

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications

Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice

Budget Estimates Hearings May 2015

Communications Portfolio

Australia Post

Question No: 73

Program No. Australia Post

Hansard Ref: Page 74-76, 27/5/2015

Topic: Parcel sorting machines – Misdirected Parcels

Senator Urquhart, Anne asked:

Senator URQUHART: At that time, I understand that Australia Post declined to be interviewed, but in a statement you said that the figures, that 40,000 parcels, was inaccurate and misleading. Do you want to expand on that and set the record straight?

Mr Fahour: No. I think we were very clear. One of my executives did partake in an interview with one particular radio journalist and tried to correct the facts. What we were emphasising was the great work that our people do, and they are terrific at what they do.

Senator URQUHART: Yes, I am not having a go at the people; I am talking about the particular process of 40,000 parcels being misdirected.

Mr Fahour: If you look at the underlying criticism, they are criticising Australia Post and the people of Australia Post and how they handle—

Senator URQUHART: No, I think they were talking about a new parcel sorting machine. By no means am I questioning here to try to have a go at the employees of Australia Post.

Mr Fahour: No, I did not think you were.

Senator URQUHART: What I am trying to determine is the accuracy of the 40,000 parcels that are misdirected every day, and whether or not that figure is actually correct?

Mr Fahour: We said publicly at that interview that that was not correct.

Senator URQUHART: Okay, so what is the correct number?

Mr Fahour: They were quoting some data that we had never seen, so we do not know the data that they are talking about. If you are asking us about—

Senator URQUHART: I am asking you how many parcels are misdirected.

Mr Fahour: What is our sorting process like, if that is the question—

Senator URQUHART: No, the question was very clear. It was: if it is not 40,000 parcels that are misdirected, how many are misdirected?

Mr Fahour: I am happy to take that on notice to give you a precise number. But what we are saying to you is that the allegations that were given were incorrect, as my executive had stated on the radio.

Senator URQUHART: I did not hear the radio, but I am just trying to set the record straight here. If it is not 40,000, how many is it?

Mr Fahour: What we do know is that we gave out some data on that day which showed that we were meeting and exceeding our service obligations. What we are really pleased—

Senator URQUHART: I am not arguing. I know you have a service obligation. I am just trying to get the number of parcels. If you are saying 40,000 is wrong, then just tell me what the number is.

Mr Fahour: I just said to you that I would happily—

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Senator URQUHART: Sorry, is the 95 per cent parcels?

Mr Fahour: Parcels, correct.

Senator URQUHART: Just simply parcels?

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Mr Fahour: Just parcels only. If I do the express parcels, we are at 99.5 per cent. If you like, I can break that down by state.

Senator URQUHART: So it is the parcels that get misdirected rather than the express parcels, is that fair to say?

Mr Fahour: They are not misdirected. I said the target was 94 and we are doing 95.

Senator URQUHART: Right. But this 40,000, this number, can you just talk to me in numbers? You said before that the 40,000 parcels is not the correct number.

Mr Fahour: What I am saying is that we are not mis-sorting; at that time my executive correctly said that we are not mis-sorting 40,000 parcels. If you would like me to take on notice what is the number of parcels out of the several hundred million that we handle that are 'mis-sorted', I am happy to give you that on notice.

Answer:

As noted at the hearing, the information will be provided separately to the committee under standing order 25(2).

For information standing order 25(2) reads:

- (a) The legislation committees shall inquire into and report upon estimates of expenditure in accordance with standing order 26, bills or draft bills referred to them by the Senate, annual reports in accordance with paragraph (20), and the performance of departments and agencies allocated to them.