Dear Mr Wright,

I am concerned about Australia Post's proposed changes to letter delivery services, for a number of reasons.

1. A big hike in price of nearly 43% cannot be justified for a significantly slower delivery service. I am more concerned about the delay in delivery than in the price hike. I question why the two-day additional delay is necessary — I have been unable to find any justification for this. Please note that mail delivery times have become much slower and less reliable over the years already. I live in the KImberley, in the north of WA, where, when I came here 36 years ago, letters sent before COB one day were delivered in Perth the following morning, and vice versa. Letters to the Eastern States took a reliable two days (excluding weekends), and to the UK, 4 to 5 days. Already, mail takes much longer than it used to and the length of time it does take is unpredictable, so that when mail is required by a certain date, one never knows if it will arrive on time or not. This applies to greeting cards, applications and submissions with a deadline and so on. I have on occasion received letters from Sydney postmarked up to 9 or ten days earlier. Customers do not want to have to wait a further two days.

2. My local post office recently announced that mail will henceforth only be despatched if it is posted before 2.00 pm (previously it was 4.00pm, having been brought back from 5.00 pm a few years ago). This will add yet another day to the delivery of mail posted after 2.00 pm — to get to the PO earlier in the day is not always possible.

3. I had been under the impression that the so-called 'standard' service, upped to $1.00, would be in addition to a 'first-class' service, price not specified, but from your guidelines it seems that will not be the case. In other words, there is no way of getting letters to their destination or receiving them in reasonable time. The so-called 'express service', at multiple times the cost of an ordinary letter, is only worth using in an emergency — and even then items can take more than two days to reach Perth.

4. I believe the proposed changes would be counterproductive, deterring people from using such a poor and expensive service. Perhaps that is the purpose of these changes. Unfortunately, I am someone who uses the letter service frequently for personal mail. I receive letters, often several, almost every day, and send at least one or two every week.

Postmen and women in the past, of whom I was once one, shared a strong ethic of getting the mail out on the day it came in, often expressed in friendly banter. Such an ethic has a long history, from the age of the horse and buggy. Even in this digital age, mail delivery is important, and this venerable service should not be sacrificed to the profit motive. Put the price up if you must, but maintain a decent service in exchange.

I note that you are also looking at the efficiency of Australia Post. Let me mention one inefficiency I am aware of. I belong to a small publishing house, which has an account with Australia Post, and we use the mail service frequently (so an increase in the cost of sending large letters would affect our business). Every time we make a purchase of stamps, envelopes etc, we receive an email invoice, a hard-copy invoice in the mail, and a hard-copy statement after we have paid the invoice. All the hard copies are completely superfluous, and we find them annoying rather than helpful. If this is happening with all customers with accounts, some savings could be made by not sending out paper accounts except to the rare customer who has no access to email. A further efficiency would be to issue invoices monthly, instead of after every purchase.

Yours sincerely,

Pat Lowe

Broome, WA.