

We want to know

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

As the owner of the LPO, the continued viability of the Post Office box service is essential for our survival, any necessary change to the street delivery frequency should not be allowed to impact on this premium service, P O Box mail needs to be maintained at 5 days per week.

A solid national network of outlets must be maintained to allow all Australians access to mail, parcel, billpay and banking services. While the current footprint is excessive in places and some significant pruning of outlets is required, reasonable access to services must be retained.

The banking services provided by Post are crucial for the survival of many smaller communities who have been abandoned by the banks, the product mix offered by this service need to be grown and expanded, and ideally Post should have it own banking license and be offering a genuine alternative to the big 4.

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

Post, needs to get rid of the anachronisms of the past, there is so much of we have always done it this way so it cant change. Product and service offerings need to be streamlined and consistent for our customers.

An example, there was no international card rate (except Christmas), cards were sent at letter rate. Post changed the international letter definition from weight based to size based, this resulted in a slightly large card increasing in cost for \$3.50 to \$14.00. Following much outcry Post has introduced a card rate up to 50gms for \$3.00. This is almost a win for the customers except those to countries whose letter rate is less than \$3.00, then the letter rate applies. Of course, this does not include postcards, unless they are in envelopes. This is just one small example of how overly complex Post systems are procedure are.

Post has hundreds of different mail product and services, it is impossible for any customer (and most staff) to have any clarity about what is best for their need, the entire product offering need to be streamlined and reduced.

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

A modern, efficient and effective postal service is essential to most Australians, however efficient does not mean daily deliveries when volumes no longer warrant such a service level, customers who require to receive mail daily have the option of renting a P O Box for a small fee.

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?

There will always be a need or desire to have something physically delivered rather than processed online, however the price of this service needs to reflect the full cost of providing it.

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

Letter volumes will decrease far faster than predicted, this is a large cost to business customers who drive their customers online at every opportunity.

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?

These days, standard letters are a last resort for most businesses and charities, the speed and low cost of an email is what they are looking for, and generally they are only remaining off line to appease their customers, but this will not last.

Trackable mail items are still valued, and businesses are willing to pay a fair price for this benefit, however the lack of consistency and reliability of scanning in Post at the moment is causing a great deal of damage to the business reputation.

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

Personally, I see zero benefit in this product, it just adds another layer of complexity and confusion into what should be a very straightforward operation. Express Post is available for customers who require faster service, the priority letter was originally killed off in the 1980s, but somehow managed to make a comeback in the 2010's, it has never really taken off with customer and I would estimate less than .1% of my customers use this product.

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?

Absolutely, there are higher speed alternatives available both physical and electronic. While delivery times need to be reasonable, the cost of providing this needs to be considered. As long as the standards are clearly defined and well communicated to the customer this should happen.

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

Again, speaking as an LPO Owner, parcels are our present and our future, we do not have a business if Post does not have parcels, any move to remove parcels from Post would destroy the network, no Post Office would be viable without parcels.

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

For me, when I send parcels, the visibility of the tracking is essential, I need to know where the item is and when it will be where it is going. The current gaps in the scanning processes at Post cause enormous angst for myself and my customers. Whether this is a technical issue or a resources issue I do not know, but this issue needs to be addressed and FIXED, not just the usual nice words.

- 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?

The tracking is essential, but it could be so much better than it is. Also the looping of parcels that just seem to go around the same facility for days at a time without going anywhere is frustrating.

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

This is not an area I feel I am qualified to comment on.

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

Our LPO is essential to our community, from the mobility challenged who can not easily get to the bank, to our small business customers that would not have a business without the post office to the people who need passport and identity services.

Not everyone is digitally literate, it essential that communities have a trusted access point to business and government services, these people cannot just be left behind.

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

Certainly, technology is an important part of the mix, but it is essential for communities to have access to actual humans to deal with if they desire. The breadth of the post office network is unrivalled in Australia and is something we should be proud of, and something we should ensure that we do everything possible to find financially viable ways of keeping it intact.

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

Australia Post should have its own banking license to be able to offer service to the community that the banks do not want to offer, this should run in conjunction with the current bank at post operations if at all possible, to give consumers and business the choice.

Australia Post should be processing almost any form of government transaction, Medicare, Centrelink, DVA. Whatever the government (Commonwealth, state and Territory) has customer facing people doing the option of doing this at the local post office should be fully explored.

Finding space in stores to promote local small businesses.

Providing an online marketplace/display space for local businesses to be promoted within the community, something like Facebook, but not toxic.

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

The challenges are many, there are entrenched silos with Post, that all have their own agendas and are actively working against the greater good of the organisation just so they can protect their patch.

The processes, policies and procedures are decades out of date and mostly irrelevant, inefficient and generally misunderstood. Every policy and procedure needs to be re-examined as to why it is done and does it add value to the organisation or the customer.

Post should take the opportunity provided by this review and increase the size of a standard letter to C5 size, while increasing the sending price significantly. Most greeting cards are larger than the current size but smaller than C5, this is a particular pain point for retail customers as they feel ripped off having to pay large letter rate when "it's just a card".

One of my personal annoyances is having to sell individual stamps, given the commission is so low, every transaction is loss making. Stamps should be available only in multiples of 5, just like the concession stamps are, this results in higher transaction values and fewer loss making sales. You do not buy a slice of bread, you buy a loaf.

Christmas stamps discount needs to go, no sane enterprise offers a discount at its peak time, this is another fall back to the bygone era.

I also believe we need to look at the GST exemption for international mail. International mail is treated as an export and therefore is exempt from GST, this causes Post to issue special international only stamps (another pain point for customers). Realistically, any business that is actually exporting, would be able to claim the GST they paid back in their activity statement. Consumers sending international letters and parcels are not exporters and it is time this loophole was closed.

Post has a policy of cubically assessing all domestic parcels over 1kg, and charging the higher of the actual or assessed weight, this is standard practice with all transport companies in Australia. For some reason this policy is not applied to international parcels, yet I am sure Post is being charged at cubic rates by the airlines, this is a revenue hole that can be easily plugged.

So much time and money is wasted printing new stamps when prices change, and customers then have to add extra stamps (another pain point). Post should follow

the overseas lead and issue forever stamps, these are valid forever no matter what price the postage is.

Postage stamps should only be able to be used on letters, not on parcels. Post may need to have a buy back offer for old stamps to clear them out of the community, this will need to be well publicised with clear messaging that they will not be valid after x date.

Post is losing millions of dollars every month is providing free tracking on letters because people are selling free parcel tracking labels (these are meant only to be used on parcels by account customers) on website and people are sticking them on letters. These labels need to be discontinued, account customers have numerous and better ways of getting tracking on their parcels and they need to be migrated to these systems. These tracking number series could then be turned off so no tracking is available.

17. How can Australia Post best support the community?

Post can only support the community by being in the community, we can not abandon the people of Australia, we must find viable ways to keep post office open.