Question No: 23

Australia Post

Hansard Ref: Page 31, 9/02/2016

Topic: Postcode Allocation

Senator Smith, Dean asked:

Senator SMITH: On notice, can you let me know what are some examples of how postcodes have been added to? How do you subdivide a postcode? For example, if the postcode here in Canberra is 2600 and you have already allocated 2601, and, for argument's sake, you wanted to have another postcode, how would you do that?

Mr Fahour: I will have to take that on notice.

Senator SMITH: Okay. I was surprised to see some of the examples that my Queensland colleague shared with me earlier this week, and I just want to put them on the record. You are probably very familiar with them. The 4306 postcode, which is an Ipswich suburban postcode, encompasses some 57 localities stretching from the federal Brisbane seat of Ryan through to South Burnett, including localities in the federal seats of Maranoa, Blair, Ryan and Wright, with many communities not even sharing a boundary. That seems very big to me, and I am not quite sure how that fits with your statement about their being an efficient means for delivery.

Mr Fahour: It is a very good example. I will take that example on board. When I get my explanation back we can use this particular postcode to then say how we would explain the answer to that question. So I will gladly respond.

Senator SMITH: I will give you another one. In similar terms, postcode 4352, which is a Toowoomba based postcode, is shared by 72 localities across Maranoa, Wright and Groom.

Mr Fahour: Without knowing the specifics of the particular one you are referring to, what I am giving you is probably the reason: it is that it is a reflection of the volume of work. For example, we would take a hub or a postcode area and in the delivery centre we might have 120 staff, or 80 staff or 60 staff, and we know how much time they have available, what the street runs are, what distances they have to go and how much mail they will deliver. We will then build a system around what we can and are doing efficiently. Therefore, what I would like to do is take all those examples of the letter you have and when we respond to you maybe we can use those examples to explain how the system works, using the ones you are asking us to use.

Answer:

1. Examples of a new or changed postcode:

   • Winter Valley (VIC) - in 2015 Australia Post assigned a new postcode (3358) for this new locality development.

   • Prairie (QLD) – a postcode change from 4816 to 4821 will occur on 14 March 2016 to improve the efficiency of mail delivery.

- Nelia (QLD) – a postcode change from 4816 to 4823 will occur on 14 March 2016 to improve the efficiency of mail delivery.

- Kurrowah (QLD) – postcode change from 4352 to 4357 to meet operational needs.

- Occasions also exist where Australia Post has removed a postcode – the former locality of World Trade Centre (VIC) 3005 is such an example.

2. There is no universal answer to how postcodes might be subdivided, as the driving force behind the need to change the postcode is an operational reason (i.e. to ensure the efficient and reliable operation of the mail network). There would need to be a compelling reason – such as an increased mail expectation in a particular area – and Australia Post would need to ensure that whatever the change was, that it would adequately serve the area for a long period of time.

   In considering what number would be used, Australia Post would consider the available postcodes within that state and that are wherever possible within a similar number range to postcodes nearby. If there was a logical number available, a number would be chosen that made sense to the changed need and addressed the underpinning cause of the change. If there was no appropriate postcode in a range, then other factors would need to be considered, such as how diverting mail would affect the delivery of the area – again, these would form part of the review.

3. From an operational perspective, the 4306 postcode allows mail to be sorted and delivered in the most efficient fashion.

   Postcode 4306 encompasses 57 localities, however for a postcode to encompass such a range is not unusual. Nationally, there are 20 postcodes that have 50 or more localities in them, and 135 postcodes with 20 or more localities in them.

   Importantly, the 57 localities in 4306 only have 12,478 delivery points between them. By contrast, the postcode 4221, which covers only localities Eleanora and Palm Beach, has 14,273 delivery points. Postcode 4301 – covering 3 localities – has 10,491 delivery points. As all postcodes have been assigned for operational purposes, the work involved in delivering to postcode 4306 is directly comparable to the work to deliver to other postcodes.

   Postcode 4352 contains 10,318 delivery points, similar to many other postcodes, and again, is operationally efficient.