

7 December 2021

Mr Julian Hodder  
General Manager – Injury Management  
People & Culture – Australia Post Group  
111 Bourke St  
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Hi Julian,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the possible renewal of License for Australian Postal Corporation.

We are contacting you on behalf of our Members in Western Australia.

We have extensively surveyed our Members, and many are wondering if APC will continue to treat them the same as they have been. They are uneasy, and looking for a way to make changes to better protect their injured colleagues.

We have been very disappointed in the prevention of injury. We would like to see safety audits performed more regularly. When we raise concerns with Comcare regarding workplace safety, the business is notified. You are then given ample time to tidy up the worksites prior to the visit. Having all of your Western Australian worksites safe should be a priority. Not just looked at when you think there may be a visit from Comcare.

An audit was to be undertaken in the Perth parcel centre in March 2020. To prepare for the audit, a large whiteboard was filled with jobs that needed to be actioned. When the audit was postponed, the tasks were not fully completed.

Motorcycles are apparently one of your main injury concerns. Previously, there has been professional training for motorcycle posties. CWU WA have grave concerns about your decision to remove this training for posties of more than 2 years service. Peer on peer training will never be of the high standard of professional motorcycle trainers. We will be encouraging all our Members to request adequate training and refresher courses.

We contact Comcare when Members have complaints regarding non-payment of medical expenses from an approved claim. As you would be aware, this happens regularly. It can take months for accounts to be paid. This causes great stress and embarrassment to your employees when they attend their appointments.

Treatment plans can take months to be approved. It can even get to the day before a psychological appointment, and the treatment plan is not approved. The heightened anxiety levels injured workers experience when this occurs is avoidable.

There is also the concern of injuries not being reported accurately. When employees are sent to the Facility Nominated Doctors, they are often returned to work without scans or other tests being done. There are many examples of where injured workers have been given the all clear by a FND, when they are obviously not fit for duties.

Injured workers feel pressured when filling out online claim forms. They are asked to do so in the presence of their manager if they are not comfortable with computers. They should have the option of filling it out on a paper copy, without coercion from management.

Authorisation forms are given straight away for workers to sign over their medical history. This is done even immediately after an accident. That is not appropriate, as workers may still be in shock.

Based on the issues identified above and at the request of our Membership, the CWU believes Australia Post should proactively seek additional conditions being attached to their licence on renewal to ensure adequate focus and resources is placed on addressing the concerns of injured workers. We also advise that we will be making representations to the SRCC to this effect.

I am more than happy to discuss these concerns further, and involve a number of Members who have had their lives spiral out of control, and all power taken away from them by your compensation and rehabilitation teams.

Kind Regards



Barry McVee  
Branch Secretary

7 December 2021

To the Secretariat,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the application for renewal of License by Australian Postal Corporation.

Please find attached a letter from the CWU to APC highlighting our concerns with regard to the treatment of workers while on compensation.

Over the last few years, the Western Australian Branch of the Communication Workers Union has had extensive dealings with injured workers employed by APC.

Our Members have expressed their desire that the SRCC give serious consideration to applying additional conditions on APC's License if it is renewed.

We would like to draw your attention to the below where we outline the areas we believe additional licence conditions would improve the experience of APC workers, and would be very willing to discuss in more detail.

- A condition that ensures payment of medical expenses is made in a timely manner. Currently, payment can take months. Injured workers are missing appointments for their rehabilitation, as bills have not been paid. Gym memberships are not renewed, and workers cannot gain access.
- A condition requiring a fund be made available of up to \$1500 for medical expenses prior to claim being accepted, if an injured worker chooses to see their own Doctor. There are vehicle accidents which can take up to 3 months before a claim is accepted. In this time, the worker has to pay themselves. Many cannot afford to get treatment.
- A condition recognising a worker must be permitted to choose an Independent specialist, not APC.
- A condition requiring clear communication between different departments. This should include requiring phone calls to be returned and an explanation of what is occurring being made in a timely and regular manner.
- A condition requiring confirmation that regular checks occur to ensure leave is re-credited in full and in a timely manner.
- A condition requiring data be kept on reconsiderations and AAT appeals and made freely available to the relevant worker and their representative.

- A condition requiring every APC worksite in West Australia is independently audited at least once during the term of the next licence for each of APC's claims management, prevention and rehabilitation functions with a particular focus on prevention of injury as a priority.

Kind Regards,



Barry McVee  
Branch Secretary

15 December 2021

Mr. Barry McVee  
CWU- Branch Secretary  
196 Lord St,

PERTH WA 6000

Re: Response to Letter dated December 7, 2021

Dear Barry,

Thank you for taking the opportunity to provide comment in your letter dated 7<sup>th</sup> of December 2021 on the Australian Postal Corporation's Self-Insurance Licence extension.

As you know, Australia Post treats the safety of its team members as its highest priority and we categorically reject any premise that our worksites are unsafe. This includes the management of team members who are unfortunately injured in the course of performing their duties. We continue to engage extensively with the CWU and work collaboratively to improve the safety of our workplaces and to care for our injured colleagues. In relation to the Motorbike Training specifically there has been extensive consultation with the CWU on this issue and we are continuing to work together on this process.

Where concerns or allegations are raised in relation to safety or the management of workers compensation claims and reasonable evidence is provided to demonstrate those concerns or allegations, we are committed to promptly investigating and responding to these.

Unfortunately, your letter largely contains broad generalisations without any specific evidence or data points that would enable us to properly investigate or respond to these claims. As such, I invite the CWU to share the specific details relating to each of the claims made in your letter so that we can properly consider those matters. This includes the names of those team members who you believe have not been managed appropriately, and the results of the survey referred to in your letter.

In the absence of that information at the present time, we are unable to take any further action in relation to those matters. However, I would like to provide you with an overview of some of the actions that Australia Post has taken in recent times to improve safety and the management of workers compensation claims:

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People and Culture (Injury  
Management)  
Level 18, 111 Bourke Street  
City, VIC, 3000

Contact:  
T 0438 763 605  
E [julian.hodder2@auspost.com.au](mailto:julian.hodder2@auspost.com.au)



Australia Post acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we operate, live and gather as employees, and recognise their continuing connection to land, water and community. We pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

Australia Post has made significant enhancements to our safety framework in recent years, which has been reflected, for example, in the significant reduction in motorcycle accidents that result in claims for the first 3 months of this financial year with over 85% fewer than the same period last year. Furthermore, our recent Say2Action survey results focusing specifically on the safety element of the survey, 89% of the deliveries WA team agreed that... "My manager always puts my safety first despite the urgency to get the job done." This would suggest that the criticisms levelled in your letter, specifically that your members are feeling 'uneasy', 'anxious' and 'pressured' are not representative of the broader workforce in Western Australia.

In relation to the use of online claim forms and authorisation as a component of the claim process, the completion of these in an online format assist in expediting the movement of claim related information including reimbursements, and ultimately claim determination which is done in the best interests of injured colleagues.

It should be noted that we have re-circulated the Contact Details for Injury Management to the CEPU on the 31<sup>st</sup> of August 2021 and we are working together on the terms of reference in relation to the upcoming IM-CEPU review. Therefore, there is an existing process in place to address issues/complaints as they arise and work together on solutions, which has been the practice of the other Branch Secretaries in my time at Australia Post.

I remain hopeful that the CWU will agree to share the information it has relied upon to form its views so that we can work collaboratively to promote the safety and wellbeing of our team members.

Yours sincerely,



**Julian Hodder**

General Manager Injury Management

Direct telephone: 0438 763 605

Email: [julian.hodder2@auspost.com.au](mailto:julian.hodder2@auspost.com.au)

22 December 2021

Mr Barry McVee  
CWU – WA Branch Secretary  
196 Lord Street  
PERTH WA 6000

Re:  
Comcare Licence Renewal

Dear Barry,

I refer to your letter dated 7 December 2021 addressed to Julian Hodder, General Manager Injury Management regarding Australia Post's self-insurance licence renewal. Julian is responding to matters raised in your letter, I am writing to address the unfounded allegations and assertions you have made.

I categorically deny your allegations and suggestion that Australia Post engages in systemic and deliberate practices to disadvantage its injured team members. I believe it is telling that you have not provided any evidence to support your claims.

The safety of our team members is Australia Post's priority and we work cooperatively and constructively with our union partners to achieve this goal. Unfortunately, the WA Branch of the CWU is an exception to this. I am disappointed that yet again the WA Branch of the CWU is raising unsubstantiated allegations and displaying a negative and adversarial approach to working with Australia Post's management team. I am pleased to note however that the behaviour of the WA Branch of the CWU is not typical of the behaviour of other state branches of the CWU.

Your letter fails to recognise the impact on Australia Post team members if Australia Post loses its self-insurance licence. At the minimum, it would result in significant upheaval for our injured team members as our injury management functions would have to be transferred to a third-party insurer. We would also lose a significant level of control over our ability to engage directly with injured team members and to support them which is likely leading to poorer outcomes.

Address:  
People & Culture  
111 Bourke Street  
Melbourne, VIC, 3000

Contact:  
T 0439 116 3976  
E [susan.davies2@auspost.com.au](mailto:susan.davies2@auspost.com.au)



Australia Post acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we operate, live and gather as employees, and recognise their continuing connection to land, water and community. We pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

Your suggestion that Australia Post only prioritises safety where it anticipates an inspection from Comcare is untrue and disregards the valuable work our team members do every day to keep one another safe. The fact is that in most investigations Comcare finds that Australia Post is complying with its WHS obligations. I note that Australia Post's experience is that Comcare's inspectors conduct thorough investigations into safety incidents.

I note that Julian recently commenced with Australia Post. I hope that the WA Branch of the CWU will take this opportunity to work to form a constructive relationship with a new senior leader rather than continuing to adopt a negative and adversarial approach to working Australia Post's management team

Yours sincerely,



**Susan Davies**  
**EGM People & Culture**

Direct telephone: 0439 116 396

Email: [susan.davies2@auspost.com.au](mailto:susan.davies2@auspost.com.au)

Copy: Greg Rayner, CWU National Secretary



You can tell me anything but if you say don't put it in the report I will not put it in. I cannot offer treatment.

This is what I've been told to ask.

These are standard questions that I have to ask.

Family history

Father

Mother

Siblings

What is your age?

Where were you born?

Do you own your home?

Who lives with you?

Do you have children?

Do you have Grand children?

Do you have any pets?

Do you need help to get out of bed or other personal tasks?

Do you do house work at home?

What house work do you do?

What home maintenance do you do?

How about the gardening what do you do?

What are your hobbies?

Do you play sport?

Have you had any surgery?

Have you had any car accidents?

Have you had any sporting injuries?

Have you had any broken bones?

Do you have any scars? / What is that scar?

Have you had any serious illnesses?

Have you had any sporting injuries?

Have you had life threatening illness or injuries?

Do you take any medications regularly?

Was there anything you could not do before your injury?

Is there anything you can't do at work?

Where do you live?

What is your home address?

What type of car do you drive? Auto or Manual?

How long does it take to drive to work each day?

How long does it take to drive home each day?

Do you have a second job?

Do you like working at Australia Post?

Have you had any litigation?

Have you had any litigation with Australia Post?

Have you had any Industrial Relation disputes with Australia Post?

Have you had disputes with other staff at Australia Post? Do you get along with your supervisors/boss?

How long have you worked for Australia Post?

What did you do before you worked at Australia Post?

What types of work did you do before you worked at Australia Post?

What do you do at Australia Post?

What is your role at Australia Post?

What were your tasks at Australia Post prior to this injury?

What are your tasks at Australia Post?

Do you rotate tasks?

Do you have any plans to retire?

What happened to cause the injury?

What were you doing?

Describe your pain:

Position, Description,

Intensity, Onset,

Timing, Duration, current symptoms,

Aggravating and relieving factors.

Associated symptoms:

Weakness,

Unusual sensations.

Numbness loss of sensation

Decreased range of movement?

How is your health generally?

Do you have any Behavioural, psychological and psychosocial factors? What is happening in your life?

How would you feel if I recommend you return to full duties in my report?

What do you think you could do at work?

I don't think surgery would be beneficial for you.

I don't think cortisone would be beneficial for you.

I don't think hand therapy would be beneficial for you.

I don't think physiotherapy would be beneficial for you.

I think getting you back to work on full duties would be beneficial for you.

I don't think full range of movement would be beneficial for you. I think your injury is consistent with the injury at work as described.

# PHC Audit

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- ity Communication o
- Policy o
- S1S1S o
- R Meetings Minutes o

cleaner

House Keeping (Rubber)

House Keeping (Duck) ↓

Maintenance Records

Fire DP checks On Ave

GHs Register (SDS) o

LSE SUTABLES LIST

EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS

Safety Partners Numbers National

LIST + UPDATE PC

x FORK LIFT OPERATORS

~~Update First Aid Officers~~

WEX ST Johns to fill all Boxes

FEWIS UPDATE (Beuf)

FTM Updated Displayed

EXTRA x FORK LIFT LICENSES

AUSLAN