



EC24-000402

28 February 2024

Director, Postal Policy
Post International Telecommunications and ACMA Branch
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts
GPO Box 594
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Director

Proposed amendments to the Australian Postal Corporation Regulations 2019

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (the department) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed amendments to the Australian Postal Corporation Regulations 2019.

Introduction

The Australian Passport Office, as a business division of the department, issues passports and travel documents to persons in Australia and overseas in accordance with the *Australian Passports Act 2005*, related Laws and the Conventions on International Civil Aviation. These documents facilitate international travel, serve as proof of identity which enable individuals to access essential government and financial services, and are crucial for maintaining national security and preventing fraud.

Australia Post is a service delivery partner for the department in delivering passport services. The Australia Post network accepted over 2.4 million passport applications in 2023. In addition, around 90 per cent of customers received their passport using Australia Post's domestic letter service. The balance of customers in Australia picked up their passport from a passport office, with many of these passports distributed by StarTrack from the department's bulk print centre.

Delivery Services

Australia Post's delivery services are the primary means of distributing passports to Australians. Changes to the frequency of delivery services will need to be communicated clearly to Australians that have applied for a passport or are planning to apply for a passport.

The priority letter service is used by the department to transport passport applications after lodgement at Australia Post outlets to passport offices. It is used to deliver passports and travel documents to individuals. The department requires the highest levels of security and reliability for these services and would need to work with Australia Post to develop appropriate terms and conditions.

In our initial submission to the Government's public consultation on modernising Australia's postal service on 27 April 2023, we noted the department would like to explore options to increase the use of Australia Post outlets as collection points, as recipients are increasingly not home at delivery times. Around 70 per cent of passports are returned to the local post outlet for subsequent customer collection. Using Australia Post's parcel lockers for passport delivery has been considered. However, this would require Australia Post rules to be amended to allow letter products to be delivered through parcel lockers.

Points of presence

Australians can access more than 1,600 Australia Post outlets, including in regional and remote Australia, to lodge their passport applications. We understand updates to geographic classifications for Australia Post retail outlets will not impact Australia Post continuing to provide these services.

Yours sincerely



Lucelle Veneros
Executive Director
Australian Passport Office
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade