

To

9<sup>th</sup> July 2020

## **The Environmental & Communications Committee**

### **My Opening Statement**

Dear Chair and Senators

As I was unable to participate and speak yesterday at the senate inquiry in to Australia Post, I would to table this document as my opening statement for Hansard into the future of Australia Post Service delivery.

My submission relates to Australia Post using COVID-19 as a cover to push through its reform process which has the potential to see job losses and cuts to employee wages and conditions of work.

While I understand there is a Memorandum of understanding (MOU) which states there would be no forced redundancies for all those parts of the network that are affected by the COVID-19 crisis and the temporary reform, in my opinion there is a big difference between no forced redundancies and that of job losses due the implementation of the Alternative Delivery Model (ADM) being modelled as a result of the temporary relief being sought by Australia Post till June 2021.

As this model rolls out we would see this becoming more permanent in the course of time.

Australia Post are still modelling around the 3 in 4 jobs and once this is done they would then consider the 4<sup>th</sup> Postie namely (DAN) and decide his future in the organisation and where they may be placed.

If Australia Post is sincere in protecting this 4<sup>th</sup> Postie's job then a model should be developed from the start that incorporates all 4 posties who are currently employed in these 4 rounds. There is no guarantee that all four jobs would be protected as it is not reflected in their model and this has been constantly reflected with our conversations with higher management.

There is another part of the work force that would be affected by the introduction of this reform and these workers would have their wages and working conditions reduced. These are the staff in the processing centres and delivery centres who currently work night shift and have a 30% penalty rate attached to their wages. This would be under attack if the reforms are approved to go through as their services and jobs would be under threat as a result of the roll out of the ADM. The processing staff and night shift staff prepare the work for the day shift

posties and this requirement would be considerably reduced as a result of the Relief Reform being approved and the Alternative Delivery Model being rolled out.

Currently there are many vacant rounds and part-time and full time staff are employed in the delivery centres as fixed term workers, some for over 12 months. Given the shortage of labour being referred to by Australia Post to deliver the influx in parcels the requirement to fill these vacant rounds becomes extremely important. These fixed term workers who have been in the organisation for over 3 months should be offered permanent employment when held against a vacant round to enable Australia Post cater for its labour demands. Australia Post has fixed term workers employed in some cases for several years. This is the time for Australia to address this matter and offer permanency to these loyal workers.

Australia Post claims there is a reduction in letters volumes, while this is true it is not to the extent that Australia Post is making it out to be. The reduction in letters at its lowest would be around 12% to 14%. While there is a small reductions in letters there has been a massive increase in parcel volumes both large & small parcels. The posties can receive up to 200 parcels per day per round with a constant average of 100+

Given that these reforms are only temporary, till June, 2021, the most efficient way for Australia Post to address this shortage of labour it claims is to develop a model where all present jobs are maintained and fixed term staff working over three months be offered permanent full-time work, all vacant rounds to be filled and while this is being progressed to ensure all wages and conditions of these loyal permanent and fixed term workers are protected. These workers have put their health and well-being in danger by working through the Pandemic.

Dear senators, if the reforms are approved and goes through it would have adverse effects on vulnerable older Australians, who rely on the postal service they have known and loved over the decades. These people rely on the postal service to get their letters delivered on time to meet their medical appointments and other commitments which plays a great role in making them valued and an important part of society. Australia Post has been in operation for over 200 years and in general the Australian people need a postal service that is reliable and committed on time delivery for all types of mail, letters and parcels etc. And this is what this iconic organisation has stood for over all these years.

We have further concerns also that areas such as Geelong in regional Victoria are been misclassified as Metro areas and will see a further reduction of service standards in-spite of the Federal government announcement that the temporary reforms will not apply in regional areas in Australia.

The Victorian branch of the CWU has a long and proud history of advocating for strong mail service standards and COVID-19 has only strengthened our resolve.

We appreciate this opportunity to put our views across of the potential damage this Relief Reform could do to job security and service standards in this wonderful country of ours.

Finally, in relation to the modes of delivery being used, Australia Post are in the process of selling off their fleet of Motorbikes and gradually replacing them with an imported Swiss made electric Vehicle (EV) called a **Kyburz** . Over a period of time Australia Post have imported over 2000 of these vehicles (with no transparent tender process). These EV's are three wheel delivery vehicles which gives Australia Post the capacity of carrying more and bigger parcels when compared to a motorbike or an electric push bike. These EV's have had serious mechanical problems which has seen the fleet taken off the road. They have been proven unstable and have tipped over on slightly inclined surfaces in Tasmania causing injury.

There is an Australian version of this vehicle which is made in Melbourne. This vehicle is called a **Stealth OzPod** electric vehicle. While Australia Post have informed us that the locally made version costs more than the imported **Kyburz** , the extra costs can be quickly recovered because of the following reasons. Greater carrying capacity increasing productivity (700 litres v 400 litres with approx. 50kg of extra weight capacity

1. Greater safety features
2. Superior front suspensions.
3. Better suited on inclines and in rough terrain in outer suburban and rural areas. (millions of Australians live in areas where the **Kyburz** is simply unsuitable)
4. Far superior breaking with discs and callipers similar to a motor car. The **Stealth OzPod** uses the same car tyres on three wheels which are more durable and which offers superior traction when cornering or breaking.
5. As well as having front and rear hand operated brakes, the **Stealth OzPod** also has a foot operated brake pedal which applies brakes to all 3 wheels. In an emergency or in a panic, stepping on this pedal reduces the stopping distance. During normal operations it allows riders to keep their left hand free (i.e. for putting mail in letter boxes) while being able to safely stop at any time.
6. The **Stealth OzPod** roof is less obstructive to the driver when getting in and out of the vehicle decreasing the need to bend and twist when getting into the riders seat.(Less chance of neck injuries when having to contort your way into the seat while wearing a helmet)
7. The **Stealth OzPod** has minimal obstructions forward of the rider which gives greater peripheral vision when navigating footpaths, potholes, obstacles, pedestrians etc.
8. Does not lose power on hills as the Swiss model drops too low as 10kph on hills in transit.
9. Rear wheels work independently offering greater traction.
10. More comfortable for operator, less prone to fatigue.
11. Out - performed the **Kyburz** in trial in all aspects.

12. Less prone to roll over due to lower centre of gravity and extra weight
13. Faster charge time
14. Has a greater range able to outlast Kyburz in kilometres per charge. (Battery is far superior)
15. Less Maintenance re: service hours.
16. Posties involved with trial stated they felt safer on the **Stealth Oz pod**. (trial conducted at the Mooroolbark Delivery Centre).
17. Helps Australia Post meet its Australian Procurement obligations.
18. It is our understanding that the company can produce up 50 vehicles per week.
19. Any additional purchase cost of the **Stealth Oz pod** will be recovered quickly via a greater payload and lower service costs.
20. Creates Australian Jobs in a time of great need.
21. Promotion of this vehicle in Australia Post could create the potential of export opportunities.

In summary our view and that of our members who had had direct experience is that the Australian version the **Stealth OzPod** is a far superior version over the Swiss made **Kyburz** and much better suited to Australian conditions:

Thank you again and due to the communication difficulties yesterday we again respectfully request that my opening statement is added to Hansard.

Best regards.

Leroy Lazaro

Branch Secretary

Communication Workers Union

Postal & Telecommunications Branch Victoria.