

# MEDIA RELEASE

Friday 3 February 2006

## International Mailing of Firearms, Firearms Parts and Weapons Prohibited

Australia Post has announced a further tightening of prohibitions on the use of the international mail service for the carriage of firearms, firearms parts, weapons and replicas thereof. The new restrictions, effective immediately, are consistent with similar prohibitions introduced by postal authorities in many other countries.

The restrictions are a reaction to an increase in the instances of delay to mail consignments and temporary closure of mail processing facilities caused when screening detects guns, ordinances or other potentially dangerous items in international mail.

Australia Post has advised postal administrations around the world that it will not accept articles containing firearms, firearm parts, or items of weaponry. A grace period has been allowed for the acceptance of items which were mailed to Australia before the implementation of the prohibition. This means that prohibited items arriving after 1 February 2006 by Air, or after 1 April 2006 by sea will not be accepted.

"Whilst this decision will no doubt inconvenience some individuals and industry groups who will need to use other modes of weapons transportation, our responsibility for staff safety and network security will always be first and foremost", said Australia Post spokesperson, Matt Pollard.

Australia Post is also concerned with the increase in delays for all mail consignments in overseas ports when items of this nature are identified by the authorities of that country. These delays have the potential to affect the service for all mail users.

"Although some countries do accept the delivery of firearms and weapons through the mail, it is often necessary for these items (en route) to pass through the postal service of countries where these items are prohibited and must be confiscated by customs and reported to police or other authorities. This has increasingly caused serious delays to entire despatches of mail," said Pollard.

There is an increasing international trend for mail articles to be security screened in transit. Given this, at least seven countries have implemented a total prohibition on all firearms and firearm parts, a further 76 countries have partial prohibitions in place, and almost all remaining countries have some form of restriction or conditions on acceptance.

"Canada, Austria, China, Denmark, Greece, Japan and Russia are examples of countries whose postal authorities have already prohibited the carriage of firearms and firearm parts in their networks. Australia Post is following a global trend to provide greater security to delivery networks and staff," he said.

"The operational process and communication systems inherent in an international postal network do not allow for the distinction of specific items within bulk mail receptacles. This means that any firearm or firearm part can delay the entire mail stream and is a potential threat to the safety and security of the network."

Firearms and firearm parts are able to be imported and exported via specialist dangerous goods handling companies, which have the necessary specialist expertise to manage the logistics from end-to-end safely.

The conditions under which Australia Post carries firearms, firearm parts and weaponry in the domestic mail remain unchanged however senders and addressees must comply with the relevant state and territory legislation when considering or using either the international or domestic mail service.

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## Definitions:

Australia Post defines Firearm and Firearm Parts to mean the contents of an article where:

1. the description of such contents appearing on the face of the article includes those words or other words which could reasonably be construed as meaning a firearm or a part thereof; or
2. it is otherwise detected during the course of post that the article contains a matter or thing which in Australia Post's opinion is a firearm or firearm part not including a firearm part which in Australia Post's opinion would not impact:
  - a) Australia Post's operations; or
  - b) The safety or security of persons or property.

For the purpose of this definition Australia Post advises that the following items are deemed to be firearm parts and are therefore prohibited from International carriage by Australia Post:

- A gas piston, friction assembly, action bar, breech bolt or breech block
- A firearm barrel
- An assembled trigger mechanism
- A receiver
- Something, other than a complete firearm, that includes 1 or more of these items
- Any other matter or thing the carriage of which would contravene a law of a State or Territory or which is prohibited by Australia Post pursuant to the Australia Post Terms and Conditions including those items excluded from carriage in the Australia Post Dangerous and Prohibited Goods and Packaging Post Guide.

For further information, or for complete details regarding the prohibition, customers can download information [www.auspost.com.au](http://www.auspost.com.au) , or call 13 13 18.