

Parcel pricing

- Parcels are too expensive for private individual's vs for businesses. Private posting is typically for presents and the like so I feel that should come cheaper than commercial goods.
- It is common for businesses to offer free shipping. If I have to pay for shipping I'm more likely to ensure I consolidate my orders and think more carefully about making an order/ordering online vs shop in person, as there is that additional cost to pay. The volume of parcels being received may be partly because they are too cheap.
- Following on from the above two points, I have family interstate and if I'm sending a present it is often cheaper for me to buy the item online and have it shipped straight to them, due to the free or reduced-price shipping available from businesses. To buy an item in store and then post it matches more with my idea of giving a gift, but peculiarities in the parcel pricing mean I pay a premium to do that. Ultimately posting things is about people, and as a government owned service I expect Australia Post to be not-for-profit and deliver the services people want, rather than what is commercially the best option.
- The discussion paper talks of post offices being expected to bring in revenue, but I see post offices as part of the delivery process, from lodgement to collection. The prices of sending parcels should recover costs for all steps of the delivery process and thus factor in post office use, even if no money changes hands there.
- Local (intrastate) parcels should be cheaper than they are. The postage calculator is telling me there is no price difference but I remember it used to be approx. 75c cheaper for the smallest parcel. This hardly seems enough considering that where WA is involved, any interstate package spends 3-7 days in transit. I'm not advocating for different pricing per state as we can't control where we live vs where goods are supplied from, but there should be a discount for sending locally as it travels less distance and only needs sorting in one state.
- Some years ago the postage was changed to remove the smaller parcel sizes like 500g. This has made it very expensive to send small goods. There is too much of a jump from letter size to parcel size. Smaller parcel rates need to come back for pricing fairness as well as to encourage people to think about how much they are sending – every parcel has an environmental cost related to its size and weight, and larger parcels will take up more of the delivery capacity. Pricing needs to encourage efficient use of the service.
- Mention was made of enabling small businesses – my experience with sellers on eBay and Etsy is they often sell lower value items at lower volumes than a large business. This makes it expensive to buy from them, especially if it is a low value item where shipping is similar to (or even more than) the cost of the item. I'm not suggesting lowering their shipping costs, but rather changing costs per above to stop subsidising large businesses and fairly price small parcels.
- I think there is something wrong with the pricing for inbound international mail. There are cheap items available from China for \$1 with free shipping, which is less than it costs to send a letter in Australia. I also bought a book once from the UK with free shipping and wanted to return it, but the return shipping of \$25 was more than the book cost. Is Australia Post adequately recovering its costs to deliver these items?
- Letter pricing should be proportional to parcel pricing. There should be a basic cost to move something via the post, then extra cost based on air vs road, size of the article, tracking etc. Letters are faster to send interstate than parcels, but they are untracked and small, so pricing letters at 10-20% of the cost of a parcel seems reasonable. There may be differences in the handling of the items, but as customers we are just trying to transport something. The

pricing of the service should keep that in mind, not try to make letters and parcels individually profitable based on the particular way Australia Post transports things.

- Free returns make a big difference to whether I will take a risk on a product or return something that doesn't suit. Otherwise it is costing me around \$10 or more to return, which I know is more than the business paid to ship it to me.

Post office locations

- The 2.5km distance to post offices may seem close for metro areas, but it needs to be considered in light of walkability. I walk to collect my parcels unless it is something too large to carry.
- Consideration also needs to be given to community members who cannot travel easily. However, there may be ways to offset impact for them, such as offering a parcel re-delivery option, parcel pickups (noting this is already available), letting people buy postage products online and have them delivered, etc.

Delivery

- I would like the ability to schedule deliveries, that way I can request my parcels to come on the days that I work from home. This would cut down on the need to collect from a post office or use a parcel locker.
- I don't support reducing the frequency of delivering mail because some letters are time critical, e.g. birthday cards or important documents. There needs to be a way for people to ensure that letters arrive quickly, without using Express Post because the cost of that is much greater than that of regular letters for little extra speed (c.f. parcels for WA, where express upgrades from road to air, but letters are always by air). Using priority mail to get daily delivery for documents may be acceptable, but it seems wrong for birthday cards. Perhaps have a card only stamp that is available year round but only available for purchase privately, so that private cards can be sent priority for regular letter price?
- I don't understand the need to have less frequent mail delivery in metro areas if the postie is delivering anyway to service parcels. Surely adding letters in makes little difference, and the imposition will become less over time if letter volumes keep declining? The advantage would only seem to be if delaying the letter delivery would allow a reduction in the number of trips, e.g. avoiding visiting a regional area. However if this is an attractive option, the question is then whether you shouldn't have a corresponding parcel product?
- Another idea that could be considered longer term is whether there is any scope to move away from letter boxes at everyone's house to having centrally located neighbourhood letterboxes.
- Speed of delivery and tracking are great, but predictability of delivery may be just as important so I can plan to purchase things in time and know roughly when they'll arrive without relying on the tracking events.

Other

- I find Australia Post's delivery services to be very good, and prefer to purchase from businesses that use Australia Post for delivery (although I avoid items from Queensland, because they take too long to reach WA). I have wondered if the parcel service is perhaps too good. Tracking has become standard instead of an add on, and parcels can be delivered within Perth overnight. I've started to expect this premium level of service and get annoyed when I see a parcel has been held up at the sorting or delivery centre.

- Self service options seem good in theory, like the supermarkets have moved to, but the ones I've seen in the Perth post offices are now out of service. Same with the stamp vending machine we used to have ~20 years ago, the service just disappeared. It can be frustrating to wait in a queue at a post office. In the course of this submission I looked to see if postage can be bought online (knowing that eBay sells online postage labels) and discovered it is available, and cheaper than going to the post office. Great option, I'll try to use it for my next parcel, but where was this advertised? I've been to post offices in the past couple of months and not seen anything to promote self-service options. I see there is a link on the website postage calculator but it is right down the bottom, where you don't bother scrolling down to if you think you have to go to a post office and are just checking the price first.
- Some businesses have moved to compostable satchels and plastic-free packaging materials. Australia Post should be doing likewise or collecting back its packaging for recycling.
- I find Australia Post's retail offerings to be strange, and I'm not the only one. I don't go to a post office to buy a stuffed toy or a chopping board.
- I'm interested in the idea of a secure digital mail service to be used to deliver things like bills. The idea would be that senders are limited to trusted organisations so people know who the mail has come from. Senders could be made to pay a small fee to send the secure mail so as to help pay for the cost of the service. They could address mail to your physical address, with you getting notifications via a linked email address that is not known to senders. This may help to cut down on scams and spam.