



THE SENATE

**SENATE ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS
REFERENCES COMMITTEE**

6 April 2021

Mr Rodney Boys
Acting Group Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director
Australia Post

By email:

Cc:

Dear Mr Boys

**Australia Post inquiry:
Treatment of potential submitters and witnesses**

As you would be aware the Senate has recently referred to the Environment and Communications References Committee (the Committee) an inquiry into Australia Post. The Committee has become aware of concerns in relation to the treatment of potential witnesses to this inquiry by Australia Post.

The Committee understands that people working for Australia Post may have been discouraged from participating in the inquiry.

The Committee reminds Australia Post that taking action against a submitter or witness to a parliamentary inquiry may constitute a contempt of Parliament. The relevant [parliamentary privilege resolutions](#) provide:

Interference with witnesses

6(10) A person shall not, by fraud, intimidation, force or threat of any kind, by the offer or promise of any inducement or benefit of any kind, or by other improper means, influence another person in respect of any evidence given or to be given before the Senate or a committee, or induce another person to refrain from giving such evidence.

Molestation of witnesses

6(11) A person shall not inflict any penalty or injury upon, or deprive of any benefit, another person on account of any evidence given or to be given before the Senate or a committee.

Such action may also constitute a criminal offence under section 12 of the [Parliamentary Privileges Act 1987](#). Penalties may include fines or imprisonment not exceeding six months.

Evidence provided by public officials is often critical to the conduct of parliamentary inquiries. Attempts to interfere with the provision of such evidence (given in either an official or a private capacity) have been treated with the utmost seriousness by the Senate's Privileges Committee.¹

Should Australia Post have concerns with evidence provided by any of its employees or other witnesses during the course of the inquiry, Australia Post may submit a response or write to the Committee to seek another remedy. Employers must not interfere or seek to influence employees in respect to their participation in parliamentary proceedings, or the evidence they provide. In addition, employers must not demand to see or 'vet' an employee's evidence as such action could constitute interference.

If specific evidence of interference with witnesses to this inquiry is provided to the Committee, the Committee will vigorously pursue the matter.

I trust you will make this information available to the Board, employees, licensees and relevant contractors of Australia Post. The Committee intends to publish this letter on its website on Wednesday, 7 April 2021.

If you require further information or guidance, please contact the Committee Secretary on 02 6277 3526.

Yours sincerely,

Senator Sarah Hanson-Young
Chair

¹ Senate Standing Committee of Privileges, *Parliamentary privilege: Precedents, procedure and practice in the Australian Senate 1966–2005*, pp. 46–56.