



Group Mail Delivery Poll Policy

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Statement of Policy

Overview	<p>Letter delivery and collection arrangements vary from place to place, depending on the size, location and make-up of each community. Australia Post recognises that, over time, the needs of the community can change and we are open to reviewing arrangements in these situations to ensure that we provide a delivery service that best meets their needs.</p> <p>The mail delivery poll process ensures that Australia Post deals with community requests for change in a fair, equitable and consistent manner.</p>
Rationale & scope	<p>Australia Post's Mail Delivery Poll Policy (the policy) outlines the standard guidelines undertaken by our business to measure the community's support to change their existing letter delivery arrangements.</p> <p>The policy is in place to offer guidance and clarity for our people, our stakeholders and the community, demonstrating our commitment to a transparent and robust polling process that our stakeholders can rely on.</p> <p>The policy has been developed as a result of ongoing community and government consultation, and aligns with our Customer Service Charter, which includes Australia Post's Community Service Obligations and prescribed performance standards (see 'Related information' below) in relation to our mail services.</p> <p>The policy relates to our letter (or 'regulated mail') delivery services only.</p> <p>Our parcel delivery service – a non-regulated commercial service provided by Australia Post – is not reflected in this policy.</p>
Audience	<p>Australia Post employees and delivery contractors, our customers and their local representatives and the general community.</p> <p>This policy applies to employees and managers in the mail delivery network of the Australia Postal Group (APG). The APG is defined as the Australian Postal Corporation and its subsidiaries. This includes, but is not limited to, employees, contractors, licensees and franchisees of the APG.</p>
Application	<p>All managers and employees that coordinate mail delivery polls must comply with the requirements set out in this policy.</p>
Policy Principles	<p>Our Community Service Obligations</p> <p>Australia Post operates under the Australian Postal Corporation Act 1989 (the Act) and our underlying purpose is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Operate according to sound commercial practice• Meet our community service obligations (CSOs) to provide a reliable, accessible and affordable service for all Australians, wherever they live. <p>Our CSOs are set out under s27 of the Act. They require that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• we provide a letter service for both domestic and international letter traffic• the service be available at a single uniform rate within Australia for standard letters• the service be reasonably accessible to all Australians wherever they reside• the performance standards for the service reasonably meet the social, industrial and commercial needs of the community. <p>The CSOs outline performance standards which Australia Post must meet. The standards that relate to street mail delivery are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 94 per cent of basic letters must be delivered on time or early• 98 per cent of addresses must receive mail delivery five days a week

- 99.7 per cent of addresses must receive mail delivery two days a week.

More information on our Community Service Obligations can be found on our website. It is important to note that any amendments to delivery arrangements align with these obligations and Australia Post's commitment to ensuring that mail services are provided at a standard that reasonably meets the collective needs of individual communities.

Delivery service performance

As part of our CSO, we make our basic letter service available on an equitable basis by delivering to street, roadside, post office and post office box addresses across Australia.

The delivery of mail is provided as part of the cost of postage unless mail is delivered to a post office box or private bag, both of which incur an annual fee.

We try our best to deliver to the addressed property but have to take into consideration factors such as the safety of our people, availability of local transport, delivery costs and customer preference. If we cannot deliver directly to the property, mail can either be collected from our nearest post office, from a Post Office Box (provided at a concessional rate) or from the nearest delivery point on an existing mail run (eg. a roadside clusterbox).

When we establish a new delivery service, or propose changes to an existing one, our policy is to consult directly with affected local communities.

Establishing or changing a letter delivery service: key considerations

There are a range of factors that must be considered when determining the type and level of service provided, including economic impacts and existing postal services.

Community needs and expectations must be carefully considered, such as:

- the special characteristics of the area where mail services are to be provided (for example, population growth or decline, mail volumes, delivery accessibility, and distance to postal facilities)
- the way the community is currently serviced (for example, mail collection arrangements, or street mail delivery / roadside mail delivery in surrounding areas)
- the facilities already provided to the community (for example, nearby post offices and post office boxes).

For more information, see Community considerations and impacts (page 8).

Australia Post will only introduce a change to existing delivery arrangements if there is demonstrated support for the change by a majority of the community.

Awareness, Training & Induction

This policy will be available to all staff via the intranet. Any aspects of this policy affecting staff will be communicated directly to them.

Enforcement & Monitoring

Staff may be deemed to have failed to comply with this policy directly and or with its intent. Failure to comply with the intent of this (or any other) policy will be considered in breach of the requirements.

Employees acting or behaving in a manner that contravenes the principles outlined in this document are considered to be in breach.

Breaches will be subject to counselling or disciplinary action appropriate to the circumstances and seriousness of the behaviour.

Disciplinary action may include dismissal or termination of employment.

Breaches, Exemptions & Variations

Any exemptions to this policy must be approved by the Executive General Manager Postal Services

Reporting

Reports highlighting outstanding and non-compliance is run on a monthly basis.

Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years to enhance the delivery of efficient and effective outcomes.

Policy Guidelines

Mail delivery polls

1 Why mail delivery polls are conducted

- 1.1. Australia Post services more than 11.2 million delivery points (including households and businesses) across Australia.
- 1.2. Most of these delivery points are letterboxes that are located on a property and serviced by “street delivery”. In medium to low population density areas letterboxes can be grouped on a main road and serviced by “roadside delivery”. Some households and businesses that don’t have access to “roadside delivery” rent a Post Office (PO) Box which Australia Post provides to them at a discounted rate. Those that choose not to have a PO Box collect their mail over the counter at the post office.
- 1.3. In line with our CSOs, the majority of delivery points are serviced by five days a week delivery. In some medium to low population density areas, where Australia Post relies on mail contractors to deliver the mail, the delivery frequency may vary depending on the needs of the community and the agreement reached with the mail contractor.
- 1.4. From time to time, as a result of changes to their local community, residents will approach Australia Post requesting that a “street delivery” or “roadside delivery” service be introduced or that the frequency of their current mail delivery service be increased.
- 1.5. Mail delivery and postal services are important facilities and any change to them can have impacts on the local community. For this reason, Australia Post will only implement changes if the majority of the community supports the change.
- 1.6. To measure community support, Australia Post will conduct a mail delivery poll with affected households that meet the eligibility criteria to receive a street or roadside delivery service.
- 1.7. The Australia Post mail delivery poll process is designed to prevent a situation where a minority of residents could bring about a change to existing arrangements which has cost and convenience impacts for all community members.
- 1.8. In some instances, where it is determined that operating conditions and service requirements for an extension or introduction of a mail delivery service can be met and is appropriate for the community, Australia Post may (at its discretion) elect to forego the mail delivery poll process and take steps to implement the service in consultation with affected community members. These instances will be judged on a case-by-case basis.

Polling process

2 Community requests for a mail delivery poll

- 2.1 Before pursuing any requests for changes to mail arrangements, Australia Post must review whether the street/roadside delivery service meets eligibility criteria and whether the request is likely to reflect, or be representative of, the wishes of the majority of the people who will be impacted in that community.

- 2.2 Should a member of the community want a mail delivery poll to be conducted in their local area, they must provide Australia Post with indications from a representative number of affected community members.
- 2.3 A representative number is at least 25 per cent of eligible households in the area where the change is proposed. For example, if the change is likely to affect several neighbouring streets where the total number of households is 100, at least 25 of those households would need to demonstrate support for a poll. The total volume of mail being collected over-the-counter for those eligible households should also be on average greater than 220 articles per day. As the polling size varies, Australia Post will determine this on a case-by-case basis.
- 2.4 The community can demonstrate their support to Australia Post by being signatories to a petition, including their full name, property number and street address, and signature. The petition should then be forwarded to the appropriate local Australia Post delivery centre for review.
- 2.5 The community may choose to be represented by a local politician, such as a Federal or State Member of Parliament (MP). In this situation, the local MP's constituents will still be required to demonstrate that there is representative community support. The petition may be submitted through the MP if desired.
- 2.6 In the event that the eligibility criteria has been met and the community is able to demonstrate support from a representative number of the community, Australia Post will assess the merits of conducting a mail delivery poll against a series of eligibility criteria as outlined in section 3.

3 Determining conduct of mail delivery polls and community eligibility

- 3.1 On receipt of a mail delivery poll petition, if the request meets the necessary requirements (see 2.3), Australia Post management first reviews whether a poll has been undertaken recently.
- 3.2 Australia Post generally holds that polls should not be conducted more than once every two years, unless there are exceptional circumstances (such as major development in the area).
- 3.3 To determine feasibility of the proposed service, management will arrange to visit the affected location, speak to householders and businesses, and gather information (see 3.6) to establish the proposed operating conditions (for example, the mail delivery route) and service requirements. This information will be used to determine which households the proposed service would be applicable to, and therefore: a) whether a mail delivery poll should be conducted; b) who will be included in the mail delivery poll.
- 3.4 Australia Post is committed to ensuring that all households who are entitled to respond to a mail delivery poll receive the opportunity to do so.
- 3.5 Determining which households should be included in a poll may depend on the proposal being put forward – i.e. where a request has been proposed for extension to an existing service, only those households that would be affected by the extension will be polled. For example, extension of a roadside mail delivery service down a particular road would only affect households along that road and therefore only those residents would be eligible to participate in the poll.
- 3.6 Coupled with community needs and expectations, Australia Post will assess a number of factors including:

- the type of service sought (roadside or street delivery)
- the number of households to be served
- current and projected mail volumes
- estimated cost of service provision
- frequency of operations, location of adjoining mail service routes; distance to nearby postal facilities
- accessibility to the area
- impact on Australia Post resources.

These factors will effectively determine the households that the proposed service would be applicable to, and therefore: a) whether a mail delivery poll should be conducted; b) who will be eligible to participate in the mail delivery poll.

3.7 Following the management review:

- 3.7.1 Should Australia Post determine that the service change – and, therefore, a mail delivery poll – is not feasible, the Delivery Centre will respond to the community member(s)'s request to explain why a mail delivery poll cannot be conducted.
- 3.7.2 If a decision has been made to conduct a mail delivery poll, the Delivery Manager will take appropriate steps to undertake the poll, including notifying relevant stakeholders.
- 3.7.3 If Australia Post deems it appropriate to bypass the polling process and introduce a street delivery service they will consult directly with the impacted community.
- 3.8 Once a decision is made to conduct a mail delivery poll, a list of the affected addresses will be compiled using a variety of sources such as physical site visits, a list of discounted PO Box holder details from the local post office and town planning advice from the local council.
- 3.9 A household is eligible to vote if they are within the area that Australia Post is able to deliver to, which varies depending on geography and urban spread.
- 3.10 In the interest of fairness each eligible household or property is entitled to one vote. This ensures that people who live alone have an equal voice to dwellings with several residents – as both receive the same service from Australia Post.
- 3.11 When polling eligible households, permanent residents are therefore asked to provide their name(s), address and telephone number so Australia Post can confirm that only those eligible to participate in the poll have done so and that only one vote has been returned per household.

4 Mail delivery poll conduct and delivery of polling papers

- 4.1 Mail delivery polls must be conducted over a minimum period of four weeks. In some circumstances (e.g. polls with a large number of eligible residents) the polling period may be longer.
- 4.2 Once a start and end date has been determined, the Delivery Manager will notify interested parties – such as local councils, politicians, and community members who submitted the original request for a poll – of the upcoming poll.
- 4.3 Individual polling papers to affected residents will be prepared. Each letter is numbered and a copy is recorded in a register prior to delivery.

- 4.4 All households eligible to vote in the poll will receive a letter outlining the mail delivery poll purpose, process, polling period and closing date/time, and polling form with a Reply Paid envelope.
- 4.5 Australia Post will endeavour to hand deliver polling letters to each residence. Generally, distribution is by special delivery to the door. If no one is home to receive the polling letter, it will be left in a prominent and secure position, e.g. under the front door, inside the security/flyscreen door etc.
- 4.6 Should the Delivery Manager be unable to hand deliver the letter, or it is known that mail is delivered via PO Box or over the post office counter, it may be delivered by a representative of the local post office.
- 4.7 The Delivery Manager will record in the register whether they personally delivered the polling letter to the residence and the location where the letter was left or whether it was delivered via other methods.
- 4.8 If, for any reason, the Delivery Manager is unable to deliver a polling letter, household(s) that did not receive polling papers will be discounted from the outcome.
- 4.9 The polling form asks eligible households to record their personal details and vote 'Yes' for whether they want their mail delivery arrangements to change.
- 4.10 The polling papers advise that if no response is received by the poll's closing date, Australia Post will assume that the recipient does not want their current mail delivery arrangements to change and they will be recorded as a 'No' vote.
- 4.11 For their vote to count, eligible households must return their polling form before the poll closing date using the Reply Paid envelope supplied. The 'return' date is defined as the day on which the letter is received by Australia Post and registered in our system.

5 Notifying local community stakeholders of a mail delivery poll

- 5.1 In addition to delivering polling papers to eligible households, Australia Post may notify interested parties, such as local councils and Members of Parliament of the forthcoming mail delivery poll.
- 5.2 Depending on the size and nature of the poll, Australia Post may, at its discretion, undertake additional forms of communication (such as community noticeboard bulletins, media release and/or advertising in the form of a public notice) to ensure all eligible residents are aware of the poll.
- 5.3 All promotional material will include an appropriate contact point – in most cases the Delivery Centre, Mail Contract Manager or, in the case of media releases, Australia Post's Customer Contact Centre.
- 5.4 Where appropriate, Australia Post may consider holding a community information meeting prior to the poll to inform the community of the issues involved with the polling process.

6 Community considerations and impacts

- 6.1 For many people there are obvious benefits to having a street delivery service, but it doesn't always suit all members of the community. As such, if a poll is

conducted, residents are asked to consider a number of important points before making their decision, including:

- the loss of existing concessional rates for Post Office Box holders
- changes to the times when mail will be available
- costs associated with putting up a letterbox at every residence or business
- possible impacts on the viability of the local post office and nearby businesses/traders
- that a five-day-a-week delivery service is not guaranteed – delivery frequency will depend on the nature of the community and whether the service is delivered by a third party mail contractor or an Australia Post employee.

Polling outcome

7 Determining the result of a mail delivery poll

- 7.1 Australia Post will progressively open and record responses during the mail poll period. If the number of 'Yes' votes counted exceeds 50 per cent of the total number of residents polled prior to the end of the polling period, Australia Post will close the poll early and take steps to change mail delivery arrangements as outlined in 7.5.
- 7.2 Australia Post will record all responses received in a register and polling forms will kept on file for seven years.
- 7.3 Responses are categorised in two ways: 'Yes' and 'Nil response' to reflect the overall will of, and impact to, the community. A 'Nil response' will be treated as a 'No' vote.
- 7.4 A 'Nil response' is considered a 'No' vote because it ensures the responsibility for proving the case for change rests with those who do not want the status quo.
- 7.5 If the total of 'Yes' votes is more than 50 per cent of the total number of residents polled then the poll will be deemed successful and Australia Post will take steps to change the mail delivery arrangements to that community.

8 Advising the outcome of a mail delivery poll

- 8.1 Australia Post will send written advice of the mail delivery poll result to local Members of Parliament (via their electoral office postal address), within 14 days of a poll's closure.
- 8.2 Within 30 days of a poll's closure Australia Post will, at a minimum, advise eligible households of the mail delivery poll result in writing (via the customer's regular mail collection method) and, with consent, through customer notices at the local post office.
- 8.3 In addition Australia Post may, at its discretion, issue a media release, provide a statement online at auspost.com.au and/or publish an advertisement (public notice) with the local media outlet(s) outlining the result.
- 8.4 If a poll is successful, Australia Post will advise the community of the new mail delivery arrangements as soon as they are finalised.
- 8.5 The instruction will include advice for residents to prepare for their mail delivery service, for example purchasing and erecting a compliant letterbox in a suitable location (refer to our Letterbox and Security Specifications) at their own expense.



Roles & Responsibilities

Policy Governance

Requirement	Responsible area/Role	Activities	Nature of activity
The Enterprise Risk Management Forum (ERMF) must report on the implementation of governance frameworks and policies.	ERMF	The ERMF will ensure appropriate governance mechanisms and control frameworks are in place.	Second line of defence
Accountable Executive	Executive General Manager Postal Services	To oversee the application of the Policy	First Line of defence

Policy Operation

Requirement	Responsible area/Role	Activities	Nature of activity
Identifying and managing the use of resources	Managers	Fostering an environment that encourage compliance with the principles of the policy	First line of defence
Comply with regulatory obligations, policies and procedures. Undertake relevant training.	Employees	Complying with regulatory obligations, policies and procedures relevant to their work responsibilities and behavioural Guidelines	First line of defence

Policy Monitoring & Oversight

Requirement	Responsible area/Role	Activities	Nature of activity
Compliance	Mail Network & Postal Safety function	Oversee and ensure APG compliance to the principles of the Policy.	First line of defence
Breach & Incident Reporting	Mail Network & Postal Safety function	Will undertake remediation and reporting for related matters to the Enterprise Risk Management Forum	First line of defence
Periodic review of compliance to this policy	Enterprise Risk & Compliance	Undertake periodic review to ensure this policy is complied with and reporting of Breaches and incidents to the ERMF and BARC.	Second line of defence

Glossary

APG

Australia Postal Group (APG). The APG is defined as the Australian Corporation and its subsidiaries.