

## **MEDIA RELEASE: PUBLIC TRANSPORT OMBUDSMAN 2017/18 ANNUAL REPORT** **EMBARGOED UNTIL 1 A.M. 4 DECEMBER 2018**

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The Public Transport Ombudsman (PTO), Treasure Jennings released figures today showing a substantial increase in the number of complaints about public transport service delivery. Issues such as punctuality and reliability of service rose by over 40% in response to disruption and congestion on the public transport network.

The figures, released in the PTO's 2017/18 Annual Report, show that service delivery overtook myki as the most complained about aspect of public transport.

Ms Jennings said public transport services were facing challenges due to increases in passenger demand coupled with disruption caused by upgrade works.

*"Given the level of scheduled disruptions, we were expecting an uplift in complaints and the increase is within the expected range. Overall it seems that planned disruptions were reasonably well managed and accepted by the community. However unplanned disruptions, on top of planned disruptions, are understandably less well received,"* she said.

*"Public transport operators need to be vigilant in ensuring that when unplanned disruptions to service do occur, the correct information is provided to the public in a prompt and targeted manner, so people have a reasonable opportunity to change their travel plans".*

The Public Transport Ombudsman received 3056 approaches in 2017/2018, a slight increase on the previous year with an increase of 38% in the number of investigations.

*"The changing public transport landscape means that complaints to our office are becoming more complex, and while the number of complaints remained steady, we are undertaking more and more detailed investigations into disputes that cannot be resolved in the first instance".*

A consumer based complaints Ombudsman such as the PTO serves the community by highlighting more widespread concerns to government and helping public transport operators understand how they can improve their services. The problems with the V/Line paper ticket system was an example of a systemic enquiry that was identified by the PTO following consumer complaints and feedback from regional councils.

Ms Jennings said that this broad approach to dispute resolution saw the PTO partner with WEstjustice legal service in Melbourne's west to deliver an innovative pilot program to address problems associated with vulnerable youth and public transport.

*"I'm very proud that our work on this project was recognised with the 2018 Innovation of the Year award from the Australian Disputes Centre. More recently, the State Government announced funding for an expanded program in 2018 that would see public transport being made accessible to many more young people in need".*

More information can be found in the 2017/18 PTO Annual Report, which is available at:  
<https://www.ptovic.com.au/publications-a-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, V/Line, VicTrack, Yarra Trams, Level Crossing Removal Authority and Melbourne Metro Rail Authority. SkyBus has joined the PTO with effect from 1 July 2018.

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](http://www.ptovic.com.au), call 1800 466 865 or search 'Public Transport Ombudsman' on Facebook.

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