



Connecting
our community

communication workers union
CWUunion
Australia

GOVERNMENT SLASHES SERVICE STANDARDS:

AUSTRALIA POST MUST GUARANTEE JOBS, NOW

Many members would, by now, be aware of the temporary changes to Australia Post's service standards, announced today by the Morrison Government.

In a nutshell, Australia Post will now operate under the following temporary relaxation in regulatory requirements:

- Its required delivery time for regular intrastate letters will be extended to five days after the day of posting;
- In metropolitan areas, it will be permitted to push out to slash the delivery of letters from every business day, to every second business day;
- It will have greater freedom in managing post offices while there is a pandemic, but will take all reasonable steps to keep outlets open.

Delivery frequency in regional, rural and remote Australia will not change. The changes will take effect following approval by the Governor General at the Executive Council and will apply until 30 June 2021, subject to review.

Lack of consultation: disgraceful

CWU National Secretary Greg Rayner said the changes were snuck in by the Federal Government, without any consultation with workers.

"We've remained open and have engaged in genuine, cooperative consultation with Australia Post to ensure our communities remain connected, whilst ensuring the safety of our members," said Greg.

"Our members have demonstrated flexibility in their core job responsibilities, flexibility in their work locations, and in some cases, significant wage restraint as take-home pay and opportunities for additional earnings have become affected by a change in starting times.

"Why the government, in cahoots with management, thought postal workers, who are on the frontlines of the pandemic response, shouldn't be consulted on such significant change is not only perplexing, it is insulting and disgraceful, but sadly unsurprising."

One of the key highlights of Australia Post's communications to employees and the media is their plan to retrain 2000 posties to deliver parcels in vans, daily, along with a degree of ambiguity around keeping post offices open.

Greg said the Union has called on Australia Post to immediately come to the table and consult on exactly how their proposed changes will be implemented.

"Who will be affected, how will they be affected, and how do we mitigate against the impact to our members' take-home pay and their rights to a safe workplace?"

"These are all matters that our members need urgent clarity on. Australia Post must immediately come to the table and engage in genuine, meaningful consultation to ensure workers' voices considered through this major change.

"Our members need it, they deserve it, and we still have an EBA that entitles them to it."

Jobs guarantee needed now

CWU National President Shane Murphy said members are reporting an explosion in parcel volumes across the country.

“Members across the country are saying they’ve seen nothing like it. Not at Christmas, not on Black Friday and not even on Cyber Monday.

“And whilst a significant reduction in letters volumes is not disputed, particularly in UMS, what is currently exploding in the parcels side of the business is nothing short of a total blowout.”

Shane said no member should be fearful for their job security at such a time.

“If that parcel volume is significant enough for the Morrison Government to slash our community’s letter delivery service in order to focus on delivering those parcels, it’s significant enough to guarantee our members’ jobs.

“Our members have been patient – swallowing the increasing visibility of contractors and casuals in their workplace, changing their starting times, shifting work locations, cutting their overtime and putting up with delay after delay in the distribution of necessary personal protective equipment.

“With what our members have had to swallow so far, and what is now being asked of them, they deserve some serious certainty about the future of their employment.

“That’s why, in light of today’s announcement, we’re calling for an **immediate moratorium on all involuntary redundancies**.

“Our members are on the frontlines of the pandemic response and they deserve a jobs guarantee. Equally, our communities deserve certainty around knowing their post office and their five-day-a-week letter delivery service will continue to keep them connected, at the other end of this crisis.”

EBA uncertainty needs to end

Discussions have been underway with Australia Post for some time now on how to approach EBA10, where formal negotiations were scheduled to commence in March.

With an immediate future of economic uncertainty and potential change ahead of us, now is probably not the best time for either party to pursue a new EBA.

This is a view which is overwhelmingly shared by both Post and your Union leadership team. However, we have so far failed to agree on an appropriate way forward to ensure continuity of certainty for our members’ conditions, in the meantime.

Late last week, the Morrison Government made it easier for employers to cut workers’ pay and conditions by allowing them to give just one day’s notice before opening a vote on changes to EBAs – bypassing the proper consultation period with you and your Union.

This is not the time for Post to use these unfair, anti-worker provisions to mount a surprise assault on your rights at work.

That’s why we have today written to Australia Post reiterating our support to delay EBA10 talks and to extend the nominal expiry date of the current EBA9 – along with a jobs guarantee for the duration of that varied agreement.

Achieving this would maximise certainty and job security for our members through what is going to inevitably be a significantly volatile period at work.

We will continue to keep you updated as all these important matters progress. In the meantime, should you require any further information, please contact me on 0402 456 514 or nick.townsend@cwu-sant.asn.au.

Yours faithfully,



Nick Townsend
Branch Secretary, CWU SA/NT

22 April 2020