



MEDIA RELEASE: PUBLIC TRANSPORT OMBUDSMAN 2016 ANNUAL REPORT – REGIONAL NORTH

V/LINE COMPLAINTS UP DUE TO WHEEL WEAR ISSUES

The Public Transport Ombudsman (PTO) Treasure Jennings released figures today showing a significant increase in complaints from Victorian commuters about V/Line.

Ms Jennings said the figures, presented in the PTO's 2015/16 Annual Report, were reflective of a large and unexpected disruption V/Line experienced at the start of 2016.

"Commuters were greatly impacted for some time by V/Line needing to address a serious wheel wear issue on many of their carriages," she said.

"Many people across Victoria contacted my office with complaints relating to cancellations, disruptions and punctuality of services. My office also initiated 8 formal investigations and made several recommendations to V/Line to drive improvements with their customer communication and claims processing.

"Although we have been pleased with the response from V/Line, the best way for us to gauge progress on these issues is if we continue to hear from Victorian commuters.

"It is important people understand that the PTO is the independent umpire and we are here to help resolve consumer concerns or complaints about public transport," Ms Jennings said.

As reported in the annual report, in 2015/16 the PTO recorded 5,320 issues within 3,412 approaches and conducted 358 investigations.

Of the 3,412 complaints, 359 were recorded from people living in regional Victoria or Melbourne's outer fringe and 105 from the Northern region, resulting in 11 investigations. Bendigo and Seymour were represented in the Top 25 regional hotspots with 15 complaints from Bendigo residents and 6 from Seymour.

Across the State in 2015/16, the top five issues identified by consumers were – myki, matters involving transport staff, the issuing of infringement notices, service delivery, infrastructure and rolling stock.

Ms Jennings commented that although myki remained the main reason why people contacted the PTO, it was pleasing to see overall complaint numbers in this area fall again, with a 36% drop last financial year.

“A concerning trend in 2015/16 was the 16% increase in issues about the behaviour of Authorised Officers (AOs),” she said.

“This increase is concerning given the previous three Victorian Ombudsman’s investigations and work by Public Transport Victoria to review and improve AO training.

“Looking forward, we are expecting to see an increase in complaints relating to major infrastructure transport projects including level crossing removals, the Melbourne Metro Rail Project and the extension of the line to Mernda.

“Large projects like these can have significant impacts on both transport users and non-passengers and my office is able to assist with complaints related to public transport construction and works such as noise and other disruptions to homes and businesses.”

More information about the PTO and the 2015/16 PTO Annual Report, can be found at <http://www.ptovic.com.au/>

The Public Transport Ombudsman is a not-for-profit, independent dispute resolution body providing free, fair and informal service for the resolution of complaints about Victorian public transport operators who are members of the PTO scheme.

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

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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Media inquiries:
Sarah Bishop, Activate Consulting
Mobile: 0403 214 449; Email: sarah@activatepeople.com