

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications

Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice

Additional Estimates Hearings February 2014

Communications Portfolio

Australia Post

Question No: 146

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: Page 81/82 (25/2/2014)

Topic: Department of Human Services

Senator Cameron asked:

On notice, can you provide me with details of who you have met with from the Department in relation to this issue, when you met with them, and who instigated the discussions.

Mr Fahour: Are you talking about the digital mailbox opportunity?

Senator Cameron: No, I thought you were talking about DHS.

Mr Fahour: I am sorry. Could we just make sure that we are answering—

Senator Cameron: My question was: could you assist DHS recipients to use the Department's digital and phone self-managed services?

Mr Fahour: I am sorry; I was answering a different question to what you are asking, so I apologise for that.

Senator Cameron: I understand it is hard because your mindset is in Australia Post and my mindset is in DHS, and we will try to work out where you are headed.

Mr Fahour: I have not corresponded on that particular aspect of what you are talking about. I have personally corresponded with the Department of Human Services. I have this on the record because we made a public announcement in October last year. We have made two or three public announcements on this. The Department of Human Services, the Australian Taxation Office and Australia Post have been consulting and working with each other on the digital mailbox, to deliver items through the Australia Post digital mailbox. We have made public announcements on this and we have been working very diligently to bring on stream the Department of Human Services into our digital mailbox.

Senator Cameron: That is fine.

Mr Fahour: That is where that interaction took place.

Senator Cameron: I come back to my question. Would you be able to assist DHS customers to use the department's digital and phone self-managed services?

Mr Fahour: I do not know. I do not even know what it is.

Senator Cameron: Would you—by 'you' I mean people in your post offices—be able to advise customers on legislation, policy procedures, payments and services administered by the department?

Mr Fahour: I am not certain of the answer to your question.

Senator Cameron: Can you take that on notice to make certain?

Mr Fahour: I can.

Senator Cameron: Would you be able to assess customers' needs, requirements, entitlements and obligations?

Mr Fahour: Again, I am happy to take that on notice if you wish.

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Answer:

Throughout its history, Australia Post has provided essential services on behalf of the Government to business and the community. The public have placed their trust and confidence in Australia Post to securely handle personal, sensitive and confidential information.

Since its inception in 1809, Australia Post provided mail and money transfer services and later provided agency banking services for the Bank of the Commonwealth.

As a Government business enterprise after 1975, Australia Post introduced additional services such as passport application (1984), bill payment (1988), banking agency (1995) and broader identity services (2005).

Today Australia Post provides these services on behalf of over 750 organisations servicing over 800,000 retail customers every business day.

Australia Post is well positioned to deliver Government Services leveraging its:

- customer centric trusted brand;
- 200+ years of history in delivering Government Services across a broad range of activities;
- extensive physical footprint (4,400+ points of presence);
- deep experience in the delivery of project based outcomes (Future Post & Future Ready);
- commercial focus; and
- existing expertise in payments, identity and communications

Australia Post would welcome the opportunity to provide services to citizens on behalf of the Department of Human Services.