



Annual Report
2025



CONTENTS

Year at a glance	4
Complaint issues	5
Chair's report	6
Ombudsman's report	8
PTO Scheme members	10
Staff profile: Holly Patterson	12
How we manage approaches to the PTO	14
Conciliations	16
Investigations	18
Fines complaints	20
Snapshot of fines complaints handled by the PTO in 2024-25	22
Authorised Officers	24
Case study: Shan's complaint about an Authorised Officer	26
Default fares	28
Case study: Brendan's complaint about a default fare	30
Case study: Silvia's complaint about a fine	32
Default fares: A systemic improvement opportunity	34
Service disruptions	36
Case study: Emily's complaint about disruption information	38
Case study: Eileen's complaint about a disrupted service	40
Community outreach and accessibility	42
Case study: Martin's complaint about using his Access Travel Pass	44
Continuous improvement and the PTO	46
Our Board	48
Approaches with issues by member	50
Summary Financial Statements	52



OUR NEW BRAND

This year, we conducted a review of our public communications and brand. Our aim was to consider ways to better communicate who we are, what we do, and the benefits we provide to our stakeholders. A key outcome was a new Public Transport Ombudsman (PTO) visual identity – the first substantial refresh of our landmark since the PTO was established in 2004.

Our new logo's three arrows represent the three parties to our complaint processes – customer, member organisation and the PTO. The arrows unite to form a wheel that reinforces the concept of forward-motion, and a stylised 'O' that signifies Ombudsman. This brings our new brand 'essence' *move forward fairly* to life by embodying progress and positive direction.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Public Transport Ombudsman respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we operate our services. We pay our respects to the ongoing living cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and to Elders past and present.

* A note about case studies: all names and any identifying details have been changed to protect complainants' privacy.

YEAR AT A GLANCE



499

Enquiries
about members



310

Approaches about
non-members



3,057
Approaches
to the PTO



1,671

Complaints referred
to members



262

Approaches about
fines



295

Conciliations
opened



20

Investigations
opened

COMPLAINT ISSUES



706
Service
delivery



570
Staff



422
Land and
infrastructure



422
Myki



390
General
enquiries



264
Infringement
notices



244
Trams, trains
and buses



160
Authorised
Officers



109
Non-myki
ticketing



76
Accessibility



2
Protective Services
Officers



1
Privacy

CHAIR'S REPORT



It is my pleasure to present the PTO's Annual Report for 2024-25, my first since being appointed as Chair of the PTO Board in November 2024. It is an exciting time for public transport in Victoria, and it has been a year of significant progress for the PTO.

One of my first responsibilities as Chair was to host the Minister for Public and Active Transport, members, PTO alumni and community stakeholders at our 20th anniversary celebration in November. The event provided an opportunity to reflect on two decades of achievements since establishment in 2004 and also look forward to future priorities in Victoria's rapidly evolving and dynamic public transport landscape.

The year provided an important opportunity for strategic reflection through the independent five-year Scheme Review. The PTO Board commissioned cameron. ralph. khoury to conduct the review, which pleasingly affirmed that the PTO continues to operate as an effective Ombudsman scheme, delivering an accessible and independent dispute resolution service. The Review also offered recommendations to further strengthen the PTO's service delivery and enhance our capacity to provide insights that contribute to a better public transport system. The Board has carefully considered the recommendations, and the PTO team are now implementing the recommendations across our dispute resolution and systemics functions.

This Annual Report also marks the introduction of the PTO's new visual identity. Developed as part of a comprehensive brand strategy across 2024-25, our new visual identity aims to strengthen effectiveness and ensure clarity and consistency in all communications.

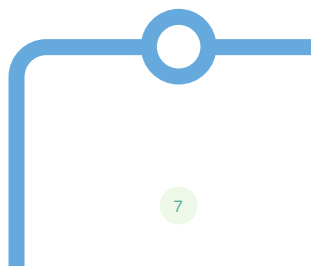
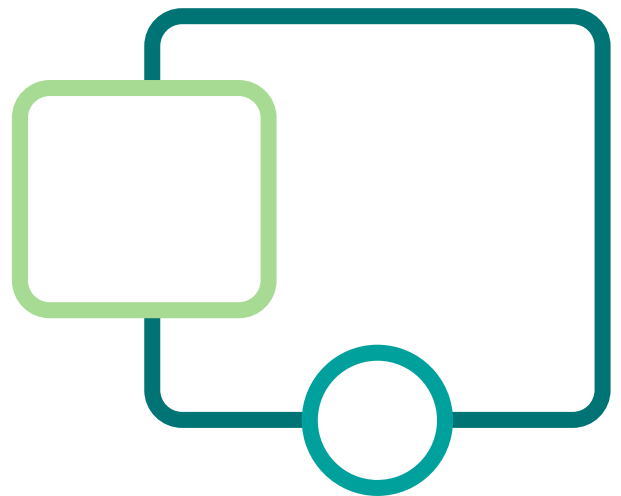
We acknowledge the significant contributions of outgoing Board members. Llewellyn Prain concluded her 9-year tenure as a Consumer Director, and Member of the Finance and Audit Committee in June 2025. Her insight and practical wisdom supported both the effective governance of the organisation and the improved accessibility of PTO services.

In December, Pete Gleeson of Metro Trains completed his term on the Board. Pete's positive energy and keen commercial acumen were appreciated by the Board and the Performance and Remuneration Committee. We welcomed Lisa Stolt from V/Line to the Board in January.

Financial performance for the 2024-25 financial year was well within the budget set by the Board and approved by members. The PTO reported an operating deficit of \$4,693 against a budgeted deficit of \$89,378, reflecting in part, savings from outsourcing finance functions to external accountants, and higher-than-anticipated interest income due to interest rates and improved utilisation of PTO funds.

As the strength of this year's Annual Report attests, the team at the PTO has undertaken a powerhouse of work in these 12 months. I extend my sincere appreciation to the PTO team for their outstanding work and to the Ombudsman, Ann Jorgensen, for her exemplary leadership.

Aisha Nicolay
Chair



OMBUDSMAN'S REPORT



The PTO operates in a dynamic sector that provides people with a vital connection to education, work and community life. It is important that the PTO meets the needs of the community and the sector, and for us to continuously seek to improve the service that we offer.

In the 2024-25 financial year we marked 20 years of operation and undertook significant work to set the foundations for the PTO for the next decade.

Key to this was the independent review of our Scheme which comprehensively examined all aspects of our work, including our complaint handling, governance, accessibility and systemic improvement role. The insights and recommendations of the Review support us to deliver on our commitment to delivering a fair and efficient dispute resolution service and improving public transport for the Victorian community.

In response to the Review, we have developed a detailed implementation plan and our team have been working steadily on a number of projects within it. Key initial work done in 2024-25 was the review of our Complaint Handling Procedures and better resourcing our systemic improvement function.

On 1 July we went live with our new software platform (Dynamics 365) for complaint handling, and our team did an incredible job in getting up to speed with the new system and providing vital feedback to ensure that it works most effectively. The new system provides more flexibility to customise as our needs change and gives us greater capacity to more effectively utilise data about complaints.

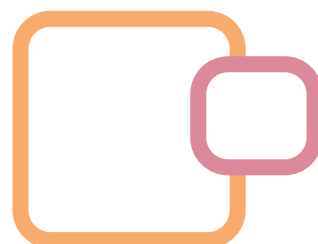
After a decade in our previous premises, the PTO moved offices in May. Our new office space provides a more modern work environment with better opportunities for collaboration and breakout spaces.

We also commenced work on a range of projects that will be finalised in 2025-26 including the development of a brand strategy and new visual identity, a new website with greater functionality and new three-year strategic plan.

In this Annual Report we look at four thematic areas from our work – public transport fines, Authorised Officers, default fares and disruption. We have presented case studies showing how the PTO handles complaints in these areas and we share insights from our work to contribute to system improvements.

We have a fantastic, hard-working team at the PTO. The support that the team provides to each other has enabled us to do an enormous amount of work this year and to continue to provide a responsive service to the community. I particularly value the insights the team has contributed this year to the Scheme Review and brand strategy. I thank all of the staff for their enthusiasm for what we do and their continued kindness and dedication.

Ann Jorgensen
Ombudsman





PTO SCHEME MEMBERS





K/NET/C



STAFF PROFILE:

HOLLY PATTERSON

Holly is a PTO Conciliator who specialises in complaints about public transport fines and Authorised Officers. She's been part of the PTO team since August 2022.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE "CAREER PATH" THAT LED TO YOUR ROLE WITH THE PTO?

I studied social work as a mature age student. My mum is a community worker so it's something I'd always seen as really valuable work. After I graduated, I worked for the Department of Health as a case worker for a couple of years. And then – because I'd had my first child and I needed more time – I started looking for a part-time role. It was actually my husband who saw the PTO job ad and thought it would be a really good fit. At the time, I was a bit more "hmmm, maybe, I'm not sure ...". But it's definitely been a good fit.

I do think my work at the PTO is very much informed by my social work training. There are a lot of sensitive conversations, and I'm often speaking with people who are quite vulnerable. And with the fines work, it's often people who are feeling really upset by the fines review system but who aren't quite sure how to navigate it. So that's part of the role, too – explaining what information people need to provide, the documents they need to show, that type of thing.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT WORKING AT THE PTO?

I think it's two-fold. The first is that I really like the people. Everyone seems to have a really genuine passion for the work the PTO does. And that's something I like – because I like being around people who are interested, and engaged, and who want to contribute to helping people and improving things. I think everyone's on the same page in that way.

I also find the work I do really interesting. There's room to take a broader view on individual matters and think about wider system improvements, to identify issues that may be more systemic. And not just room – it's encouraged. Which is great for me, personally, being encouraged to do what interests me most.

WHAT DOES THE "DAY TO DAY" OF YOUR JOB LOOK LIKE?

With the fines work, I speak with people who've got a fine that they don't think is fair. My job is to listen and ask questions, to get an understanding of the broader circumstances around the incident that led to them being fined. Sometimes, it's about getting an understanding of their 'life' circumstances – what might have been going on for them, that's possibly contributed to them getting a fine.

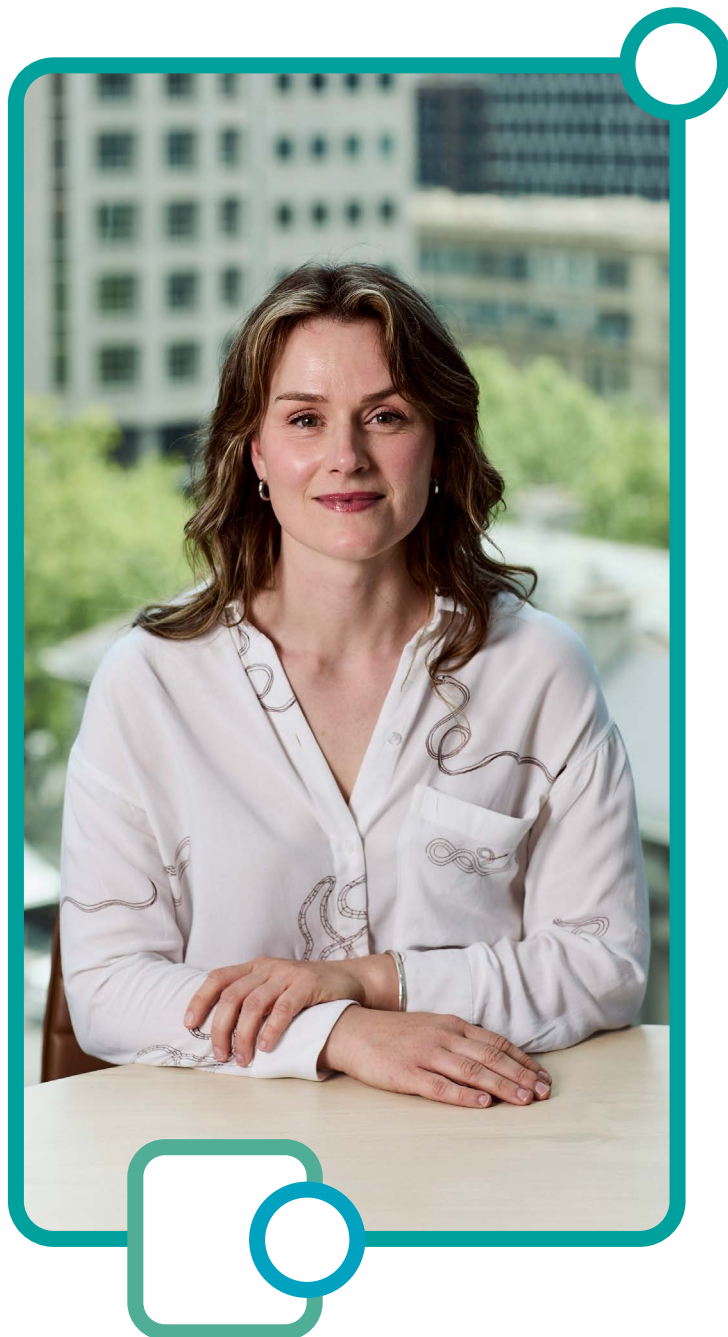
After that, I determine whether we can assist them further – which essentially means whether what they've shared with me might meet the criteria for "special" or "exceptional" circumstances. Then my job is to gather all the relevant information and evidence – from the person and the Department – so we can form an independent view about whether the fine is fair.

For Authorised Officer complaints, it's a similar approach in that it also starts with a conversation with the person making the complaint, about their experience of the incident they've complained about. But an Authorised Officer case is different in that it means running an investigation process. An investigation means I conduct an independent assessment of the incident, based on all the available information and evidence.

WHAT DO YOU GET UP TO IN YOUR SPARE TIME?

I've got two little kids so there's really no such thing as spare time! My son is four years old and my daughter is nearly two. I like to garden – so I like recruiting the kids for gardening. Sometimes I can get them really engaged in it. Sometimes it's chaos. It really depends on the day!

I'm in the process of planning out a new garden. We moved to a new house not long ago and there's not much of an established garden. I really enjoy it as a creative outlet. If I had more spare time, that's what I'd be doing – more gardening.



HOW WE MANAGE APPROACHES TO THE PTO

The PTO handles consumer approaches in an accessible, fair and efficient manner. Our processes allow us to be flexible, and to apply the most suitable approach based on the circumstances of the complaint, the issues in question, and the previous attempts by the parties to resolve the matter. This may be through conciliation, investigation, or referral to a member or other relevant organisation.

Our processes are designed to assist parties in reaching agreement, taking into account applicable law, codes and standards, and industry practices. When complaints do not resolve by agreement, the PTO may make determinations about what is fair and reasonable in the circumstances, including making binding determinations if necessary.

REFERRAL TO A PTO SCHEME MEMBER

The PTO can only handle complaints if the relevant PTO member has been given a prior opportunity to resolve the complaint. If a consumer approaches us seeking information about a member, we record the interaction as a Member Enquiry and refer them back to the member. When a consumer raises concerns about a member or their services, we categorise the approach as a Member Complaint. In these circumstances, we take the consumer's details, issue a reference number and provide the consumer with a pathway back to us should they remain dissatisfied after raising their concerns with the member.

REFERRAL TO OTHER AGENCIES

When a complaint concerns a matter outside the scope of the PTO scheme or relates to an agency that is not a member, the PTO will refer the consumer to another agency that may be able to assist with the complaint. These cases are classified as Non-member Cases. They usually involve matters that are not related to public transport, are outside the PTO's jurisdiction, or are better handled by another agency such as the Victorian Ombudsman, Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner or the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission.

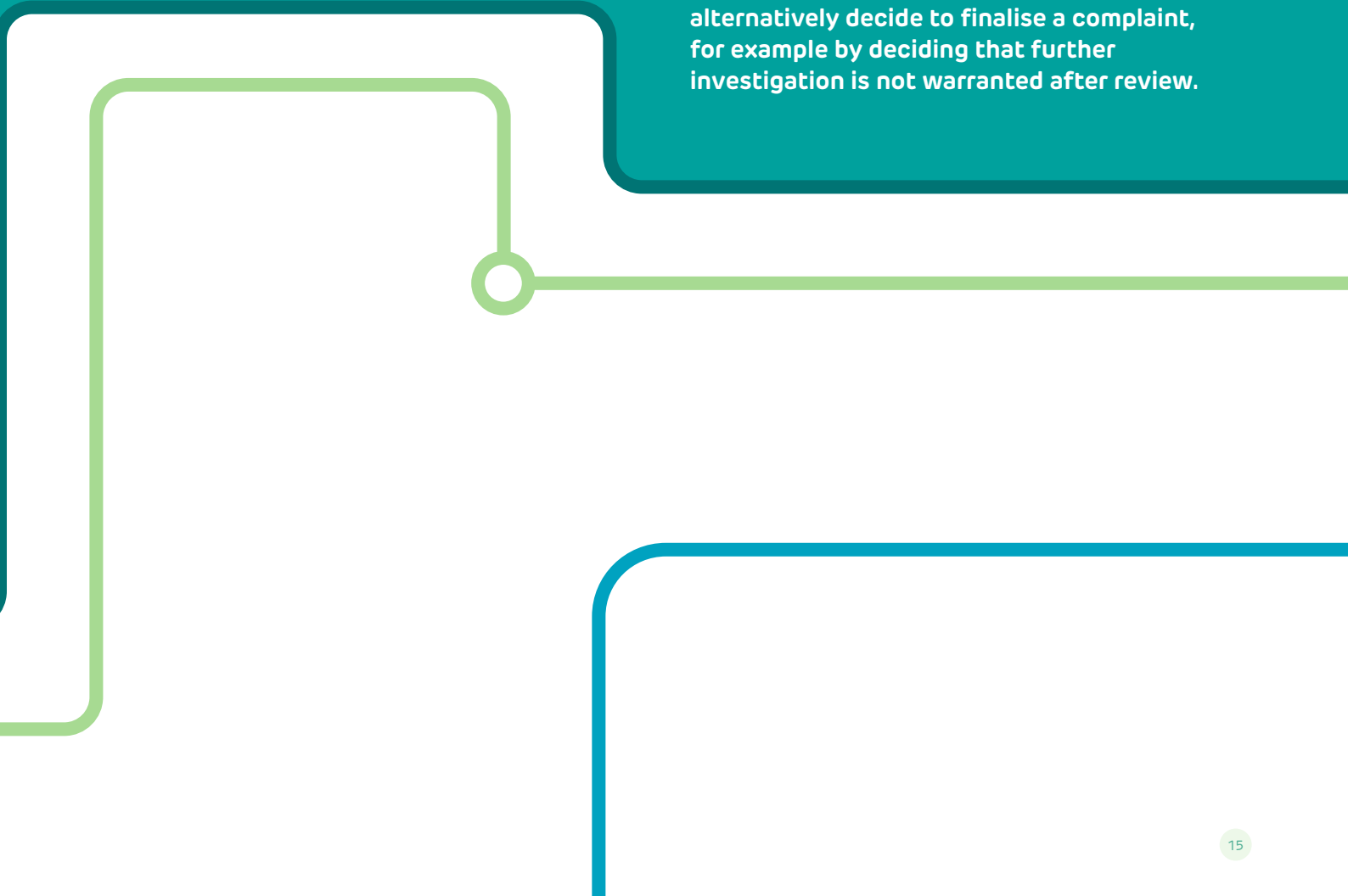


CONCILIATION

If a complaint between a consumer and member is unresolved, the PTO will generally attempt conciliation in the first instance. This process involves the PTO helping both parties reach agreement without making a formal decision or imposing a solution. During conciliation, the PTO utilises its knowledge of public transport, industry practice, and the application of dispute resolution techniques to assist parties to better understand and quantify the relevant issues, consider the other party's views, and generate options for fair resolution of the complaint.

INVESTIGATION

If a complaint cannot be resolved through conciliation, or the parties are better served by formal determination, the PTO may decide to conduct an investigation. Investigation is a more formal process that involves the PTO gathering and assessing information and evidence to make recommendations or decisions about how a complaint should be resolved. During investigation, the PTO may discuss potential options for resolution and will look to facilitate agreement between the parties where possible. Where agreement is not reached, the Ombudsman may decide to make a binding decision to resolve the complaint. The Ombudsman may alternatively decide to finalise a complaint, for example by deciding that further investigation is not warranted after review.



CONCILIATIONS

The PTO has a team of skilled conciliators who help consumers and members to resolve disputes and reach agreement. The PTO primarily uses conciliation to resolve disputes but may conduct an investigation where it is more appropriate in the circumstances.

The conciliation process involves conciliators working with consumers and members to clarify and explore complaint issues and party interests in support of finding a mutually agreed outcome.

CONCILIATIONS OPENED

We opened 295 conciliation cases in 2024-25, a decrease from 435 cases in 2023-24. The top conciliation issues are listed below.

 109	Staff Driver conduct; call centre staff; incorrect information/announcements by staff	 90	Land and infrastructure Property damage and nuisance from infrastructure works; fences and vegetation; track noise
 76	Service delivery Disruptions; service information/timetabling; replacement services; punctuality	 33	Myki Refunds; top-ups; overcharges
 43	Trams, trains, buses Door closures; accidents with vehicles; noise and pollution; safety and anti-social behaviour	 13	Accessibility Train station facilities; boarding ramps; driver behaviour
		 1	Authorised Officers Conduct; banking details



CLOSED CONCILIATIONS

The PTO finalised 297 conciliations during the year (down from 444 in 2023-24). The average resolution time for conciliated cases was 43 days, an improvement from 46 days in 2023-24.

CONCILIATION OUTCOMES

In 2024-25, 75 conciliations were resolved through financial redress totalling \$31,420.39 (refunds, reimbursements, compensation and goodwill gestures).

Non-monetary outcomes included:

- 281 detailed explanations being provided to consumers
- 114 formal apologies being issued
- 93 member undertakings
- 24 agreements to undertake staff training
- 27 instances of staff counselling or disciplinary action
- 8 modifications to a member policy or process.



INVESTIGATIONS

The PTO may choose to investigate a complaint as an alternative to conciliation for complex matters or where conciliation has been unsuccessful. During an investigation, we collect information from the parties by asking members and consumers questions and obtaining relevant evidence such as CCTV, myki records, medical certificates, receipts, or quotes. We also encourage parties to put forward resolution offers and come to an agreement where possible. If an agreement cannot be reached between the parties, we will assess the information provided and provide our formal view about how the complaint should resolve. In making decisions we determine what is fair and reasonable considering the relevant information, relevant laws and codes, and good industry practice.

INVESTIGATIONS OPENED

The PTO proceeded to investigation in 20 matters, up from 15 in 2023-24. The investigations contained the following issues:



Authorised Officers



Driver behaviour



Noise



Construction and maintenance



Accident and injury

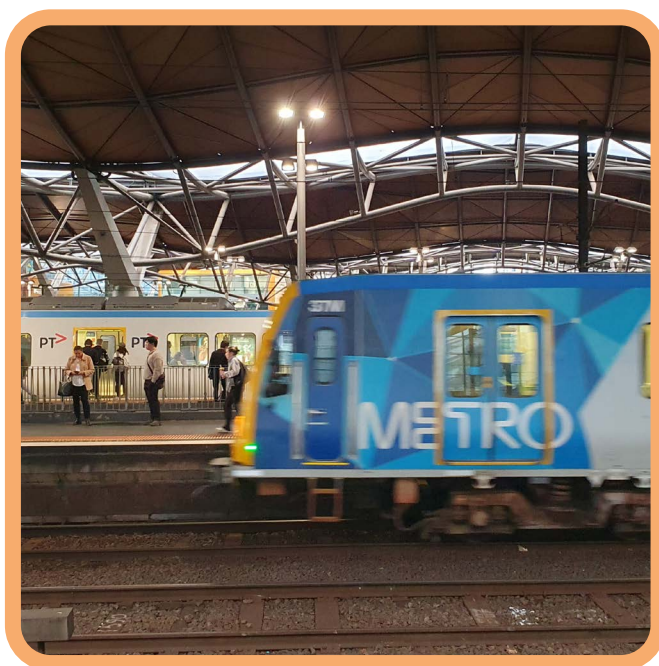


INVESTIGATIONS CLOSED

The PTO finalised 10 investigations during the year, down from 22 in 2023-24. The investigations were closed in an average of 132 days compared to 205 days in 2023-24.

Investigation outcomes from these matters included

- 8 detailed explanations being provided to consumers
- 4 apologies being issued
- 4 member undertakings
- 3 changes to a member policy or process
- 1 instance of financial redress
- 1 agreement to undertake staff training
- 1 instance of staff counselling or disciplinary action.



FINES COMPLAINTS

The PTO continues to handle fine matters under the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP). There were 262 approaches to the PTO about public transport fines in 2024-25, up from 186 in 2023-24.

FINES REFERRALS

Under our agreement with DTP, the PTO can only handle a complaint about a fine after a consumer has sought an internal review through DTP. When consumers approach the PTO prior to seek an internal review, we provide information about how to make an internal review application. The PTO referred 161 consumers to DTP to request an internal review and made 17 additional referrals to DTP for other issues such as queries about fines histories.

Where a consumer's fine has progressed beyond internal review stage or has other complexities, the PTO refers them to Fines Victoria, legal services or the Victorian Ombudsman as appropriate. This happened in 32 matters.

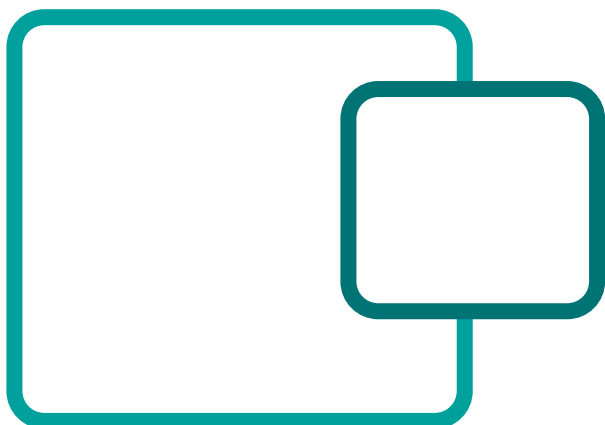
FINES CASES HANDLED BY THE PTO

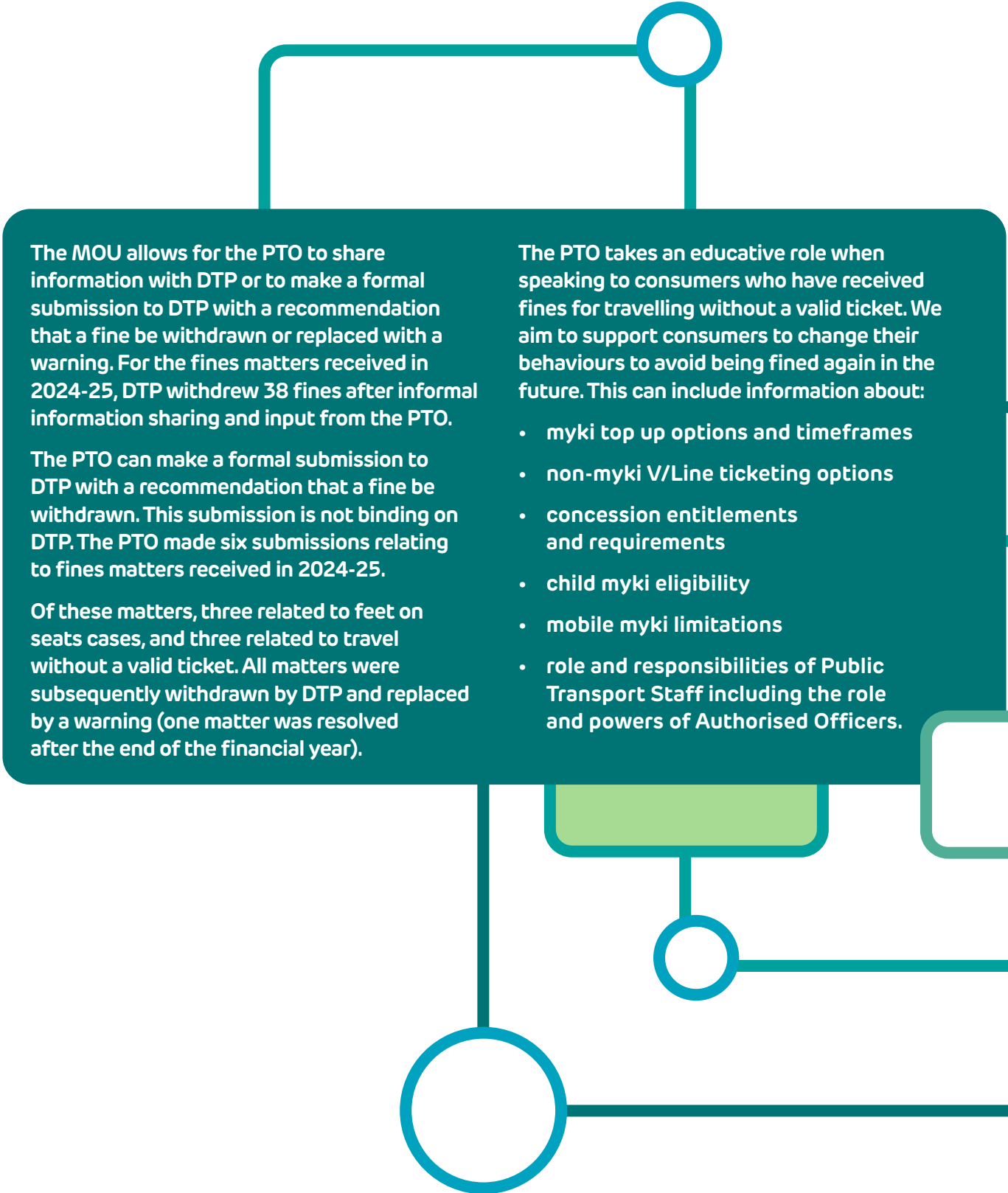
The PTO can handle fines cases if a consumer approaches us after their internal review has been unsuccessful and before their fine has progressed to Fines Victoria for enforcement.

The criteria for us to get involved is whether there are special or exceptional circumstances. We also consider the principles of fair and reasonable decision-making, in line with our overarching approach to dispute resolution.

In these cases, we talk to consumers to understand the circumstances that led to them getting fined. We may work with the consumer to get additional information such as travel history information, banking information (to show that a myki has been topped up) or medical information.

We also ask DTP to provide us with the information it has about a consumer's fine, including whether the consumer has previously received a fine or a warning and the reasons why their internal review was unsuccessful.





The MOU allows for the PTO to share information with DTP or to make a formal submission to DTP with a recommendation that a fine be withdrawn or replaced with a warning. For the fines matters received in 2024-25, DTP withdrew 38 fines after informal information sharing and input from the PTO.

The PTO can make a formal submission to DTP with a recommendation that a fine be withdrawn. This submission is not binding on DTP. The PTO made six submissions relating to fines matters received in 2024-25.

Of these matters, three related to feet on seats cases, and three related to travel without a valid ticket. All matters were subsequently withdrawn by DTP and replaced by a warning (one matter was resolved after the end of the financial year).

The PTO takes an educative role when speaking to consumers who have received fines for travelling without a valid ticket. We aim to support consumers to change their behaviours to avoid being fined again in the future. This can include information about:

- myki top up options and timeframes
- non-myki V/Line ticketing options
- concession entitlements and requirements
- child myki eligibility
- mobile myki limitations
- role and responsibilities of Public Transport Staff including the role and powers of Authorised Officers.

SNAPSHOT OF FINES COMPLAINTS HANDLED BY THE PTO IN 2024-25

These snapshot stories are indicative of types of fines complaints we have handled, and the kind of assistance we've been able to provide.

WINNIE

Winnie rarely uses public transport. Her car broke down one morning, and she had to catch a bus to get to an important work meeting. Winnie knew her myki had around \$12 on it but she wasn't aware that her myki had expired. She was reported for travelling without a valid ticket. After discussions with the PTO, the DTP replaced Winnie's fine with a warning, based on the circumstances of her offence and her lack of prior fines or warnings.

NOAH

Noah was a student in his first year of university study. He'd incorrectly believed his university student ID card was sufficient proof of his entitlement to travel on a Student Concession myki. He was reported for not carrying a valid concession entitlement.

Noah had withdrawn from his university course shortly before receiving the Infringement Notice, so he couldn't prove his entitlement retrospectively by applying for a PTV Tertiary Concession Card. We helped Noah gather evidence that showed he was eligible at the time of the offence. Based on this evidence, DTP withdrew Noah's fine and replaced it with a warning.

MICHAEL

Michael didn't realise his myki had a negative balance until he boarded a bus. He tried to complete an instant top-up via the PTV app, but his phone wouldn't scan his myki. His only other option was an online top-up, which meant a delay of 45 minutes before the funds could be used for travel. He was reported shortly after completing the online top-up transaction. After discussions with the PTO, DTP replaced Michael's fine with a warning, citing his attempts to rectify his negative balance, and his lack of prior fines or warnings.

RAVEENA

Raveena was six months pregnant when she was reported for putting her feet on the seats of a train. She explained that – while re-positioning her legs to reach the myki in her hip pocket, which she was doing in order to comply with an Authorised Officer's request to check her myki – one of her feet had briefly rested on the edge of the seat in front of her. After discussions with the PTO, DTP exercised its discretion to withdraw Raveena's fine and replace it with a warning.

OLIVIA

Olivia had a myki with a positive balance but was reported because she didn't touch-on immediately after boarding. She'd sat down straight away to alleviate severe menstrual pain and to ensure she wasn't on her feet when the bus started moving again. She intended to stand and touch-on when the bus next stopped. DTP upheld Olivia's fine on the basis that exceptional circumstances did not apply, and that she had previously received a warning for a concession offence.

We made a submission to DTP that Olivia's fine should be reconsidered and that her menstrual pain was a relevant circumstance. We also noted that Olivia's previous warning was for a different offence. DTP acknowledged that Olivia's prior warning was for a distinct offence and exercised its discretion to withdraw her fine and replace it with a warning.

AUTHORISED OFFICERS

The PTO saw a 40 per cent increase in Authorised Officer (AO) complaints in 2024-25, with 160 AO complaints received compared to 114 last year. However, we note that 22 AO complaints received this year pertained to a single incident that was widely publicised on social media involving an allegation that an AO had used excessive force.

AOs have substantial powers including powers to arrest individuals under certain circumstances. While AO complaints to the PTO represent a small percentage of the large number of interactions between passengers and AOs that take place on the network, the independent investigation of complaints about AO conduct is important for ensuring transparency, continuous improvement and community confidence in enforcement activity. The Victorian Ombudsman (VO) is also able to handle complaints about AOs and we refer cases to the VO where appropriate, particularly where there is an allegation of excessive use of force.

Most of the AO complaints we receive relate to the conduct of individual AOs. Typically, AO conduct complaints involve someone's experience of being stopped, questioned or reported by an AO.

In the context of increasing community concerns around privacy and a number of high-profile data breaches, the PTO has seen more complaints about the information that AOs obtain to establish a passenger's identity. One of the key themes we see in these types of complaints is concern regarding AOs checking banking apps to prove identity or confirm an address. The PTO is maintaining a watching brief on this issue which was also identified as an area for further systemic investigation in the 2024 Scheme Review.



HOW WE HANDLE COMPLAINTS ABOUT AUTHORISED OFFICERS

Our conciliation and investigation work in relation to AO complaints incorporates obtaining and viewing CCTV footage, reviewing statements and reports made by AOs, and reviewing the reports of any witnesses.

Of the 160 AO complaints we received in 2024-25, the PTO conciliated or investigated 10 of them. We referred 150 complaints to our scheme members Metro Trains, Yarra Trams and V/Line, who together are responsible for employing the public transport network's AO workforce.

Our unique position within the Victorian public transport sector affords us a view of AO practice across different operators and the network as a whole. We seek to contribute to improvements in AO practice by identifying and raising systemic issues (see case study on next page). We also participate in training sessions for new Authorised Officers by presenting information to AOs about how passengers can raise complaints about interactions with AOs, the types of issues we see typically see raised by complainants, and how AO complaints are handled.



AUTHORISED OFFICERS: ROLE AND POWERS

AOs are employed by public transport operators to check tickets, help prevent anti-social and unsafe behaviours, and assist passengers during special events and service disruptions.

AOs don't issue warnings or fines directly to passengers. If an AO believes a passenger has committed a public transport offence, they will report this to the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP). DTP then decide whether to issue an infringement notice to the passenger who was reported.

AOs must comply with the Code of Conduct for Public Transport Authorised Officers. They are authorised by law to ask passengers:

- to present tickets and concession entitlements for checking
- for their name, address and proof of identity
- to surrender their myki card or paper ticket for use as evidence.



CASE STUDY:

SHAN'S COMPLAINT ABOUT AN AUTHORISED OFFICER

Shan lives in Malaysia but was in Melbourne visiting her elderly mother. She was reported for not having a valid ticket on a tram. She was preoccupied with rushing to an appointment for her mother and hadn't yet tapped on her myki.

The Authorised Officer (AO) who approached Shan asked for proof of identification. Shan showed them her Malaysian ID card which lists her Malaysian address. The AO told Shan she was required to provide proof of an Australian address, noting that Shan had a Victorian Driver's licence in her wallet which they then asked to see. Shan's Victorian licence also lists her Malaysian address. The AO wouldn't accept either ID document and insisted that Shan provide an Australian address.

After discovering that Shan was visiting her mother, the AO said Shan needed to provide proof of her mother's address. Shan searched her emails and eventually found one that referenced her mother's address. It didn't contain a formal lease document but was correspondence Shan had sent to her mother's landlord. The AO accepted this email as proof of Shan's address, even though Shan doesn't live there, and recorded it in their Report of Non-Compliance.

Shan complained to Yarra Trams about her interaction with the AO. She found the experience distressing and felt she'd been treated like she was lying. She asked Yarra Trams to confirm if the AO had been right to refuse her Malaysian ID and insist that an Australian address be recorded in their report. She also wanted to ensure that the fine was sent to her own address and expressed concerns about the privacy of her mother's personal information.

WHY DID SHAN COMPLAIN TO THE PTO?

Shan believed Yarra Trams' response didn't adequately respond to her questions or address her complaint. She remained unclear about whether the AO had acted correctly when they refused to accept her ID or international residential address.

WHY, AND HOW, DID THE PTO INVESTIGATE SHAN'S COMPLAINT?

We chose to investigate Shan's complaint because it raised a significant issue regarding AO practice.

Our first step was to seek Yarra Trams' explanation for why Shan's Malaysian ID and Victorian Driver's licence weren't accepted by the AO. We noted that AO guidance materials state that the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) cannot issue or serve an infringement notice or a summons at someone else's address.

In subsequent discussions, Yarra Trams noted that their AO staff had operated for many years with the understanding that international addresses could not be used to issue infringements. Yarra Trams sought to clarify DTP's position on this point, as part of their response to our investigation. DTP confirmed that international addresses could be accepted.

WHAT WAS THE INVESTIGATION OUTCOME?

Yarra Trams acknowledged that their response to Shan's original complaint was based on a position that was incorrect. They apologised to Shan and arranged for DTP's record to be updated with her address in Malaysia. They also confirmed they had deleted any private information related to Shan's mother from their own records.

Yarra Trams confirmed that they communicated to all their AO staff that international addresses could be accepted and recorded.

A SYSTEMIC IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITY

Following the closure of Shan's investigation – and in line with our systemic enquiry process – we referred the matter to the DTP for consideration.

The Ombudsman determined that a systemic enquiry was appropriate to confirm DTP's position on the issue, and to make recommendations around ensuring all members of Victoria's AO workforce understand how to approach interactions with public transport users who hold international identity documents.

Our systemic enquiry to DTP noted that AO guidance materials were silent on the issue of recording international addresses and unclear about whether identity documents issued overseas could be used as primary proof of address. We also noted that current AO training and practice appeared to be at odds with DTP's advice that international addresses were acceptable for issuing infringement notices.

Our enquiry included the following recommendations to DTP:

- that communication clarifying DTP's position be provided to Yarra Trams, Metro Trains Melbourne, V/Line and the Metro Academy
- that consideration be given to amending AO guidance materials to clarify that an international address can be recorded in a Report of Non-Compliance, the circumstances in which doing so is appropriate, and the documents that can be used to verify this type of address

DTP confirmed that identity documents issued overseas could be used to confirm address details and accepted our recommendations. DTP committed to communicating this information to the AO workforce in its next quarterly AO newsletter and to incorporating the information into future updates to AO guidance materials.

DEFAULT FARES

Default fare charging is a little understood aspect of how the myki system operates that causes confusion for consumers and generates complaints to the PTO. In 2024-25 the PTO received 27 complaints about default fares.

The myki system charges a fare when a passenger taps off at the end of their travel. When a passenger does not tap off at the end of their journey, the system will finalise the fare charge for their trip the next time that they tap on. This is called a default fare.

Default fares are common for tram travellers because there is messaging on board that tells passengers they don't need to tap off unless they are only travelling in zone 2. This is to avoid multiple people attempting to tap off at busy tram stops and causing congestion and delay. However, not tapping off means the fare for a journey hasn't been finalised and the charge is still pending. The charge will not be applied to the myki account until the next time that card interacts with a myki reader. Tram users can be caught up in a cycle of default fare charging so that they don't realise that they are continually paying for a previous day's travel.

Complaints to the PTO often arise from a lack of consumer understanding about default fares. When a default fare is charged, it may appear that a consumer has paid more than the daily cap on a given day – however, this is not the case, as one of the charges on that day relates to a previous day's travel. Many consumers who approach the PTO with a default fare complaint are under the impression that they have been overcharged and this belief has persisted after Transport Victoria has responded to their initial complaint.

The PTO also comes across default fares as an issue in fine cases [not included in case numbers above]. If someone has a default fare pending on their myki and doesn't understand how default fare charging works, they may be unaware that their myki will go into a negative balance when they next tap a myki reader, which will mean that they will be travelling without a valid ticket. Pending fares are not reflected in someone's myki balance, so when checking a myki balance someone might believe they have more funds available than they do. They might not become aware of this until they are next travelling on the network and their tap on isn't successful.



CASE STUDY:

BRENDAN'S COMPLAINT ABOUT A DEFAULT FARE

Brendan checked his myki travel history and saw he'd been charged a daily myki fare and a two-hour fare on the same date. He believed he'd been overcharged and contacted Transport Victoria for a refund. He was confused by the explanation he received, but his understanding at the end of the call was that he would be reimbursed.

When the refund didn't show up on his myki, Brendan contacted Transport Victoria to follow-up. He got an email response that explained that he hadn't been overcharged and said that the charge in question had occurred when he tapped on because he had boarded a tram without tapping off.

WHY DID BRENDAN COMPLAIN TO THE PTO?

Brendan believed Transport Victoria hadn't understood his complaint and felt sure he'd been overcharged. He also believed he'd been misled by public information that tells tram users they don't need to tap off unless their entire trip is within zone 2.



HOW DID THE PTO HELP RESOLVE BRENDAN'S COMPLAINT?

Our first step was to talk to Brendan about his complaint. Our conversation with Brendan included an explanation of how default fares work, and what a default fare charge would look like on his myki travel history the next time he travelled. Because Brendan remained unsatisfied after this initial conversation – and because we had formed the view that the explanation for the charges Transport Victoria originally provided him included elements that were confusing – we started a conciliation.

We asked Transport Victoria to respond to questions about Brendan's myki travel history, the fares he'd been charged, and their communications with Brendan about his complaint. To enable their response, Transport Victoria reviewed call recordings from Brendan's conversation with the call centre agent, his subsequent email correspondence with Transport Victoria, and his travel history.

Transport Victoria subsequently confirmed that Brendan hadn't been overcharged and they provided us with a copy of Brendan's myki travel history that enabled us to verify this. Transport Victoria also confirmed that the call centre agent hadn't told Brendan to expect a refund but had instead told him that his request for refund would be reviewed.

WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?

Transport Victoria acknowledged that the explanation Brendan got for the myki charges he was querying could have been communicated more clearly. They acknowledged this had resulted in a poor experience for Brendan and apologised for this.

Transport Victoria explained that public messaging about not needing to tap off on trams was designed to avoid congestion on board trams. They suggested to Brendan that – if he wanted to ensure his fares were finalised and debited on the day of travel – he could opt to tap off at the end of each trip.

Brendan accepted Transport Victoria's explanation and apology, and his case was closed.

CASE STUDY: SILVIA'S COMPLAINT ABOUT A FINE

Silvia tapped on using Mobile myki. When she double-checked her Mobile myki to make sure the tap on registered she saw an entry labelled "ride" for the current date. Silvia interpreted this as her successful tap on.

Soon after this, an Authorised Officer (AO) approached Silvia and asked to check her myki. When Silvia showed the AO her Mobile myki they told her she wasn't tapped on. Silvia explained that she'd tapped on as soon as she boarded the tram and pointed to her Mobile myki activity for the current date. The AO told her this transaction was for her previous trip.

Silvia hadn't understood that she had a default fare pending from her previous tram trip. Her tap on attempt had triggered the default fare charge, which had in turn caused her myki balance to drop below \$0, which then prevented the system from registering the tap on because of her negative balance. When Silvia checked her Mobile myki to confirm the tap on, nothing about the way the default fare was labelled alerted her to the fact that it related to a previous trip.

The AO reported Silvia for travelling without valid ticket, and she received an infringement notice a few weeks later. Her application to the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) for an internal review was unsuccessful.

WHY DID SILVIA COMPLAIN TO THE PTO?

Silvia felt that her fine was unfair because she wasn't aware she had a default fare charge pending. She noted there was no information onboard trams, or online, that explained that if you don't tap off on a tram then your fare will be deducted the next time you travel – and that this might cause your myki to fall into negative balance. Silvia also felt her Mobile myki activity hadn't been clear that what she'd thought was a tap on was actually a tap off for her previous trip.

WHY AND HOW DID THE PTO HANDLE SILVIA'S COMPLAINT ABOUT HER FINE?

We decided to handle Silvia's complaint because of the default fare charge and the steps she'd taken to confirm her tap on. We spoke with Silvia about the circumstances of her fine, including her actions on the tram prior to being approached by the AO. We also reviewed her travel history, screenshots of her Mobile myki on the relevant date, her internal review application, and DTP's response to her review application.

We wrote to DTP seeking information about the decision made in Silvia's internal review and provided additional context about how the default fare had operated with the Mobile myki leading to Silvia's confusion.



WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?

Following our request for additional information, DTP conducted a further review of Silvia's fine and replaced it with a warning. They considered Silvia's lack of prior fines or warnings and that she now understood default fare charges.



DEFAULT FARES: A SYSTEMIC IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITY

We raised a systemic improvement opportunity with the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) because we thought there was an opportunity to reduce the number of complaints that arise due to default fares. We noted that the default-fare related complaints we see most frequently – which are overcharging complaints – don't arise from actual overcharges, but from a lack of awareness about default fares and how they operate.

We recommended that DTP comprehensively review its public information about default fares to help customers better understand them.

DTP accepted our feedback and updated the Transport Victoria website to include additional detail about default fares. DTP also substantially revised the explanatory information it gives customers who raise complaints about overcharging, to provide greater clarity about when default fares apply and when default fares get debited.





SERVICE DISRUPTIONS

Service disruptions are an unavoidable aspect of managing a complex public transport system and facilitating the maintenance and infrastructure upgrades necessary to ensure it runs safely, smoothly and keeps pace with Victoria's growing population.

Our observation is that the community understands and is generally sympathetic to the fact occasional unplanned disruptions are a fact of life, and that planned disruptions are necessary to facilitate system improvements.

Where the PTO most typically sees complaints about service disruptions is when disruption communications fail in some way, or when information about the impact to customer journey planning doesn't meet customer expectations. Customers expect sufficient information to be able to anticipate the likely impact to their end-to-end public transport journey and their broader plans, and to assess what alternative transport options are available to them. Passengers need accurate, timely and – where necessary – detailed information so that they can make informed travel decisions that best suit their interests.



The PTO also sees disruption-related complaints related to replacement services when these services generate unexpected issues or don't offer a service commensurate with the service they're replacing. Accessing and using replacement services – particularly in the context of unplanned disruptions – can be especially challenging for people with a disability, older people, or more vulnerable passengers.

Of the 706 service delivery complaints the PTO received in 2024-25, around one in five (19 per cent) were about service disruptions. Of these complaints, around 10 per cent were about replacement services specifically.



CASE STUDY:

EMILY'S COMPLAINT ABOUT DISRUPTION INFORMATION

Emily had to be home from work by a certain time to look after her kids. She knew rail replacement buses were running on her train line that evening. She took steps to plan her rostered shift, and her public transport journey, with these things in mind.

The public information Emily had seen indicated line disruptions would start from 9:00pm, due to infrastructure works. She arranged to finish work a bit earlier, to be at the station by 8:40pm and get on a train before replacement buses started. But when she arrived at the station, replacement buses had already commenced.

Emily knew from experience that a replacement bus would get her home later than a train, and later than she needed to get home for her kids. She decided to get a ride-share car home instead. This cost \$22 on top of the daily myki fare she'd already incurred.

Emily complained to Metro Trains Melbourne (Metro) about replacement bus services starting earlier than advertised. In their response, Metro told Emily that trains may stop before the advertised disruption start time because trains must be cleared from the whole line before infrastructure works can start.



WHY DID EMILY COMPLAIN TO THE PTO?

Emily told us that – while she understood that Metro needed time to clear trains from the line – she didn't understand what this had to do with start times for replacement buses. She said she would have simply arranged to get an earlier train, if she'd known that replacement buses were going to start before 9.00pm.

HOW DID THE PTO HELP EMILY AND METRO RESOLVE HER COMPLAINT?

We asked Metro to respond to Emily's reasons for raising a complaint with the PTO. In their initial response, Metro:

- Explained that the timing of the cut-over from timetabled trains to replacement buses varies based on a passenger's location along a train line, and that this variation arises from an operational need to ensure the whole section of track that's subject to works is cleared of trains. In practice, this means that, if a train is timetabled to depart a station before 9.00pm, but the train wouldn't clear the track until after 9.00pm, then that service will not run.
- Recommended that Emily use PTV's Journey Planner or Metro's Notify app to confirm the last train for her destination station during planned works.
- Agreed to reimburse Emily her myki fare as a gesture of goodwill.

We subsequently met with Metro to discuss how planned service disruption times are described and advertised to public transport users. Metro confirmed the PTO's understanding that the advertised 9.00pm start time reflected the commencement of planned works, and not the point from which customers could expect to experience disruptions to their timetabled train services.

Metro acknowledged that communications about this type of planned disruption could be improved, and that service disruptions had started earlier than Emily would have expected.

WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?

Metro told us they taken steps towards including information about the final 'through service' into public communications about planned line disruptions, and that this planned change was pending Departmental approval.

We advised Emily of Metro's planned improvements to how the timing of service disruptions is communicated to public transport users, and that Metro had agreed to reimburse her daily myki fare as a goodwill gesture.

Emily accepted Metro's offer and her complaint was closed.



CASE STUDY:

EILEEN'S COMPLAINT ABOUT A DISRUPTED SERVICE

Eileen is in her 80s and lives in South Gippsland. She was travelling home from a trip to Melbourne when her journey was disrupted. Her trip involved two buses: a V/Line coach and a local bus service.

Eileen's V/Line coach was delayed by 20 minutes, because a connecting V/Line train was running 20 minutes late. Eileen knew this delay would cause her to miss her connecting local bus, and that she'd need to wait a long time for the next bus. She was worried about a prolonged wait at the bus interchange because it was a warm day and the location is relatively isolated.

When her V/Line coach driver announced the delay, Eileen called PTV for advice. The call centre supervisor told Eileen that local buses were outside V/Line's remit and there was no assistance they could offer her. With no other options, Eileen took a taxi home from the interchange. This cost her \$122.

Eileen complained to V/Line about her experience. V/Line acknowledged that – given Eileen's age and health-related vulnerabilities – alternative transport should have been arranged for her when she contacted PTV. In recognition of this fact, V/Line reimbursed Eileen's taxi fare in full.

WHY DID EILEEN COMPLAIN TO THE PTO?

Eileen felt V/Line's response didn't address her core concern, which was the risk connecting passengers would continue to become stranded at the same bus interchange.

HOW DID THE PTO HELP EILEEN AND V/LINE RESOLVE HER COMPLAINT?

Our first step was to speak with Eileen about her experience, and to better understand the resolution she was seeking. Eileen told us she wanted V/Line to take greater responsibility for the impact of V/Line service delays on her non-V/Line connecting bus, through coordination with the local bus operator, or by arranging alternate transport for passengers who missed their connection.

Eileen disclosed to us that her partner was in poor health, and that she would soon start accompanying them on trips into Melbourne for medical treatment. It became apparent that Eileen's complaint was, in part, related to her concerns about the impact of a repeat incident on her partner.

Our next step was a conversation with V/Line to flag Eileen and her partner's travel needs, with the aim of understanding what assistance might be available to support them. V/Line suggested that Eileen use their Accessibility Booking process, in advance of any travel.

We then sought V/Line's formal response to Eileen's complaint, as well as information about:

- how V/Line had addressed the fact that the PTV call centre had incorrectly advised Eileen that no assistance was available to her; and
- how an Accessibility Booking might assist Eileen and her partner with their future travel.

In their response, V/Line clarified that V/Line services have a duty to connect with other V/Line services. They reiterated that customers can call PTV for assistance if they become stranded through no fault of their own.

V/Line also acknowledged that Eileen had called for assistance but had not received the help she needed. V/Line said this had occurred because PTV's on-duty supervisor had not contacted V/Line's Integrated Operations Centre (IOC) for instructions in response to Eileen's call. Had they done so, the IOC would have instructed them to arrange alternate transport for Eileen. V/Line confirmed that the relevant supervisor had been spoken to.

WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?

V/Line apologised to Eileen for her poor travel experience. To reassure her that alternative transport would be arranged if she was stranded in future – and to support her future travel needs – V/Line provided us with the following advice to relay to Eileen:

- If she did become stranded again, a call to PTV from her mobile number would flag an alert in the system that advised the call centre agent to contact V/Line's IOC without delay to request an alternate travel arrangement.
- A recommendation that she make an Accessibility Booking prior to any future travel. This would give V/Line drivers and staff advance knowledge of any travel-related support that Eileen or her partner required, and ensure staff were better prepared to assist them.

Eileen was satisfied with V/Line's response, and her complaint was closed.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND ACCESSIBILITY

Outreach is the work we do, in the community, to raise awareness of the PTO and its services. Community outreach is fundamental to our commitment to ensuring everyone can access our services – particularly those who may face barriers to using public transport or be more likely to rely on it. PTO outreach activities are focused on information-sharing, events and conversations in the community.

In 2024-25, the PTO continued to focus its outreach efforts on public transport users living with a disability. We also conducted targeted outreach to community legal and financial counselling services to raise awareness of the support we offer community case workers and their clients in the context of the public transport fines review system. To support these outreach efforts, in October 2024 we launched new information materials to explain and promote our fines service on our website and in outreach settings.

ENGAGING KEY COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS

In August 2024, the Ombudsman and Deputy Ombudsman delivered a presentation to the Accessible Transport Advisory Committee (ATAC). ATAC is a key source of consultation regarding whole-of-journey accessibility for Victoria's transport portfolio Ministers, the Department and state transport agencies. ATAC comprises seven members with extensive knowledge of issues affecting people with a disability, older people and vulnerable groups.

Our presentation to ATAC explained our role as an independent dispute resolution service for complex and difficult-to-resolve complaints, incorporating real-life case studies to demonstrate how we help individuals resolve accessibility-related complaints. It also covered the work we do to help address systemic public transport issues, and the fact that systemic barriers to access and equity is a core focus of this work.

In October 2024, the Ombudsman presented to the Federation of Community Legal Centres' Infringements Working Group (IWG). The IWG is comprised of community lawyers and financial counsellors from throughout Victoria. Our presentation overviewed the role the PTO plays within the public transport infringement review system, with a focus on how our role enhances and supports the accessibility of the system, particularly for vulnerable groups within our community.





CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

In 2024-25 the PTO attended three major events that enabled us to engage with a broad range of people living with disabilities, as well as carers and support workers, and representatives from a range of disability- and accessibility-focused service providers. These events were:

- Melbourne Disability Expo 2024 (November 22 - 23)
- VALID's 'Have A Say' Conference 2025 (January 28 - 29)
- Geelong Disability Expo 2025 (March 14 - 15)

As in previous years, our approach to these events is to promote awareness of who we are, and what we do, through face-to-face conversations and information-sharing. We also encourage people to share feedback with us about their public transport experiences, issues or challenges.

In October 2024, the PTO attended the Financial Counsellors Victoria Conference as a sponsoring Community Conference Partner. The Conference brings together over 300 of the state's financial counsellors and representatives from various community services, government departments and Ombudsman schemes. Our objective was to promote our fines service to individual financial counsellors, and their affiliated organisations. We distributed around 200 PTO fines service information brochures to attendees we engaged directly.

The PTO commenced focusing on outreach to public transport users with lived experience of disability in mid-2023. To date, some of the most consistent themes in the conversations we've had, and feedback we've heard, include:

- A lack of clarity around the maximum size for wheelchair and mobility scooter access in general, and across different modes, operators and vehicles.
- Reports that rail replacement bus service staff often don't have sufficient knowledge to handle accessibility-related service and information enquiries.
- Low awareness of PTV Access Travel Pass as a ticketing option for people who have difficulties complying with myki ticketing requirements due to cognitive impairment.
- Queries around Access Travel Pass and Companion Card eligibility and application processes.
- Queries around whether a Victorian Carer Card entitles a person to concession fares.
- Generally positive feedback about the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower initiative, and queries about where and how to get a Sunflower lanyard.
- Calls for public information and/or a community awareness campaign around the fact that access to a priority seat may be required by people with hidden disabilities.
- Confusion around what support passengers can expect from staff in relation to other passengers – for example, asking a passenger to consider vacating a priority seat on behalf of another passenger, or addressing verbal harassment or ridicule by another passenger.



CASE STUDY:

MARTIN'S COMPLAINT ABOUT USING HIS ACCESS TRAVEL PASS

Martin travels on a PTV Access Travel Pass. He showed his Pass to a group of staff at the myki gates, with the expectation that they would open the gates and let him pass through. He said none of the staff who saw his Pass seemed to recognise what it was or know what to do. One of them took the Pass from Martin's hand and used it to open the gates.

Martin was unhappy with this interaction, and about the fact that multiple staff didn't seem to know how an Access Travel Pass works. He said it was his understanding that it was up to individual Passholders to decide if they wanted to tap on or tap off. He also noted that his preference was never to tap on or off, and that this preference had a relationship to the condition that made him eligible to hold the Pass.



HOW DID THE PTO WORK WITH METRO TO RESOLVE MARTIN'S COMPLAINT?

We asked Metro Trains Melbourne (Metro) what staff are trained to do when a customer presents an Access Travel Pass at a myki gate. Metro advised us that staff are instructed in the Victorian Fares and Ticketing Conditions (VFTC), which identify various myki, travel pass and concession entitlements and include the conditions of use for Access Travel Passes. Metro also advised us that, in some circumstances, staff may verbally encourage Access Travel Passholders to tap on or off, in line with the VFTC, which state that customers "are not required to [tap] on or off but are encouraged to do so if they are able".

In subsequent discussions, we recommended that Metro seek clarification from the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) on how staff should interpret and apply this condition. We relayed our understanding that this condition applied to the Passholder, and flagged our concerns that Metro's approach:

- may result in Passholders being asked to explain why they cannot tap on or off, despite there being no requirement to do so
- may lead to inconsistent Passholder interactions and experiences across the network, which may create customer uncertainty or confusion.

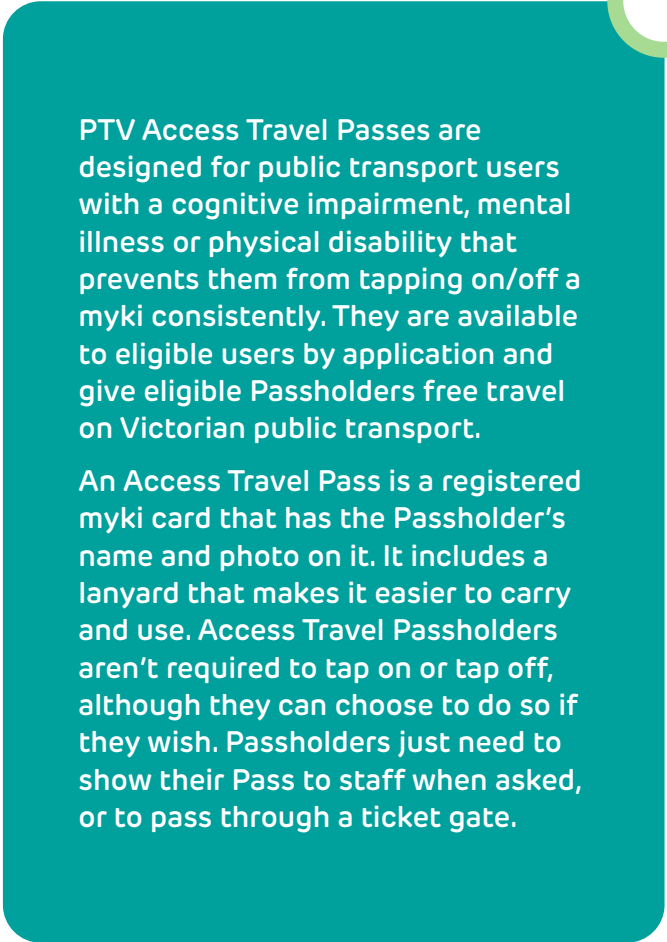
Metro subsequently confirmed that DTP had clarified that staff should treat an Access Travel Pass as a 'flash pass', which means that when a customer displays an Access Travel Pass at a myki gate, staff should open the gate with their own pass and allow the customer through.

WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?

Metro relayed DTP's advice that Access Travel Passes should be treated as 'flash passes' to all frontline Metro staff. Metro also confirmed that they were working to incorporate DTP's advice into induction and ongoing staff training.

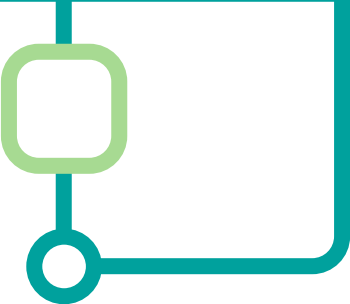
We advised Martin that Metro had sought DTP's clarification on best practice for assisting customers with Access Travel Passes at myki gates, and that DTP's advice had confirmed that ultimately it is the Passholder's decision whether or not to tap on or off. We also advised Martin that Metro had communicated this clarification to all staff.

We made the point to Martin that – based on our own understanding and Martin's own reported experiences – most Metro staff seemed to be aware of the Access Travel Pass and its intended conditions for use. We suggested that he lodge a complaint with Metro if he experienced any further issues using his Pass, as this would help Metro identify staff who needed additional training around assisting Access Travel Passholders.



PTV Access Travel Passes are designed for public transport users with a cognitive impairment, mental illness or physical disability that prevents them from tapping on/off a myki consistently. They are available to eligible users by application and give eligible Passholders free travel on Victorian public transport.

An Access Travel Pass is a registered myki card that has the Passholder's name and photo on it. It includes a lanyard that makes it easier to carry and use. Access Travel Passholders aren't required to tap on or tap off, although they can choose to do so if they wish. Passholders just need to show their Pass to staff when asked, or to pass through a ticket gate.



CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AND THE PTO

SCHEME REVIEW

In 2024, the PTO commissioned an independent review of its governance, operations, and dispute resolution processes. These reviews are undertaken every five years, to determine the PTO's performance against the six Benchmarks for Industry-based Customer Dispute Resolution, and to assess the PTO's approach to governance and privacy. Regular external reviews support the PTO's commitment to continuously improving our operations and better serving the Victorian community.

The Review concluded the PTO meets all six Benchmarks and found the PTO to be an effective, efficient Ombudsman scheme that delivers an accessible, independent dispute resolution service. The reviewers also made 17 recommendations highlighting opportunities for the PTO to enhance its dispute resolution processes, improve consumer experiences, and contribute to systemic improvement across public transport.

Key recommendations included:

- Reviewing internal guidance to staff, templates and our quality assurance framework to build a sustainable and effective platform for complaints handling.
- Enhancing our tools and approaches to bring finality to difficult to resolve complaints and reduce the time taken to resolve matters.
- Renewing our systemic issues framework and procedures and improving our reporting on systemic casework.
- Reviewing our Charter and Constitution to consider an increase to the monetary limit for cases that the PTO can handle and changes to appointment of industry directors.

The PTO has committed to implementing the recommendations of the Review and has commenced three key projects to support this:

- Dispute Resolution Improvement Project
- Improving the PTO's Systemic Capacity
- Charter and Constitution Review.





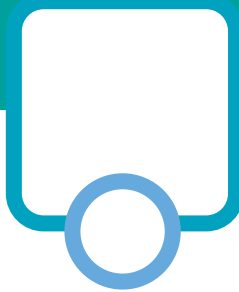
MONITORING CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

The PTO recognises the significant value in regularly seeking insights from consumer experience to identify key satisfaction components and areas for improvement within our dispute resolution processes.

The Customer Satisfaction Survey allows consumers to provide feedback about their experiences anonymously, incorporating both closed-answer questions and free text options. The survey is wide-ranging, addressing not only outcome satisfaction, but also staff engagement, organisational procedures, dispute resolution practices, and our handling of information.

This year, we invited 361 individuals who had their complaint conciliated or investigated by the PTO during the 2024-25 financial year to complete our survey. We received 101 responses, which represents a 28 per cent response rate. Of these respondents, approximately one in five (22 per cent) were persons living with a disability, and approximately one in three (32 per cent) speak a language other than English at home.

This year's consumer satisfaction results generally reflected the findings of the Review. Consumers acknowledged the professionalism of staff and the independence of our processes. In particular, the PTO's work in relation to Public Transport fines was highly valued by consumers. The survey results also confirmed areas of improvement previously identified by the PTO and the 2024 Review including:

- Clearly informing consumers early in our dispute resolution process about the scope of complaints the PTO can handle and the outcomes available.
 - Ensuring we are clear in communicating how we have assessed member responses and what is fair and reasonable in the circumstances.
 - Improving the timeliness of our complaint handling processes.
- 

OUR BOARD



**AISHA
NICOLAY**
Chair
since November 2024

Aisha is an experienced company director, serving on boards spanning economic development, infrastructure, energy and community not-for-profit sectors. As a senior executive, she has held global and national roles in business advisory and engineering organisations. Aisha has also run her own coaching and strategic advisory company for over ten years. Aisha holds business qualifications and is a member of the AICD.



**GLENYYS
ROMANES**
Consumer Director
since January 2018

Glenyys has widespread experience across all three tiers of government, having been a Member of the Victorian Parliament, a Mayor and a Councillor, as well as having held senior roles with the Commonwealth Ombudsman and in Public Transport Victoria. She chaired the Moreland council/community committee that developed one of Victoria's first integrated transport strategies in local government. An AICD graduate, Glenyys is an active member of various NFP committees and community groups, including the Victorian Transport Action Group.



**LLEWELLYN
PRAIN**
Consumer Director
since January 2016

Llewellyn is an experienced company director with a background in law and public policy. Her directorships have spanned the health, legal, infrastructure and disability sectors, and she is an AICD Fellow. She is the Deputy Chair of Greater Western Water. Alongside senior roles across a number of government agencies Llewellyn ran her own business for seven years. Llewellyn has a vision impairment and is a strong advocate for the rights and strengths of people with disability. In 2021 she received a Victorian Disability Award in the emerging leader category.



**ANDREW
DIX**
Consumer Director
since September 2022

Andrew Dix started his career at Price Waterhouse in external audit before moving to Telstra, where he spent over 20 years in CFO and Executive Director roles in finance, risk, assurance and compliance. After departing Telstra, he began a non-executive career with positions on boards and audit and risk committees for organisations including Services Australia, Bureau of Meteorology, Anglicare Victoria, and the Cities of Melbourne, Monash and Manningham. Andrew is a Graduate Member of the AICD and a Professional Member of the Institute of Internal Auditors.



**PETER
KAVANAGH**
Industry Director (Bus
Association of Victoria)
since January 2023

Peter Kavanagh is a lawyer who has worked across the private and public sectors, advising clients on a wide range of areas including governance issues and arrangements, corporations law, transport and roads law, industrial law, intellectual property and technology law, privacy law, and the development of legislation. Peter is Executive Director and General Counsel at the Bus Association of Victoria Incorporated (BAV), and Director of five BAV-owned companies.



**LISA
STOLT**
Industry Director (V/Line)
since January 2025

Lisa is the Director Network Strategy and Timetable at V/Line, and has worked in private, public and not for profit sectors in Australia and Europe. Her career has focussed on strategic planning and management roles spanning marketing, stakeholder relations, customer experience and network strategy. Lisa holds a Master of Business qualifications and is a Graduate Member of the AICD.



**TONY
HAYWARD**
Industry Director
(Department of
Transport and Planning)
since January 2024

Tony Hayward is Executive Director, Commercial Transactions at the Department of Transport and Planning. Prior to that, he was the Project Director of rail franchising at the Department, a role that included leading major service recontracting on behalf of the Victorian government. He previously held senior roles at Metro Trains Melbourne, working on a range of commercial, financial and risk matters, including CFO, audit and risk roles reporting into Boards. Tony holds Chartered Accountant qualifications and is a former a non-executive board member for Henry Buck.



**BERNARD
STUTE**
Company Secretary
since 1 April 2004

Bernard is a senior executive who has been leading commercial, finance, risk and audit, procurement and legal divisions in the private and public sectors for more than twenty years. He has been Company Secretary at the PTO since the establishment of the office and boasts extensive experience in public transport, critical infrastructure and property development in senior public sector roles spanning his career. Bernard is also a qualified lawyer who has worked in private practice with large law firms.

APPROACHES WITH ISSUES BY MEMBER

BUS ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA (BUSVIC) 2024-25	
Conciliations	7
Investigations	0
Member Complaint	44
Member Enquiry	1
Total	52
Top issues within approaches	
Staff	38
Service delivery	16
Trams, trains and buses	6

CDC VICTORIA (MELBOURNE) 2024-25	
Conciliations	8
Investigations	1
Member Complaint	46
Member Enquiry	1
Total	56
Top issues within approaches	
Staff	39
Service delivery	14
Trams, trains and buses	11

CHRISTIAN'S BUS COMPANY 2024-25	
Conciliations	1
Investigations	0
Member Complaint	6
Member Enquiry	0
Total	7
Top issues within approaches	
Staff	5
Service delivery	2

DYSONS 2024-25	
Conciliations	4
Investigations	0
Member Complaint	28
Member Enquiry	0
Total	32
Top issues within approaches	
Staff	23
Service delivery	14
Trams, trains and buses	4

KINETIC 2024-25	
Conciliations	9
Investigations	1
Member Complaint	106
Member Enquiry	14
Total	130
Top issues within approaches	
Staff	66
Service delivery	42
Trams, trains and buses	35

LEVEL CROSSING REMOVAL PROJECT 2024-25	
Conciliations	20
Investigations	1
Member Complaint	22
Member Enquiry	1
Total	44
Top issues within approaches	
Land and infrastructure	42
Staff	7
Trams, trains and buses	2

METRO TRAINS MELBOURNE 2024-25	
Conciliations	76
Investigations	7
Member Complaint	409
Member Enquiry	64
Total	556
Top issues within approaches	
Service delivery	159
Land and infrastructure	154
Authorised Officer	111
Staff	87

METRO TUNNEL PROJECT 2024-25	
Conciliations	2
Investigations	0
Member Complaint	6
Member Enquiry	2
Total	10
Top issues within approaches	
Land and infrastructure	5
Staff	4

SKYBUS 2024-25	
Conciliations	3
Investigations	0
Member Complaint	17
Member Enquiry	6
Total	26
Top issues within approaches	
Non-myki ticketing	12
Staff	8
Service delivery	5

SOUTHERN CROSS STATION	2024-25
Conciliations	5
Investigations	0
Member Complaint	20
Member Enquiry	55
Total	80
Top issues within approaches	
Service delivery	25
Staff	24
General enquiry	16

SUBURBAN RAIL LOOP AUTHORITY	2024-25
Conciliations	1
Investigations	0
Member Complaint	3
Member Enquiry	0
Total	4
Top issues within approaches	
Land and infrastructure	4

TRANSIT SYSTEMS VICTORIA	2024-25
Conciliations	9
Investigations	2
Member Complaint	16
Member Enquiry	0
Total	27
Top issues within approaches	
Staff	18
Service delivery	9
Trams, trains and buses	5

TRANSPORT VICTORIA (DTP)	2024-25
Conciliations	65
Investigations	1
Member Complaint	478
Member Enquiry	171
Public Transport Fine	262
Total	985
Top issues within approaches	
myki	409
Infringement notice	261
Service delivery	139

VENTURA BUS LINES	2024-25
Conciliations	14
Investigations	0
Member Complaint	51
Member Enquiry	5
Total	70
Top issues within approaches	
Staff	43
Service delivery	28
Trams, trains and buses	9

VICTRACK	2024-25
Conciliations	0
Investigations	0
Member Complaint	9
Member Enquiry	3
Total	12
Top issues within approaches	
Land and infrastructure	10
Staff	2
Trams, trains and buses	11

V/LINE	2024-25
Conciliations	45
Investigations	3
Member Complaint	231
Member Enquiry	160
Total	439
Top issues within approaches	
Service delivery	202
Non-myki ticketing	71
Staff	59

YARRA TRAMS	2024-25
Conciliations	26
Investigations	4
Member Complaint	179
Member Enquiry	16
Total	225
Top issues within approaches	
Staff	84
Trams, trains and buses	54
Land and infrastructure	39



SUMMARY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The following is a concise version of the Financial Report for the Public Transport Ombudsman Ltd. for the year ending 30 June 2025. 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 2025 was \$2,500,207.

This was derived from the following sources:

- Annual Levies from Members: \$2,458,022; and
- Other Income (Interest): \$42,185

Operating Expenses

Operating Expenses for the period ending 30 June 2025 were \$2,504,900. The majority of operating expenses were employee benefits (\$1,805,025), telephone and IT expenses (\$147,707), Depreciation and Amortisation expenses (\$125,192) and occupancy costs (\$62,101).

Income Tax

The Australian Taxation Office ("ATO") issued private tax rulings declaring that the Company is deemed exempt from income tax for the financial years through to 30 June 2026.

Discussion and analysis of the Statement of Financial Position

Total Assets

Total assets increased by \$593,806 during the period due to an increase in total current assets of \$409,355 and an increase in non-current assets of \$184,451.

Total Liabilities

Total liabilities increased by \$598,499 during the period. This is due to an increase in total current liabilities of \$379,432 and an increase in total non-current liabilities of \$219,067.

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 \$2,278,644. This was derived from:

- Cash inflow from operating activities (\$759,186)
- Cash inflow from investing activities (\$255,293)
- Cash outflow from financing activities (\$117,803); and
- Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of financial year \$1,381,968.

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

Statement of Income

For the Financial Year ended 30 June 2025

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
REVENUE AND OTHER INCOME	2,500,207	2,294,400
EXPENSES		
Depreciation and amortisation	125,192	134,909
Employee Benefits	1,805,025	1,741,976
Occupancy Costs	62,101	61,956
Telephone and IT	147,707	177,375
Consultancy and Other Professional Fees	144,085	36,794
Other Expenses	220,790	160,350
TOTAL EXPENSES	2,504,900	2,313,360
NET DEFICIT FOR THE YEAR	(4,693)	(18,960)
Other Comprehensive Income	-	-
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE LOSS FOR THE YEAR	(4,693)	(18,960)

Statement of Financial Position

For the Financial Year ended 30 June 2025

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	2,278,644	1,381,968
Financial Assets	139,898	399,249
Trade and Other Receivables	320,124	517,287
Other Assets	39,250	70,057
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	2,777,916	2,368,561
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Property, Plant and Equipment	15,653	30,149
Right-of-use Assets	301,886	97,812
Intangible Assets	-	5,127
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	317,539	133,088
TOTAL ASSETS	3,095,455	2,501,649
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Trade and Other Payables	252,498	245,155
Employee Benefit Liability	197,323	160,677
Other Liabilities	1,579,276	1,229,011
Lease Liabilities	92,056	106,878
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	2,121,153	1,741,721
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Employee Benefit Liability	13,291	5,351
Lease Liabilities	211,127	-
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES	224,418	5,351
TOTAL LIABILITIES	2,345,571	1,747,072
NET ASSETS	749,884	754,577
EQUITY		
Retained Surpluses	749,884	754,577
TOTAL EQUITY	749,884	754,577

Statement of Changes in Equity

For the Financial Year ended 30 June 2025

	Accumulated Surplus
	\$
BALANCE AT 1 JULY 2023	773,537
Net Deficit for the Year	(18,960)
Other Comprehensive Income	-
BALANCE AT 30 JUNE 2024	754,577
BALANCE AT 1 JULY 2024	754,577
Net Deficit for the Year	(4,693)
Other Comprehensive Income	-
BALANCE AT 30 JUNE 2025	749,884

Statement of Cash Flow

For the Financial Year ended 30 June 2025

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
Receipts from Members	3,305,995	2,836,517
Payments to Suppliers and Employees	(2,572,949)	(2,442,426)
Interest Received	26,140	33,260
NET CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES	759,186	427,351
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES		
Acquisition of Property, Plant and Equipment	(4,058)	(4,703)
Acquisition of Financial Assets	259,351	(13,225)
NET CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES	255,293	(17,928)
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES		
Repayment of Lease Liabilities	(114,271)	(103,904)
Interest	(3,532)	(4,984)
NET CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES	(117,803)	(108,888)
NET INCREASE IN CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS	896,676	300,535
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR	1,381,968	1,081,433
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS AT THE END OF THE YEAR	2,278,644	1,381,968



Public Transport
Ombudsman