

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Additional Estimates Hearings February 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australia Post

Question No: 1

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: EC 63

Topic: Australia Post Uniforms

Senator Abetz asked:

Senator ABETZ—That has obviated the need for my next question, so thank you for that. Whereabouts are Australia Post uniforms manufactured? You can take that on notice if nobody knows off the top of their head

Mr Fahour—We will take it on notice.

Answer:

Australia Post has existing arrangements in place with two Australian based companies – Pacific Brands (retail and work wear) and Mountain Design (wet weather gear). Currently, both suppliers source predominantly from China.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Additional Estimates Hearings February 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australia Post

Question No: 2

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Australia Post Uniforms

Senator Abetz asked:

1. How does Australia Post select the uniforms manufacturer?
2. Is there a tender process?

Answer:

1. 2.

Via a tender process that evaluates suppliers in terms of capability, price, quality and service standards.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Additional Estimates Hearings February 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australia Post

Question No: 3

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: EC 63

Topic: Assistance to Licensees in flood affected areas of QLD

Senator Abetz asked:

Senator ABETZ—Can I ask what assistance Australia Post gave to flood affected licensed post offices and mail contractors?

Mr Fahour—Are you referring to any specific floods, like Queensland or Victoria, or just generally?

Senator ABETZ—I think we have had a number of floods in every state of Australia. I am just wondering what Australia Post has done to assist those post offices and contractors.

Ms Corbett—A number of our licensees in Queensland were particularly affected. We have deferred some of the stock payments for the month of January because a lot of them were unable to trade on a temporary basis.

Senator ABETZ—Is that it? Could you take on notice what other assistance you may have offered to individual licensees and post offices, without naming them?

Ms Corbett—Certainly. I can give you a number of examples relating to the floods, which happened in North Queensland straight after Christmas. We have given extensive support and have had experienced people managing to our licensees, our staff and the community at large. We have worked closely with the Queensland government—the Department of Communities in particular—to ensure we are able to distribute emergency relief funds to people in need. We have also worked very closely with licensees to set up some temporary arrangements with regard to both mail delivery and temporary premises. As I said, we have also then looked at how we can alleviate some of the stock payments in the immediate term.

Answer:

Australia Post provided extensive support to licensees and mail contractors affected by the flooding in Queensland. This included the maintenance of mail and delivery related payments for both groups, the extension of stock credit terms, suspension of point of sale technology fees for licensees and assistance with returning affected postal outlets to operation.

The impact of flooding on Australia Post's operations in states outside Queensland was minimal with little or no impact on licensed post offices or mail contractors.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Additional Estimates Hearings February 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australia Post

Australia Post offered the following additional assistance to licensees based on their individual circumstances:

- office cleanout;
- demountable building arranged for temporary outlet operation;
- interest free loan;
- provision of second hand counters and other office fixtures;
- replacement of damaged postage stock; and
- discussions with landlords/centre management/local councils regarding remedial work requirements.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Additional Estimates Hearings February 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australia Post

Question No: 4

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Queensland Floods

Senator Abetz asked:

1. What damage did Australia Post's corporate post offices suffer in the recent flooding in Queensland?
2. What damage was there to Licensed Post Offices and Community Postal Agencies during the Queensland floods?

Answer:

1. 10 corporate post offices in Queensland were damaged by the recent flooding and cyclone - 7 by floodwaters and 3 by heavy rains and cyclonic winds.
2. 11 Licensed Post Offices and Community Postal Agencies in Queensland were damaged by the recent flooding and cyclone – 8 by floodwaters and 3 by heavy rains and cyclonic winds.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Additional Estimates Hearings February 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australia Post

Question No: 5

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Security

Senator Abetz asked:

1. What security checks does Australia Post require for staff at Franchised Post Offices?
2. What security checks does Australia Post require for staff at Licensed Post Offices?

Answer:

1. 2.

Australia Post requires all staff employed at Franchised Post Offices and Licensed Post Offices (if assigned since November 2008) to undergo criminal history checks. Franchisees and Licensees are responsible for organising these criminal history checks for their own staff.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Additional Estimates Hearings February 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australia Post

Question No: 6

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Insurance

Senator Abetz asked:

Does Australia Post self-insure its property, including all vehicles, buildings, fixtures and fittings?

Answer:

Australia Post's board-endorsed risk management policy statement and framework includes a "Risk Insurance Strategy" to cover the possibility of catastrophic losses (which are not considered affordable or which cannot be controlled or effectively managed internally) by purchase of appropriate insurance cover.

Australia Post purchases Property Insurance on Freehold properties (including fixtures and fittings, IT equipment and general contents) and Leasehold properties that house high-valued Australia Post assets.

Australia Post self-insures Motor "own damage" and purchases third party property damage cover under the General Liability insurance program.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Additional Estimates Hearings February 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australia Post

Question No: 7

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Vehicles

Senator Abetz asked:

1. How many vehicles does Australia Post own as at 1 February 2011?
2. Has the use of vehicles decreased as more delivery work is contracted?
3. How does Australia Post dispose of vehicles such as mail vans or postie bikes when the vehicles have reached the end of their working life?
4. Are vehicles provided for the use of the Managing Director, the Board and senior Australia Post executives?
 - a. If so, what sort of vehicles are provided?

Answer:

1. 10,115 (includes motorcycles, cars, mail vans, small trucks, large trucks and Prime Movers).
2. There has been a small decrease in the total number of owned vehicles over this period – 10,287 in 2006 compared with 10,115 in 2011 (-1.6 per cent).
3. Mostly by public auction, however, some motorcycles are sold to exporters for resale overseas.
4. a. A Holden Statesman is available for the Managing Director's use when attending business engagements in Melbourne.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Additional Estimates Hearings February 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australia Post

Question No: 8

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: 111 Bourke Street

Senator Abetz asked:

1. At the last Senate Estimates, Australia Post indicated that the total cost of the fit-out to its new headquarters at 111 Bourke Street, Melbourne, was in the region of \$70M. What was the exact figure?
2. What is the annual leasing cost of 111 Bourke Street?
3. How do the costs of fit-out and lease fit within Australia Post's MD's statement at the October Senate Estimates hearings that he was aiming for a "lean and mean" organisation?
4. How many years remain on the lease for 111 Bourke Street?
5. What other premises does Australia Post have in Melbourne?
 - a. Which are leased and which are owned?
 - b. Is it Australia Post's intention to relocate any of those offices to its headquarters?

Answer:

1. In response to question on notice 13: Budget Estimates Hearings, October 2010, Australia Post indicated the fit-out was completed at a total cost of \$54.5m, against the original budget of \$66.9m. These figures did not include IT infrastructure, which has only recently been completed. With IT infrastructure included, the total cost was \$59.5m.
2. \$19.4m per annum.
3. Australia Post has traditionally leased its Headquarters building. The former Headquarters building in Exhibition Street had passed its useful life as a quality workplace with the majority of fit-out and building services in excess of 19 years old.

The building had transferred ownership five times, with little if any investment in upgrade of lifts, lighting, air-conditioning and services. Australia Post decided to find new accommodation prior to the lease expiring in February 2010, which would provide a quality 5 Star-rating, Green Star certified workplace.

The lease for the new Headquarters building in Bourke Street was approved by the Australia Post Board in November 2006 – more than three years prior to the appointment of the current Managing Director – because analysis at the time confirmed that leasing was the best financial option for the corporation.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Additional Estimates Hearings February 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australia Post

4. The lease expires in November 2019, with a further 4 x 5 year options available, if required.
- 5 a. Australia Post currently leases the following properties in the CBD - 123 Lonsdale Street (1126m²) and 150 Lonsdale Street (564m²). It does not own any other properties in the central business district
- b. Not at this stage.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Additional Estimates Hearings February 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australia Post

Question No: 9

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Australia Today Magazine

Senator Abetz asked:

1. Is *Australia Today* magazine being discontinued? If so, why?
2. What has Australia Post spent on this magazine since its inception?

Answer:

1. Yes. Whilst there was merit in the consumer engagement aspect of the publication, Australia Post was unable to close the funding gap through advertising. In its current format, the magazine was not generating sufficient return to justify further support.
2. Australia Post spent in the order of \$2.4 million on the magazine since its inception. This was offset by around \$1 million in advertising income and supplier funding.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Additional Estimates Hearings February 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australia Post

Question No: 11

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Stamp supplies to Licensed Post Offices

Senator Abetz asked:

1. Did Australia Post assist those Licensees who lost sales due to Australia Post's supply problems in the lead-up to Christmas 2010?
2. Where are Australia Post's stamp distribution hubs located?
3. How long does it take for Licensees located far away from those distribution hubs to receive the stamps that they order?

Answer:

1. Australia Post is not aware of any licensees who lost sales because of supply problems in the lead-up to Christmas 2010. While in some cases Christmas specific stamps were delayed, alternative general issue stamps were available for sale to customers.
2. Australia Post operates a national distribution centre co-located with its stamp production facility in Knoxfield, Victoria, for the supply of stamps to outlets in all states, except Western Australia. The distribution centre in Perth distributes stamps to outlets in Western Australia.
3. Orders for stamps are fulfilled (picked, packed and despatched) by the distribution centres on either the same or next working day from receipt of the order. Delivery of these orders to outlets is based on the delivery standard for domestic parcels and can range from 1 to 5 working days.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Additional Estimates Hearings February 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australia Post

Question No: 12

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Portable Data Terminals (hand-held scanners)

Senator Abetz asked:

1. How many PDTs have been allocated to Corporate post offices?
2. Are there any Corporate post offices that do not have at least one PDT?
3. How many LPOs have a PDT?
4. How many PDTs have been allocated to the LPO network?
5. What are the criteria for allocating PDTs to LPOs?

Answer:

1. 880 hand-held scanners have been allocated to corporate post offices.
2. 71 corporate post offices do not have at least one hand-held scanner.
3. 192 LPOs have been allocated hand-held scanners.
4. 192 hand-held scanners have been allocated to the LPO network.
5. Australia Post will provide hand-held scanners to LPOs at no cost where the outlet performs a minimum of 10,000 delivery scans per annum. Requests from other LPOs are considered on the basis of scanner availability, relative delivery scan volumes and the licensee's agreement to pay a monthly lease fee.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Additional Estimates Hearings February 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australia Post

Question No: 13

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Domestic letter service

Senator Abetz asked:

What is Australia Post doing to promote the usage of the basic domestic letter service?

Answer:

The basic domestic letter service comprises three broad communications categories – transactional mail (bills, invoices and statements), promotional mail (offers for goods and services or promotion/solicitation of donations for a cause) and social mail (personal cards and letters).

Australia Post has the following programs in place to promote the ongoing use of the basic domestic letter service for these three broad categories of mail:

Transactional Mail - targeted campaigns to businesses - via direct marketing or face-to-face presentations by Australia Post sales teams - that reinforce the effectiveness of using mail. Targeted campaigns to businesses that promote the concept of transpromotional mail (i.e. the inclusion of tailored marketing messages on a transactional item such as a bill or statement).

Promotional Mail - trade advertising campaigns that promote the key features of mail as a communication channel. Targeted campaigns to marketing and media managers that promote how mail integrates with other media channels.

Social Mail - general advertising and promotional campaigns to promote the sending of personal greetings at key times of the year, including Christmas. Programs to encourage and develop letter writing amongst primary school students.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Additional Estimates Hearings February 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australia Post

Question No: 14

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Renewal of IT systems and equipment

Senator Abetz asked:

1. At the October 2010 Estimates hearing (page EC59), the chairman asked for details of expenditure on the renewal of Australia Post's IT systems and equipment. Has there been a response to this?
2. How has Australia Post benefited and how will Australia Post benefit in the future from its current renewal of its IT systems and equipment?

Answer:

1. Yes, the answer to question on notice 5: Budget Estimates Hearing October 2010 is available on the committee's website.
2. There are numerous current and future benefits resulting from the renewal of IT systems and equipment, including:
 - the fleet of PCs and peripherals for the Administration Network and Retail Network were upgraded, avoiding risk of failure;
 - the data centre IT hardware and supporting equipment was upgraded, avoiding risk of failure;
 - the foundation IT systems were renewed to build a core of business process and information capability that the business can leverage as a group of assets into the future;
 - critical IT systems such as payroll have been implemented, replacing unsupported systems;
 - world class capability in parcel track and trace has been implemented;
 - refurbishment of the Retail supply chain management systems and rebuild of much of the unsupported legacy that executes in our retail network; and
 - importantly, compliance with required standards.

Australia Post is now able to reap the benefits of these investments and the flexibility that comes with contemporary systems and technology environments. This enables the implementation of new business models, rationalisation and implementation of products and services, and a greater customer focus.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Additional Estimates Hearings February 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australia Post

Question No: 15

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Staff Levels

Senator Abetz asked:

1. How many redundancies have been taken by Australia Post staff in the 2010 calendar year?
2. How has this impacted on total employee numbers?
3. How much did Australia Post budget for employee redundancies and how much of this budget has been used so far?
4. Will this redundancy programme impact on the dividend paid to the Government this year?

Answer:

1. During the 2010 calendar year, 795 employees took Voluntary Redundancy Packages (VRPs).
2. The total number of employees dropped by 815 (or 2.3 per cent) during the year, with VRPs accounting for around 18 per cent of total cessations.
3. Australia Post's 2009/10 Annual Report quotes a provision of \$141.9m for redundancies in 2010/11 (p75). At the completion of the half-year statements at 31 December 2010, this provision had been reduced by \$63.3m to \$78.6m.
4. The redundancy program will support the corporation's ability to pay a dividend in the future.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Additional Estimates Hearings February 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australia Post

Question No: 16

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Consultants

Senator Abetz asked:

Has Australia Post's use of consultants increased or decreased over the past 12 months compared to previous years?

Answer:

Expenditure on consultants for 2010/11 is expected to be lower than for 2009/10.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Additional Estimates Hearings February 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australia Post

Question No: 17

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Other Carriers

Senator Abetz asked:

With reference to the answer to question on notice 12 (from October 2010 estimates), please provide a complete list of other carriers for whom Australia Post performs last mile delivery.

Answer:

The answer to question on notice 12: Budget Estimates Hearings October 2010 contains the complete list of other carriers.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Additional Estimates Hearings February 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australia Post

Question No: 18

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Restructure

Senator Abetz asked:

With reference to the answer to question on notice 14 (from October 2010 estimates), have all management positions at State and National levels now been filled?

Answer:

The vast majority of State and National management positions have been filled. The remaining positions will be filled as soon as practicable as the corporation moves into the next phase of its five-year "Future Ready" business renewal program.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Additional Estimates Hearings February 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australia Post

Question No: 19

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Australia Post Headquarters

Senator Abetz asked:

With reference to the answer to question on notice 17 (from October 2010 estimates), Australia Post provided total costs for operating the Vic/Tas office over the past 5 financial years.

Please provide costs for WA, SA/NT, QLD and NSW. Please also indicate what proportion of those costs are salaries.

Answer:

Year	Costs by State Office - Total (proportion salaries)			
	NSW/ACT	QLD	SA/NT	WA
2006/07	\$33m (\$18.23m)	\$13.05m (\$8.03m)	\$14.59m (\$7.18m)	\$7.52m (\$4.69m)
2007/08	\$37.35m (\$19.93m)	\$19.37m (\$9.04m)	\$14.87m (\$5.50m)	\$10.66m (\$5.86m)
2008/09	\$34.68m (\$21.04m)	\$19.98m (\$10.52m)	\$14.40m (\$5.30m)	\$11.88m (\$6.55m)
2009/10	\$33.30m (\$18.97m)	\$16.66m (\$8.55m)	\$15.72m (\$7.18m)	\$16.69m (\$6.43m)
2010/11 (Projected)	\$32.34m (\$18.29m)	\$17.46m (\$8.86m)	\$16.66m (\$6.75m)	\$15.99m (\$5.17m)

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Additional Estimates Hearings February 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australia Post

Question No: 20

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: EC 71

Topic: Frequency of Delivery Services

Senator Birmingham asked:

Senator BIRMINGHAM—Australia Post has had some correspondence with my colleague Dan Tehan, the member for Wannon, about the frequency of mail delivery in the Streatham and Mininera regions. Streatham in particular is a region where delivery services have been reduced from five days a week to three days a week. I understand the arguments that have been mounted in the correspondence to Mr Tehan, and obviously there is no expectation or likelihood that Australia Post will reconsider delivery frequency in that area. With regard to Mininera, though, the correspondence signed by Mr Thorne, the board and shareholder liaison officer, highlights that although Mininera does not meet the five-day delivery frequency policy you will maintain a five-day-a-week route because of certain factors related to a local service and so on. Can I have an assurance that there is no plan to review that anytime soon, given the existing arrangements there?

Mr Fahour—I will take your question on notice to give us time to investigate that particular agreement, whenever that was made. We will come back to you with the facts on that.

Answer:

Australia Post has no plans to reduce the frequency of mail deliveries in Mininera.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Additional Estimates Hearings February 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australia Post

Question No: 21

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: EC 71

Topic: Change to Frequency of Delivery Services

Senator Birmingham asked:

Senator BIRMINGHAM—How many regions over the last 12 months have had their services cut from a five-day-a-week delivery to a three-day-a-week delivery?

Mr Fahour—I am happy to take that on notice.

Senator BIRMINGHAM—Equally, to be fair, are there any regions that have had their services increased from a three-day-a-week delivery to a five-day-a-week delivery?

Answer:

No areas have had the frequency of their mail deliveries reduced from five to three days per week or increased from three to five days per week, in the last 12 months.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Additional Estimates Hearings February 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australia Post

Question No: 22

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: Written

Topic: Closure of Belconnen Business Centre

Senator Humphries asked:

In relation to the reported closure of the Belconnen Business Centre

1. When is the centre scheduled to close?
2. What consultation was done before the decision was made to close the centre?
 - a. What was Australia Post's rationale for closing the centre?
3. Please provide a copy of any reports or studies undertaken, and resulting recommendations, into the Belconnen Business Centre.
4. Will the staff be retrenched?
 - a. If not where will they be moved to?
5. Where will postage items that are currently sent to the Belconnen Business Centre be redirected to?
6. What will happen to the building which houses the Belconnen Business Centre
 - a. Will it be sold?

Answer:

1. 6.

There are no current plans to close the Belconnen Business Centre.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Additional Estimates Hearings February 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australia Post

Question No: 23

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: EC 72

Topic: Rockhampton Mail Centre's Operations During the floods

Senator MacDonald asked:

Senator IAN MACDONALD—I just wanted to briefly question what happened to the Rockhampton mail centre's operations during the floods in Rockhampton, when, clearly, trucks were not able to get through. I have heard that the mail centre was temporarily moved to Gladstone. I am interested to question that in relation to my other interest in the Rockhampton mail centre, which I will not mention today except, in passing, to say that I appreciate that arrangements have been made to meet with residents and me at some time in the not-too-distant future.

Mr Ousley—The work-around arrangements for Rockhampton did not involve a relocation to Gladstone. Both events – the floods and then later the cyclone – caused closures for staff to deal with their own personal issues on a number of occasions. There was obviously work that did not flow as usual because of road closures et cetera. But there was local work to be done in those precincts during that time. There were no relocations -

Senator IAN MACDONALD—It was suggested to me that mail coming from the south that could not get through to Rockhampton because of the floods was actually diverted to Gladstone and then distributed to western Queensland and sometimes further north via circuitous routes, but done out of Gladstone. That is not the case?

Mr Ousley—That is not the case, to my knowledge. There was some mail that got held up at Miles heading north and then across, but that eventually got in through Mackay, I think. But we can clarify this through a question on notice if that would suit.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Could you just check out what happened to the mail coming north when it reached the outskirts of Rockhampton? As I said, my information is that it was diverted to Gladstone and then sorted and distributed from Gladstone as a temporary measure. I am interested in whether that did happen and, if so, what the arrangements were.

Mr Ousley—Yes.

Mr Fahour—We are happy to take that on notice.

Answer:

Rockhampton Mail Centre (RMC) operated everyday during the floods, as the Bruce Highway north of Rockhampton was not cut off.

Between 5 and 27 January 2011 some destinations* south of Rockhampton became inaccessible from RMC. To continue servicing these destinations, the following arrangements were put in place:

- Northgate and Underwood Mail Centres separated mail for RMC and diverted mail for these destinations to Gladstone Delivery Centre;

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Additional Estimates Hearings February 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australia Post

- Mail posted from these destinations was brought back to Gladstone Delivery Centre before being transported to Brisbane.

[*Ambrose, Bajool, Banana, Baralaba, Biloela, Dululu, Goovigen, Jambin, Marmor, Mt Larcom, Mt Morgan, Moura, Thangool, Theodore, Wowan and Yarwun]

The rest of the Rockhampton Region mail arrived at RMC through an alternative route (via Miles, Emerald and Mackay back to Rockhampton). RMC processed the mail and it was despatched back out via Mackay to Emerald and distributed from Emerald to its destinations.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Additional Estimates Hearings February 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australia Post

Question No: 24

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: EC 72 - 75

Topic: Australian Legends Series stamps

Senator Ryan asked:

Senator RYAN – I would like to turn our attention to stamps, if I could – in particular, the Australian legends series that was recently announced.

Senator Conroy—Did you miss out?

Senator RYAN—The standard would have been lowered if I was on one, Senator Conroy. I would like to explore who chose the criteria for this particular series of stamps.

Mr Fahour—Stephen Walter has been looking after this area for the last number of years. He can give you the background on how we went through our process.

Mr Walter—I have been involved since the inception of the Legends Award in 1997. I can give a bit of background in answering your question. Prior to 1997 the only living people honoured on Australian stamps were the monarch and sometimes members of the royal family. Our stamp program is approved by the board. The living legends series has been an annual part of the program since 1997. What has been attempted with the legends award is to make it a very long-running event and each year there will be people, as individuals or in fields of endeavour, who will be recognised with the Australian Legends Award. The recommendation for the content of the legends award comes from our philatelic group, which consults widely, and particularly the Stamp Advisory Committee, comprising external experts including philatelic and graphic designers. They are looking at a balanced approach.

Senator RYAN—It will not surprise you that I am a bit concerned about a lack of balance here. Do you have the names of the members of the Stamp Advisory Committee handy?

Mr Walter—No, but I can take that on notice.

Senator RYAN—You said that the members of the Stamp Advisory Committee were experts in philately and graphic designers. Is that who is on the Stamp Advisory Committee?

Mr Walter—It goes wider than that. I can take that on notice and give you the make-up of the Stamp Advisory Committee.

Senator RYAN—So that committee makes a recommendation about the criteria for a legends series in a given year?

Mr Walter—No, there are some criteria that have been established from the start.

Senator RYAN—If we go to this year, who established the criteria around which these four women were made Australian legends on stamps?

CHAIR—What four women?

Senator RYAN—Excuse me if I do not use their honorifics. They are Eva Cox, Elizabeth Evatt, Germaine Greer and Anne Summers.

Senator Conroy—The stamp police have arrived. The stamp police are with us.

Senator RYAN—I am a bit concerned about the stamp police already having been in action. Who established the criteria? Someone obviously chose them. Recognising leaders amongst Australian women is something I entirely support. I am not challenging that. But I assume that someone made that choice.

Senator Conroy—Of the four?

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications

Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice

Additional Estimates Hearings February 2011

Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio

Australia Post

Senator RYAN—No, the criteria.

Mr Walter—The criteria have been established since 1997. I can also arrange to give you those on notice as well. But, basically, the selection criteria include things like helping to shape the national identity-

Senator RYAN—Sorry; maybe I am not being clear. I understand the broad criteria. Who established the theme for this series, if that is a better way to put it?

Mr Walter—About the middle of last year – I am sorry if that was the specifics you were getting to – it was decided that, in line with the celebration of the centenary of International Women's Day next month, those women who had contributed to gender equality would be recognised. I think it is important to understand, too, that the Legends Award is not just about four individuals in this case; it is about all women who have supported the cause of gender equality. If you look at the book that was published in conjunction with the award, which is called *Trailblazers: The Road to Equality*, you will see there that many women are recognised. This group of women was chosen -

Senator RYAN—The choice of the four who go on the stamp is obviously an important one. I think you will accept that. In acknowledging the centenary of International Women's Day, a valid thing to honour and recognise, someone decided to pick only the 1970s. Who was it? Your criteria say the recipients of the Australia Post legends award each rose to prominence during the 1970s. Who decided to say we are going to have the four from the 1970s on it?

Mr Walter—The criteria actually say that they have to have achieved in their field or contributed in their field over an extended or sustained period of many years. If you look back through the years and the people who have been awarded you will find that from people like Sir Donald Bradman, one of the first ones, Slim Dusty and so on—

Senator RYAN—Yes, I have the list.

Mr Walter—all of them have contributed in their field for many years. The process that occurred is that our philatelic researchers, once the theme of gender equality was established, researched the various possible people to fit that theme. And of course they consulted widely. Again, I could give you on notice who was consulted. It goes outside the Stamp Advisory Committee—

Senator RYAN—I appreciate that.

Mr Walter—It went to a number of women's groups. I cannot name them but I can take it on notice. It goes to a number of prominent Australians as well.

Senator RYAN—But who decided to pick the 1970s? In a century of a campaign for women's equality there have been an enormous number of Australians involved. Who decided to pick the 1970s? You have picked four in one decade here out of 10 decades and many more.

Mr Walter—Sorry, I missed an important point, I think. I was going to run through the criteria as I understood them without providing them on notice, but this is the living legends as well. So the fact is that you have to be alive to receive this award and, as I said, the only living people who appeared—

Senator Conroy—It is an important point.

Senator RYAN—I am assuming there are more than four people alive from the 1970s involved in this particular sphere, Senator Conroy.

Senator Conroy—Just come out and say who you hated. Stop teasing us; tell us who you hated on the stamp. I cannot stand the suspense anymore. Who is it you hate?

Senator RYAN—Just ignore the interjections of the minister. We find it much easier in the chamber as well.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications

Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice

Additional Estimates Hearings February 2011

Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio

Australia Post

Mr Walter—Senator, I guess it is fair to say that a recommendation comes through from that group—

Senator RYAN—To the board?

Mr Walter—From the advisory committee to the managing director. The managing director puts it to the board. The board approves the stamp issue. The board is an independent board with an independent chairman, Mr David Mortimer. I am sure you know David. And the board will look at a whole series of stamp issues. The living legends, while it is an important exercise and over the last 14 years has been terrific and well received, in the context of our business represents less than one per cent—it is 0.05 per cent—of our business. Therefore it would not necessarily take up the amount of time at a board meeting that maybe you would like it to.

Senator RYAN—No, the point is I am not critical of any particular choice; I am, however, concerned at what is, quite frankly, a lack of diversity amongst the choices.

Senator Conroy—Could you explain what you mean?

Senator RYAN—I am quite happy to explain that.

CHAIR—Why couldn't you even get a female senator to ask this? That is what is exercising my mind.

Senator RYAN—Chair, we can think as individuals. My concern is that in this particular choice there are a number of other notable women. The truth is that the four people you have named as legends—and I am not critical—can be balanced off with four people who do not necessarily share that political persuasion. You have a person who used to work for a former Labor prime minister. You have a person who at least used to recommend Labor votes but now recommends Green votes, so I understand why you are a bit sensitive about that. And you have consciously chosen political activists. Yet in the 1970s you had the first female cabinet minister with portfolio, Dame Margaret Guilfoyle, a senator. You had the first convenor of the National Women's Advisory Council, Dame Beryl Beaurepaire, who later became the first female chairman of the Australian War Memorial. The point I am making is that there is not the diversity in this range of stamps that there could otherwise be that would fully represent the cause you are trying to raise public consciousness about.

Mr Fahour—Senator, thank you for your feedback. I have not been around, obviously, long enough to know any of these things, but could I just add this point. It is an important thing and we have to make sure, but definitely the one thing I will not allow my team to do is to figure out what the underlying politics of the individuals are and whether they are left, right, up or down. I do not really care, nor do I want to influence their decision in the recommendations they put forward.

There is an independent group who are experts in their own right who have put forward—

Senator RYAN—Experts in history? Experts in this?

Mr Fahour—Experts in their own right who—

Senator RYAN—On what?

Mr Fahour—I am the CEO. We are running a business, and as the CEO of this business working for the government of Australia—we have been asked to dispense our duty. We have dispensed our duty. We have put in place expert people who have gone and consulted widely. We have taken on notice, Senator, the points that you make, and we will come back to you with who they consulted and how they did—

Senator RYAN—I would like to know whether they were considered by the group. I would like to know who else was considered and whether anyone else was recommended either to you or to the board, or whether the board simply ticked off on the four who were proposed.

Mr Fahour—No problems.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Additional Estimates Hearings February 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australia Post

Answer:

Stamp Advisory Committee

The Stamp Advisory Committee comprises eight members drawn from the fields of design, fine arts, philately, publishing and Australia Post's philatelic group including the philatelic manager. Its primary role is the evaluation of stamp designs while its guiding objectives are to maintain a reputation for high quality, promote a favourable image of Australia and appeal to the philatelic market. It does not select the Legends but is involved in the stamp development process.

Selection criteria for Living Legend series

There were no separate selection criteria for this year's series. The selection criteria in place since the establishment of Living Legends series 14 years ago were again followed, namely:

The honour recognises contributions to the development of the Australian character/identity through his/her/their endeavours and excellence in the field selected for recognition.

The person/s would need to demonstrate that they have:

- been a pioneer in their field/s of endeavour;
- been publicly inspirational, particularly to those in their chosen field of endeavour;
- positively impacted the way Australians think about themselves and their country; and
- positively impacted the way others think about Australia.

The individual/s will have displayed:

- commitment to achieving excellence;
- spirit that exemplifies tenacity, imagination, perseverance, devotion, integrity and compassion;
- commitment to the task as the main motivator (rather than power or money); and
- involved in educating others in their knowledge, skills, techniques.

Tangible evidence of recognition:

- a substantial body of work that can be displayed over an extended and sustained period.

Consultation for this year's Living Legend series

The Office for Women was the "area expert" principally consulted during the selection process.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Additional Estimates Hearings February 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australia Post

Other people considered or recommended for this year's Living Legend series

Australia Post has never released this information and does not consider it appropriate to do so out of respect for the many outstanding Australians who are considered for the Living Legends award each year and are not selected.

Those who have read the book released in conjunction with this year's Living Legends series "Trailblazers – The Road to Equality" will note the many outstanding Australian women acknowledged for their many and substantial contributions over the years.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Additional Estimates Hearings February 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australia Post

Question No: 25

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: EC 75 - 76

Topic: Diamond Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth

Senator Ryan asked:

Senator RYAN—That can represent the campaign. But I am here as an individual. Can I ask one last question on a different issue: does Australia Post plan to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II in any way? Are you planning to commemorate it with a stamp of any variety?

Senator Conroy—Oh, my god.

Senator RYAN—I am a republican, Senator Conroy, but I am asking the question.

Senator HEFFERNAN—I am a stamp collector.

Senator RYAN—Amongst many other things, Bill.

Senator Conroy—Did you miss out on an invitation? Is that what this is about?

Senator RYAN—I would not take it up.

Senator Conroy—Do you think you can score a late invitation to the wedding?

Senator RYAN—I have been a republican longer than you, Senator Conroy. It is just a question. Do you have plans under way to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee?

Ms Corbett—I will need to refer to our stamp issue program for the upcoming month. We will take that on notice for you.

Answer:

Australia Post will commemorate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee with a special stamp that will be released on 3 April 2012.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Additional Estimates Hearings February 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australia Post

Question No: 26

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: EC 77 - 78

Topic: Mercedes Benz Mail Vans

Senator Wortley asked:

Senator WORTLEY—On the issue of the Mercedes Benz vans, there was a questionnaire that was received by drivers that were going to driving the vans. I understand that a lot of the drivers were satisfied, but in October, I think, when we spoke, there were some six per cent who still had issues. I am wondering whether those issues have been addressed or how that has been dealt with.

Ms Walsh—As with the Work Ready Program, the Mercedes van arrangements and concerns that the union and our employees have had is a continuing discussion that we are having with all of those groups. I am happy to take on notice if there has been any change from that six per cent. But what I can advise you is that the discussions around this with individuals who are concerned and, indeed, the unions, has been continuing during that time. Given the small number of people with those concerns, I think the best thing to do is continue working with them one-on-one to consider their concerns and the particular details of their route that they are undertaking as part of their round to see what improvements can be made to allay those concerns.

Senator WORTLEY—Has there been feedback from the other drivers – not the six per cent who had issues – as to how it is working with the other drivers?

Ms Walsh—Since we undertook that original survey and the further discussions that have been had, I have not been advised that there has been any further increase or addition to that. But I am happy to take that on notice and provide that to you.

Senator WORTLEY—I would appreciate that. Thank you.

Answer:

All issues previously raised by drivers have been addressed. No other drivers have raised any subsequent concerns.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Additional Estimates Hearings February 2011
Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Portfolio
Australia Post

Question No: 27

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: EC 79

Topic: Indigenous Employment

Senator McEwen asked:

Senator McEWEN—You mentioned that you have 600 Indigenous employees and are aiming higher, and that is great. I am particularly curious about what programs you have in regional and rural areas of Australia to provide employment for Indigenous people.

Ms Walsh—As Mr Fahour has indicated, those programs are now encapsulated in our reconciliation action plan. But I think the focus we really want there is, as Mr Fahour said, around the employment opportunities we can offer, particularly around traineeships and encouraging people to take part in school-to-work programs. So we see the whole spectrum of assistance through the Indigenous community. It does not just start with employment, although that is the bedrock of what we are doing and what we can offer. It starts with keeping people in school, giving them a great education, supporting them with part-time work while they transfer from school to work, and then giving them the opportunity of undertaking traineeships in skills that will take them not only to jobs and a career at Australia Post but indeed, if they so choose, elsewhere. We have seen a lot of that at Australia Post—we skill people up to go into other jobs and give them careers in other places, and we see that as success as well. And beyond that we are giving them the basics and the fundamentals. We have been working with TAFE in the Hunter Valley region to give people skills to set up their own small business. They might be mail contractors or parcel contractors, given that those are often the jobs that are available in rural and regional areas. We want to continue that kind of work and we see that it can make a real difference in rural and regional areas as well.

Senator McEWEN—Of the 600 Indigenous employees you have now, how many would be on traineeships of some kind?

Ms Walsh—I can take that on notice but I know that we have a commitment to—at the moment it is around 30 but we are certainly looking to extend well above that into the future and over the period of the RAP commitments.

Answer:

At 28 February 2011, Australia Post had 52 traineeships comprising 45 school-based trainees and 7 adult trainees, located in both metropolitan and regional areas.