaviour / Demeanour	93
Exceeding Authority / Misleading / Unreasonable Force	48
<b>Land - 31 issues in total - top 1:</b>	
Car Park	15
	<b>1768</b>

#### Complaint Issues Raised By case category, these included:

Requests for Information	308
Referred Complaints – no further PTO action	1,487
Escalated Operator Complaints – PTO Resolution Review	320
Investigated Complaints	274
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,389 issues</b>

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