

Senate Environment and Communications References Committee
Australia Post inquiry
Responses to Written Questions from Senator McKenzie

Question	Response
<p>1. When did Australia Post make the decision to stop carrying perishable foods on 30 June 2021?</p> <p>a. Was this date changed from an earlier end date to cease carrying perishable foods? What was the original date?</p> <p>2. Who did Australia Post consult with, particularly in agricultural and food production industries, to inform this decision?</p> <p>3. Did Australia Post undertake any research on the negative impacts this move would have on Australia's food producers who rely on your carriage services, particularly in regional Australia where couriers are expensive or unavailable?</p> <p>a. What about on the post offices and carriers who operate in rural and regional areas?</p> <p>4. On 22 April, Australia Post released a statement that it will continue to carry perishable foods beyond 30 June. Why did Australia Post form a working group to explore solutions to the issue after the announcement to cease carrying perishable foods by 30 June?</p> <p>a. Who will be the producer representatives participating in the industry forum?</p> <p>b. Which industry groups will participate in the forum?</p> <p>c. How will the producers and industry groups be identified and selected?</p> <p>d. How will Australia Post ensure the industry forum is representative?</p> <p>5. What representations has Australia Post made to governments to address food safety and regulatory issues?</p>	<p>1. In late 2020 a decision was made to stop carrying perishable food for the small number of business customers identified at the time who, were using our services to deliver the perishable food they sold. The decision was made in connection with a decision to discontinue exploratory work into cold chain logistics. The decision would not impact on consumers sending perishables food to other consumers, as Australian food safety regulations do not apply in a non-commercial context.</p> <p>a. In early 2021 some identified commercial senders of perishable foods were advised that the carriage of some categories of perishable foods would be discontinued from 31 March 2021, later revised to 30 June 2021. As announced on 22 April 2021, Australia Post has since advised that it is continuing to ship perishable foods as the industry forum convenes.</p> <p>2. Initial, informal consultation on cold chain logistics and perishable food transport was undertaken with regulatory authorities in all States and Territories in late 2019 and early 2020, including authorities in the health, meat, dairy and primary industries.</p> <p>3. An assessment of known commercial senders was undertaken, but a detailed customer/stakeholder impact assessment was not performed at that stage (noting the limitations associated with senders not being required to declare the content of articles they send, and with Australian food safety regulations not applying to the carriage of foods in a non-commercial context).</p> <p>a. See item 3 above.</p> <p>4. The industry forum is being established in the interests of finding a solution to supporting the carriage needs of Australian commercial organisations – many of whom are small businesses sending perishable foods they have sold to consumers.</p> <p>a. Australia Post and the Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman are currently establishing the forum and considering potential participants.</p> <p>b. See item 4a above.</p> <p>c. See item 4a above.</p> <p>d. See item 4a above.</p> <p>5. See item 2 above. Further engagement is anticipated once the industry forum is established.</p>