

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications

Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice

Budget Estimates May 2017

Communications Portfolio

Australia Post

Question No: 72

Australia Post

Hansard Ref: Page 104, 24/05/2017

Topic: Parcel Delivery Protocols

Senator Abetz, Eric asked:

Senator ABETZ: I have a very brief bracket of questions relating to parcel delivery protocols. I assume Australia Post still presents itself to the community with that slogan 'We deliver'?

Ms Corbett: Absolutely.

Senator ABETZ: That is good. So can you explain—and, if need be, take on notice—why the New South Wales State management of Australia Post is insisting that persons in the footprint of the Hammondville licenced post office in New South Wales are forbidden to collect their undeliverable parcels from the local licenced post office in Hammondville and are required to travel over half an hour to collect those parcels from the corporate Moorebank post office?

Ms Corbett: I am very happy to take that on notice; I do not have those specifics.

Senator ABETZ: I thought that might be the case. Could you also provide to us on notice what the actual protocol is around Australia generally? If the information I have been provided is correct, that is a substantial inconvenience. Also, it would suggest that state management is supporting Australia Post corporate offices to the detriment of licensed post offices. Given our previous encounters at Senate estimates, you know that I seek to support the small business licenced post offices.

Ms Corbett: Absolutely. Let me confirm for you that, with respect to parcels, we have introduced a new service over the last 12 months called 'parcel collect'. Members of the Australian community can nominate their local post office—be it a corporate post office or a licenced post office—and have their parcels delivered directly to that post office first time. We are 100 per cent supportive of giving our customers a choice in where they want their parcels delivered first time—be it a home, a post office or a parcel locker. We now have close to 90 per cent of parcels being delivered first time to the recipient's preferred address. If an item does get carded, we card it back to the local post office—and that is irrespective of whether it is a corporate outlet or a licenced post office. I am aware of some instances over the last few years where the local office—and it could be a corporate outlet or it could be a licenced post office—does not have the storage facilities and they have requested to go on what is called 'bypass' and take it to another area.

Senator ABETZ: Be assured that, with this one, they are complaining to me that they are being bypassed with a definition a half an hour's drive away.

Ms Corbett: I am very happy to take that on notice. You just asked what our protocols were, and I can certainly explain our protocols. In the instance of carding, it will be to the nearest outlet.

Senator ABETZ: Yes, but that is where the customer elects where it should be delivered to. If they do not elect—

Ms Corbett: No, that is actually the issue of where it is carded. What that means is you are not home today and the driver will take it back to the—

Senator ABETZ: The local post office from whence it originated.

Ms Corbett: The local postal facility, yes. But I am happy to take that specific on notice.

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Answer:

For situations where no-one is in attendance at the addressed premises to take delivery of an article, Australia Post endeavours to 'card' street addressed mail articles to the nearest post office to ensure the customer is not disadvantaged. Occasionally – for operational reasons – the article is taken to another nearby collection location (for example, due to capacity constraints and/or OH&S issues at the closest post office).

In the specific case of Hammondville Post Office, the Licensee advised Australia Post in 2011 that they no longer wished to receive 'carded' articles, for reasons including health and safety concerns. Australia Post agreed to this request due to the health and safety concerns raised, and was able to 'card' articles to the five other post offices located within five kilometres of Hammondville Post Office, one of which is the Moorebank Post Shop.

Periodically since this time, Australia Post has offered to reinstate the 'carded' article service to Hammondville Post Office, however this has been rejected by the Licensee due to the concerns previously raised.

Australia Post understands the Licensee has now made structural changes to their premises to allow for greater storage of 'carded' articles, which they have confirmed alleviate their health and safety concerns. Australia Post will again offer to reinstate this service.