

# E-BULLETIN Postal

## #20. Tuesday, 11 November 2014



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## 1. 'Fitness for Duty' Declaration

Post is now rolling out the revised version of the Fitness for Duty Declaration (FFDD).

Drivers previously signed off on the "Australia Post Transport Drivers Daily Health Declaration". This is an updated version due to changes in legislation.

Post's original FFDD contained several points that were not relevant to what transport laws require. Some points were repeated such as having a valid drivers' license and complying with "Our Ethics" policy.

Drivers now only sign a document that is relevant to what they are responsible for by law and relevant driving duties.

To sign an open ended declaration without any key points being identified to what a driver is declaring would be irresponsible.

The union is here to protect driver's rights and safety.

## 2. MPF /SPF expansions

Phase 1 of the expansions of Post's major parcel facilities in Melbourne (MPF) and Sydney (SPF) has been completed with the new equipment due to go live on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2014.

The Future Parcels Network program of which MPF and SPF are a part of is a \$595 million capital program. The program will deliver major productivity and cost improvements. It is expected to double Post's capacity to handle more than 320 million parcels per year nationwide by 2019.

Post parcel workers have played a big part in helping the Melbourne and Sydney parcel facilities expansions work. We wish CWU members in the expanded facilities well. Members will be fully supported by us in any issues in these facilities.

### **3. Workers health to be monitored at MPF and SPF**

Post has agreed to monitor workers' health and safety in the upgraded major parcel facilities in Melbourne (MPF) and Sydney (SPF) - after the issue was represented by the CWU National Office.

Parcel workers at the upgraded Melbourne and Sydney parcel facilities will be asked to complete a health monitoring questionnaire a number of times over the next 2 years. The aim of the questionnaire is to identify tasks which parcel workers find difficult or dangerous or which cause fatigue, discomfort or pain.

This information will assist in picking up emerging health and injury patterns. It provides the opportunity to change work to make it easier and safer and thus prevent workers from being injured.

### **4. Saturday trading in Post Offices**

Following several meetings between the CWU National Office and Post, Post has agreed that volunteers will be used to staff corporate post offices on Saturdays. All staff will either receive a penalty of 50% extra or overtime rates for Saturday work. Post offices will open from 9.00 a.m. until 12.30 p.m. with all staff paid for 4 hours to enable 15 minutes either side of the shift to open and close.

To ensure equity a roster system will be applied on an area basis if the Saturday shifts are over-subscribed. Approximately 95% of corporate outlets will be open to trade. A small number of outlets will open the parcel hatch only.

The CWU has put to Post that a minimum of 2 employees is required for hatch only for reasons of health and safety, security and to cater for the higher volumes of parcels expected during the peak season. Post is still proposing a minimum of 2 staff where the front door of a post office is open and a minimum of 1 employee where the parcel hatch only is open. State and local consultation should be occurring on staffing issues. If you are not satisfied with staffing for your post office or hatch then contact your CWU State branch.

### **5. FWC finds formal counselling for absence without medical certificate unfair**

The Fair Work Commission has found that the formal counselling issued to a CWU member for absence following a public holiday was unfair and should be removed - after the matter was represented by the CWU National Office. The absence was not supported by a medical certificate. Post applied its policy that applications for sick leave before or after a public holiday must be supported by medical certificate.

The member was paid for the absence after representation by the CWU National Office and SA Branch but Post refused to remove the formal counselling. The CWU National Office notified a dispute in the FWC. The union put the view that having paid the member for the absence, Post had accepted that the member had a satisfactory explanation and that to continue the formal counselling was unfair. The FWC agreed that the formal counselling was inappropriate on fairness and equity grounds.

This was a good outcome for the member concerned. But under the current policy published to all employees, employees are still pressured to come to work when sick as they may be unable for a number of reasons, to get a medical certificate. While the union takes on these cases it can take many months to recover the wages and low paid employees cannot afford to wait. Post needs to reconsider its arbitrarily determined policy.

## 6. CWU members say sale of PostConnect already decided

CWU members have told the union that ABnote employees have said they were told 2 months ago that they have purchased a company with the announcement expected early Nov. The story goes they too were offered packages prior to the purchase announcement, since the purchase all packages placed on hold. Apparently the Post management team are actively seeking employment within the industry.

The CWU National Office had previously raised concerns in relation to the consultative process in PostConnect. We have now asked Post whether they have spoken to ABnote about the purchase outright of PostConnect and about taking Australia Post employees to ABnote? We have also asked if Post has spoken to other companies about the purchase outright of PostConnect?

This information is requested in order to enable meaningful consultation and a genuine opportunity to influence any decisions in relation to the future of PostConnect. We will keep you advised.

Of course the closure of PostConnect is not part of the 900 job losses. Indeed, the first tranche - round 3 of the corporate headcount reduction (Post's terminology) will commence in the New Year.

## 7. Integration of Post and Startrack employees

Over the past 12 months Post has been integrating Post and StarTrack. CWU National Secretary Dan Dwyer has previously sought and obtained commitments from Post that in relation to integrating Post and StarTrack, Post employees would continue to be covered by Australia Post EBA (FWA 2013) pay and conditions.

However recent briefings by senior Post people have alarmed some CWU members who are concerned for their job security and future. As a result the union has received several calls and emails from members asking if they will become StarTrack employees in the near future.

To put this matter to rest we have asked Post to confirm in writing the commitments below.

1. There is no intention to move any Australia Post employees from direct employment by Australia Post.
2. All employees of Australia Post will continue to be employed by Australia Post Corporation as "integration" with StarTrack progresses.
3. No "transfer of business" is being contemplated by moving any business or any part of the business from Australia Post to StarTrack entities.

We have further asked if Australia Post is considering transfer of business by moving any business or any part of the business from StarTrack entities

Post's response will be provided to members when available.

## 8. Post trials mobile van in Business Hubs

Post has purchased 3 Mercedes vans and fitted them out as a mobile unit to reach business customers at events, markets and other large gatherings.

The vans are operating in Queensland, NSW and Victoria.



Apparently they are not selling postal products (stamps and envelopes) but informing business customers on how they can improve their postal options.

Customers have the ability to sign up to business solutions on the spot or be forwarded further information.

The union is working through OHS concerns and staffing with Post.

While we support initiatives that bring new business to Post we are concerned about the creation of two different entities, i.e. red Post and blue Post and the potential for asset stripping and privatisation of one or both in the future.

## **9. Truckies and posties top the list of Australia's deadliest jobs**

Truckies, posties and warehouse workers top the list of Australia's deadliest jobs, according to new research. The transport and storage industry recorded the highest number of deaths, with 65 workers killed on the job in 2012, comparison website Life Insurance Finder found.

Transport and storage workers accounted for nearly one-third of all workplace deaths that year.

Finder spokeswoman Michelle Hutchison said vehicle collisions caused most fatalities, with one in three workplace deaths occurring on the road.

Muscular stress while lifting, carrying or putting down objects was the most common cause of serious injury across all industries.

"Many Australian workers have to drive vehicles or lift things as part of their job and they may not realise how dangerous their work can be," she said.

Many people would be surprised to find retail trade was in the top 10 most dangerous line of work. Retail trade workers sustained more than 11,000 serious injuries and six fatalities in 2012. Driving, explosions, contact with chemicals and being trapped between objects were the most common causes of death for retail workers.

The list ranks jobs based on the number of deaths in 2012. The research defines a serious injury as resulting in an absence from work of one week or more. (Source: [www.smh.com.au](http://www.smh.com.au))

## **10. Australia Post has become no friend of printers**

Australia Post has been hitting businesses hard with higher charges says Bill Healey, the chief executive of the Printing Industries Association of Australia. In July 2011, the average price for a bulk mail delivery was 48 cents an item. By July 2014, it was 62 cents. That's an increase in costs by 29 per cent in three years.

All of this is having an impact on printers. Facing increased costs, companies are now ordering fewer brochures, flyers and newsletters. That means less business coming in for printers.

Australia Post also wants to scale back the frequency of its services and to create a tiered pricing structure under which customers would pay a premium for faster services. And that will further reduce the amount of business for printers.

Healey called for the restoration of Australia Post's obligation to refer price increases for bulk mail services to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) for approval, this has now been recommended by Parliament.

Healey says there is an increasing recognition that email communication is not so effective anymore as many people are ignoring emails or a lot of emails are ending up in spam folders. More might recognise that electronic mail has its limitations. Digital Post Australia, a competitor to Australia Post, closed down in July. Computershare, one of three backers of Digital Post, blamed a lack of customers for the decision to axe the online mail platform.

Lindsay May, managing director at The Mailing House is also critical of the way Australia Post has handled things. "If you go to the end, which is Australia Post, I cannot understand why they talk the business down. They keep talking about reduced volumes," he says. "It is one of those circular arguments."

What is needed, Healey says, is for the industry to work with Australia Post to find some way of managing the problem.

CWU Assistant Secretary, Martin O'Nea, is doing just that bringing the stakeholders including the CWU, other unions, the printing industry and Australia Post licensees in on the discussion. (Source: ProPrint Magazine)

## 11. Asbestos awareness week: November 24 – 28

Please remember the annual Asbestos Awareness Week at the end of this month. Most Trades and Labour Councils have events scheduled during the week, but if you can't attend one of these, then do something your workplace: a minute's silence for the thousands of Australian workers and members of the community who have become victims of this toxic substance; doing a 'spot check' of any possible asbestos in your workplace; and checking that your manager has an up to date register for your workplace.

**We welcome your comments and contributions –  
send us an email and let us know what you think via [cwu@cwu.org.au](mailto:cwu@cwu.org.au)  
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