

## **Podcast 124 - Australia Post - Delivering the Mail**

by Rob McCormack - Friday, November 13, 2020

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**Learn English while learning about daily life in Australia, with Rob McCormack**

*Podcast Number 124 – Australia Post - Delivering the Mail*

<https://traffic.libsyn.com/secure/slowenglish/podcast124.mp3>

(This podcast is 14 minutes and 4 seconds long)

Hi,

I retired from work in 2011, having spent the last 14 years of my working life in the IT area for Australia Post. Australia Post is Australia's government owned postal services company. It delivers letters, parcels and also provides other related services to the public of Australia. During the pandemic of 2020 it has continued to provide very important postal services, especially to help those companies doing business online. In this podcast, I would like to tell you a little about this much respected Australian organisation. I will provide a brief summary here, so for full information you should visit [www.auspost.com.au](http://www.auspost.com.au).

Primarily, Australia Post provides a letter delivery service for all of Australia. While it is owned by the Australian federal government, it operates as a Government Business Enterprise, which means that it gets no financial support from the government. In other words, it must operate as a profitable business.

Australia Post operates 4,330 Post Offices located all over Australia. What's more, 2,520 of these are in rural and country areas, making sure that all Australians can get easy access to the letter service. It also provides 15,036 street posting boxes, where you can post your mail. In order to deliver letters and parcels, it uses 5,412 motorcycles and 4,691 delivery vans, trucks, cars and utes. Australia Post also has an extensive fleet of electric delivery vehicles and motorbikes. More than 2.8 billion items were processed in 2019/20 and deliveries are made to around 12.3 million homes, businesses and other delivery points. There are around 35,000 employees at Australia Post, along with another approximately 40,000 contractors, licensees and subcontractors. In 2019/20, it had a revenue of around \$7.5 billion and earned a profit of around \$53 million.



My local Post Office.

The business of Australia Post has been changing quite rapidly in recent years. This has been largely driven by the fact that the volume of letters being sent is going steadily down. The old fashioned way of communicating, by sending a letter, is slowly disappearing. People are using email and other digital means to send and receive information. At the same time, our population is growing and the number of delivery points keeps rising. So Australia Post is in a bind. While it is delivering fewer and fewer letters, it must deliver to more and more addresses all over Australia. This is costly to do. But with fewer letters being posted, it means income from the sale of postage is going down. So Australia Post has been losing increasing amounts of money in its letters business. One way of overcoming this is to put up the price of postage. Australia Post has been doing this. For example, in the year 2000, the cost of posting a standard

letter was 45 cents. In 2020, that cost is now \$1.10. In addition to postage price rises, Australia Post has invested in many efficiency measures, including innovative use of computers and high speed mail sorting equipment. But ultimately, this has not been enough. Australia Post has had to develop other products and services so that it can continue to make a profit overall.

One area where Australia Post's business is growing is in parcel delivery. This is especially true during the pandemic of 2020, when many people are buying things online and having them delivered. Of course, there are many other parcel delivery companies, so Australia Post must be efficient, well-priced and innovative in order to successfully compete. For example, many people like to buy and sell things on eBay (<https://www.ebay.com.au/>) and other similar platforms in Australia such as Gumtree. I have used eBay quite a bit and I find it very convenient for selling things. Australia Post has made it so easy for me to use their parcel delivery service by integrating it with eBay. Within eBay, it is possible to calculate the postage cost, pay for it and then print out an address slip for attaching to your parcel. All I need to do then is drop the parcel off at the local Post Office.

Australia Post also offers products and services in other related areas. One such area is logistics. Logistics is the process to get a product from the factory to a warehouse and then to the shops or direct to customers. This is called end to end supply chain services. It's called a chain because all these steps are linked, just like the links in a chain. Australia Post owns a subsidiary company called Star Track, which provides logistics and freight services.

Another area is agency services. This is where Australia Post provides a service on behalf of another company or organisation and charges a fee. For example, Post provides banking services for the major banks. I can go to the Post Office and deposit money to my bank account, or I can withdraw money. Likewise, I can take my telephone bill or electricity bill to a Post Office and pay it there. This is convenient because there are Post Offices all over Australia. I can also get my passport organised at a Post Office, including having my passport photo taken.

I can also buy a range of retail products at my local Post Office. This includes mobile phones, office supplies and a range of other similar products. The sale of these products has helped Australia Post to develop other income streams so that it remains profitable overall.

One of the things I like about Australia Post is it's policy on diversity in its workforce, to make sure that it gives opportunities to Australians from all sections of our community. For example, they are working to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who work for Australia Post, which is now at 3%, matching the percentage in the Australian population. It is also interesting to note that Australia Post employees represent over 147 nationalities. When I worked in the IT area, I am pleased to say that I worked with people who came from many countries around the world. Gender balance is also important. In 2019/20, Australia Post's workforce was 36.9% female. In the Australia Post executive management team, they had 44.4% women. This is great, but it will be even better when it reaches 50%.

In addition, Australia Post has a strong environmental protection policy. For example, as a company they have reduced their CO2 emissions by 25%, when compared to the year 2000. That's helping the planet. That's just another reason why I was proud to work for Australia Post for the last 14 years of my working career.

If you have a question or a comment to make, please leave it in the comments box at the bottom of this page. Or, you can send me an email at [rob@slowenglish.info](mailto:rob@slowenglish.info). I would love to hear from you. Tell me where you live, a little bit about yourself and what you think of my Slow English podcast. I will write back to you, in English of course. If you would like to take a short quiz to see if you have understood this podcast, you will also find it on my website. Goodbye until next time.

Rob

[WpProQuiz 127]

### Vocabulary

address slip = a piece of paper which has the address of the person receiving the parcel

approximately = about

attaching = (here) joins onto or sticks (with glue) onto something

bind = (here) when it is hard to make a decision because all the options bring problems

brief = short

compete = when you try to beat someone else or another company

contractors = a type of employee who is not permanent

convenient = when something is easy to do

country = (here) away from the city, where small towns are

delivers = when a business sends something to a customer

deposit = put money into your bank account

digital = to do with computers and the internet

diversity = when you have people from all the different groups in a society

efficiency = when things work better and faster

emissions = things which are put into the air (usually means things)

employees = people who work for a company permanently

enterprise = firm, company, business

environmental = to do with the natural world, or a part of it, in which we live

extensive = large

factory = a building where things are made in large numbers

financial = to do with money

freight = when goods are carried on a truck, train, ship or plane from one place to another

gender = male or female

Gumtree = <https://www.gumtree.com.au/>

income streams = money that is earned, usually from one type of activity

innovative = new and different

integrating = when you become part of something else or work closely with something else

invested = when you buy things in order to improve your business

licensees = when you are allowed to do an activity by the company that owns the activity

major = important, large

matching = the same as

nationalities = from different countries

old fashioned = when something is as it was many years ago

operates = manages

parcels = small packages which are sent by mail

passport = your ID book which shows you are a citizen of a country

planet = something which goes around a sun. Our planet is called earth

platforms = (here) a website on the internet where you can do certain things

points = (here) places

postage = the cost of sending a letter or parcel by mail

processed = changed or moved

profitable = when a business makes more money than it spends

public = (here) all the people in a community or country

receive = to get

related = it belongs with something else

respected = when many people think you are a good person or a good organisation

retail = to do with things sold in a shop

retired = when you are no longer working, usually because you are 65 years or older

revenue = income

rural = away from the city, where the farms are

subcontractors = a type of employee who is not permanent

subsidiary = a company that is owned by another company, but kept separate

ultimately = finally

utes = short for utility. In Australia, this means a car with only 2 seats and the back is used for carrying things.

vans = half way between a car and a truck. The carrying part of the van is always covered

vehicles = something which can carry you from one place to another by road

volume = (here) number

warehouse = a building where things are stored

withdraw = (here) take money out of your bank account