

E-BULLETIN **Postal**

#11. Friday, 4 July 2014



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1. CWU demands consultation over job cuts

Last week the CWU Divisional Office filed a dispute notice in the FWC about Australia Post's failure to consult the union on 900 job cuts. They are mainly in Melbourne and Sydney. FWC heard the matter this week. Divisional Secretary, Dan Dwyer said the union knew nothing about the job cuts and was taken by surprise by media reports on the long weekend of 9 June that 900 jobs were set to be cut and every day delivery of standard-priced mail was in jeopardy. When the CWU met with Australia Post on the Tuesday following the long weekend about the job cuts Post had nothing to say.

Hence, the union notified a dispute in the FWC. CWU sought an undertaking from Australia Post that it will comply with its obligations under the EBA to consult the union at the National level before decisions are made so that the union and its members can have the opportunity to influence decisions.

The outcome of the FWC conference is that Australia Post has agreed that CWU National Divisional Office will be a leading part of consultation process. There will be a report back conference at FWC in six weeks' time. In the meantime consultation on the 900 job cuts has been scheduled.

2. Will Saturday work be forced on Post Office workers?

More than a month has elapsed since CEO, Ahmed Fahour unilaterally announced that Australia Post corporate outlets will open on Saturdays nationwide from the end of the year.

Australia Post senior managers said they were caught out by the CEO's announcement and needed time to put some details around the announced change in post office hours.

Area Managers however are reportedly advising Retail employees that they will be forced to work Saturdays. CWU retail members have expressed their deep concern at the lack of consultation about the decision to extend opening hours.



Clearly the extension of opening hours is a significant change that may have a profound negative impact on members, if people are forced to work Saturdays and offices are expected to work short staffed during the week to support Saturday opening.

Your union has requested an urgent meeting with Australia Post to discuss the issues relating to the extension of hours.

3. Trial for Honda NBC110 intermediate block pattern motorcycle tyre

The CWU has received numerous representations from posties who ride the new Honda NBC110 motorcycle regarding the factory tyres on the bike and their inability to handle off road conditions.



No postie should be riding the NBC110 for delivery on rounds that have off road conditions. The NBC110 with its current tyre is for paved roads and footpaths only. If you are using the NBC for delivery in off road conditions the CWU strongly suggests you replace this with the old red Honda 110 with off road tyres.

This matter has been represented by the CWU at the National Delivery Forum. Australia Post has now advised Michael Etue from the National Office that an initial assessment of an intermediate block pattern motorcycle by two PDOs (one union nominated) will take place at Honda Australia Rider Training Facility at Somerton (Melbourne) in mid-July.

If there is positive feedback from the two posties a longer trial will take place mid-August with a number of posties in the field.

The CWU will keep members updated on this important trial.

Member feedback on the NBC110 tyres and block pattern tyres

I have been riding the NBC110 with the road tyres on and like everybody else know that they are dangerous in the wet. I have been informed that off road tyres have had a decision made on them. It just needs to be implemented ASAP. Apart from that while it is dry they are fairly good. People just need to be aware.

In a word Rubbish. As a motorcyclist for 47 years and a postie for over 23 years these tyres are fine on bitumen/concrete but on grass or gravel they offer little traction. I fell off on the second day on the new bike just accelerating away from a letterbox and have had the back step out many times just riding across grass slopes(wet or dry) which are a large percentage of the rounds in my State. I have yet to try them on a wet day but I'm not looking forward to it. The tyres on the CT110 much better although still questionable in the wet.

If you have any feedback on the Honda NBC110 motorcycle, including the tyres please let us know.

4. Is Australia Post serious about health and safety?

If you are a worker and you make a small error of judgement that is a breach of health and safety then you can expect to be coded under Australia Post's counselling and discipline policy.

But if you are a manager and wilfully breach health and safety then you can be pretty sure that you will not be disciplined.

This double standard is a reality in many Australia Post workplaces.



For example:

- Motorcycle postie caught travelling at 8kms in facility driveway. Postie coded.
- Manager seen talking on mobile telephone while driving Australia Post car in facility driveway. Incident reported by workers. No action taken.
- Manager seen reversing Australia Post car into an Australia Post building. Damage to car and building. Incident reported by workers. No action taken.
- HSRs and other workers punished when they come forward with safety hazards.

How can this happen?

Senior managers turn a blind eye to the behaviour of their managers. It is evident in the way the safety issues are dispensed with. It is evident in the way HSRs and workers who raise safety issues are punished.

What can be done?

Conflicts of interest between Australia Post and workers over health and safety may always exist. Although having a healthy and safe workplace is a management responsibility it is not a management prerogative. This means that you can be involved collectively, through your union, in health and safety. This in turn means workers electing HSRs, not management picks, and setting up local health and safety committees, not hand-picked management committees.

It is not through discipline but involving workers and their representatives in discussions over the safety of equipment, procedures and the job itself that prevents occupational injuries. You can contact us at [CWUnion](#) for help.

5. Making a modern Australia Post award

Last week the CWU Divisional Office and Australia Post attended a Conference before the Full Bench at the Fair Work Commission on making a Modern Enterprise Award for AP workers.

In making a modern award the Full Bench said the important threshold issue was whether to make an award and if so on what terms. Determining what should be in an Enterprise Award might be putting the cart before the horse, they said.

In addressing the first issue your union said it was common ground between the parties that an Enterprise Award be made but acknowledged that we would need to put a submission in that regard.

On the second issue, the content of the Modern Award, the Full Bench cautioned the parties to make no assumptions. In other words put your arguments and then the Bench will decide.

Disagreement between AP and the union on the content of the modern award really comes down to about 11 outstanding items. We will have to argue our case for each item.

One of the disputed items is the span of hours. Your union wants to maintain the span of hours specified in the relevant specific award (e.g. in the Technical Award). We don't agree with Australia Post's new clause to change to spread of ordinary hours because some people would lose shift penalties.

We are also seeking to have industry standards such as the 25% casual loading (currently 20% in Australia Post) and a minimum of 3 hours for part-time employees imported into the Enterprise Award.



The matter is set down for Hearing in October this year, at which time the Full Bench will decide whether to make an Award and on what terms.

6. What Post is not telling the Australian public

In a statement to the media last week the CWU warned the Australian public to be wary of claims that Australia Post is in crisis following the release of a report commissioned by the Federal Government on the future of AP's letters business. The report by the Boston Consulting Group is an assessment of an internal review conducted by AP of its letters business!

It will come as no surprise that the report supports AP's assessment of the so-called perilous state of the letters business and impresses the need for changes to the CSOs as a matter of urgency.

The CWU statement called out the report for what it is – a narrative about phoney crisis to justify the changes Ahmed Fahour wants to make to the CSOs. But the public messages being given are inconsistent with the reality. The facts are that last year AP made an after tax profit of \$312 million and paid the Federal Government a \$244 million dividend. "This is not a company in crisis" said Assistant National Secretary Martin O'Nea .



"There were more than 4.5 billion letters delivered last year. That is around 87 million letters a week or 17 million letters a day," Mr O'Nea said.

Mr O'Nea went on to say that the international experience is that the decline in mail volumes is decreasing and is expected to level out at around 3.8% a year.

"Media comments by the CEO of AP that mail volumes will fall by 8% a year for the next decade just aren't credible when compared to international experience. A study by Pricewaterhouse Coopers for the Royal Mail in the UK forecasted a 4.9% decline that is tipped to slow to 3.8% after 2018," he said.

Mr O'Nea said that AP was well placed to use its extensive retail network and daily delivery service to secure the majority of the growth in small parcel deliveries flowing from the rapid increase in online shopping which last year accounted for \$15.25 Billion dollars, yet is still only some 6% of all retail spending.

"This decline will be more than taken up by the rapid growth in online shopping and the demand it creates for small parcel deliveries. Last year Post's domestic parcel volumes grew by 9.3%. Small parcels, which are now delivered by posties, make up over 70% of all parcels delivered in Australia," he said.

"The assertion by the CEO of AP that the organisation is in terminal decline is not true and is a deliberate strategy to drive down the service and soften up the Australian public to changes to the CSOs which will cost jobs not just in AP but in associated businesses like Mail houses and printers which employ thousands of Australians", said Mr O'Nea.

"Australians are not being told the whole story about AP by Mr Fahour and we need to examine closely all statements before any changes to the CSOs take place", he said

7. Deeper sort breaks will impact on jobs in smaller States

Your CWU National Office met with Australia Post representatives this week regarding the new dedicated parcel facility infrastructure in Sydney and Melbourne that has an approximate cost of \$210 million dollars.



Australia Post indicated that they are looking to introduce deeper sort breaks into Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia. Currently these States may only receive a country and metro break of parcels. But these configurations could be broken up further with the extra capacity enabled by the new equipment in Melbourne and Sydney. Australia Post claims that this is only a recent thought bubble. But we are sceptical. It adds to the picture of why Australia Post was in such mad rush to get the recent EBA agreed.

The deeper breaks could potentially mean job losses in the three States where manual parcel processing still occurs. We have demanded all the information on the potential impacts to be tabled at the next National meeting due next month.

We will keep members informed of developments as they occur.

8. CWU refresher training for HSRs

This week the CWU ran a one day refresher course for Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) who have completed the initial 5 days training program. The HSRs who attended the one day training were from delivery, retail, call centre and transport workplaces. HSRs said they found the training easy to understand, relevant to their workplace and felt empowered with more information and skills to do their job better.

The one day course provided HSRs with an overview of some of the things learned on the 5 day course, developments in WHS legislation and skills development related to the role, powers, functions and behaviours as a HSR in a workplace.

Under the Work Health and Safety Act, HSRs and deputy HSRs have the right to attend one day's refresher training each year. The entitlement to the first refresher training commences one year after the initial 5 days training.

Remember it is your right to nominate your HSRs – don't leave the choice to management. Once elected HSRs and deputy HSRs have the right to attend recognised training conducted by your union. AP must provide facilities and assistance to elected HSRs.



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We welcome your comments and contributions.

Send us an email and let us know what you think via cwu@cwu.org.au

Check out our webpage at www.cwu.org.au

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