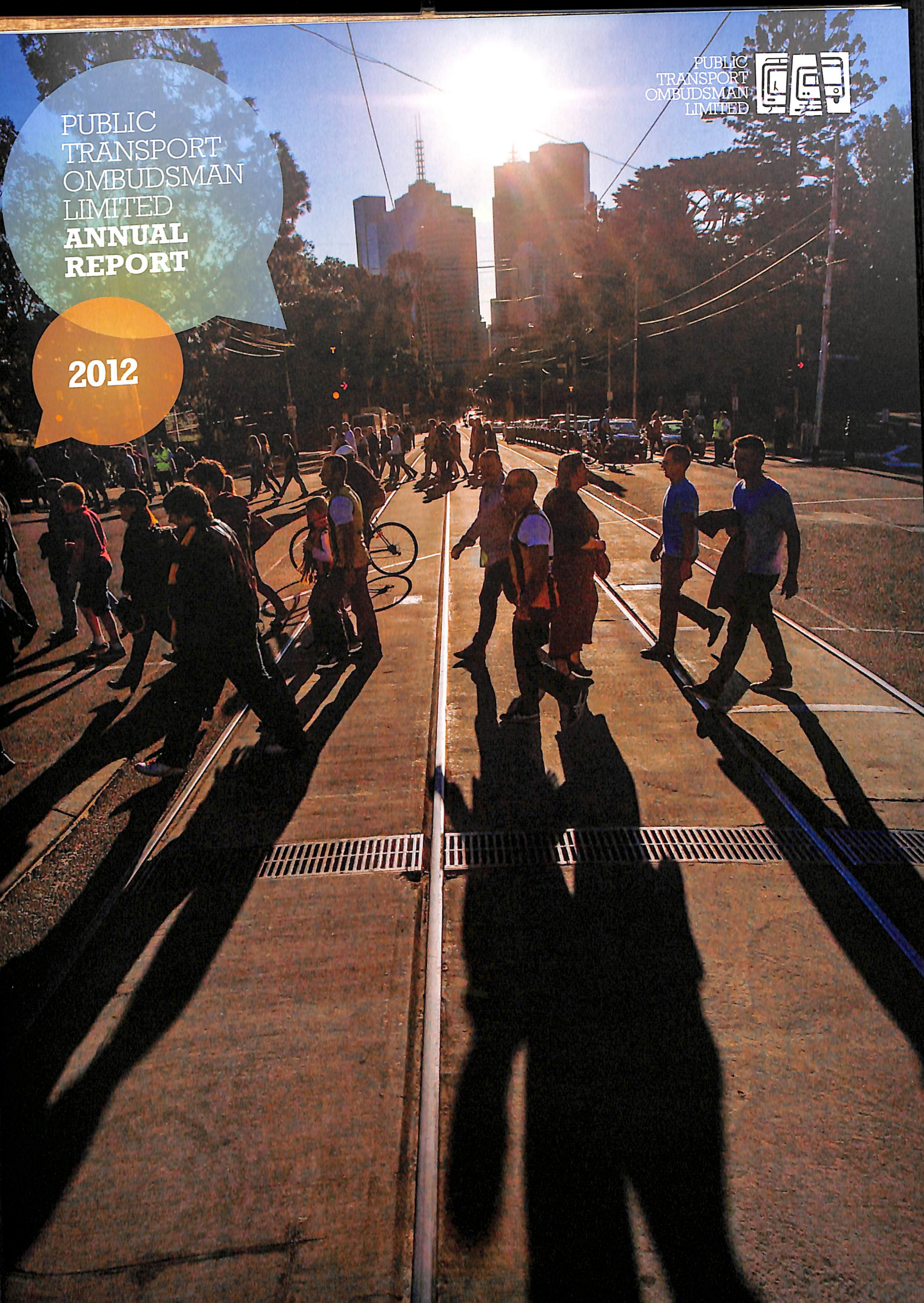


PUBLIC
TRANSPORT
OMBUDSMAN
LIMITED



PUBLIC
TRANSPORT
OMBUDSMAN
LIMITED
**ANNUAL
REPORT**

2012



3,555

Cases received

5,014

Issues registered

Cases finalised

91% within 31 days

Complaints investigated
and finalised

568 complaint investigations

999 complaint issues

91% resolved by agreement

Our mission

The mission of the Public Transport Ombudsman (PTO) is to receive, investigate and facilitate the resolution of complaints and disputes between users of public passenger transport services in Victoria and Members of the PTO scheme, where the public transport operators have been unable to resolve the complaint in the first instance.

Our mission is founded on principles of independence, natural justice, access, equity, effectiveness, accountability and community awareness.

Index

3	From the Chair
4	From the Ombudsman
5	About the PTO
6	Access and awareness for those who need it most
9	2011/2012 Cases Received
11	Case issues
14	PTO Members
17	myki – Melbourne's public transport ticketing system
19	Information requests and referrals
20	Enquiries and complaints referred to operators
21	Complaints referred to operator Customer Feedback Managers for resolution
23	PTO investigations
24	Finalised PTO investigations
26	Using PTO cases to improve public transport service
28	Complex investigations drive continual improvement
30	Case handling performance
31	Summary Financial Statements

Our values

Excellence

Quality focused, Accountable, Responsive, Accurate
We strive for excellence because we value what we do.

Integrity

Open, Confident, Strong, Committed
We are transparent, honest and consistent.

Leadership

Inspired, Creative, Courageous, Effective
We lead through encouragement, guidance and innovation.

Respect

Empathic, Considerate, Honest, Fair
We treat ourselves and others with dignity.

Independence

Equitable, Reasonable, Consistent, Transparent
We are impartial and objective.

Glossary of terms

ANZOA	Australian & New Zealand Ombudsman Association
AO	Authorised Officer
AORTA	Authorised Officer Regulation, Training and Accreditation unit
DoT	Department of Transport
IDR	Internal dispute resolution
PTO	Public Transport Ombudsman
PTV	Public Transport Victoria
RTM	Refer to Member
RFIE	Refer for Internal Escalation
TTA	Transport Ticketing Authority

From the Chair



The establishment of Public Transport Victoria (PTV) and the roll-out of myki have both altered the operational environment of the PTO.

The past year has seen the most significant changes in the operation of the PTO since it was established in 2004.

The establishment of Public Transport Victoria (PTV) and the roll-out of myki have both altered the operational environment of the PTO.

PTV's role as the statutory authority administering Victoria's train, tram and bus services, and as a single contact point for commuters, has necessitated a re-evaluation of procedures for handling commuter complaints across all modes of public transport. This process presents a unique opportunity to set up new protocols and reporting mechanisms and it is important that the right balance is struck between the roles of the PTO and PTV for the benefit of Victoria's commuters.

From a work load perspective, the PTO's case volumes increased from 1,838 in 2010/2011 to 3,555 in 2011/2012. A major driver of this was the rise in the number of myki cases, but transport operator case volumes also increased.

The increasing case load presented significant challenges for the PTO. Ombudsman, Janine Young, and all the dedicated staff of the PTO, deserve much credit for their hard work and ability to maintain high standards of performance during a particularly challenging twelve months. The significant rise in cases and investigations also necessitated an increase in PTO staff numbers.

There have been a number of changes of membership at Board level in the past year. Merran Kelsall finished her term as Chair on 25 June 2012 and I would like to acknowledge Merran's enormous contribution to the development of the PTO over an eight-year period from its establishment onward. Under Merran's leadership, the PTO was established on a firm footing and, under her guidance, operated efficiently and effectively. Having served as a Consumer Director of the PTV since July 2011, I was delighted to commence as Chair on 26 June 2012 and I look forward to building on Merran's work.

I would also like to thank our departing Consumer Director Maree Davidson, a director since the scheme's inception, and an insightful contributor to the Board's deliberations, and welcome to the Board newly appointed Consumer Directors – Lawrence Seyers and Caroline Elliott.

The year ahead will undoubtedly be another challenging one for the PTO. The PTO Board and the Ombudsman will work with all Members of the scheme to adapt to the rapidly changing public transport environment, while ensuring that the PTO continues to meet its obligations to Victorian commuters by dealing fairly and efficiently with all the cases it receives.

I am pleased to present this Annual Report for the year ended 30 June 2012 and I would like to thank all those who provided support to the PTO scheme during a particularly busy year.

Richard Allsop

*Chair
Public Transport Ombudsman Limited*

From the Ombudsman



During the past year, not only did we experience an increase in case volumes but also an increase in complaint complexity. While this could have tested the effectiveness and efficiency of the office, we were already focused on moving our service from being 'good to great'. Our major projects focused on aligning our service with the National Benchmarks for Industry Based Customer Dispute Resolution Schemes – Accessibility, Independence, Fairness, Accountability, Efficiency and Effectiveness, so we were positioned and ready to manage our larger and more complex caseload.

Our key achievements included enhancements to our case management system, reporting improvements, and the development of a comprehensive learning and development program for PTO staff.

Our key achievements included enhancements to our case management system, reporting improvements, the development of a comprehensive learning and development program for PTO staff complemented by a comprehensive case handling manual, and the development of a new and accessible website.

It has been a challenging year, with many major changes. An increase in complaints, particularly resource intensive complaint investigations, the myki transition and the establishment of PTV all impacted our ability to forecast case activity and resource needs with any certainty.

Although we had budgeted for an increase in case load, the expected increase of up to 2,300 cases actually became a total of 3,555 cases for the year, nearly double our previous year's case load. In order to ensure that complaints were handled effectively and in a timely manner, the PTO team grew from nine to 12. Despite this, we managed the larger volume without exceeding our budget.

Both the PTO and its Members are focused on ensuring that financial resources are used effectively and this message was strongly directed to the PTO by its Members during the 2012/2013 budget process. As a result, we are reviewing our case activity and budget as at 30 September 2012 to ensure that the PTO maintains its independence and the level of service expected by all of our stakeholders throughout 2012/2013.

It is, therefore, very pleasing to see PTO Members engaging positively and implementing new approaches as a result of PTO recommendations to address systemic issues. This will increase consumer satisfaction, which should, in turn, reduce PTO case activity. In 2012/2013, we will continue to provide advice and recommendations to PTO Members aimed at addressing emerging complaint issues and trends.

I have continued to strengthen our relationship with consumer organisations including Victorian Council of Social Service (VCOSS), Travellers Aid, Vision Australia and Guide Dogs Victoria, VicDeaf, Youthlaw and the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission. These relationships have increased the PTO's value to commuters and public transport operators, as they have resulted in the PTO providing training sessions to operator staff about dealing with people with disabilities or diverse needs. Most importantly, an increased awareness about the role of the PTO empowers consumers to confidently raise complaints with operators and, where necessary, my office.

The PTO team has done a tremendous job over the past 12 months – and I commend their commitment to providing high quality and timely service during a period of significantly increased workloads. The team has continued its dedication to sustainable practices, resulting in the PTO receiving the 2011 CitySwitch Signatory of the Year Victoria Award for maximising energy efficiency and embracing sustainable principles.

Again, I have been strongly supported by the PTO Board and I thank the Directors for their contribution to the continual development of the PTO.

Finally, thank you to all of the consumer groups with whom we liaise and to the consumers who seek our advice or dispute resolution service. Contributing to public transport service improvement through complaint analysis and dispute resolution is the mission of the PTO – and is therefore reliant on effective consumer interaction.

Janine Young

Ombudsman
Public Transport Ombudsman Limited

About the PTO scheme

The PTO has been providing a free, fair, informal and accessible service to people who use or are affected by Victorian public transport services since its establishment in 2004. We are a not-for-profit, dispute resolution body, independent from both transport operators who are Members of the scheme, and government.

PTO Members

- BusVic
- Metro Trains Melbourne (Metro)
- Public Transport Victoria (PTV)
- Southern Cross Station
- Transport Ticketing Authority (TTA) (myki/Metcard)
- V/Line
- VicTrack
- Yarra Trams



Corporate governance

The PTO is a private, not-for-profit company, limited by guarantee. The PTO Constitution and Charter determine our structure and how we operate.

The PTO Limited Board has:

- three Industry Directors, appointed by passenger carrying Members of the PTO scheme to represent the views of the industry;
- three Consumer Directors, appointed by the Minister for Public Transport, who represent consumers and the community; and
- an independent Chairperson appointed by the Minister for Public Transport.

Responsibilities

The Board is responsible for the business affairs and property of the PTO - including corporate governance, risk management, the setting of budgets, strategic planning, the appointment of the Ombudsman and ensuring the Ombudsman's independence.

The equal representation of industry and consumers ensures the independence of the Board and the PTO itself.

The Ombudsman is responsible for complaint handling and the day-to-day operations of the PTO.

The PTO Ltd Board

From left to right:

- Richard Allsop, Chair
- Rob Barnett, Industry Director
- Caroline Elliott, Consumer Director
- Greg McGann, Industry Director
- Lawrence Seyers, Consumer Director
- Wendy Smith, Consumer Director
- Leah Waymark, Industry Director
- Bernard Stute, Company Secretary
- Janine Young, Ombudsman