

SUBMISSION TO THE AUSTRALIA POST MODERNISATION CONSULTATION

by



General Comments

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my views on the future of Australia's Postal Service. I believe Australia Post should be subject to a few key principles, namely:

- A postal service (whether letter or parcel) should be the standard remit of Government, and **never** be privatised. Despite many promises to the contrary, there are very few services traditionally supplied by Government (eg, electricity, telecommunications) that have resulted in improved services or reduced cost for the public as a consequence of privatisation. On the contrary, services have become significantly worse, and costs have significantly increased.
- A postal service should provide for the needs of **all** Australians, whether young or old, technologically savvy, or not, living in cities or rural and remote areas, nursing homes, private accommodation or no fixed abode due to homelessness. Consequently, a continuing letter service is vital and should not be removed. A letter service is particularly important for the elderly who are usually less technologically savvy and more isolated from family and friends as a consequence of poor health, dementia, reduced mobility, bereavement. A letter service is also important for those who are less well-off and cannot afford smart phones or extensive internet access. People in older age groups also place more value on letters than the younger generation, because that is what they grew up with and therefore letters provide familiarity, which is particularly important for those with dementia.
- While it is understood that fewer people are sending letters, the reduced volume of letters is also because more and more businesses are forcing customers online by charging for paper bills and other correspondence. This is unfair for those members of the population who do not have access to, or the capability to manage, internet delivery, especially when 'cost of living' is a consistent issue for many. It also raises the issue of online security, which as seen by recent events, cannot be guaranteed!
- Letters are still a necessary part of life for many people and should not be disregarded or phased out completely. Delivery should occur on a regular and consistent basis. If 5 days a week is no longer feasible, then each area should have specific days they can expect delivery (e.g., Monday, Wednesday, Friday or Tuesday and Thursday). Every second day becomes difficult to predict when you are likely/not likely to receive mail.

More specific response to some of the consultation questions

Q1. What services provided by Australia Post are most important to you?

Mail – purchase of stamps, postage of both letters and parcels

Q4. 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?

Sending and receiving letters is still a very important part of the life of our household. Postage of birthday, sympathy, thank you, Christmas, Easter greetings etc mean we would post at least 50-

100 letters per year. Increases in postage costs make it more difficult to maintain this level of postage.

Q5. Do you expect usage of Australia Post's letter services to change in the next 5 years and why?

Any change will only be due to the reduced volume of mail that others send. Posting birthday, Christmas cards etc, as well as letters to family and friends living overseas (who have expressed the desire to receive 'snail mail' still) will remain important in our household.

Q6. 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?

Delivery reliability, consistency and speed as well as having reasonable confidence of consistency of speed (i.e. is it necessary to ensure a card is posted 3 days, 1 week before a due date to ensure arrival in time).

Q7. What is the value of the regulated priority letter service to you?

Extremely valuable for all the reasons previously outlined.

Q8. Should the current letter service speed or frequency of delivery requirements change in line with the expected decline in the number of letters being delivered?

While it is understood this is most likely to occur, personally I would prefer the current frequency and speed to be retained. At the very least, as already mentioned, delivery and speed need to remain consistent, predictable and reliable.

Q11. 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?

Of course, everyone would like speedy, convenient delivery in this day and age of impatience and expecting to have everything at once. However, when receiving a parcel, delivery persons should be required to wait a few moments for someone to get to the door after ringing a doorbell, rather than ringing the doorbell and disappearing. Not everyone has the physical ability to get to the door quickly.

For international parcels, tracking is essential to ensure parcels arrive at their intended destination and don't do round the world trips like some have in the past (especially given the cost of postage to some countries).

Q13. How important is the Post Office to individuals, business and communities, including which Post Office services are most valued?

Local post offices provide many essential services and smaller businesses are preferred for personalised and quicker service (i.e., queues are not as extensive for those who have difficulty standing for a long time).