

Post Office Network Change Protocols

Effective 1 January 2023

Introduction

Australia Post operates the nation's largest physical retail outlet network. This network includes a combination of Australia Post-owned corporate outlets (CPOs), Licensed Post Offices (LPOs), and Community Postal Agencies (CPAs). The community relies on Australia Post to deliver important services through our network, especially in rural and remote areas.

The growth of the digital economy is changing how Australians communicate; how they access services; and how they do their shopping. Australia Post regularly reviews its network taking into account customer behaviour, demographics including new development and growth areas, the impacts of new technology and shifting requirements of a particular local community in optimising our retail outlet network.

Australia Post has a responsibility to manage the performance of all its functions “in a manner consistent with sound commercial practice,”¹ including the commercial operation of our retail outlet network. Australia Post also has a community service obligation (CSO) to provide services that are “reasonably accessible to all people in Australia, wherever they reside or carry-on business”, including maintaining at least 4,000 postal outlets, including 2,500 in rural and remote areas of Australia. Further to this, Australia Post is committed to maintaining its Performance Standards of accessibility with 90% of residences in a metropolitan area are located within 2.5 kilometres of a retail outlet and at least 85% of residences in a non-metropolitan zone are within 7.5 kilometres of a retail outlet.

This Post Office Network Change Protocol (the Protocol) provides a guideline of how Australia Post will communicate with the community in the event of retail service changes so we can offer new and innovative services and maintain a dynamic retail outlet network that can be adapted to local customer and community needs.

Our Commitment

As an important community service provider, we accept and understand that the majority of Australians are interested in changes we make to services in their local area. This is especially the case in rural and remote areas where the Australia Post outlet (often operated as an LPO or CPA) provides vital services and acts as a local community hub.

At Australia Post, we are committed to communicating any changes to our retail outlet network in local communities.

Examples of retail service changes include:

- outlet relocation;
- outlet closure or amalgamation; or
- the conversion of a retail outlet to provide a different level of service.

¹ Australian Postal Corporation Act 1989 (Cth) Part 3. Division 1. s.26

Australia Post will:

- consider the current and future needs and expectations of our customers and the local community when planning and implementing changes to our retail outlet network; and
- ensure we are accountable and transparent about the change process and the decisions we make.

We are committed to applying these Protocols when making service changes at Australia Post-owned outlets which are Post Offices operated directly by Australia Post.

We will also endeavour to use this approach when there are local service changes at LPOs and CPAs. However, given these types of outlets are operated in partnership with other entities, occasionally circumstances beyond our control may prevent us from adhering to the commitments outlined in the Protocol. For instance, sometimes the operator of the local postal outlet may not give Australia Post enough notice of a service change to allow a community notification process.

This Commitment does not apply to changes with minimal or no impact to our stakeholders; or where the community consultation process is impractical for reasons beyond Australia Post's control (e.g. flood, unexpected closure by a Licensee).

Network Change Protocols

1. Where an Australia Post owned and operated Post Office is proposed to close, amalgamate, convert or significantly relocate in a metropolitan, rural or remote area, Australia Post commits to providing customers and community stakeholders, including Federal MPs, State Government MPs and Local Government Representatives, a minimum 60 days written notice of our intention to change the service.
2. Where PO Box customers are impacted, Australia Post commits to offering at a minimum 6 month free mail redirection to a premise, home or alternative PO Box service.
3. Where Australia Post makes minor changes in opening hours or proposes a relocation to a premise a short distance from the existing site; or a minor outlet conversion – we will issue appropriate stakeholder information bulletins that outline details of the proposed change in a timely manner.
4. Where Australia Post makes minor changes in opening hours or proposes a relocation to a premise a short distance from the existing site (i.e. within 500 meters); or a minor outlet conversion (e.g. from CPA to LPO) – where possible we will issue appropriate stakeholder communications at least one month in advance that outline details of the proposed change in a timely manner.
5. At Australia Post we regularly review and assess the effectiveness of our network as community needs and expectations change, this includes considering the positioning and establishment of a Post Office, or other points of presence eg parcel lockers. When a decision is made to add a retail outlet or service, a number of scenarios are considered and evaluated in order to understand the most suitable format or point of presence for the community.

Classification: PUBLIC

6. Australia Post will use public notices, communications to Post Office Box customers, bulletins and other announcements to inform the community about any proposed changes that may impact the community when a change is made.

Feedback and Complaints

Community members seeking information about the Post Office network, or wishing to provide feedback to Australia Post, are encouraged to contact Australia Post via:

Letter

Australia Post
Customer Sales and Service
GPO Box 9911
MELBOURNE VIC 3001

Phone

13 76 78 (13 POST) for residential customers within Australia, 13 11 18 for business customers within Australia, or +61 3 8847 9045 for customers outside Australia.

Online

A number of online forms to facilitate the provision of complaints and feedback are available at:

<https://auspost.com.au/about-us/corporate-information/complaints-and-feedback>.

Commonwealth Ombudsman

Customers unhappy with the way Australia Post has responded to a complaint are encouraged to contact Australia Post again to ask that their complaint be escalated.

Customers who have contacted Australia Post but remain unhappy are able to contact the postal industry branch of the Commonwealth Ombudsman. Australia Post assists the Commonwealth Ombudsman with its enquiries.