

# E-BULLETIN Postal

# 17, 20<sup>th</sup> September 2013



1. Major summit to hear about changes within Post
2. Red blue and green Post structural changes
3. Summit: Parcel processing
4. Summit: Delivery
5. Summit: Transport
6. Summit: Community service obligations
7. Summit: Other matters
8. Post cuts costs by cutting to services
9. Workers' rights in Work Health and Safety law
10. Australia Post's planned HQ in Sydney
11. Comcare conference
12. National strike could disrupt Royal Mail's Christmas season

## 1. Major summit to hear about changes within Post

This week we met with Post at Chullora in Sydney for a two day Summit. CWU was represented by Divisional Office and each Branch. Post has given us details of some of the changes to the Postal Structure and initiatives being considered to drive down costs. It will affect Retail, Transport, Delivery and processing roles and jobs. There are some job reductions forecast. It was not good news in terms of jobs. It was about savings. But it does give us time to mitigate the effects of the changes that confront us. Brief reports by Dan Dwyer Divisional Secretary follow. **We will be undertaking more detailed discussions over all these issues to ensure protection of jobs, salary and conditions.**

## 2. Red blue and green Post structural changes

A major structural change is about to take place. Three core businesses are being created:

**Red Post** - Tracey Fellows - Communications Management Services - Red Post is the Mail network and includes delivery and processing staff in the capital cities plus Newcastle, Canberra, Wollongong, Sunshine Coast, Gold Coast and Geelong. All other delivery and processing personnel located in other Regional area will be in Green Post.

**Blue Post** - Richard Umbers - Parcels and Express - brings together core Parcel operations and Transport, including StarTrack, Express, Courier and International operations. Blue trucks with Post logo will soon be delivered. Traditional red trucks will continue in the short term.

**Green Post** - Christine Corbett - Retail and Rural Post - Green Post is the National Retail network but now includes delivery and processing staff as mentioned above, from most of regional Australia.

## 3. Summit: Parcel processing

The new machines initially for Sydney and Melbourne parcel facilities are being installed and are planned to be in operation by late next year. Once the new machines running and proven, the current machines will be removed. There will be a staff impact. Initially more staff will be needed but when the current machines are removed, less staff are needed for face up, coding, bull rings and fork lift operations. The staff savings are estimated to be about 25% of the current staff at SPF and MPF in 2015. Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth will follow. There may also be sharing of StarTrack sorting machines. More discussions are proposed to deal with this issue.

#### **4. Summit: Delivery**

National Delivery Modelling Tool - allows Post to maximize full time employment - removes excessive measurement and time setting for rounds - data is being collected and assessed. Penalty rates will not be extended, but would be considered if overall costs were not increased in the modelling review. Branches will be progressively briefed.

#### **5. Summit: Transport**

A re-badging of some trucks to StarTrack Blue will be seen within weeks. Another proposal being considered is the removal of the Adelaide/Hay/Sydney and Melbourne/Dubbo/Brisbane linehaul routes. The Sydney Adelaide product will travel by the normal Melbourne run. The Melbourne Brisbane product will travel via the normal Sydney runs. Overall, there may be more trips as the increased flexibility means far less dependence on contractors. StarTrack product may also add to the loads. We will be demanding significant compensation and more talks are planned. A meeting of the Linehaul committee is planned within two weeks in Melbourne.

#### **6. Summit: Community service obligations**

Post is providing services in excess of the Community Service Obligations. Post currently enhance "next day" delivery to a number of large non metropolitan cities that go beyond the guarantee. They wish to cease providing these enhancements and process the mail at larger centres and then return the mail sorted and sequenced. The districts (and catchments) include Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo, Gippsland, Wollongong, Central Coast, Bathurst, Wagga, Albury, Casino and Kempsey. The outcome will mean removal of some processing jobs at these locations. Post has assured us that there will be no compulsory redundancies as a result of this. We will be demanding much greater detail on this before anything further is considered.

Post are also required to have at least 10,000 SPBs throughout Australia. They have over 16,000 now and wish to review the use of the SPBs. Some will be removed as a survey showed that they received less than 1kg of mail, including the bag. There are some areas where more are needed. But overall there will be a significant reduction if implemented. More detail will be soon provided on this proposal.

#### **7. Summit: Other matters**

Health and Safety initiatives were presented. We were highly critical of the presentation because of the failure to even mention the HSR. We proposed that the HSR be the centre of the policy. Post agreed to review the process to incorporate the HSR role.

"Post People first" - the problems of the employment freeze and transfer lists were discussed at length. Base level jobs are now advertised after redundant staff and those on transfer lists are considered. Further talks are proposed - this is a long term matter.

#### **8. Post cuts costs by cutting to services**

Despite an expected profit of \$260+ million this year Australia Post is embarking on cutting costs by cutting services. In Victoria and Western Australia on recent public holidays Street Post Boxes (SPBs) were not cleared after 6pm (as per Community Service Obligations).

Delivery rounds are reportedly being left behind in country areas and managers who 6 months ago were disciplining posties for breaches of the clear floor policy, are now talking of how Australia Post are “**over servicing**” the customers!

The union will not tolerate any moves by the CEO that undermines either our great mail system or the public’s confidence in it and has asked Australia Post to provide clarification on a number of issues surrounding the Community Service Obligation (CSO).

## **9. Workers’ rights in Work Health and Safety law**

**Unions say you can have an absolute right to a safe and healthy work environment.**

**That’s Union Policy.**

The Workplace Health and Safety Act say many of your rights are qualified by what is ‘reasonably practicable’.

Your rights under the work health and safety act are:

- To have your health and safety ensured
  - Be provided with safe systems of work
  - Be provided with the information, instruction, training and supervision you need to do your job
  - Have the PCBU (employer) monitor your health and conditions at the workplace
  - Be provided with facilities at work
  - Be provided with accommodation, if needed
  - Be consulted on WHS issues that affect you at work
  - Request a Work Group be established to elect an HSR
  - Request that the Union represent you in negotiations for the Work Group
  - Be part of a majority of workers getting the Union to run HSR elections
  - Be represented by your HSR
  - Have your HSR present at any interview between you and your employer (PCBU) or a WHS inspector
  - Refuse to perform work you reasonably think would expose you to a serious risk that is also immediate and imminent
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- Seek the help of your HSR to direct that unsafe work cease
  - Protection from discrimination, coercion or threats in relation to a WHS matter
  - Request the review of a WHS inspector’s decision that affects you (including if the inspector decides to do nothing)
  - Change your HSR.

## **10. Australia Post’s planned HQ in Sydney**

Australia Post's planned NSW headquarters on Cleveland Street in Sydney's Strawberry Hills has been sold with AP committing to a long-term relationship with the new owners, Eureka AXA Real Estate Investment Managers.

Australia Post unveiled plans for a redevelopment to transform the building into a state-of-the-art corporate headquarters and has committed to a 15-year head lease. Work is scheduled to be completed by mid-next year.

The finished building will span more than 29,000sq m of net leasable area and Australia Post will occupy about one-third of the building, maintaining the Australia Post retail store with expanded services including 24/7 access and parcel lockers, and incorporating a gymnasium, cafe, function and conference facilities and car parking for 257 vehicles. Any surplus office areas will be offered for sub-lease.

While the costs of the downturn in mail volumes and, increasingly, the costs of doing business, have been imposed on postal workers, Australia Post it would seem is doing very nicely, keeping damn near all the proceeds from doing business.



**Australia Post's planned HQ in Sydney**

## **11. Comcare conference**

There were a number of themes running through the Annual Comcare Conference in Canberra this week. These included: harassment and bullying, mental health issues and creating working environments where workers' mental wellbeing is front and centre.

A key speaker, Dr. Gerry Ayers, the OHS Manager with the Victorian Branch of the CFMEU spoke about how companies could make the best of their HSRs. Gerry Strongly encouraged the employer representatives present to fully engage with their HSRs and to value their knowledge.

Dr. Carlo Caponecchia, a Senior lecturer of the University of NSW conducted a master class in bullying prevention and management. It was refreshing to note an acknowledgement from a number of HR practitioners that managers sometimes use performance management as a bullying tool and do not consult with workers adequately.

Bruce Bonyhady, the Chairman of Disability Care Australia and one of the chief Architects of the National Disability Insurance Scheme spoke passionately and reminded the audience that the NDIS is a system that anyone could need at some stage in their lives.

Award winning author Graeme Cowen spoke about his 5 year battle with depression and the strategies he employed to get his life back on track. Graeme pointed out how happy workers are productive workers and how 70% of change in organisations does not achieve what is intended due in most part to company failures to engage with their workers fully. This can lead to mental health issues which only compounds the problems associated with change.

Graeme was followed up by Dr. Merv Gilbert from Canada. Graeme reiterated the benefits of developing a psychologically healthy workplace.

A number of sceptics seemed to be won over by the end of the two presentations (Cowen & Gilbert). A full report of the Conference will be available on our website in the near future.

## **12. National strike could disrupt Royal Mail's Christmas season**

The UK's Communications Workers Union will hold a vote later this month regarding the possibility of a full national postal strike at Royal Mail.

The union said if current ongoing talks with the universal postal service provider do not bring agreement before the end of September, ballot papers will go out to 125,000 Royal Mail workers seeking their votes.

It would be the first national strike ballot since 2009.

The CWU is protesting the current “below-inflation” pay offer from Royal Mail, changes to the workers’ pension scheme and the impact of forthcoming privatisation on job security and staff terms and conditions.

If the vote is in favour of a strike, the CWU would give seven days’ notice to Royal Mail, meaning industrial action would begin 10th October at the earliest.

The union said it had reached “breaking point” with Royal Mail negotiations, and believed a strike was “inevitable” unless Royal Mail met the “needs of the workforce”.



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