

MEDIA RELEASE

Public Transport Ombudsman



Tuesday 10 November 2020

SERVICE DELIVERY TO TICKETING – HOW COVID-19 IMPACTED OMBUDSMAN COMPLAINTS IN 2020

EMBARGOED UNTIL 1 A.M. 11 NOVEMBER 2020

Data released by the Acting Public Transport Ombudsman Mr Simon McKenzie today shows that complaints about public transport were on track to exceed previous years before the onset of COVID-19 impacted the network in March.

For the 2019/20-year, overall approaches at 3373 were down 6% from the previous year. Complaints to the PTO decreased 13% from 2780 to 2428.

The year began with more approaches to the PTO compared with last year, with complaints about Staff, Service Delivery and Ticketing the main areas of concern. Service Delivery complaints were up by 6% compared with last year, while Staff issues decreased (-7%), as did Ticketing (-13%) in the first nine months compared to the previous year.

The onset of COVID-19 and the declaration of the State of Emergency in March meant that patronage on the network rapidly declined, as did the number of approaches to the PTO.

Of 215 issues raised by consumers who said COVID-19 was relevant to why they contacted us, over 50% were related to ticketing, including concerns about processing of refunds or sorting out myki balances.

COVID-19 caused consumers to reassess their pre-purchased myki Passes and seek refunds of myki Money balances. Also of note:

- 27% of issues raised by consumers about COVID-19 involved concerns about social distancing or the perception that public transport operators should do more to encourage or enforce social distancing;
- 7% of issues raised by consumers about COVID-19 involved hygiene and cleaning on vehicles and network assets.

We continue to collect data as Victoria responds to COVID-19 and we share this information with members involved in network planning.

Mr McKenzie said as passengers start travelling on the network again, ticketing products will need to evolve to be more flexible and easier to use to meet the requirements of passengers.

“More flexible and simpler ticketing products may be required to meet people’s expectations as consumers return to the network under COVID-normal,” Mr McKenzie said.

“Community confidence about 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.”

“We expect that social distancing is going to be a challenge as people return to the network. Already we are hearing that people are concerned about physical distancing on public transport,” Mr McKenzie added.

More information can be found in the 2019/20 PTO Annual Report, which is available at:
<https://www.ptovic.com.au/about-us/publications-media/annual-reports>

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.

The members are Public Transport Victoria, BusVic, Metro Trains, Southern Cross Station, Transdev, Skybus, Ventura, V/Line, VicTrack, Yarra Trams, Level Crossing Removal Project and Rail Projects Victoria.

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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