

E-BULLETIN Postal

#22. Friday, 13 December 2013



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1. Workers send a strong message to Ahmed Fahour

Last week, Post began paying the extra 15c meal allowance as a result of Ahmed Fahour's magnanimous EBA gesture.

At Dandenong Letters Centre, the payment took the form of 15c sticky-taped to the outside of the meal allowance envelopes. This raised the ire of all the workers and dramatically highlighted just how miserable AP really is.

Greatly insulted by this paltry "pay rise", someone decided to donate it to Ahmed Fahour to help with the repayments on his new house. So they attached it to the Xmas tree situated on the work floor just outside one of the managers' offices.

This was on Friday night about 10PM. What happened next was truly amazing - the likes of which has never been seen in this place before. Over the course of the next several hours, worker after worker made a pilgrimage to the tree and also attached their meal allowance envelopes to the tree, along with their 15c donation to Ahmed.

By end of the day, Saturday morning, the Xmas tree was literally covered with empty envelopes with their 15c attached, bearing various Xmas greetings to the AP boss, Ahmed Fahour.

There were no rude or insulting remarks. Most simply wished Ahmed a "Happy Xmas" or offered it towards his new house. One simply said, "4.7m + 15c"! As one worker said, "We are donating to Ahmed 100% of our pay rise!"

If Ahmed should in any way feel insulted by these donations - of receiving just a miserly 15c -then, by god, so do we!

Post script: Management called the CWU delegate into the office the following Monday and presented him with an envelope stuffed with all the allowance packets, with the 15c attached, asking what they should do with them. Forward them to the person that they were intended for he said. They couldn't do that they said!



DLC worker donates 15c allowance increase to AP boss Ahmed Fahour.



DLC workers attach the meal allowance envelopes along with their 15c to Xmas tree.

Members who still wish to make a donation to Ahmed should mail them in to **Ahmed "15c" Fahour Appeal** 111 Bourke St. Melbourne 3000. Use your postage stamps left over from your last Xmas "Bonus" (Source: CWU member Vic Branch).

2. AP profits up, Fahour's pay up, demands for your share up

AP profits up, Ahmed Fahour's pay up big time, and petitions by you demanding your share up. We have received hundreds of petitions from members directly into the CWU national office. State Branches have also received hundreds of responses from members.

Many members have expressed their absolute disgust with the CEO's pay increase from \$2.8 million last year to \$4.7 million this year, especially given his mantra of "pay restraint" during his EBA "Roadshows".

Keep the petitions coming. We will be formerly submitting them to AP in the New Year. We will not be providing people's names to AP. Contact us directly (details below) in the CWU national office if you need any more copies for your workplace.

3. Union provides submission to Senate on Australia Post

If you listen to AP mail volumes are declining faster than predicted and it is all because of the internet.

But there's more to the story said the Union in its written submission to the current Senate *Inquiry into the performance, importance and role of AP in the Australia communities and LPOs*.

Yes traditional mail volumes are going down. Yes substitution by email is going up. But mail is not dead. This is not a business that is going to go away anytime soon. AP presents a far more pessimistic outlook than that provided by international postal experts. Why? If you want to close post offices, reduce the workforce and cut services you need a permanent change in thinking. Mail volumes are declining so of course it is killing AP - except it's not. Undermining postal services will do much more harm to AP than declining mail volumes.

Individual posties complain that AP is fiddling the figures. Mail volume is going up, not down. Posties are being bullied into doing ever longer rounds. A full-time postie in a large capital city says he is working pretty consistently 10 hour days. "Overtime used to be optional once, not anymore." A part-time postie in the same capital city said he is coerced by his team leader into doing 8 1/2 hours every day.

If a postie says, "Don't tell me about falling mail volumes, I'm carrying more than ever," a lot of the time they will be correct. Posties are delivering fewer letters but small parcels and packets have replaced the declining volume of traditional letters. Domestic parcel volumes are increasing at an unprecedented rate, up 9.3% in 2012 – 2013. Around 84 % of all small parcels are processed through the delivery centres, with more than two thirds of these now delivered by posties. Most posties are working harder than ever.

Alongside our posties, our retail members in post offices are under increasing pressure. Many offices run short staffed. People do unpaid time. The big rise in parcels because of the popularity of online shopping brings foot traffic but has put retail workers under more pressure and exposed to health and safety risks. Parcels not delivered by contractors are returned to post offices. It is not uncommon for big, awkward and heavy parcels to present at post offices. Recently a car gear box turned up as a carded parcel. There is minimal parcel handling equipment and limited storage space in most post offices. Asking workers to get someone to help lift a parcel is not feasible in a busy post office nor is it an acceptable work method.

Notwithstanding that members are working harder than ever they will receive a total of 1.5% into salary this year which is again another pay cut in real terms. AP should at least commit to top up pay to CPI and engage with the union on the profit share commitment that was promised during the EBA discussions.

Read our whole submission on our website from Monday.

4. CWU asked to give evidence to Senate inquiry into Australia Post

National Assistant Secretary, Martin O’Nea and Senior Industrial Officer, Carol Gee gave evidence last week to the Senate Inquiry into Australia Post’s performance and Licenced Post Offices.

Your union was upfront in areas where you have identified that Post have lost their way, but reinforced where you say that they are getting it right. Martin spent additional time in Canberra briefing politicians of all political flavours and received positive responses and acknowledgments that AP has a duty to provide a top notch service to the public of Australia, especially in regional and rural areas that rely on that service so much.

Martin also addressed Wagga Wagga Council, the first time in the council’s history that a union has addressed them, and found much common ground on the maintenance of existing services to Regional Australia.

The Council passed a motion calling on Australia Post to maintain existing services in Wagga Wagga and in Regional Australia in general. Your union’s lobbying efforts so far have seen Australia Post scale back some of the service reduction proposals but more work needs to be done.

We have a number of meetings scheduled with interested parties in the New Year and will continue to speak out on issues of service reductions to the Australian public. The Full Senate Inquiry report is due out in March of next year. If you have any suggestions on these issues do not hesitate to contact us.

5. Senate highlights

Q&A highlights of CWU in Senate

Q. Can you provide some introductory comments?

A. (CWU) AP has lost its way. The staffing freeze has failed miserably. In six months, over 450 positions have been stripped from the frontline network. The abolition of the 'clear floor' policy, the direction in regional areas of no overtime and return mail by 3.00pm, the proposed cuts to services in regional Victoria and New South Wales with no consultation and attempts to gag the union are all examples of where AP lost its way.

Q. How is carting mail from Ballarat to Dandenong, Geelong to Dandenong, Bendigo to Dandenong, Mildura to Dandenong and then it is going to go back out again going to be more efficient delivery of the mail?

A. (CWU) Letters would have a longer journey. The rationale is cost saving. Jobs would be going if this proposal went ahead. No changes should be made without full engagement and consultation with the union and regional Australia.

Q. We have seen that we have only had three price rises on stamps in 20 years do you have anything to say about that?

A. (CWU) If services are going to be maintained then we would support paying more for a stamp. The stamp has got to be the greatest bargain in Australia, compared to inflation and the price increases of other products.

Q. What’s the motivation behind the developments of moving from employees with AP owned establishments to outsourcing the work to others over the past decade or so?

A. (CWU) Corporate post offices are extremely important. They are more important than LPOs, because they provide a full service. If an LPO cannot run the post office then AP should open a corporate. LPOs are a convenient tool for allowing wages, conditions and service standards to fall without AP having to take the blame for that.

Curiously, Mr Fahour stated that he did not accept the union’s statement that LPOs are not important. But that’s not what we said. We said corporate POs are more important than LPOs. Fahour, on the other hand, made no mention of the importance of corporate POs!

Q&A highlights of AP in Senate

Q. Is that a common occurrence in Australia Post that a postie might have to bring mail back?

A. (Mr Fahour) It is true, we do not have to deliver 100 per cent on time or whatever the standard is. We have storms, we have hurricanes and we have situations that make it difficult. Roads get flooded.

Q. If you do not have a storm or a flood and everyone is on board, would you then have 100 per cent delivery?

A. (Mr Fahour) It is quite probable that if you hold everything else constant, our model assumes that we will deliver all the mail.

Q. How often is it occurring that you are delivering all the mail? Is it more often that you are not delivering, or is it more often that you are delivering 100 per cent of the mail?

A. (Mr Fahour) We eventually deliver all the mail.

No mention here of the deliberate policy decisions not to fill jobs, to leave runs behind, and to be back at the facility by 3pm to keep costs down!

The Senate is due to report 11 December 2013. We cannot say for certain what the outcomes of the Senate Inquiry will be. But given the flurry of behind the scenes activity by Ahmed Fahour personally it is likely LPOs will receive assistance - nothing for corporate POs. Whether regional and rural mail services and postal workers jobs will be saved is anyone's guess.

6. OHS agreement all done

At long last the new OH&S Agreement has been signed by AP and a copy has been sent to the union's National Secretary Dan Dwyer for his signature.

This long drawn out process all started with fervent commitments given in EBA7 to negotiate a new OHS Agreement with the union. Then followed procrastination and resistance by AP in which every little issue would be contested, especially union conducted elections and training of HSRs.

Among other things the right of HSRs to attend union training and the right of workers to request the union to conduct HSR elections in accordance with provisions in the WHS Act is now agreed. The right of the union, HSRs and workers to be involved in issues resolution in relation to work health and safety issues is also agreed.

7. Scrooge award goes to Australia Post Retail

Retail workers in Qld post offices told, *"Monday – Friday; rostered finish time is 6pm. In the rare circumstance that a post office is unable to close the doors by 6 pm, and staff members have been required to work past the 6pm rostered time they will need to provide explanation to the Manager prior to the relevant penalty/allowance being approved for payment"*.

Typical Australia Post retail.

They rely unduly on the goodwill and conscientiousness of their employees in order to keep their retail businesses viable. Most retail workers choose to routinely work unpaid overtime, forego tea and meal breaks, and remain on duty to meet customer demand - the queue out the door syndrome. Retail profit again grew to \$200.6 million through 2012-2013.

Despite all this AP retail behaves like Scrooge.

If you are told to stop work at 6pm or you won't be paid then shut the post office with sufficient time to cash up, do all relevant duties and vacate by 6pm. DO NOT work for free. AP retail can afford to pay you.

8. Australia Post childish, petulant and unprofessional

Australia Post continues its childish, petulant and unprofessional behaviour in relation to banning the National Assistant Secretary (Postal) Martin O'Nea and the Victorian Secretary Joan Doyle from all consultation. AP claims these officials breached confidential information. They did not. The real reason for AP's behaviour is that Martin and Joan won't play the game and they opposed the poor EBA.

We have the matter in Fair Work and the Commission has issued a recommendation which we accept.

AP has rejected the FWC recommendation. AP's repeated failure to meet with Joan and Martin is a breach of the consultation processes under the Agreement.

We are therefore taking the matter further. We have written to AP seeking it to waive mediation and allow the matter to proceed directly to arbitration. We have suggested this as it is very clear that AP is not prepared to move from its position. The waiver will save both parties cost and time.

9. New Torquay super store

Member for Corangamite Sarah Henderson opened a new Retail Super Store outlet in Geelong.

Sarah had campaigned for extra postal services in Torquay. She has also been very critical of AP's moves to reduce existing services in the Geelong area and on behalf of our members we thank her for her efforts.

AP can be made to listen but people have to speak up. If any members have any campaign ideas for their local areas or require any assistance or contacts then do/not hesitate to contact the CWU National Office (see our contact details below).

We are in regular contact with politicians from all over the country from all sides of politics.

Catherine King and Richard Marles have also supported their local electorates by moving a private members' bill in the House of Representatives calling on AP to maintain existing services in Regional Victoria and we also applaud their efforts.

10. New bullying laws

The Fair Work Act 2009 has been amended to include an anti-bullying jurisdiction that will commence on 1 January 2014.

The new Bullying Laws mean that a worker can make an application to the Commission if they reasonably believe they are being bullied at work (**Stop Bullying Application**).

Under the new Bullying Laws, a worker is bullied if, while the worker is at work:

- an individual or a group of individuals repeatedly behaves unreasonably towards the worker, or a group of workers; and
- that behaviour creates *a risk to health and safety*.

Reasonable management action carried out in a reasonable manner will not be bullying.

The Commission may make any non-pecuniary order it considers appropriate to prevent the worker from being bullied (**Stop Bullying Order**), if in fact the worker has been bullied at work and there is a risk that the worker will continue to be bullied.

WHS Inspectors can also prosecute organisations and individuals in relation to bullying matters. Indeed, the Commission can refer matters to the WHS Regulator.

The new Bullying Laws along with the existing Work Health and Safety Laws create a potentially stronger anti-bully regime.

11. Year in review

We have again had a very productive year. This year began with our postal EBA campaign. While your CWU national office believed that the deal could have been better, the fact is that we were able to improve the offer in a number of ways during the negotiations. For instance, it is important to remember that AP's initial offer was a series of cash bonuses not guaranteed and linked to service performance and profits! As well the sign on bonus was not part of Post's initial offer but was negotiated by the union. Consequently, the final EBA is a vast improvement on what was initially on the table. We are still trying to improve on the 1.5% this year given AP profits are up.

With the EBA voted on it was time to focus on continuing to hold AP to account on all issues that affect the hopes, aspirations and well-being of our members. Together we have achieved much including:

- New AP/ CWU OHS agreement
- Union application to FWC for modern AP award
- HSR courses run by the union
- Linehaul run changes to be negotiated with union, workplace meetings in each affected State
- Delivery of small parcels negotiated with union and members, millions of small parcels under 2 kgs now going to the posties protecting job security
- Portable ring scanners in parcel centres and business hubs negotiated with union making the scanning process safer and easier
- Reinstatement of AP employees fired for sending inappropriate emails by managers
- Win with Comcare on work groups and HSRs at Mt Waverley DC/Business Hub
- Commitment from the Coalition that it would not privatise AP
- Negotiation of new national delivery modelling tool to maximizing full time employment, secure penalty rates and create a safer indoor and outdoor work environment
- Union sues AP for adverse action to protect rights of members (ongoing)
- Shift times altered to suit worker when union disputed matter
- AP forced to review fixed-term employment – permanent jobs created
- Union action sees LPO owner in Braybrook ordered to pay former employee/member for underpayment of wages.
- PDO working for AP contractor disputes status, claiming an employee not a subcontractor. Union settled matter.
- Two member drivers take legal action against employer alleging adversely treated because they raised concerns about having not been paid superannuation. Union settles matter favourably following a Federal Court injunction. Union reignited dispute when employer tried to avoid their obligations. A further settlement was reached.
- WA member refused pay for sick leave on a day which followed a public holiday, despite the availability of credits and excellent attendance history. Union threatened Magistrate Court action if member was not paid. Post buckled and paid the member.
- New AP vans to be fitted with cameras for improved visibility following union campaign
- Union forces changes to loose load to making work safer
- Decipha EBA with a 3% up front pay increase, increased redundancy pay and introduced domestic violence leave
- Rank and file members involved in negotiating Decipha Agreement
- Scheme to change sick leave reporting in AP call centres stopped
- Joint working party with rank and file members involved in changing ROM
- Trial of new ROM processes and documents in post offices
- Study of inadequacy of MODAPTS bill payment time used to determine staffing in post offices
- National magazine and fortnightly e-bulletins

Next year we will have more challenges and struggles. We look forward to them and your support. Each action, each accomplishment is another step closer to our goals. So keep going. Keep pushing. Do not get down, and never, ever, ever give up. Everyone here at the CWU National Office is with you, right by your side.

12. Season's Greetings

Good wishes for Christmas and the New Year to members and their families from your union. Have a happy and safe holiday.

Your editor in chief Carol Gee (Senior Industrial Officer)

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 Michael Etue (Senior Industrial Officer)
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Special thanks to the many members who provided input in 2013

Without your contributions many of the stories would not have been possible.



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