



2020

ANNUAL REPORT



**PUBLIC
TRANSPORT
OMBUDSMAN**

LISTEN · ACT · RESOLVE · IMPROVE

PTO Scheme members



On 1 July 2019, Public Transport Victoria (PTV) together with VicRoads merged with the Department of Transport (DoT) to create an integrated transport department.



Our value proposition

The Public Transport Ombudsman is a fair, free and fast service to sort out public transport complaints and help make the system better for everyone.

We're here to listen.

We have the power to act, influence and drive change.

We are highly skilled.

We help people reach agreements.

We're impartial and achieve fair resolutions.

We act on opportunities to improve the system.

We're here for the whole community.

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Year at a glance



3373
APPROACHES TO THE PTO
 -234 COMPARED TO 2018/19 F.Y.



472
INVESTIGATIONS OPENED
 -107 COMPARED TO 2018/19 F.Y.



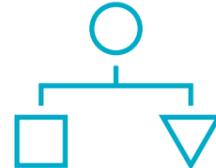
1956
COMPLAINTS RECEIVED
 -245 COMPARED TO 2018/19 F.Y.



595
ENQUIRIES ABOUT MEMBERS
 +248 COMPARED TO 2018/19 F.Y.

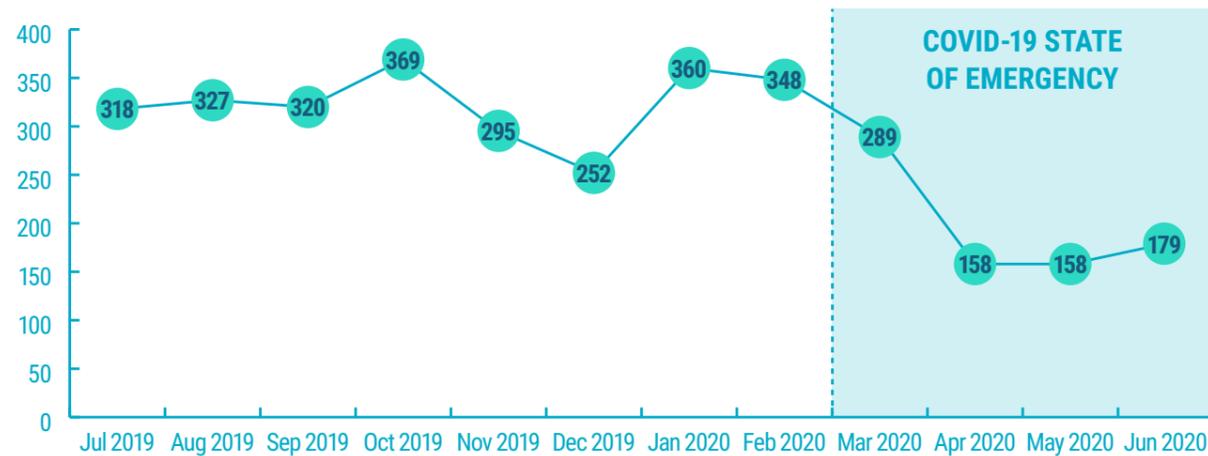


350
APPROACHES ABOUT NON MEMBERS
 -130 COMPARED TO 2018/19 F.Y.



6340
ISSUES WITHIN APPROACHES
 -624 COMPARED TO 2018/19 F.Y.

Approaches per month



Common issues within approaches



1701
STAFF
 -334 COMPARED TO 2018/19 F.Y.



1592
SERVICE DELIVERY
 -74 COMPARED TO 2018/19 F.Y.



1200
TICKETING
 -186 COMPARED TO 2018/19 F.Y.



631
LAND & INFRASTRUCTURE
 -28 COMPARED TO 2018/19 F.Y.



310
TRAMS, TRAINS & BUSES
 -49 COMPARED TO 2018/19 F.Y.



215
COVID-19*
 *NEW ISSUE, READ MORE ON PAGE 10

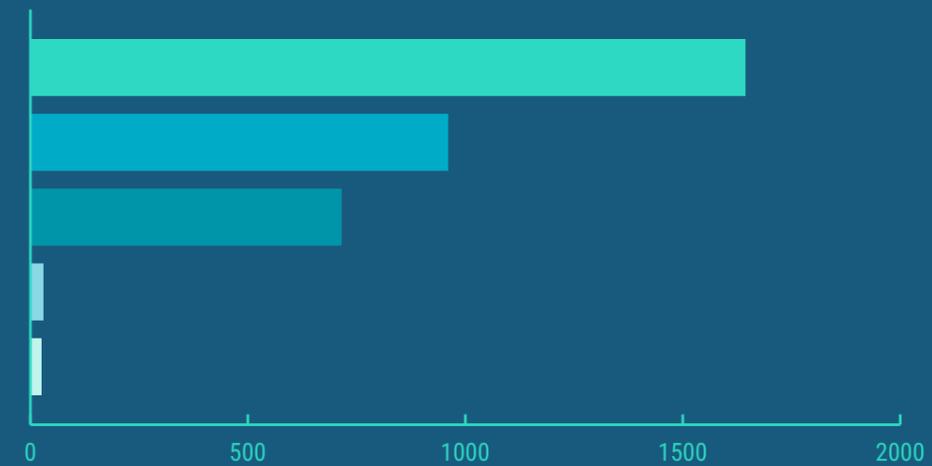


214
INFRINGEMENT NOTICES
 -114 COMPARED TO 2018/19 F.Y.



122
ACCESSIBILITY
 -72 COMPARED TO 2018/19 F.Y.

How people contacted us



1644
 EMAIL

960
 PHONE

715
 WEBSITE

29
 LETTER

25
 FACEBOOK

Chair's Report



I am pleased to present the 2019/20 Annual Report as Chair of the PTO in one of the most extraordinary and challenging years in our 16 years of operation.

I start by acknowledging the incredibly difficult situation our members find themselves in during this COVID-19 pandemic, with unprecedented low passenger numbers on public transport in Victoria. This has in turn, affected our operations at the PTO so, like many businesses in Victoria, we have made some significant changes to the way we operate and manage our Scheme.

This year saw the end of an era for Ombudsman Treasure Jennings who resigned after five and a half years at the PTO to take up two exciting and challenging roles as the Mental Health Complaints Commissioner and Disability Services Commissioner for Victoria. Throughout her time Treasure helped the PTO mature and grow, developing constructive relationships with our members, tackling systemic issues and ensuring that the focus remains on a public transport system that is not only efficient and effective, but fair and accessible. Treasure helped the PTO extend its reach through projects such as the Travel Assistance Program which assists vulnerable students in the western suburbs to stay connected to school using public transport ([page 19](#)). We are very grateful to Treasure for her thoughtful and effective leadership of the PTO and wish her all the best in her new roles.

The Board appointed Simon McKenzie as Acting Ombudsman, allowing the organisation time to see through the current COVID-19 restrictions and giving the Board time to conduct the recruitment for the new Ombudsman. Simon has been with the PTO for more than six years, most recently as Deputy Ombudsman.

While 2020 has been a very tough time for all of us, it has also shown that it is as important as ever to provide free and accessible advice to people about their public transport complaints. PTO staff are to be congratulated on seamlessly making the transition to working from home, continuing to provide effective and timely dispute resolution services meeting the PTO's performance targets. The Board was pleased to see the PTO make progress on initiatives addressing the independent Scheme review recommendations received last year.

I wish to extend my thanks to Industry Director Peter Ryan for his valuable contribution to the PTO's governance whose term finished during the year. I thank all the Industry and Consumer Directors and Company Secretary for their professionalism and dedication, and our members' staff who continue to take a cooperative and proactive approach to working with the PTO team in these challenging times.

Finally, on behalf of the Board I want to thank Treasure, Simon and the wider team of accomplished PTO staff for continuing to deliver their highly skilled complaint handling services, providing independent dispute resolution for consumers and members and providing useful insights about improving the public transport system for everyone.

Kay Rundle
Chair

Ombudsman's Report



Welcome to my first report as Acting Ombudsman in an extraordinary year of change and upheaval for Victorians.

We are experiencing an unprecedented time with COVID-19 fundamentally changing the way we work and live our lives. The year began with the rate of approaches to the PTO Scheme exceeding the previous year. Service delivery issues were the main driver of complaints, up by 6%. This type of consumer complaint is understandable given there was growing patronage and a lot of activity on the network, including ongoing construction, infrastructure upgrades and routine maintenance. We heard from many consumers dissatisfied about cancellations, late services and disruption to timetabled services, both planned and unplanned. Pleasingly, in the first nine months staff issues within approaches had decreased (-7%), as had myki (-13%) compared to the same period last year.

The onset of COVID-19 meant that patronage on the network rapidly declined, as did the number of approaches to the PTO. The PTO recorded 3373 approaches to the PTO for the full year, down 6% from 3607 the previous year. Complaints and investigations handled by my office decreased 13% from 2780 to 2428.

COVID-19 changed the complaint mix, consumer complaint focus shifted from service delivery to ticketing and the management of land and infrastructure. Changes in consumer circumstances drove complaints about ticket refunds and changes to passes, leading to 21 investigations. In 136 approaches during the last 3 months of the year, consumers cited COVID-19 considerations as relevant to why they approached the PTO. You can read more about the issues consumers raised linked to COVID-19 on [page 10](#).

It is important to listen to consumers who take the time to tell us that public transport or an individual operator hasn't met their expectations. The way in which our members address consumer's COVID-19 related concerns while striving for continuous improvement will be fundamental to bringing passengers back as movement linked to economic and social activity returns. We are committed to working with our members on several levels; resolving individual disputes and identifying potential improvements or systemic causes of complaint.

During the year we launched a [Have Your Say](#) section on our website to allow consumers to highlight such issues for attention even if they do not wish to make a complaint through our office themselves. You can read more about our work on systemic issues on [page 14](#).

Public transport is an essential service that enables independence and community participation for many Victorians. As restrictions ease and we head towards COVID-normal, the PTO and its members will need to respond to transformed consumer expectations and sentiment. Community confidence in how public transport is delivered and how concerns are addressed will influence people's decision about how they travel, and importantly, if they travel at all.

Raising awareness of the work we do and reaching consumers is an important focus for us, so we expanded our social media engagement, redeveloped our website, and launched new strategic initiatives like our Accessibility and Inclusion Action Plan. Read about our accessibility, engagement, and awareness initiatives on [page 18](#).

I would like to thank the hard-working PTO team who continue to deliver a professional, independent, and excellent service to consumers and members during these uncertain times. I also thank the members of the PTO Scheme for their participation and support.

Finally, I extend my congratulations to Treasure Jennings on her appointment to the roles of Victoria's Mental Health Commissioner and Disability Services Commissioner and thank her for her leadership and tremendous contribution to the PTO.

Simon McKenzie
Acting Ombudsman

Our Board

The PTO is governed by a Board of consumer and industry representatives with an independent Chair. The responsibilities of the Board include oversight of the PTO Scheme and maintenance of the day-to-day independence of the Ombudsman.



Kay Rundle

Chair

Kay has been the PTO Chair since November 2015. Kay has an extensive background as former CEO of local government and has held several directorships and Chair appointments. As an executive coach, she works with CEOs in government, hospitals, and schools.



Dr. Chris Lowe

Industry Director (BusVic) since December 2017

Chris has been the Executive Director of Bus Association in Victoria since 2008, the industry representative body for bus operators and suppliers. Chris completed his MBA in 2006 and PhD in 2016.



Glenyys Romanes

Consumer Non-executive Director since January 2018

Glenyys is an AICD graduate, with a background across all tiers of government including the Victorian Parliament, Commonwealth Ombudsman, Councillor and Mayor. Glenyys is an active member of many NGO committees and community groups including the Victorian Transport Action Group.



Marika Harvey

Industry Director (Public Transport Victoria) since December 2018

Marika is the Director of Network Performance Insights at the Department of Transport. Marika has extensive professional experience in operations, corporate communications and marketing, customer service, and contract management in the public sector.



Llewellyn Prain

Consumer Non-executive Director since January 2016

Llewellyn is an experienced company director and a Fellow of the AICD. She has a background in law and public policy. Llewellyn has a vision impairment and is passionate about improving disability inclusion and accessibility in our community.



Jonathan McKeown

Industry Director (V/Line) since February 2020

Jonathan is the Executive General Manager for Network Development and Integration at V/Line. Jonathan has more than 25 years' experience working with state and local government and private industry.



Mark Davies

Consumer Non-executive Director since July 2016

Mark is a Chartered Accountant and former CEO of local government. With extensive experience in the private sector and local government, Mark now provides consultancy services to state and local governments.



Bernard Stute

Company Secretary

Bernard has extensive experience in government and public transport having worked for more than 17 years in the sector. He is a lawyer and has supported the PTO in the role of Company Secretary since its inception in 2004.

Scheme Review

In 2019 the PTO underwent an independent Scheme review, as required every five years.

The Scheme review was very positive about the compliance of the PTO and how we deliver our services, but did recommend we continue to raise awareness of the work we do and simplify how consumers find out about and access our services.

Read the full [Scheme Review report](#) and the [PTO Board's response](#) on our website.

In response we implemented some new and improved strategies, including:

- Redeveloping our website to simplify the functionality, prioritise user experience and meet the accessibility compliance standard of WCAG 2.1. The content of the website was rewritten into plain English, optimised for search, with information in languages other than English added.
 - Introducing a [Have Your Say](#) page on the website to capture issues about public transport which may not necessarily be an individual complaint, and to help us identify issues that may be systemic in nature.
 - Developing a comprehensive Accessibility and Inclusion Action Plan which includes measures for raising awareness of the PTO and engaging with people with disabilities and their advocates. These measures include attending both metropolitan and regional disability expos, partnering with the Disability Resource Centre (DRC) to participate in regional public transport workshops and upgrading our website to make our systemic investigations process more accessible.
 - Expanding our public communications to include additional social media channels including Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram, giving us more ways to engage with our audience and providing alternative ways to contact us and make a complaint.
 - Writing and filming a new updated Auslan information video for the website and social media.
 - Surveying students at O-Week events at four different Universities across Melbourne to capture their experiences with public transport and awareness of the PTO.
 - Staff undertook disability awareness training which will continue to be delivered on an annual basis.
- Opportunities to raise public awareness of the PTO and improve the ease with which a person can complain to us when they are dissatisfied continues to be a focus. We are developing an Awareness Strategy to make it easier for people to contact us, including vulnerable people and people with accessibility needs.



COVID-19 and Public Transport

Everyone's lives were suddenly impacted by the outbreak of COVID-19 in March, including public transport users. The restrictions put in place to stop the spread of the virus meant that within the space of a week, thousands of Victorians stopped commuting as they began working and studying from home (where possible).

This meant that our office saw a spike in the number of complaints relating to COVID-19. Recognising that the pandemic was affecting customer's circumstances in a growing proportion of complaints, we created a distinct new issue category for COVID-19, to help us track these complaints and potential opportunities for improvement.

Of the 215 COVID-19 issues within approaches we received until 30 June, around half were related to ticketing, including: refund delays, pausing myki Passes no longer in use and access to accurate information about options to manage their myki Pass while working from home or travelling less. We also heard concerns about social distancing, hygiene and cleaning of vehicles and network assets.

As the impact of COVID-19 on public transport became clearer, the Department of Transport reviewed ticketing and refund processes and introduced the ability for consumers to Pause their myki. We worked with the Department to ensure that all customer requests made before the new options were created were reviewed, and that no consumers were disadvantaged by the rapidly changing COVID-19 landscape.



Some of the COVID-19-related ticketing complaints we received to 30 June 2020 included:

- Anastasia was not given the opportunity to review the refund amount for her annual myki Pass before it was processed. The refund she received was far less than she was expecting, and she would not have opted for the refund had she known this.
- Trevor requested a refund of his myki Pass in March, before the option to 'pause' an active Pass was announced. He contacted us because he realised the Pause was the better option for him financially, but PTV had been unable to reverse his request.
- Brian received inconsistent advice about returning his myki card by post to receive a Pass refund. The requirement to return a myki card had been waived during the COVID-19 pandemic, but his refund request was declined on the basis he hadn't returned his card.
- Vihaan 'paused' his active myki Pass but when he received his replacement card, he saw it was loaded with fewer Pass days than he was expecting. He contacted the PTO as he had already spent weeks working with the PTV call centre arranging his replacement card and was left confused by the process.
- Ron had a commuter club myki Pass and requested it be refunded because he was no longer travelling. Only after he received the refund did he realise that he would be losing out on the discounted value and 40 free days built into the Pass.
- Hamish held a tertiary student myki Pass and called the PTV call centre to request information on travelling and Passes during Covid-19 restrictions. The call centre told him to check online, and PTV's website suggested that his only option as a student Pass holder was to refund his myki card entirely. He contacted us as he hoped we could explore the option of him keeping his myki card and retaining the value of his Pass.

While most COVID-19 related complaints were about myki Passes, consumers also expressed frustration about confusing information provided by public transport operators on the phone and online. There was a clear need for concise and easy to understand information for consumers when managing their myki Passes during the COVID-19 lockdown. Our office worked with the Department and operators to resolve complaints driven by COVID-19 impacts on commuters and achieve outcomes they were satisfied with.

Issues within COVID-19 approaches



Complaints and Investigations

The PTO has a team of skilled and impartial Conciliators to help consumers and members resolve disputes and reach an agreement.

We do this by conducting investigations into both the cause, and the handling of complaints in a process designed to address outstanding issues and focus on a fair outcome.

If there is no agreement, we may assess the case formally and look at whether the resolution offered by the member is fair. The Ombudsman also has the power to make a binding determination on unresolved matters if we do not think the offer of resolution goes far enough.

Complaint Causes

In the first nine months of the year, the PTO dealt with 2109 complaints and investigations, up 6% on the previous year to date. As a full year total, we received more complaints about major construction and metropolitan rail, with Rail Projects Victoria complaints rising by 32% and Metro by 29%. This increase in complaints reflects the amount of construction and upgrade occurring on the network and includes consumer frustration with planned and unplanned disruptions. The same period saw reduction in complaints about Transdev (-59%), Level Crossing Removal Project (-56%), Department of Transport (PTV) (-27%), Yarra Trams (-24%) and V/Line (-4%). The combination of Victoria's Big Build, growing patronage and the shock of COVID-19 have led to a volatile year for members and the movement in complaints and investigations reported by the PTO (-13%) should be seen within the context of unprecedented change on the network.

COVID-19

Passenger trips decreased in line with COVID-19 restrictions, complaints to the PTO decreased as did the proportion of service delivery complaints. We recorded 215 issues where consumers said COVID-19 was relevant to why they had approached us, most involved ticketing (51%) and these included concerns about processing of refunds and sorting out myki Passes. Concerns about social distancing, including overcrowding and expectations that more should be done to promote or enforce distancing was the next main issue for consumers (27%). Less common were concerns about hygiene and cleaning on vehicles and network assets (7%). The issues may change as restrictions lift and patronage returns, we continue to collect data and provide information to members involved in operating services and network planning.

Graham's Story

Graham contacted us after he had a negative interaction with a tram driver of a City Loop Circle Tram.

Graham had purchased a stick vacuum cleaner when shopping at the Docklands precinct, west of the city of Melbourne. The appliance came in a large box, and when Graham tried to board the tram, he was told he wasn't allowed to and that trams weren't for couriers. He explained to the driver that he wasn't a courier but had simply purchased the appliance for himself. However, he still was not able to board the tram and had to find alternative transport home.

Graham then contacted Yarra Trams to make a complaint about the tram driver, explaining his experience. When Yarra Trams first responded to him, they said they couldn't

find the driver he was referring to. They gave Graham advice confirming what the driver had said to him, that he was not allowed to board the tram with a large box.

Unhappy with this response, Graham contacted our office for advice and assistance. We contacted Yarra Trams on his behalf and worked with them to identify and locate the tram driver involved. Yarra Trams conceded that they did not condone the conduct of the tram driver, or the view about the size of the box allowed on trams from the initial response that had been given to Graham.

With assistance from our office, Yarra Trams offered Graham a goodwill gesture of movie tickets as an apology for his poor experience, which Graham was happy with.

Investigations

The PTO commenced 472 investigations, 109 less than last year. The reduction was more pronounced during the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the last quarter we commenced 91 investigations compared to 159 in the same quarter last year.

The top issues contributing to disputes investigated were in the following categories:

- Staff: 590 issues
- Myki: 310 issues
- Service Delivery: 226 issues
- Land and Infrastructure: 107 issues
- Trams, Trains and Buses: 56 issues

It is understandable that staff issues like quality of response to a complaint (277), lack of response (98), and failure to action undertakings (20) are prevalent in investigations. The PTO investigates unresolved complaints when a member has had a prior opportunity to look into the matter and the consumer remains dissatisfied. Allegations of poor conduct accounted for 10% of staff issues (60) and should always be a focus for our members.

Myki issues featured in 160 investigations. The most common complaint issues were dissatisfaction with delays or calculations in refunds and reimbursements (101), and disputes about top-ups (39). COVID-19 caused consumers to reassess their pre-purchased myki Passes and seek refunds of myki Money balances. Many consumers were dissatisfied with the explanation of the value refunded on partially used Passes. More flexible and simple myki products may be required to meet consumer expectations as consumers return to the network under COVID-normal. One in ten myki investigations (19) involved mobile myki.

Service delivery issues were present in 136 investigations, which is 46 less than last year due to COVID-19. The most common service delivery issues were reliability (41), disruption (29), information (27) and punctuality (26).

Outcomes

The PTO finalised 503 investigations, facilitating 397 conciliated settlements (79%).

The PTO continued to provide a full service to consumers during the transition to working from home, with 66% of investigations finalised within 45 days, 83% finalised within 60 days and 94% finalised within 90 days.

Resolutions achieved included a range of undertakings by members, such as changes to processes, apologies and retraining and counselling staff. Financial redress in the form of refunds, compensation or goodwill gestures totalled \$28,305.



The top issues contributing to disputes investigated were in the following categories:

Staff: 590 issues

Myki: 310 issues

Service Delivery: 226 issues

Land and Infrastructure: 107 issues

Trams, Trains and Buses: 56 issues

Systemic Issues

When the PTO identifies issues that may have the potential to impact a number of consumers, they can be raised as a systemic issue with a member.

Issues come to our attention in various ways, including approaches to our office, inquiries through our [Have Your Say page](#) or via stakeholders from our many outreach activities. Once we have identified an issue as a systemic issue, we classify it into one of four categories:

- 1. Improvement Opportunity**
An informal process used to highlight a specific situation to an operator who may want to improve a current set of practices.
- 2. Systemic Enquiry**
A more formal process which involves using the information from the members to decide whether the issue has the potential to cause widespread or repeated detriment.
- 3. Systemic Investigation**
A formal process involving a thorough analysis of complaint data, operator records and the operator's response to understand the scale of an issue and means of stemming detriment and providing redress.
- 4. Issues of Ongoing Interest**
We monitor various sources of information over a period of time to understand the extent or impact of an issue and its nature.

The following are the systemic issues that we have recorded over the past year.

We worked with our members to finalise a number of ongoing issues of interest raised in the previous year. This impact of COVID-19 on patronage and the number of approaches to the PTO Scheme then led to a reduced number of new issues raised with members compared to previous years.

Improvement Opportunities:

- Myki replacement process - no option to arrange a refund instead of a replacement card
- Mobile myki - request for myki to be submitted in order to process refund
- Monthly performance results not published by date determined under member Franchise Agreements
- Bus company policies and driver training regarding passengers boarding with Guide Dogs.

Systemic Enquiries:

- Replacement bus service cancelled during planned disruption due to insufficient passenger numbers waiting for the service
- Loud volume levels of PA systems at regional stations
- Myki reader programmed with incorrect location resulting in fare charges during Early Bird travel period
- Value of myki funds on unused myki cards
- COVID-19 response to myki Pass holders ceasing travel.

Systemic Improvement Opportunity

We identified an improvement opportunity for Yarra Trams after there were delays in publishing their monthly performance results on their website. The Ombudsman considered that due to these delays there may be detriment caused to consumers.

Under the terms of Yarra Trams' Passenger Compensation Code, performance results must be published no later than 10 days after the end of the month and eligible passengers have until the end of the month to apply for compensation. The Ombudsman was concerned that any delay in publishing these monthly results may mean that consumers were not given a fair opportunity to request compensation.

Yarra Trams explained that it is unable to publish performance results until they are released by the Department of Transport (DoT). Yarra Trams acknowledged that its Passenger Compensation Code does not state that the publication of results may be delayed beyond 10 days after the end of the month, depending on when DoT releases the results. Yarra Trams advised that the Code will be updated to reflect this.

Yarra Trams also agreed with the Ombudsman and advised that in the event of any future publishing delays, it will extend the date passengers can apply for compensation equal to the number of days the results have been delayed.

Systemic Enquiry

The PTO raised an enquiry with PTV after an investigation of a consumer complaint identified issues that were potentially systemic. A consumer complained to the PTO that they were charged a myki Money fare during the Early Bird travel period (when travel is free). As part of the PTO's investigation, PTV explained that a myki reader had been installed on the metropolitan train network but incorrectly programmed as being located on the regional train network. PTV refunded the consumer's fare and all other consumers it identified as being impacted by the issue. PTV explained that it was exploring options to ensure that the problem did not happen again.

Given the issue had the potential to impact a number of consumers, the PTO sought further information from PTV under the systemic process about corrective measures introduced to prevent the issue from recurring.

After meeting with PTV, we accepted that the issue was an isolated incident and PTV had introduced sufficient means to prevent the matter from happening again.

When finalising the systemic enquiry, we suggested that the issue form part of PTV's knowledge database so that any reviews of fare charges would rule out the possibility of a programming error when the location of the myki transaction is in dispute.



In the Community

We continue to raise awareness of the work we do by promoting our services in the community. While 2020 was a challenging year for outreach, with the COVID-19 pandemic impacting many events, we found new ways to reach our audience to show that our Scheme is easy to use and has no cost barriers (in accordance with the Benchmark of Accessibility).

Throughout the year we engaged with the community, both in person and online, to simplify how consumers find out about and access our services ensuring that we reach those who need us most.

DRC Workshops

Before the onset of the COVID-19 lockdown in March, PTO staff attended a number of disability expos across metropolitan and regional Victoria to provide information about our services, record complaints and get first-hand information about systemic accessibility challenges on public transport. These included the Valid 'Having A Say' Disability Expo in Geelong and the Disability Resource Centre (DRC) disability and accessibility forums in Gippsland (Traralgon and Sale).

After the DRC workshops moved online due to the COVID-19 restrictions, we participated in a virtual workshop on accessibility, speaking to the panel about the cases PTO has seen throughout the year and systemic issues that we have investigated. This gave us the opportunity to explain to the panel just why complaining is so important in helping us to identify and raise systemic issues to make improvements to the public transport system.

Victorian Law Week

As Victorian Law Week was also moved online due to COVID-19 restrictions, we developed a virtual event with the Ombudsman and the Victorian Law Foundation in Melbourne. With the aim of reaching a new and engaged audience online, we recorded a Q & A session with former Ombudsman Treasure Jennings, to explain how alternative dispute resolution schemes such as the PTO promote fair, free and fast access to justice and how we are continuing to take complaints and resolve issues during the pandemic.

Social Media

We expanded our social media presence beyond Facebook this year to include more channels such as Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram. This provides consumers with another way to contact us or receive updates about public transport or consumer issues that may affect them.



Outreach

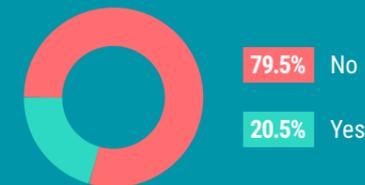
We began the new year at university campuses across Melbourne to engage with students and staff, talking about their public transport issues and how they can involve our office when things go wrong. Myki and concession complaints featured strongly in the issues raised with us, and we received lots of general feedback on the public transport system, both bad and good.

O-Week Survey

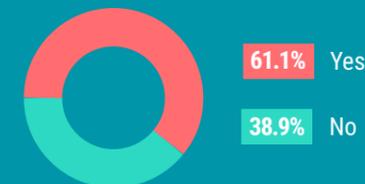
One of the recommendations of the Scheme review was to increase awareness of the PTO and how people can access our services so we attended four University O-Week Market Day festivals across Melbourne. Because young people are more likely to have low complaint efficacy, we conducted a survey at these Universities to capture students' knowledge of the PTO and our services, and to gain insight into their experiences with public transport.

Highlights from the O-Week survey

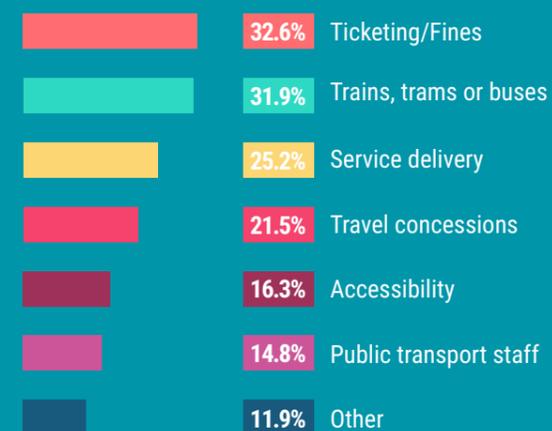
Q: Did you know about the PTO?



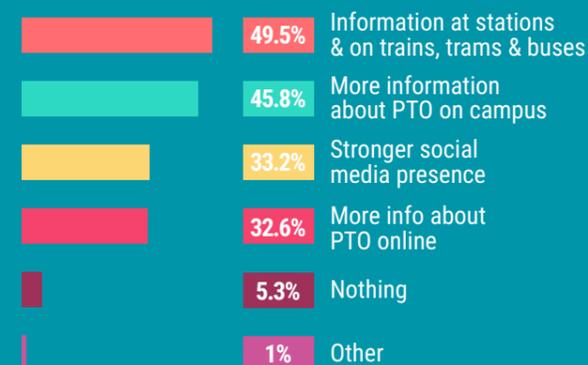
Q: Have you ever had a complaint about public transport?



Q: If yes, did your complaint relate to any of the below issues?



Q: What could we do to make it easier for you to contact us if you have a complaint about public transport?



Accessibility and Inclusion

The accessibility of public transport continues to be a major focus of the work we do. Accessible public transport is essential to meet the needs of everyone's daily lives and support them to participate fully in the community, and we continue to implement new and improved ways to address this.

Accessibility and Inclusion Action Plan

At the start of the year we developed a comprehensive [Accessibility and Inclusion Action Plan](#) which includes measures for raising awareness of the PTO, engaging with people with disabilities and their advocates, reaching young people, those living in regional or rural Victoria and for people from non-English backgrounds.

Some of these measures include attending both metropolitan and regional disability expos, partnering with the Disability Resource Centre (DRC) to participate in regional public transport workshops and upgrading our website to make our systemic investigations process more accessible.

Auslan Video

As part of the Public Transport Ombudsman Awareness Strategy for 2020 we are making it easier for people to contact us, including people with accessibility needs.

This year we filmed a new [Auslan video](#) in spoken word and Auslan, providing information about what we do and how people can access our service. The film was shot at various locations around Melbourne and Victoria on public transport with the assistance of Auslan interpreters. Auslan is the Australian sign language for people who are Deaf.

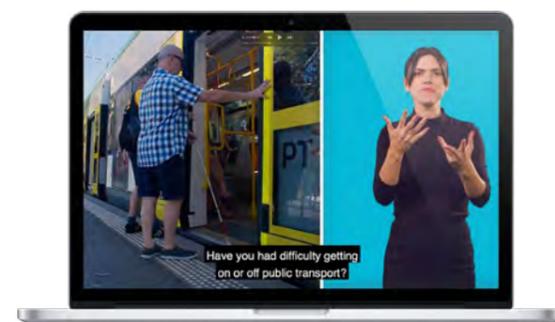
Have Your Say

Our systemic issues process is one way in which we can address systemic failings regarding accessibility and bring about improvements to the public transport system. We identify potential systemic issues through the complaints we receive, from advocacy or community organisations, and sometimes from the public transport operators themselves.

To make it even easier for people to contact us about issues with public transport we implemented a [Have Your Say](#) feature on our website. The feature allows us to capture issues from people who may not necessarily want to make a complaint but want to alert us to an issue with public transport they think may affect more people. Namely, a systemic issue.

After people leave the information about the issue, we then assess it to decide if it raises a systemic issue that needs to be addressed.

Feedback from organisations like the DRC and Traveller's Aid tells us that the [Have Your Say](#) page is an important step in reaching more people and providing easy access to vulnerable groups.



Screengrab from the PTO Auslan video

Accessibility Bulletin 2020

In April, we released our second annual [Accessibility Bulletin](#), which looked at some of the accessibility challenges facing Victorians using public transport, or who are affected by public transport works. The Bulletin explored some of the current issues with accessibility and the measures we are taking to make it easier for people to complain to us.

Since 2014, complaints about accessibility of public transport have comprised between two to seven per cent of the total complaints we receive. We believe this figure under-represents the difficulties faced by some people accessing public transport. We continue to hear from advocacy agencies who tell us that people who are more vulnerable are very often unlikely or unwilling to complain when things go wrong.

Further to this, our research tells us that people with disabilities in particular are less likely to complain when things go wrong. Because of this, it is important that public transport is accessible and that our services are accessible to people when they want to make a complaint.

We continued to build on our partnerships with organisations like the DRC to identify and address barriers to accessible public transport and make sure everyone feels they have a voice when it comes to complaining about public transport.

Travel Assistance Program

This year saw the expansion of the award-winning Travel Assistance Program to more schools with the help of a grant from the State Government. We continued to work with WEstjustice and other partners to support students in the City of Wyndham who face challenges getting to school because of housing instability.

WEstjustice continue to work on managing the program with the monthly vulnerable persons Pass, which is being trialled by the Department of Transport. We have continued to support the program to ensure all students on the program have the best support and travel outcomes.

Partners in the program include Victorian Council of Social Service, the Department of Education, the Department of Transport, the City of Wyndham and Metro. All members of the Steering Committee have an overriding commitment to support the students on the program to get the support they need and to continue their schooling.



Approaches With Issues by Member

BUSVIC	2019-2020
Investigation	41
Member - Complaint	74
Member - Enquiry	4
Assisted Referral	9
Total	128
Top Issues	
Staff	142
Service Delivery	92
Buses	27

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT (PTV)	2019-2020
Investigation	180
Member - Complaint	477
Member - Enquiry	250
Assisted Referral	135
Total	1,042
Top Issues	
myki	902
Staff	452
Service delivery	101

SOUTHERN CROSS STATION	2019-2020
Investigation	1
Member - Complaint	13
Member - Enquiry	4
Assisted Referral	1
Total	19
Top Issues	
Land and Infrastructure	14
Staff	4
Accessibility	1

TRANSDEV	2019-2020
Investigation	12
Member - Complaint	54
Member - Enquiry	10
Assisted Referral	6
Total	82
Top Issues	
Staff	86
Service Delivery	49
Buses	19

LEVEL CROSSING REMOVAL PROJECT	2019-2020
Investigation	15
Member - Complaint	26
Member - Enquiry	1
Assisted Referral	3
Total	45
Top Issues	
Land and Infrastructure	59
Staff	35
Service Delivery	14

METRO TRAINS	2019-2020
Investigation	103
Member - Complaint	578
Member - Enquiry	146
Assisted Referral	72
Total	899
Top Issues	
Service Delivery	763
Staff	405
Land and Infrastructure	234

VENTURA BUS LINES	2019-2020
Investigation	10
Member - Complaint	33
Member - Enquiry	1
Assisted Referral	3
Total	47
Top Issues	
Staff	46
Service Delivery	29
Buses	6

VICTRACK	2019-2020
Investigation	N/A
Member - Complaint	6
Member - Enquiry	2
Assisted Referral	3
Total	11
Top Issues	
Land and Infrastructure	12
Staff	3
N/A	N/A

RAIL PROJECTS VICTORIA	2019-2020
Investigation	9
Member - Complaint	25
Member - Enquiry	2
Assisted Referral	3
Total	39
Top Issues	
Land and Infrastructure	44
Staff	28
Service Delivery	4

SKYBUS	2019-2020
Investigation	3
Member - Complaint	17
Member - Enquiry	16
Assisted Referral	2
Total	38
Top Issues	
Staff	16
Ticketing	12
Service Delivery	6

V/LINE	2019-2020
Investigation	53
Member - Complaint	208
Member - Enquiry	141
Assisted Referral	52
Total	454
Top Issues	
Service Delivery	250
Staff	231
Land and Infrastructure	75

YARRA TRAMS	2019-2020
Investigation	45
Member - Complaint	130
Member - Enquiry	18
Assisted Referral	26
Total	219
Top Issues	
Staff	182
Service Delivery	85
Land and Infrastructure	54

Summary financial report

The following is a concise version of the Financial Report for the Public Transport Ombudsman Limited for the year ending 30 June 2020. The financial statements and specific disclosures contained in this concise financial report have been derived from the full financial report and the concise financial report cannot be expected to provide as full an understanding of the financial performance, financial position and financing and investing activities of the entity as the financial report.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE INCOME STATEMENT

REVENUE FROM ORDINARY ACTIVITIES

Revenue for the period ending 30 June 2020 was \$2,319,415. This was derived from the following sources:

- Annual Levies from Members: \$2,258,447
- Profit on sale of PPE: \$45; and
- Other Income: \$63,923

OPERATING EXPENSES

Operating Expenses for the period ending 30 June 2020 were \$2,193,234. The majority of operating expenses were employee benefits (\$1,674,082), telephone and IT expenses (\$141,270), depreciation and amortisation expenses (149,195) and occupancy expenses (\$48,685).

INCOME TAX

The Australian Taxation Office ("ATO") issued a private tax ruling declaring that the company is deemed exempt from income tax for the financial years ending 30 June 2019 to 30 June 2022.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF THE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

TOTAL ASSETS

Total assets increased by \$299,599 during the period due primarily to an increase in total current assets of \$65,440 and an increase in non-current assets of \$234,159.

TOTAL LIABILITIES

Total Liabilities increased by \$173,418 during the period. This is due to an increase in total current liabilities of \$94,811 and non-current liabilities of \$78,607.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF THE STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES

Cash at the end of the financial year as shown in the statements of cash flows is \$1,071,689. This was derived from:

- Cash inflow from operating activities \$328,235
- Cash outflow from investing activities (\$28,383)
- Cash outflow from financing activities (\$122,149); and
- Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of financial year \$893,986.

Audited Financial Statements and Directors' Report for the Public Transport Ombudsman Limited have been lodged with ASIC in accordance with the Corporations Act requirements.

INCOME STATEMENT

For the year ended 30 June 2020

	2020 \$	2019 \$
REVENUE	2,319,415	2,070,003
Employee benefits expense	1,674,082	1,567,132
Depreciation and amortisation expense	149,195	56,057
Occupancy costs	48,685	136,802
Telephone and IT expenses	141,270	138,901
Consultancy expenses	41,739	60,582
Other expenses from ordinary activities	138,263	124,053
(Loss) / Surplus before income tax expense	126,181	(13,524)
Income tax expense	-	-
Total Comprehensive (Loss) / Income for the year	126,181	(13,524)

BALANCE SHEET

As at 30 June 2020

	2020 \$	2019 \$
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	1,071,689	893,986
Trade and other receivables	493,248	601,722
Other assets	308	4,097
Total Current Assets	1,565,245	1,499,805
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Property, plant and equipment	20,434	29,560
Right of use asset	234,485	-
Intangible assets	40,398	31,598
Total Non-Current Assets	295,317	61,158
Total Assets	1,860,562	1,560,963
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Trade and other payables	163,966	168,716
Right of use asset liability	121,332	-
Employee benefit liability	105,255	80,381
Other liabilities	713,387	760,032
Total Current Liabilities	1,103,940	1,009,129
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Provisions	28,158	28,158
Right of use asset liability	120,552	-
Employee benefit liability	14,133	56,078
Total Non-Current Liabilities	162,843	84,236
Total Liabilities	1,266,783	1,093,365
NET ASSETS	593,779	467,598
EQUITY		
Retained surplus	593,779	467,568
Total equity	593,779	467,568

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY

For the year ended 30 June 2020

	2020 \$	2019 \$
Total Equity at the beginning of the financial year	467,598	481,122
Total comprehensive income for the year	126,181	(13,524)
Total Equity at the end of the financial year	593,779	467,598

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOW

For the year ended 30 June 2020

	2020 \$	2019 \$
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
Receipts from Members	2,342,227	1,933,651
Payments to suppliers and employees	(2,074,915)	(1,980,755)
Other Income	50,000	-
Interest received	10,923	17,125
Net cash inflow from operating activities	328,235	(29,979)
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES		
Payments for office equipment	(6,110)	(6,973)
Payments for intangible assets	(22,920)	(22,920)
Proceeds from office equipment	647	-
Net cash (outflow) from investing activities	(28,383)	(29,893)
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES		
Lease liability	(113,042)	-
Interest	(9,107)	-
Net cash (outflow) from financing activities	(122,149)	-
Net increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	177,703	(59,872)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of financial year	893,986	953,858
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of financial year	1,071,689	893,986

CONTACT US

Telephone

1800 466 865*

** Free from landlines, standard rates apply for calls from mobiles. If you call from a mobile you can ask us to call you back.*

If you are deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment you can contact us by:

National Relay Service (NRS)

- Contacting the [National Relay Service](#)
- Providing the NRS with the Public Transport Ombudsman number (1800 466 865).

If you speak a language other than English you can contact us by:

Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)

- Information about TIS can be found on the [TIS website](#).
- 131 450

Complaint form

Submit a complaint via our [online complaint form](#) here.

Email

enquiries@ptovic.com.au

** Emails received outside of PTO business hours are addressed the next business day and you should hear back from us within three business days.*

Mail address

Public Transport Ombudsman
PO Box 538
Collins Street West
MELBOURNE VIC 8007

Social media

facebook.com/PublicTransportOmbudsman/
twitter.com/ptovic

Hours of operation

9.00 am to 5.00 pm
Monday to Friday



**PUBLIC
TRANSPORT
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