

# E-BULLETIN Postal

#16. Friday, 12 September 2014



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## 1. Post annual report undermines mail crisis claims

The Australia Post Annual Report released last week shows that Ahmed Fahour's claims that mail volumes are in freefall is not correct.

The Annual Report clearly shows that mail volumes are falling at a manageable 5% a year. This is what the union has been saying. Not the 12% that Ahmed Fahour has been spruiking for the last few months.

While everybody recognises the challenges facing the industry, a decline of 5% is not a crisis. It needs to be addressed but in a thoughtful considered manner.

It is Important to note that the **underlying profit reported by Australia Post**, before one off costs, such as restructuring, is actually **up by over 10% to \$518 million dollars**.

The CWU national office has brought together an alliance of business groups representing printers and mail houses (PIAA), licensed post offices (LPO Group) and other unions - AMWU, CPSU to stop Ahmed Fahour from running down the mail business.

These organisations have come together to voice their concerns about the future of Australia Post, said CWU Assistant Secretary Martin O'Nea. "Australia Post needs a clear strategic direction on how it intends to deal with the challenges resulting from the emergence of the digital economy", said Martin O'Nea.

The Alliance is calling for:

- The retention of all of Australia Post's existing community service obligations.
- The restoration of ACCC oversight of price increases in bulk lodged mail and the monitoring of service standards, as is currently the case of with Post's community service obligations.
- The establishment of a bipartisan round table also involving all industry stakeholders to examine options for Australia Post's future with oversight of proposals and outcomes by the senate communications committee.

Greater oversight is required of the management of Australia Post to ensure that a significant public asset is not lost and /or irreparably damaged.

## 2. Ahmed Fahour says ‘pay’s fair and relationships wonderful’! But only for Ahmed!

Ahmed Fahour’s claims on ABC radio on the 4<sup>th</sup> September that postal workers have received 10%, averaging 3% p.a. in pay increases over the last 5 years are not correct.

Pay increases over the last 5 years have averaged less than 2.5% p.a. This is below inflation (3% in July 2014). And the current EBA pay deal came after low increases in 2010 of 2.5%, 2011 of 1.5%, 2012 of 1.5% and 2013 1.5%.



Ahmed Fahour – ‘pay’s fair and relationships wonderful’

Mr. Fahour is however correct in saying that the CWU national office did not support the wage offer in EBA8. We wanted a better upfront pay rise, particularly as the new pay offer included the 1.5% in Dec 2013 that was already promised under EBA7! The fact is there have been no new pay rises until August this year – 0.5%.

We wanted members to keep ahead of inflation, superannuation protected and increased allowances.

The protections for superannuation benefits that Post and some individuals said were locked in are not. Approximately 17,000 workers are affected by Post’s unilateral changes to the APSS. That’s every second person. The average gap between the AWOTE salary (frozen by Post) and current salary is \$8,000 – so we are not talking about small sums of money that people will lose.

When questioned about his own \$4.8 million salary in 2013, including a whopping \$1.9 million base salary and more than 2 million in incentive pay, Mr Fahour had nothing to say.

Instead Mr. Fahour also told ABC radio that relationships between Post and workers are “wonderful”. He is seeking changes to the Community Service Obligations. For example, he wants three days to deliver most mail. The savings will come from redundancies and loss of penalty rates. And with 900 jobs that Post calls the “headcount reduction” being axed in non operational areas and further job cuts yet to be announced in operational areas, Mr. Fahour is obviously not talking to workers.

## 3. Australia Post digital mailbox setback

The Australia Post digital mailbox appears doomed for the time being.

Communications Minister Malcolm Turnbull said this week that the federal government will offer state and local governments free access to the myGov online transactional hub.

The Minister’s endorsement of myGov to states and councils is the strongest signal to date that Australia Post cannot expect to be handed a near monopoly on official electronic correspondence.



Over the last few years Australia Post has invested heavily on the MyPost mailbox (announced in Oct 2012) and has lobbied intensely to become the default interface for citizen transactions for most government services.

The MyPost digital mailbox is a free service with the business model largely based on deriving revenue from electronic bill payments and bill providers covering the cost from the money they're saving on postage.

The Coalition government's policy to have 80% of government communications available digitally, as well as in hard-copy, by 2017 on an opt-in basis and Turnbull ready to sacrifice Post's digital mail box for myGov does not bode well at all for Australia Post.

Indeed the privately run Digital Post Australia recently announced it would close its service by due to a lack of customers.

#### 4. Public consultations on the future of Post

Apparently, Australia Post has initiated public consultations to engage the community in a discussion about the future of Australia Post. But it seems they are not telling the public where the consultations are occurring - in case they turn up! They wouldn't want that to happen, would they?

#### 5. Post uses poor methods to determine staffing in post offices

It is common knowledge Australia Post uses poor methods to determine staffing in post offices. They rely too much on spurious analysis WFM/ROM and incorrect use of MODAPTS.

Now they say Post offices will open on Saturday with a minimum of 2 staff in the front office and a minimum of 1 staff member where the hatch only is open. Staffing for Saturdays will be assessed on knowledge of outlet volumes and conditions, projected customers and experience with outlets that currently trade Saturdays.

But our understanding is that most, if not all, offices that currently trade on Saturdays have a minimum of 3 staff. Hatches do not currently open on Saturdays. Having one person open hatch on Saturday raises many safety and security issues.

Like their methods of analysis for weekday staffing their rationale for Saturday staffing appears more to do with justifying staff reductions than with ensuring workers safety and services are correctly staffed.

#### 6. Tony Abbott wants to change the FWA and bring back Workchoices style laws

Tony Abbott wants to change the Fair Work Act as part of his plan to bring in Workchoices style laws which will reduce our standard of living by taking away our rights at work.

**The key changes Tony Abbott is seeking to make to the FWA are as follows:**

- The return of individual contracts that can take away penalty rates and cut your take home pay. These were emphatically rejected by Australians in 2007 as they resulted in the exploitation of workers. Low-skilled workers, workers in areas of high unemployment, women with caring responsibilities – are most disadvantaged in these negotiations.
- Allow workers to receive “non-monetary” benefits instead of penalty rates or overtime. A pizza restaurant worker for example could be “paid” for these rates in pizza instead!
- Take away your right to strike by allowing employers to veto industrial action. The Bill strips workers of their ability to negotiate with companies that don't want to do a deal. This would effectively allow employers to prevent lawful industrial action by simply refusing to bargain. It puts employees in a weaker bargaining position.



- Make it harder for workers to be represented by their union at work. The Bill changes the right of entry rules for workers representatives making it harder, and sometimes impossible, to have discussion with their representatives in their own time at work.
- Allows employers to write their own Greenfields “Agreements”. The Bill allows companies such as those in mining and construction industries to simply write their own workplace agreement if they do not reach agreement with the relevant union within three months. What employer would seek to reach an agreement if they can simply get what they want after three months?
- Move Australia towards an American style system of low wages and zero conditions.

These attacks on our rights are before the Senate now. We cannot let him win.

## 7. Help stop Tony Abbott from getting his changes and hurting millions of Australian workers

You can help stop Tony Abbott from getting his changes to the Fair Work Act and hurting millions of Australian workers by taking action now!

We just need to sway the votes of three Senators to stop Tony Abbott in his tracks and protect our standard of living.

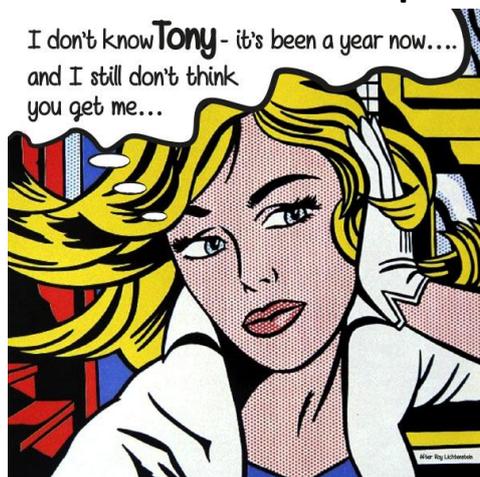
17,000 union members have emailed cross bench senators saying how these changes are bad for ordinary working Australians and asking them to vote NO to the government’s Fair Work amendments.

Labor and Green Senators have already committed to voting against this attack on Australian workers. Now the fate of Tony Abbott’s anti-worker laws depends on the votes of eight cross-bench Senators.

To win the Senators votes we have two hugely powerful tools - **our numbers and our stories**. That’s why Australian Unions supporters are ‘*adopting Senators*’--calling, emailing and writing to the decision makers--and making the case for why they should stand with workers.

**Click here to adopt a cross-bench senator and ask them to vote NO:**  
[http://www.australianunions.org.au/adopt\\_a\\_senator](http://www.australianunions.org.au/adopt_a_senator)

## 8. Coalition notched up its first 12 months in government



Let’s take out the political spin and election promises – what has the Abbott Government done for women in its first year?

### 1. Massive cuts to education, health and community services which employ and support women

Sixty per cent of public servants are women who stand to lose their jobs under the government’s severe job cuts. Cuts to social assistance and services will reduce support for women to participate in the workforce and enjoy a better quality of life.

### 2. No extra funding for childcare and freezing the childcare rebate

The cost of childcare directly affects women’s capacity to afford to go back to work. Freezing the childcare rebate will make it simply unaffordable for many women to return to work.

### **3. Cutting off family benefits when children reach school age at the same time as ripping out funding for Out of School Hours Care and funding 4-year-old kindergarten for only one more year**

We all know caring responsibilities for children don't stop once they reach school age. Without adequate pre-school and out of school hours care, many women simply can't work.

### **4. Cuts to single parent and family tax benefits**

A single-income couple with two school-age children and average earnings will lose up to \$4250 per year. Single parenting payments will be reduced and unlikely to keep up with real increases in the cost of living.

### **5. Amendments to the Fair Work Act which will allow employers to pay women less if they need to access family- friendly work arrangements**

The government wants employers to be able to trade employee's wages and conditions for 'non-financial benefits', such as family friendly hours. The gender pay gap between men and women, who are still mostly responsible for caring for family members, will widen even further than its current 20 year record high.

### **6. Axing the Low Income Superannuation Contribution scheme**

The government's axing of the scheme has reduced retirement savings for 1 in 2 (over 2 million) working women by up to \$27,000. Low income earners (2/3 of who are women) now pay more tax on their superannuation savings than they do on their income. The wealthy enjoy a 35% tax break on their super.

### **7. Watering down the Workplace Gender Equality legislation to lower employers reporting requirements on equal opportunity for women in their workplaces**

The government has proposed to water down the minimum standards required of all employers to ensure women are treated equally in the workplace.

### **8. Increases to higher education fees**

Whilst the higher fees and interest charged will see on average men taking 15 years to pay off their debts, because of their childrearing and broken employment history it will take women will take on average 26 years to pay off their university fees.

### **9. No new paid parental leave scheme**

There are serious questions as to whether the Coalition will deliver its proposed paid parental leave scheme. The ONLY Coalition policy which was clearly designed to support women has been put on hold indefinitely.

### **10. No Women's Budget Statement for the first time in 30 years**

In 2014 this practice ceased without explanation from the Government.

Women make up half the workforce and half the voting population – we need to stand up for a better deal. Article by [Belinda Tkalcevic](#) ACTU Industrial and Social policy

**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)  
Check out our webpage at [www.cwu.org.au](http://www.cwu.org.au)**



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Level 9, 365 Queen Street, Melbourne Vic 3000 (Australia)

[cwu.org.au](http://cwu.org.au)

**P** (03) 9001 9920

**F** (03) 9642 0333

**E** [cwu@cwu.org.au](mailto:cwu@cwu.org.au)

ABN 22 401 014 998 A Division of CEPU

**Dan Dwyer** Divisional Secretary

**Martin O'Nea** Divisional Assistant Secretary (Postal)