

Australia Post

COMMUNITY POLLING PRACTICES: GAUGING COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR CHANGES TO POSTAL DELIVERY SERVICES

March 2009

Report by the Commonwealth and Postal Industry Ombudsman,
Prof. John McMillan, under the *Ombudsman Act 1976*

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Not all homes and businesses in Australia have mail delivered directly to the property. Where delivery to the property is not available, many addressees receive their mail by collecting it from the local post office (PO), where it is held for over-the-counter service or placed in a PO Box. Residents sometimes request that mail be delivered to their property, and, if certain criteria are met, Australia Post will carry out a poll in the community to gauge support for change.

Similar community polling arrangements apply where residents only receive one mail delivery per week, and conditions are suitable for increasing this to two or more deliveries per week.

These polls seek the opinion of affected households as to whether or not they support change to the existing postal delivery arrangements. Australia Post seeks the 'active' support of a community before making changes to postal delivery arrangements. This is because the provision of a delivery service will mean that affected households lose their entitlement to subsidised PO Box services, and the local post office (together with any associated services such as a general store) may be affected by a loss of business.

In order to measure the 'active' support of the community, Australia Post polls those households potentially affected, and changes the delivery arrangements only if at least 50% of the households that were provided with polling documents return them requesting change.

The Ombudsman has received a number of complaints about polls carried out by Australia Post to determine whether delivery services should be established or extended.

As the relevant procedures can affect large numbers of people, we decided to investigate the appropriateness of the polling methodology and processes being used. In order to do so, we sought more information from Australia Post about its procedures, and obtained advice from experts in the fields of survey design and analysis, social research and demography.

This report concludes that Australia Post should review its polling methodology, and should consider moving away from treating a non-response as a 'no' vote. Instead, Australia Post should find ways to increase community participation in polls, and if it has a particular threshold for community support that must be reached (for example, the community must 'strongly' support change), then the poll should be better designed to measure this.

Whether or not the polling methodology is changed, we consider further work is required to verify the reasons why households do not return polling forms. We also suggest that Australia Post consider engaging third parties to carry out polls, particularly where larger numbers of households may be involved.

The Ombudsman recommends the following.

- Australia Post should review the way in which it carries out polls of communities to gauge their support for changes to mail delivery services. In particular, the review should address the feasibility of alternatives to the

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present system, such as asking residents whether they support (or strongly support) change, and steps such as face-to-face interviews, follow-up visits, and reminder letters to ensure maximum community participation in the poll.

- If that review concludes that change to the present polling methodology is not practicable, Australia Post should conduct a program of follow-up surveys in areas that it has recently polled. These surveys should aim to establish whether all households received the polling form, and whether they were aware that, by not responding to the survey, their vote was being counted as a 'no' vote.
- Australia Post should identify a method for taking account of the results of those surveys in future polls, to eliminate from the denominator used to calculate the poll result those households that did not receive polling papers.
- Alternatively, Australia Post should conduct a follow-up survey in all polls before the result is calculated, to allow those households that did not receive polling papers to be discounted.
- Australia Post should give consideration to retaining independent companies to carry out polls, at least in cases where larger numbers of households are involved.

Australia Post response

We provided a draft version of this report, including the above recommendations, to Australia Post for its comment. In response, Australia Post advised us that

[h]aving considered the content of the report, Australia Post has decided to accept its principal recommendation and review the way in which the corporation gauges community support for ... changes [to local mail delivery arrangements].

Australia Post has undertaken to advise the Ombudsman of the outcome once that review has been finalised. We welcome Australia Post's commitment to carry out this review, and look forward to learning of the outcome in due course. We anticipate that the review will consider and address each of the individual recommendations of this report.

PART 1—COMMUNITY POLLING: REASONS, PROCESS, METHODOLOGY

Why and when Australia Post carries out community polls

1.1 Australia Post delivered mail to approximately 10.5 million delivery points in the financial year 2007–08.¹ Most of those delivery points are mail boxes, on the boundary of people's properties and the public road in urban areas, or at a convenient location on the local mail run in rural districts.

1.2 However, for some residences and businesses in rural and regional areas, delivery is not provided to the property. Many people who do not have 'to the property' delivery choose to rent a PO Box, which is made available at a subsidised rate. For those who do not have a PO Box, delivery is provided by way of a community mail bag, or over the counter at the nearest post office.

1.3 Although the majority of delivery points have a mail delivery at least twice a week, in a few remote areas the frequency is less. Where practicable, Australia Post will consider requests to increase the frequency of a rural delivery to twice weekly.

1.4 From time to time, residents approach Australia Post requesting the establishment of a 'to the property' mail delivery service, or requesting that the frequency of their mail delivery be increased.

1.5 Australia Post considers all such requests against a number of criteria it has established. For example, a new street delivery service will only be introduced where there are at least 150 delivery points within 1.2 km of a postal outlet, and there is a projected average letter volume of at least 225 articles per day.

1.6 The relevant criteria for a new 'to the property' delivery service will depend on whether the service sought is a roadside delivery or a street delivery (for the distinction between these terms see the glossary), and whether the service is to be provided by extending an existing service, or establishing a new one. The criteria are set out in Annex 1.

1.7 A criterion that applies to all new mail delivery services or requests for increase in delivery frequency is that the service can be provided at reasonable cost. 'Reasonable cost' is not defined anywhere, but will be considered on the facts of each individual case.

1.8 If the criteria for extension of delivery, or increase in delivery frequency, are otherwise met, then Australia Post will poll affected households to establish whether or not there is community support for the proposed change.

Why poll affected households?

1.9 Australia Post considers that the gauging of community support is an important step in the process of deciding whether to provide a 'to the property' delivery service, or to increase the frequency of a delivery service. There are a number of reasons for this.

¹ Australia Post Annual Report 2007–2008.

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1.10 Residents who do not receive a delivery service at least twice a week are entitled to a subsidised PO Box. If a 'to the property' delivery is introduced, or twice-weekly delivery is instituted, they will lose that entitlement.

1.11 In addition, a local post office may depend on the business generated by people attending to collect their mail. If people no longer have to do this, the post office may suffer or even close. The post office in a small community is often situated in the community general store or a similar small business, and the loss of custom caused to that business if people no longer have to go to the post office to collect their mail may be such that the entire business—not just the post office—may close. This in turn may have a negative effect on the community.

1.12 Arguments have also been put forward that the environmental impact of establishing a dedicated mail delivery service is greater than the impact of people stopping to collect their mail on journeys they would have undertaken anyway.

1.13 Finally, there is inevitably a cost to Australia Post in extending a delivery service or establishing a new one. This cost eventually falls on the purchasers of mail services, or ultimately the taxpayer in the form of a reduced dividend to consolidated revenue from Australia Post's activities. Australia Post does not wish to incur the cost of providing new or additional services if the community does not want them.

Polling process and methodology

Process

1.14 Once it has been decided that a community poll will take place, Australia Post staff usually undertake the following process:

- a list of addressees is compiled, with the aim of providing one opportunity to each affected household to respond to the poll, using the following sources of information:
 - physical visit to site
 - lists of counter delivery/private box holder customers
 - planning map from local council/shire
 - discussion with existing postal contractor, if relevant
- state and federal parliamentarians are advised of the poll
- local post office licensee/manager is briefed
- local councils/community leaders are advised
- industry bodies (Post Office Agents' Association Ltd and unions) are briefed
- the poll is advertised in local media
- the poll is advertised in the local post office
- polling letters are delivered, with a closing date of 14 days after the last letter is delivered, and a reply-paid envelope enclosed
- responses are recorded and result obtained.

1.15 Not all these steps may be followed in every case. We are aware of polls being conducted with as few as 10 letters distributed, and in such a case it might be seen as excessive to brief federal parliamentarians and take out local media

advertising. Nonetheless, in a typical case the above steps will form the polling process.

Methodology

1.16 By conducting the above process, Australia Post seeks to assess whether there is ‘active’ support in the community for the proposed change to delivery arrangements. The rationale is that the proposed changes should not occur by default, or in a situation where people are not concerned one way or the other as to how their postal service is provided. Australia Post will only implement mail service alterations if there is a specific desire for change, expressed through the community poll.

1.17 Australia Post believes that the best way of measuring whether there is ‘active’ support for the change in the community is to require over 50% of the polling letters distributed to be returned with a ‘yes’ vote. If this occurs, the poll is considered in favour of change. In other words, only if at least half of the households polled are sufficiently motivated to return the letter to vote ‘yes’ will the community be considered to ‘actively’ support change.

1.18 For this reason, the poll solicits only ‘yes’ responses. The letter advises that if no response is received, it will be assumed that the recipient does not want any change to the current delivery arrangements.

1.19 In an answer given to a question on notice from the Senate Standing Committee on the Environment, Communications and the Arts in May 2008, Australia Post identified applications received in the past five years for a street mail service that were accepted or rejected following community polling. The answer is reproduced as Annex 2 to this report. It shows that community poll rejections outnumbered acceptances by 42 to 30, but nonetheless a substantial proportion of polls about proposed street mail delivery did support changes to the community’s delivery service.

PART 2—OUR INVESTIGATION

2.1 The Ombudsman has received a number of complaints about Australia Post's polling process. These complaints have generally been about situations where the provision of 'to the property' delivery, rather than the frequency of delivery, is an issue.

2.2 Typically, complainants will say that a poll was carried out in their area but some people were missed, or that the poll was carried out at a time when not all residents were home (for example, school holidays) so that not everyone got the chance to vote. We have also had complaints which simply challenge the validity of a poll that only seeks responses on one side of the question, and counts all non-responses as 'no' votes.

2.3 There often appears to be an underlying assumption by complainants that people would want a mail delivery to their property, and so the fact that the poll did not indicate a preference for 'to the property' delivery suggests that there is some flaw in the way it is carried out. As discussed above, that may not be an accurate assumption because people may have good reason for not wanting 'to the property' delivery.

2.4 However, the methodology adopted by Australia Post is striking in that it only seeks votes for one side of the proposal. This is at odds with the typical examples of polls, such as local and national elections.

2.5 Given the nature of complaints we receive on the subject, the potential of the process to have far-reaching implications for large numbers of people, and the distinctive way in which Australia Post assesses the results of its polls, we decided to carry out an investigation into the validity of Australia Post's polling methodology, and issues that might arise from the polling process.

2.6 Our understanding of Australia Post's polling process and methodology was drawn from our investigation of previous complaints made to us about it, and the information we had been provided with by Australia Post in response to those investigations.

2.7 Our present investigation was carried out by writing to Australia Post to ask for its comment on the issues that appeared to us to arise from the methodology adopted. We also sought advice on Australia Post's polling process and methodology from an academic expert in the field of demography and social research, Prof. Peter McDonald AM of the Australian National University, and consultant statisticians, Data Analysis Australia Pty Ltd (DAA).

PART 3—ISSUES

Methodology

3.1 As noted above, many people’s experience of polls is based on their participation in the electoral process, where typically voters choose between candidates and the candidate with the largest number of votes is successful. Complainants have raised questions with us about the validity of a process that only asks for votes in favour of one side of a proposal, and automatically counts non-responses as not supporting the proposal.

3.2 We pursued this question with Australia Post and with our expert advisers. Australia Post reiterated that what it is seeking to assess in these polls is whether there is majority active support for change. Treating non-responses as ‘no’ votes is in its view:

... the fairest and most reliable method of ensuring that changes affecting all residents are not made on the basis of the declared wishes of a minority within the community.

3.3 In response to our questions, DAA advised that the methodology adopted meant that the thing being measured was not independent of the survey methodology itself. Whereas many surveys seek to determine some matter that exists independently of the survey being carried out, such as how many respondents are unemployed, this methodology only measures how many people respond to the survey. Assumptions are made about the views of people who do not do so (that the non-responders are not active supporters of change), but those assumptions are not independently verified.

3.4 DAA noted that changes to the methodology could give different results, and to that extent the methodology itself might influence the result. For example, a telephone or face-to-face interview with respondents, asking them the question ‘do you actively support a change to delivery arrangements?’, might lead to different outcomes.

3.5 This issue has arisen in the context of complaints to the Ombudsman, where residents have stated that local ‘straw polls’ and petitions have indicated support for change to delivery services whereas subsequent Australia Post polls have not supported change. Although we understand that people may react differently to being asked to sign a petition than they would when asked to complete a confidential poll, this nonetheless illustrates how the methodology may influence the survey outcome.

3.6 Prof. McDonald also referred to this issue, advising us that:

[i]mplicitly ... Australia Post is defining active support as return of the ballot paper with a ‘yes’ response following community consultation and advertising. Implicitly also, Australia Post is defining households as not having active support if they do not return the ballot with a ‘yes’ vote ... [t]he question for assessment is whether non-return of the ballot paper with a ‘yes’ response is a clear indication that the household does not actively support the proposal.

3.7 Having discussed this issue in its report DAA advised us that:

[w]hile this makes it a little more difficult to comment on the methodology it is not clear to us that a better definition [of active support] exists and, as such, the comments that we do

make are made on the basis that this act of returning a 'yes' vote to a mail back survey is the definition of active support of a change.

3.8 We consider that to equate 'active' support with the return of a polling form means that the definition is not directly measuring an independent quality such as the strength of support. People might 'strongly' support change but nevertheless fail to return a polling form. We accept that Australia Post needs to identify a way of measuring how many people really want change, whether this desire is called 'active' or 'strong' support or whether some other term is used. However, defining 'active' support in terms of whether or not a polling form is returned makes assumptions about the reasons why forms are not returned which may not be justified or valid.

3.9 In our view, the best way of addressing this problem would be for Australia Post to review exactly what its requirements are in terms of community support for changes to delivery processes. There appears to us to be a distinction between the nature of the support people have for a change to delivery services (be it strong support, mild support, neutrality or lack of interest), and the level of participation in a community poll, because the reasons for non-participation in a poll may be unconnected with the intensity of support for change.

3.10 We consider that Australia Post should examine the question of whether the method it uses to canvass community opinion on changes to delivery services is measuring what it sets out to measure. By way of illustration, if Australia Post wishes to ascertain whether there is strong support in the community for change, it could do so by designing a survey or poll that asks the question 'do you support change strongly/mildly/not at all?' We believe it would also be appropriate for Australia Post to seek expert advice on this issue.

3.11 The challenge would then be to obtain a high level of participation in the survey so that the results were reflective of the community as a whole. Prof. McDonald suggested ways in which participation levels could be improved, such as having face to face interviews instead of written responses, taking more active steps to return and collect poll forms, and sending reminder letters to residents. Meeting this challenge would avoid the problems encountered where an assumption is made that lack of participation equals lack of support for change.

Process under the current methodology

3.12 If there is no change to the current methodology, we consider that it is incumbent on Australia Post to take all reasonable steps to exclude reasons other than apathy for the non-return of the polling form before arriving at a result for the poll.

3.13 DAA summarised the reasons that supporters of change might not respond to a community poll as follows:

1. The household received the form but did not return it for some reason; or
2. The household did not receive the form and therefore had *no chance* to return it.²

3.14 Australia Post's current polling methodology equates non-return of the form with the recipient not being an active supporter of change. This might mean that the recipient does not support change at all, and by not returning the form intends to vote 'no' to change. Australia Post also considers that people are not 'active' supporters of

² Emphasis in original.

change if they would vote ‘yes’ to change in a compulsory vote, but are not sufficiently bothered about the matter to return the polling form.

3.15 Australia Post takes the view that it is justifiable to treat non-return of the form as a ‘no’ vote, on the basis that a non-returner of the form does not ‘actively’ support change. However in our view there are reasons other than lack of concern that might cause people who would consider themselves active, or strong, supporters of change not to return the form.

3.16 One possibility is that people might forget to return the form, but their forgetfulness is not a symptom of apathy or lack of interest. It is possible that there will be people who strongly support change to the delivery process but through poor memory, or a more important intervening event, would not return the form within the 14 days allowed. We consider it unreliable to assume that the only reason someone could receive the form but fail to send it back is lack of interest.

3.17 At the margins of this issue we accept that forgetfulness and strength of interest in the question will be linked. However the larger the poll (and we are aware of one poll with 1398 letters distributed) the more likely it is that people with poor memory will be among those polled. To treat their non-response as a lack of active support may verge on discrimination.

3.18 As noted in paragraph 3.11, Prof. McDonald suggested a number of ways by which non-response to surveys could be reduced, including reminder letters and personal collection of responses.

3.19 Overall we consider that, particularly in the context of larger surveys, forgetting to return the form is not an issue that can simply be ignored. We discuss a way in which the extent of the problem could be assessed, and to some extent mitigated, below.

3.20 In relation to DAA’s second category of non-responder, households that did not receive the form, it advised:

[this reason] is purely a process issue, and all efforts must be taken to overcome this. The current methodology suggests that hand delivery of an advisory letter and polling form to all affected household[s] is undertaken and then that this number is used as the denominator for calculating whether a majority of households support the change. There does not appear to be provision for decreasing the denominator for households to which a form is delivered, but for some reason the household did not receive the form (for example, the dwelling being vacant or the residents of the dwelling being away for the duration of the study period) yet this is the *true* denominator which should be used in the calculation.³

3.21 DAA suggested solutions to the problem were to only include households in the survey where the form can be delivered personally to an occupant, or conducting a follow-up ‘non-response’ survey to establish the reasons for non-response.

3.22 This first suggestion is similar to the point made by Prof. McDonald—that a face-to-face survey could be conducted, rather than a postal exercise. DAA accepted that there were issues associated with that proposal. For example, by excluding households where no-one could be contacted personally, different biases might creep in to the survey result (although it is uncertain which way those biases would

³ Emphasis in original.

tend: for example people who were more often at home might also have more time to go and collect their mail and so be happier, as a group, to do so).

3.23 The second proposal, of a non-response survey, appears to us to have much to commend it, at least in the case of bigger polls. The follow-up survey would:

... [ask] all households whether they received the form and from this follow up survey [estimate] the number of households that did not receive it, thereby allowing the denominator to be adjusted appropriately.

3.24 While we can see that there might be arguments against doing this in every case, a non-response survey following larger polls could provide added assurance to the credibility of the poll result, and could provide useful information about the awareness of the community of the poll that could feed into future polling exercises.

3.25 The concept of non-receipt, in this context, goes beyond the question of whether a polling letter was left at a household affected by the proposal. With a period for return of the poll of 14 days, it is possible that households might be on holiday or otherwise away throughout that time. In the past we have received complaints about polls being conducted during school holidays. Similarly, for example, polls conducted during the winter in cool-climate areas may not pick up responses from people spending the season elsewhere.

3.26 Non-receipt may also occur when the polling documents are not found, or are affected by the weather—by definition the households being polled for a new mail delivery are less likely to have any kind of mail box or receptacle to keep documents safe. In addition, the significance of the documents may not be appreciated and they may be discarded, although good quality advertising and community promotion of the poll should lessen the risk of that occurring.

3.27 In our view, the absence of information about why households do not respond to polls raises serious questions about whether it is reasonable to treat non-response as a lack of active support for change. In order to answer those questions with a degree of confidence, we are of the view that a selection of follow-up surveys should be conducted, both in areas that did vote for change and areas that did not, to gain a better understanding of the reasons for non-response.

3.28 In order to gain the best quality information from the process, it is advisable for the follow-up survey to take a different form to the poll—that is, it should be carried out by way of personal or telephone survey.

3.29 The follow-up survey should consider whether any responses to the poll were received after the 14 days allowed for responding, and were not counted. This, together with responses to the follow-up survey, would provide information about whether 14 days is an appropriate period to allow for responses, or whether some longer period would be better. In particular, if forgetfulness was identified as a contributing factor to non-response, a longer period for responding may help to alleviate the difficulty.

Which households are polled

3.30 The importance of ensuring that all households that are entitled to respond get the opportunity to do so is discussed above. Which households are entitled to respond will depend on what proposal is being put forward—whether an extension to an existing service, or the establishment of a new one.

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3.31 Where a request has been put forward for extension of an existing service, only those households that would be affected by the extension will be polled, which may lead to misunderstanding when households nearby, which would not be affected, are not polled. For example, extension of a roadside mail delivery service down a particular road would only affect households along that road from the start of the requested extension.

3.32 Complaints have been made to the Ombudsman in the past about households being left out of a poll. These complaints have usually come, not from the households that have been left out, but from people who disagree with the poll result who believe that not all affected households were polled. The Ombudsman will consider any complaint that households have been left out of a poll. However, people concerned about households being left out of a poll may wish to check with Australia Post to confirm which households would be affected by the proposed change and so should have received polling documents.

Credibility

3.33 Complainants sometimes appear to be of the view that Australia Post is seeking a particular result, and specifically the rejection of the extension of an existing delivery or establishment of a new one. Australia Post has assured us, and we have no reason to doubt, that it has no preference one way or the other, and simply wants to follow the expressed desire of the community (albeit limited to circumstances where there is active support for change).

3.34 That said, there is clearly a cost incurred by Australia Post in increasing the number of delivery points it services, and we are aware of media comment (*The Australian Financial Review*, 7 July 2006) highlighting the cost pressures on Australia Post's letter service and the expense incurred by the growing number of delivery points serviced annually. This may contribute to a belief among supporters of 'to the property' delivery that Australia Post does not wish community polls to go in favour of such delivery services—although it is fair to repeat that Australia Post disavows any such bias.

3.35 In our view the overall credibility of the process would be enhanced by the actions suggested above: that is, the reassessment of Australia Post's polling methodology, or, at least, investigation into the reasons that people do not respond to polls, and process changes aimed at eliminating involuntary non-responses from the poll denominator.

3.36 Another consideration is whether Australia Post, which may be seen as having a stake in the outcome, should carry out the poll itself. We already understand that the licensee of the local post office is not supposed to play any role in the distribution of polling documents, presumably because of a perceived conflict of interest. Given the extent of management time that would be required to carry out a poll, we question whether it would be significantly more expensive to have an independent market research company carry out polls, at least where the numbers are significant.

PART 4—CONCLUSIONS

4.1 We consider it reasonable for Australia Post to take the wishes of the community into account as a criterion for extending or establishing mail delivery services to properties. Polling communities is a reasonable way of doing that.

4.2 However, we have concerns over the present methodology, which equates a non-response to community polls with lack of interest in the outcome, and so effectively classifies non-response as a vote against change. We consider that this assumes too much about the reasons why people do not respond to polls.

4.3 The expert advice we have received points out that a poll designed in this way is measuring something—the response rate to the poll—which is not independent of the poll questions itself. One way of measuring community opinion independent of response rates would be to ask the question ‘do you (strongly) support change’ and take steps to ensure high levels of community participation. We consider that Australia Post should review its present polling methodology in the light of those observations, and seek its own expert advice as part of the review.

4.4 If the current methodology is not changed, we have concerns about the underlying assumption that non-response equates to lack of support for change. The main issue is the question of whether all non-responses are voluntary. If someone does not respond because they could not—not because they did not want change or could not be bothered—it is unreasonable to treat that as a negative response.

4.5 People may not be able to respond for a range of reasons. People may be on holiday or unwell. They may have to deal with a sudden crisis that causes them to direct their attention elsewhere. They may, through infirmity or other reasons, forget. They may not realise that the envelope they receive is a poll. The polling documents may be blown away or damaged by wildlife or pets.

4.6 It does not seem to us that non-response for any of those reasons can reasonably be assumed to be lack of active support. We accept there will be cases at the margins. However, if assurance is to be obtained that Australia Post’s polls are genuinely measuring active support, and not other factors, we consider that further work needs to be done to confirm the reasons for non-response and adjust the denominator of the poll, where appropriate, to measure the true level of active community support for change.

4.7 We believe it would increase the transparency of, and confidence in, the impartiality of the polling process if it was carried out by a body independent of Australia Post. While this may not be cost-effective for small polls, it should be considered for larger ones.

PART 5—RECOMMENDATIONS

Arising out of this investigation, I make the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1

Australia Post should review the way in which it carries out polls of communities to gauge their support for changes to mail delivery services. In particular, the review should address the feasibility of alternatives to the present system, such as asking residents whether they support (or strongly support) change, and taking steps such as face-to-face interviews, follow-up visits, and reminder letters, to ensure maximum community participation in the poll. Expert advice should be obtained as part of the review process.

Recommendation 2

If the review concludes that change to the present polling methodology is not practicable, Australia Post should conduct a program of follow-up surveys in areas that it has recently polled. These surveys should aim to establish whether all households received the polling form, and whether they were aware that by not responding to the survey their vote was being counted as a 'no' vote.

Recommendation 3

Australia Post should identify a method for taking account of the results of those surveys in future polls, to eliminate from the denominator used to calculate the poll result those households that did not receive polling papers.

Alternatively, Australia Post should conduct a follow-up survey in all polls before the result is calculated, to allow those households that did not receive polling papers to be discounted.

Recommendation 4

Australia Post should give consideration to retaining independent companies to carry out polls, at least in cases where larger numbers of households are involved.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Delivery point	Address to which mail is delivered, for example ‘1 Acacia Avenue, Nowheresville’, or ‘Nowheresville General Hospital, Rocky Road, Nowheresville’.
km	kilometre
m	metre
Prof.	Professor
Roadside delivery	Delivery to a person receiving mail on a mail route as defined in the dictionary section of Australia Post’s <i>terms & conditions</i>
Street mail delivery	Delivery to a person receiving mail to a mail box at their premises in accordance with appendix 2 to Australia Post’s <i>terms & conditions</i>

ANNEX 1

Australia Post criteria for establishing or extending mail delivery services

A criterion applicable to all new or extended delivery services is that the service can be provided at a reasonable cost.

	Roadside delivery	Street delivery
Extension of existing service	<p>At least one household more than 2 km beyond the existing route would benefit, or</p> <p>at least five households along the proposed extension and within 2 km of the existing route would benefit.</p> <p>The cost involved will not substantially increase the rate per kilometre of the overall service.</p>	<p>Within the perimeter of the existing area or within 1.2 km of the delivery office:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to any point \leq 250 m from the existing route, or to hospitals or large institutions. <p>Beyond the perimeter of the existing area or 1.2 km of the delivery office:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to any point \leq 50 m from the existing route to any point \leq150 m road distance from the existing route, where development in the next 12 months is expected to bring the additional distance down to \leq100 m for each delivery point to several delivery points more than 150 m from the existing route, where an average of \leq100 m of route distance would be added for each additional point.
Establishment of new service	<p>Five households more than 1.2 kms from a postal facility or a reasonable distance beyond the existing street mail delivery boundary would benefit.</p>	<p>Within 1.2 km of a postal facility</p> <p>Area accessible in all weather conditions.</p> <p>At least 150 permanent delivery points.</p> <p>Number of articles for daily distribution at least 225 on average.</p> <p>A delivery point, except a hospital or large institution, may be excluded if it would add more than 500 m road distance to the route.</p>

ANNEX 2

Results of community polls on changes to street mail delivery

*Senate Standing Committee on the Environment, Communications and the Arts Budget Estimates 2008–09: extract from Australia Post response to question on notice from Senator Parry.*⁴

'The following table details applications received in the last five years for a street mail delivery service that were accepted or rejected following community polling:'

State	Accepted	Rejected
NSW	Repton, Humula, Daysdale, Leeton, Gulgong, Ben Lomond, Freemasons Waterhole, Hilltop, Coolamon, Narromine, Bywong, Hasting Point.	Tomerong, Moama, Carcoar, Jindera, Cooma, Griffith, Kalaru, Numeralla, Broadwater, Cobargo, Murrumbateman, Dubbo, Goulburn.
VIC	Girgarre East, Katunga, Woodend, Mernda, Doreen.	Ventnor, Teesdale, Skenes Creek, Swan Hill, Rushworth, Sale, Kinglake, Sunderland Bay.
WA	Roelands, Wandering, Cockatoo Gully (Nannup), Lowden Grimwade, Chittering, Mardella Darling Estate, Waroona, Gabbadah (Redfield Park and Sovereign Hill), Quindalup.	Kalgan, Two Rocks (St Andrews Estate), Gabbdah (Woodridge), Margaret River (Brookfield), Yallingup, Lancelin, Serpentine, Northcliffe, Brookton West.
QLD	Moonie, Esk Mt Hallen.	Burrum Heads, Greenmount, Tolga, Kuranda, Cooktown, Tiaro.
SA	Lewiston.	Hindmarsh Island, Nairne, Littlehampton, Two Wells, McLaren Flat.
TAS	Baghdad.	Beaumaris.

⁴ Quoted from http://www.apf.gov.au/senate/committee/eca_ctte/estimates/bud_0809/bcde/austpost.doc, page 32.