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1. Post's cynical attempt to justify regulation changes

The Coalition of Mail Service Stakeholders (CoMSS) comprising the CWU National Office, printers, mail houses, licensed post offices and other unions has accused Post boss, Ahmed Fahour, of making a "cynical attempt" to build support for major cuts to the letters business by releasing the company's first-half profit results one day before his Senate estimates grilling.



Post reported a first-half financial year profit after tax of \$98 million. Letters services lost \$151 million, a deterioration of 57% on the first half of last financial year. Mr. Fahour is sounding the alarm bells. "We're at a crisis point," he said. "What we need to do is to fix the regulation on letters to stem the losses."

At least that's what the Post boss wants us to believe.

"But the fact is that Australia Post's whole business performed quite well last financial year," Martin O'Nea CWU Assistant Secretary said. "The underlying profit reported by Post, before one-off costs such as restructuring, was actually up by over 10 per cent to \$518 million last year."

Mr. Fahour should not forget the efforts of Postal workers as downsizing occurs, as jobs change and who are only rewarded with a non union EBA with below average pay rises.

2. Senators grill Post boss



Senators expressed concern at last week's Senate Estimates that Post boss, Ahmed Fahour was doing a poor job of engaging the stakeholders — including franchisees, licensed post offices, business, unions and others — on the future of mail delivery.

In a tense exchange, senators Ruston and Urquhart grilled Mr Fahour on his reluctance to meet with stakeholders as one group.

The senators suggested the public were irritated by Post's recalcitrance in not meeting with the Coalition of Mail Service Stakeholders (CoMSS) organised by the CWU national office.

There were concerns that Post had not implemented a recommendation of the 2014 Senate Inquiry on Australia Post to create:

“... a formal postal network strategy group that engages all stakeholders in the development of a comprehensive strategy to inform changes to the Australian Post network in the face of emerging challenges.”

CWU National office has been critical of Mr. Fahour’s handling of stakeholder engagement as the company undergoes major restructuring.

(Source: extracts from story by David Donaldson in [The Mandarin](#))

3. Post should focus on finding new parcels business as it faces competition from Japan Post’s acquisition of Toll

Japan Post’s recent announcement that it wants to acquire Toll Holdings is a stark comparison to Post’s behaviour of cannibalizing its own business. Instead of making excuses for poor first-half profit results and blaming Postal regulation, Post should be focused on finding new parcels business and other revenue sources.



The proposed acquisition of Toll by Japan Post will put pressure on Post’s B2C parcels market, bringing together Toll’s end-to-end delivery network, its network of news agencies with parcel shop services, its Australian and Asian parcels networks and Japan Post’s own network.

Toll - a large Australian logistics and delivery company has traditionally moved consumer goods between stores and warehouse by road and air. But this traditional business model has been challenged by the emergence of online shopping and Post’s dominance of the Australian market for online deliveries.

Japan Post’s \$5bn USD offer for Melbourne-based Toll Group could be confirmed by early June.

4. Head of PostConnect gets job with ABnote

The only person that is confirmed to have been given a permanent position with ABnote to date is the Head of PostConnect. How unexpected is that?

Any wonder the PostConnect manager’s first SIB for 2015 to the ex-PostConnect employees who have been kept on to show the new mob how to do their jobs, waxed lyrical about ‘it being good to be back’ and ‘a new year presenting fresh opportunities’.



Meanwhile, ABnote employees will be working in PostConnect sites as part of the transition arrangements agreed by Post for the sale to ABnote. The transition arrangements will be different in each State. When Post works out exactly what they are, they will share them with CWU State branches and ex-PostConnect employees who, in typical Post fashion, are being kept on for Post’s convenience. For instance, the PostConnect (now ABnote) WA site has been relocated with Post employees kept on for the transition period now expected to travel further with no relocation allowance!

Members should contact their CWU State branch to help them through the RRR process or the CWU National Office.

5. CWU demands protection from bad work practices



The CWU national office has told Post manually unloading and loading parcels from ULDs into other ULDs for a whole shift is not on following complaints by CWU members at the Townsville Mail Centre, Qld.

Currently full-time employees are manually unloading and loading parcels from ULDs into other ULDs and/or bags for small parcels for their whole shift.

Poor manual handling practices like this is one of the most common hazards confronted by people in AP workplaces. The injuries that occur are often disabling, long term and costly. The effects of these injuries often become more disabling as workers become older.

We know from the application of the NIOSH method for assessment of manual handling risks on the Large Parcel Sorting System at MPF and SPF that work rotation and equipment, such as height adjustable trolleys, are required to reduce manual handling risks.

As OCR and CFC and hand stamping work is performed during these shifts by part-time employees, it would seem feasible to change the lifting work of the full-time employees from a long almost eight hours a day of lifting to a more moderate duration.

The effect of changing the lifting time would be considerable in terms of reducing manual handling risks. As well Post should immediately purchase height adjustable trolleys.

The local CWU delegate has raised these issues with management in the local JCC. Management has asked the delegate to draw up an alternative roster for their consideration.

There are potentially a lot of mail centres and other work locations where work practices would not measure up well against the NIOSH method. We have asked Post to conduct a review to identify other work locations with similar work practices as those at Townsville Mail Centre.

6. Police raid Australia Post parcel depot in NSW

Police have raided Post's transport depot at Chullora reportedly uncovering dozens of safety breaches. Drivers were tested for alcohol and drugs. There were no breaches here.

Trucks were checked for defects. There were allegedly 22 major defects and 10 minor defects here.

Reportedly police officers had been gathering intelligence since January. They carried out mechanical compliance inspections and download data from engine control modules. They inspected 194 trucks and trailers and issued defects under the banner of operation Despatch. These include defects involving brakes, tyres, suspension and oil/fuel leaks.



A further 23 vehicles engine control modules were downloaded with all of them found to be non compliant. Four had records of speeding over 100km/h.

"These operations will continue until the dangerous and potentially deadly behaviour ends – even if we have to visit each facility one by one," said NSW Police assistant commissioner John Hartley.

(Source: extract story in ATN)

7. Introduction of waterproof motorcycle boots for PDOs



New waterproof motorcycle boots will commence distribution for eligible employees from May 2015 after extensive trialling. Supply agreement for the boots from DriRider (McLeod Accessories) is about to commence.

The boots are currently being manufactured but employees will be able to order now to allow for delivery in May. The boots have been certified to Australian and International Standards. Eligibility will be as per the Clothing Manual criteria.

Thank you to Mick Walters CWU delegate at Somerton Delivery Centre in Vic for his work in representing the issue. Please provide feedback to the National Office once you have worn the new boots in wet conditions. Your feedback will be given to Post at the National Delivery Forum.

8. Abbott government attack on rights at work

Unions have vowed to fight any move to cut wages, conditions and rights at work as employers supported by the Abbott Government go after penalty rates and wages under the Fair Work Commission's review of award agreements.

The fact is the Abbott Government is doing everything it can to support employers going after penalty rates and wages under the Fair Work Commission's review of award agreements, said ACTU President Ged Kearney.



This is the same Government that promised there would be no cuts to health, no cuts to education, no changes to the pension and no cuts to the ABC and SBS!

The CWU is calling on its members to take part in a national day of action on 4 March to highlight the threats to working people posed by the Abbott government and its supporters.

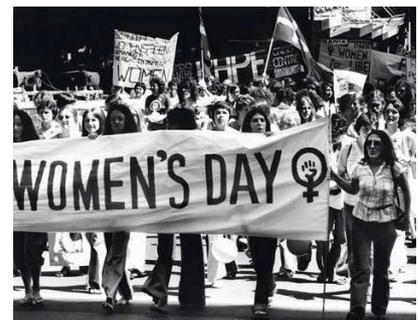
See our national [Website www.cwu.org.au](http://www.cwu.org.au) for rally details.

9. International Women's Day

It is International Women's Day (IWD) on the 8th March.

IWD was first observed in 1908 when women garment workers' went on strike in New York against their terrible working conditions, unequal pay and no right to vote. In 1910 an international conference of women decided that a day each year should be used to honour the women's movement and agitate for the rights of women.

In Australia IWD has been celebrated since 1928 with demands for equal pay for equal work, an 8 hour day for shop girls, no piece work, the basic wage for the unemployed and annual holidays on full pay.



This year the Australian union movement is focussed on cuts to wages and conditions from attacks on penalty rates and rights at work, including domestic violence leave. These issues have a huge impact on women workers.

In Australia women still earn an average of 18.2% less than men. In March 2014 the average weekly ordinary time earnings of women working full-time were \$1270 per week compared to men who earned an average weekly wage of \$1532.80. Of course this is due to a number of factors such as women working in low paid industries, women's breaks in service due to parenting and caring responsibilities and systemic discrimination against women. The gender pay gap is higher in the private sector (20.2%) than the public (13.1%) and increases with age. Those on collective agreements (16.9%) do better than those on individual contracts (20.6%).

Clearly being in a union means receiving a better wage but we still have a long way to go to remove gender inequality and sexism in the workplace.

**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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