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CWUnion
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PROBLEMS AT POST RUN MUCH DEEPER THAN LUXURY WATCHES, UNION SUBMISSION TO REGULATORY REVIEW

29 October 2020

Dear Members,

A lot has occurred over the past week.

Revelations of questionable executive expenditure during Australia Post's appearance at Senate Estimates last week led to Prime Minister Scott Morrison's impassioned speech, with lots of "shock" and "appal" thrown in, announcing he had instructed CEO Christine Holgate to stand aside from her role whilst the Department undertakes an investigation.

Now, it's all well and good to be shocked and appalled that senior employees, who are already paid very well, would be gifted such extravagant gifts for **doing their jobs**. Sure – be shocked and appalled at that. Absolutely.

But the Prime Minister's tirade against the CEO seemed to completely miss the rest of the leadership team, who not only have a role to play in the making of such significant financial decisions, but are also responsible for what is looking to be the most serious degradations in service quality at Australia Post, ever lumped on the Australian public.

Not to mention some of the most concerning working conditions facing our members as you all continue to struggle with a workload that has quickly become unsafe and simply unmanageable.

Posties are admitting to working unsafely whilst still struggling to get their jobs done, drivers and processing workers have lost take-home pay and annual leave benefit accruals with Sunday clearances being slashed, corporate admin staff were forced to deplete their annual leave balances and a number of post offices have closed early or through lunch hours simply due to a refusal to hire local relief staff.

Honestly, with all these issues that continue to plague this once-iconic Australian institution, how long do we have to wait for this Prime Minister and his government to begin expressing their shock and disgust for our people?

At the time, National Secretary Greg Rayner said "It's outrageous that Australia Post's CEO and Board gifted \$5,000 watches to four senior, highly paid employees. But it's not surprising given the other shocking decisions coming out of Australia Post's leadership this year.

"In the middle of a pandemic, Australia Post decided to slow down deliveries right when Australians need the service the most. This seriously says something about the motivations of Australia Post's Executive team, Chair and Board.

"The watches scandal is just the tip of the iceberg. If you look below the surface – there are far greater problems plaguing our network.

"The Government needs to intervene further than just wiping out the CEO – Australia Post needs a whole reshuffle to get their leadership team right.

"At the forefront of every decision made by Australia Post should be the safety of their workforce, and the quality of services they provide. That's clearly not on their minds otherwise they would not be slowing down deliveries and putting incredible pressure on their workers in the middle of a pandemic."

The results of our national survey of members employed at sites participating in the *Alternate Day Delivery Model*, has given a dire warning, as posties are engaging in unsafe work practices in an attempt to clear delivery backlogs and postage delays that are still being experienced across the network.

The survey found:

- 57% of traditional posties, delivering both letters and small parcels predominantly by motorcycle, said they left letters-based products behind at the delivery centre, or brought them back where they remained undelivered for more than one business day.
 - Of those, the average number of letters were 201 per postie per response
- 51% of posties said they left behind, or brought back, parcel products (including premium products such as *Express Post*) they were unable to deliver on their run, on the day the parcel was due for delivery.
 - Of those, the average number of parcels undelivered on the day they were due was 44
- 43% of posties admitted to not adhering to all footpath and nature strip speed limits whilst performing the delivery function of their role
- 84% of posties said they were unable to complete their duties within their rostered hours. 34% of those said they considered the level of overtime required to complete their run to be unreasonable
- 55% admitted to not taking all their applicable breaks in order to complete their duties

Greg said, “These delivery backlogs are a direct result of Government changes allowing Australia Post to neglect their regulatory obligations by slowing the network down to second day deliveries.

“We’ve warned from the very beginning that reducing the frequency of deliveries in the middle of a global pandemic is a recipe for disaster.

“These survey results paint a seriously bleak picture of what’s happening behind the scenes in our postal network. Now the watches scandal needs to be a watershed moment to get our network right.

“Australians are relying on our postal service now more than ever – and they’re being let down by the Federal Government and Australia Post’s most senior leadership team.

Last week’s events have sparked revelations of further extravagant spending and allegations of inappropriate behaviour by members of the Board. This must all be explored – but the government must not ignore that, currently, Australia Post is not delivering on the sole purpose of their existence.

Post’s failures to deliver for the taxpayer, for their customers and for their workforce should all be carefully scrutinised – and those responsible for driving those failures should be held accountable.

The Union has made a submission, on behalf of members, to the Minister’s review in to the “temporary” regulatory changes. A copy of this detailed submission can be downloaded here: <https://tinyurl.com/admsubmission>

In the meantime, we will continue to engage with Australia Post to pursue a delivery model that provides job security for members and provides the efficiencies the company requires to remain sustainable.

However, our members’ health and safety and the quality of services expected by the public must be at the forefront of those considerations.

Because what is currently occurring is simply not working.

At this point, we wanted to reiterate that all postal workers should be incredibly proud of themselves. The thankless work you are undertaking, keeping your communities connected through this pandemic, should continue to be acknowledged.

We know, as your representatives, that there is only so much that you can continue to endure. At some point, something is going to have to give.

Yours faithfully,



Nick Townsend
BRANCH SECRETARY