



**MEDIA RELEASE: PUBLIC TRANSPORT OMBUDSMAN 2016/17 ANNUAL REPORT – REGIONAL EAST
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PTO TO INCREASE FOCUS ON REGIONAL ISSUES

The Public Transport Ombudsman (PTO), Treasure Jennings reported today that her office would increase its focus on regional issues, particularly looking at the paper ticketing system used by some regional commuters.

Earlier this year the PTO visited 35 towns across regional and metropolitan Victoria. As reported in the PTO 2016/17 Annual Report, released today, concern over the paper ticketing system was the most common issue raised in-person by regional commuters.

“People told us that the dual myki/paper system was a major inconvenience, especially when people had to make separate trips to pick up paper tickets before travelling,” Ms Jennings said.

“In addition to the in-person feedback, we have been receiving complaints about the paper ticket system over a number of years.

“Other common concerns raised on our regional Roadshow included land use issues around public transport such as graffiti, noise, dust, vegetation control and maintenance.”

Ms Jennings said in terms of official complaints made to the PTO, the top issues raised in 2016/17 by regional commuters were - matters involving transport staff, infrastructure and rolling stock, myki and service delivery.

“Matters involving transport staff, including issues about customer service and staff behaviour, made up 33% of regional complaints across the top four areas of concern,” she said.

“Infrastructure and rolling stock concerns, including the state of vehicles and tracks also featured strongly.”

Last financial year the PTO recorded 3,016 approaches, 1,147 complaints and 312 requests for information and conducted 432 investigations.

Of the 3,016 approaches, 16% were recorded from people living in regional Victoria or Melbourne’s outer fringe. Traralgon and Warragul were in the top 10 regional hotspots.

Across the State in 2016/17, the top five issues identified by consumers were – myki, matters involving transport staff, service delivery, infrastructure and rolling stock and the issuing of infringement notices.

Ms Jennings commented that the largest increase in complaints last financial year was related to service delivery, including concerns about reliability of services, insufficient replacement services and cancellations.

“This shift in complaints was expected given the growing pressure on the public transport network, stemming from various sources including patronage growth, increasing traffic and congestion and the disruption caused by the many transport major projects such as the removal of level crossings.

“While providers are doing a commendable job dealing with these challenges, it is important for people to know that they can contact the PTO for advice and assistance if they feel unfairly impacted by these disruptions, including those who live near-by major transport works.”

Ms Jennings said there were also pleasing results last financial year across the State, including a 30% reduction in the number of complaints to the PTO about transport fines and Authorised Officers.

“There was also a 12% drop in complaints about myki, which follows a 36% reduction in myki complaints from the previous year,” she said.

“These positive results show us that the work we have been doing with the community, government and transport providers can produce real tangible benefits and ongoing improvement to the experience of using public transport in Victoria.”

More information about the PTO and the 2016/17 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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