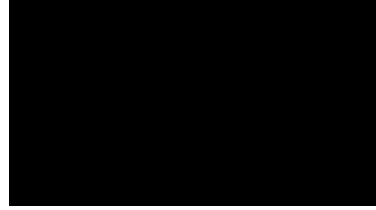


TO...

Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional
Development,
Communications and the Arts
GPO Box 2154
CANBERRA ACT 2601



8 March 2023

Attention: Director, Postal Policy—Communications Services and Consumer Division

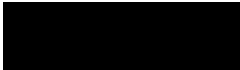
Submission in response to the Postal Services Modernisation Discussion Paper

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission in response to the Postal Services Modernisation Discussion Paper.

This submission represents my personal opinion.

I have no objection to the publication of this submission but would like my personal details redacted prior to publication. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like clarification of any of the comments made in this submission.

Yours faithfully,



Part 1: Postal services and modernisation benefits

1. What services provided by Australia Post are most important to you?

Parcels

- Sending and receiving parcels.
- Being able to have a parcel delivered to a location of my choice - my home address, a postal box, my parcel locker, or parcel collect.
- Receiving email and SMS tracking notifications for my parcel journey.
- Being able to view tracking details and access proof of delivery evidence.
- Range of parcel delivery products already available for several years include same day, AM/ PM/ Evening/ Saturday delivery windows, as well as 2 hour weekday delivery windows.
- My visits to the Post Office have significantly increased in the last several years to send/ receive parcels.

Technology

- The Australia Post Tracking App for mobile phones does the job and gives me what I need.

Retail

- Senior persons use the Post Office/ LPOs because it provides personal over the counter customer service to complete a transaction.
- Identify and Document Services are a valuable service. Continue to offer the likes of passports, police checks, ID checks for property transfer, get documents certified and witnessed.

2. What does Australia need in a modern postal service?

Parcels

- Ability for RECEIVER (not SENDER) to nominate where my parcel is delivered and whether or not I need to sign/ be present.
- If I front up to a Post Office having received notification that my parcel has been delivered to my PO Box and is ready for collection, I would expect the LPO to check the tracking number in an auspost system (rather than having the LPO tell me to go away and check tracking details on the auspost website).
- From a RECEIVER perspective, StarTrack branded parcels products provided by Australia Post appear to be no different to the Parcel Post/ Express Post product in terms of features, apart from the colour of the uniform the Driver wears and the vehicle branding.
- Senior persons should be able to go to their Post Office to track an item and manage an inflight delivery.
- Post Offices/ LPOs should offer a self service counter that offers the ability to:
 - buy and print a shipping label
 - scan a parcel being lodged and obtain a "lodged" receipt.

Technology

- Investment needs to occur in the backend systems so as to enable and facilitate technological innovation in terms of customer facing apps and online services.
- To improve tracking technology the multiple legacy backend systems need to be either consolidated or replaced to eliminate the multiple layers of middleware.

Regional Australia

- Bank@Post doesn't give us what we need. Apart from deposits and withdrawals there's nothing in place for a senior person with mobility issues to setup a term deposit investment, or arrange a personal loan.

Retail

- Limit retail merchandise to items directly related to sending and receiving letters and parcels, and stop selling goods such as electronics, electrical appliances, TVs, toys, gifts and gadgets.
- Equip each Post Office (including LPOs) offering Bank@Post services with an ATM for cash withdrawals.
- Limit the use of Self Service Terminals to large Post Offices so as not to discriminate senior citizens.
- Not in favour of using the Post Office as a physical location where local businesses can sell direct to customers. The floor space could be better used to accommodate parcels awaiting collection.
- Post Offices/ LPOs lack floor space and facilities to accommodate and process parcels awaiting collection during peak period. It's a nightmare for postal staff to locate parcels awaiting collection since they lack visual details on the item they're searching for.

Business Customers

- The range of parcels products and different brands is confusing. It would be much simpler if there was a single Australia Post brand without StarTrack and StarTrack Courier. Similarly, there's a massive opportunity to simplify the range of parcels products by consolidating the likes of Australia Post Express Post and StarTrack Premium, Australia Post Parcel Post and StarTrack Road Express, Australia Post On Demand and StarTrack Courier. Consolidation of products would significantly reduce the number of auspost backend systems, and remove a significant number of legacy systems.

3. Do you agree with the potential benefits? Are there additional benefits from your perspective?

Parcels: Increasing flexibility and improving reliability for parcel delivery, making it more convenient and accessible for consumers and business customers

- Disagree.
The range of parcels products and different brands is confusing. It would be much

simpler if there was a single Australia Post brand without StarTrack and StarTrack Courier. Similarly, there's a massive opportunity to simplify the range of parcels products by consolidating the likes of Australia Post Express Post and StarTrack Premium, Australia Post Parcel Post and StarTrack Road Express, Australia Post On Demand and StarTrack Courier. Consolidation of products would significantly reduce the number of auspost backend systems, and remove a significant number of legacy systems.

Technology: Better technology to help make it easier for businesses and consumers to use Australia Post.

- Partially Agree.
Investment needs to occur in the backend systems so as to enable and facilitate technological innovation in terms of customer facing apps and online services. To improve tracking technology the multiple legacy backend systems need to be either consolidated or replaced to eliminate the multiple layers of middleware.

Regional Australia: Continuing support for regional and remote communities, where Australia Post is needed most.

- Agree.

Retail: A retail presence that meets the needs of communities – including tailored formats, expanded services, self-service and mobile options.

- Disagree.
Expanded services will add complexity and confusion.
Keep it simple.
Avoid tailored formats unless they are repeatable and reusable.

Business Customers: Investing in customer experience and eCommerce services making it easier for businesses of all sizes.

- Disagree.
Before further investment in customer experience and eCommerce we need to consolidate and simplify the range of parcels products and invest in backend systems and remove multiple legacy backend systems.

Environmental Sustainability: Investment in more environmentally sustainable customer services, solutions and operations.

- Agree.

Supporting Communities: Continue to invest in communities to support those in need through community partnerships and community products (concession stamps).

- Agree.

Part 2: Delivery services

Letters

4. How important is the ability to send or receive a letter and what would be the impact of further increases in postage rates to allow Australia Post to fully recover the full efficient cost of providing the letters service?

- It is important to maintain the ability to send and receive letters, even if this means increasing postage rates.

5. Do you expect usage of Australia Post's letter services to change in the next 5 years and why?

- Yes, I do expect the letter services to change due more and more businesses (and government departments) utilising electronic communication in place of snail mail.

It is however important to note that there will continue to be a small proportion of the community who are not technology literate, such as our senior citizens, who will continue to rely on snail mail.

6. What do individuals, businesses and charities take into consideration in deciding whether to send a letter — for example, price, delivery speed and features (such as tracking), or digital alternatives?

- Individuals... my usage tend to be driven by price vs delivery speed vs digital alternatives. For example, given a choice I will generally opt for email over snail mail. Yet for a signed paper based contract/ agreement it is often necessary to use snail mail, as well as paying a higher rate due an A4 envelope being needed for the document. Similarly, if there are time constraints I am forced to consider paying more for a priority mail service vs using a Courier service to be sure the document arrives within a timely manner.
- Businesses... businesses I deal with tend to encourage the use of digital alternatives over snail mail, however will send documents by snail mail if requested to do so, albeit this cost is often recovered by the business in the form of a surcharge.
- Charities... as a member of car club we have numerous members that are senior citizens who are not technology literate, meaning a digital alternative isn't the norm. Consequently the club decision is price based rather than delivery speed/ features.

7. What is the value of the regulated priority letter service to you?

- I have used priority letter service to send letters on few occasions when sending documents of a sensitive nature to Government Departments such as Centrelink (due difficulty engaging with Centrelink via digital communication channels).

8. Should the current letters service speed or frequency of delivery requirements change in line with the expected decline in the number of letters being delivered?

- We should continue to have at least two delivery speed based services available,
 - Priority with tracking which is delivered within 2 business days, and
 - Regular without tracking that is delivered within 5 business days.

Parcels and eCommerce

9. How important are parcel delivery services to your business?

- Unable to comment.

10. For businesses that send parcels — what parcel service features matter most to your business?

- Unable to comment.

11. As someone that receives parcels — what features of parcel services do you value most — for example, speed of delivery, time of delivery, convenience of collection, ability to track the item and ease of returns policy?

- Parcel services features I value the most include...
 - Speed of delivery.
 - Delivery on a specific day (such as a day I can plan to work from home).
 - Delivery within a specific time windows (such as Morning, Afternoon, Evening).
 - Choice of delivery location (ie. Home address, PO Box, Parcel Locker, Parcel Collect).
 - Tracking and notifications.
 - Inflight redirection to an alternate delivery location.
 - Estimated day of arrival and delivery window.
- We need the ability for other 3rd Party parcel delivery services to be able to deliver parcels to Australia Post delivery locations such as Postal Box, Parcel Locker and Parcel Collect, albeit at a fee to the 3rd Party (under an arrangement similar to Bank@Post where there 3rd Party pays an annual fee to Australia Post to be able to deliver to Australia Post delivery locations).

12. What environmental sustainability factors matter most to you in relation to parcel delivery services?

- Sustainable satchels and packaging that can be recycled.
- Last mile delivery using electric vehicles.
- The use of multiple vehicle fleets for parcel delivery services needs to be rationalised.
Vans bearing Australia Post branding currently deliver Parcel Post/ Express Post product.
Vans bearing StarTrack branding currently deliver StarTrack Premium product.
Vans/ Trucks bearing StarTrack branding currently deliver StarTrack Road Express product.
Vans/ Trucks bearing StarTrack Courier branding currently deliver Australia Post On Demand, StarTrack Courier, and Australia Post Parcel Post/ Express Post to be delivered within a specific 2 hour delivery window.
Potentially four different vehicles could attend the same address to make deliveries in one day.

There's a massive opportunity to reduce carbon footprint through consolidating and simplifying the range of parcels products. For example...

- merge Australia Post Express Post and StarTrack Premium into a single product,
- merge Australia Post Parcel Post and StarTrack Road Express into a single product,
- merge Australia Post On Demand and StarTrack Courier into a single product.
- use the same fleet for last mile delivery of the new consolidated Australia Post Express Post and new consolidated Australia Post Parcel Post product instead of the three different vehicle fleets used today.
- by consolidating Australia Post and StarTrack parcels products this will simplify the technology landscape and eliminate multiple legacy backend systems.

Part 3: Accessibility of services – points of presence

13. How important is the Post Office to individuals, business and communities, including which Post Office services are most valued?

- Post Offices are important as they enable...
 - individuals to send/ receive parcels and access identity services,
 - businesses to lodge parcels into the parcels network.
 - senior citizens to access basic banking services and pay bills.

14. Are other facilities, such as parcel lockers, vending machines, payment terminals or mobile Post Offices, helpful to serve community needs?

- Yes, Parcel Lockers, vending machines, payment terminals and mobile Post Offices are helpful to serving the community.
- Parcel Locker coverage is still very poor, for example, Dromana/ Rosebud located on the Mornington Peninsula in VIC is a popular tourist area from November through to Easter each year. The nearest Parcel Locker available is over 10km away, even though there are at least four Post Offices/ LPOs in the vicinity.
- Mobile Post Offices are essential to serving the community following a natural disaster such as flood/ fire.

15. Are there other services Australia Post could provide to better support the community?

- Enhance Bank@Post services by providing...
 - an ATM capability would be of benefit to senior citizens and those in Regional Australia.
 - Personal loans for those in Regional Australia.

16. For Post Office licensees and agents — tell us the challenges and opportunities from your perspective.

- Unable to comment.

Part 4: Support for Australians with diverse needs

17. How can Australia Post best support the community?

- Continue to offer discounted stamps/ letter pricing to concession card holders such as senior citizens.
- Provide onsite assistance at Post Offices/ LPOs for tracking of parcels bearing in mind that senior citizens often are not technology literate as well as those that may not have access to technology. I.e. Don't fob off customers by advising them to check the auspost website.
- Continue to provide some form of mail collection or postal box service for the homeless.
- Continue to provide Mobile Van Post Office service to communities impacted by natural disasters.