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Minister for Finance
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THE HON PAUL FLETCHER MP

Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

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Another by-election, another ALP scare campaign. Setting the facts straight on Australia Post

The Morrison Government completely rejects the misleading and baseless claims from Labor that temporary regulatory relief for Australia Post will force job losses and reduce rates of pay.

Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts, the Hon Paul Fletcher MP, said Labor was resorting to its usual by-election tactic of whipping up a baseless scare campaign.

The Government has made temporary changes so Australia Post can meet surging demand for parcel deliveries as Australians order more goods online.

“The temporary changes are all putting Australia Post in the best position possible to continue serving the postal needs of all Australians,” Minister Fletcher said.

Finance Minister Mathias Cormann said the temporary adjustments to Australia Post will enable it to redeploy its workforce to critical areas experiencing a surge in volume.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has intensified existing trends, with letter volumes declining and parcel volumes jumping. Parcel volumes are up 64% in April year-on-year and letter volumes down 36% in May year-on-year.

“Australia Post has experienced a significant surge in demand for parcel deliveries during this time, with 200,000 new households shopping online for the first time during April this year. Australia Post has sought flexibility to retrain and redeploy its workforce to reflect the changed needs of Australians during this time,” Minister Cormann said.

In response to this request from Australia Post, driven by the unprecedented circumstances of the pandemic, the Government acted to temporarily adjust elements of the Australian Postal Corporation (Performance Standards) Regulations 2019. These targeted changes are temporary, effective only until 30 June 2021.

Australia Post has announced plans to retrain around 2,000 posties and redeploy them into roles supporting parcel delivery, instead of bringing in contractors. To further support the growing parcels operations, around 600 new staff are also being recruited.

“Labor has been out amidst a by-election pushing these deceptive claims and trying to overturn the vital temporary regulatory relief our Government has granted Australia Post. This relief is helping Australia Post better support Australians during COVID-19 – and if Labor succeeds in overturning this temporary regulatory measure it will disadvantage the very people they claim to protect,” Minister Fletcher said.

Labor’s claims are untrue in multiple respects:

- It has been claimed that Australia Post will cut jobs, and remove one in four posties. **This is not true.** Australia Post has said there will be no forced redundancies or plans to cut posties’ take-home pay due to the new temporary arrangements. Many posties will continue delivering letters on bikes, and others will be retrained to deliver parcels in vans, putting them where the work is, securing their job with Australia Post, and better meeting the increasing needs of Australians for parcel deliveries.
- It has been claimed that Australia Post wants to cut delivery services in half. **This is not true.** Australia Post is permitted to adjust its delivery frequency, in metropolitan areas only, from every business day to every second business day. Delivery frequency in rural, regional and remote areas will not change.
- It has been claimed that wait times for letters will more than double, from 3 to 7 days. **This is not true.** Mail speed standards for regular interstate letters (mail travelling around the country) have not changed. Whether measured in business days or actual days, the speed of delivery for intrastate mail has changed by only 1 or 2 days for regular intrastate letters, not out by 4 days as suggested.
- It has been claimed regional Australians and small business will be disadvantaged compared to metropolitan areas. **This is not true.** While the delivery frequency of regular mail has been adjusted in metropolitan areas, the delivery frequency for regular mail for rural, regional and remote areas was protected and remains unchanged. Licensed Post Offices – which, together with community postal agencies, represent around 2300 small businesses in regional and rural communities – have come out in active support of the temporary regulatory changes.
- It has been claimed that vulnerable Australians will be most impacted by the changes. **This is not true.** The temporary regulatory changes give Australia Post flexibility to provide additional services that better support vulnerable Australians, such as delivering medicines and grocery boxes.
- It has been claimed that the changes are permanent. **This is not true.** The regulations are written such that changes will automatically end on 30 June 2021. The Government will assess the effect of these temporary arrangements before the end of the year, and decide if they are to stay in place for the full period expected. Any extension of the temporary relief measures will be informed by relevant consultations. Such an extension would also be subject to a new disallowance period.
- It has been claimed that the Government wants to privatise Australia Post. **This is not true.** The Morrison Government is fully committed to Australia Post remaining in government ownership. There will be no change to Australia Post’s ownership, which will remain Government owned.

The Morrison Government is committed to supporting Australia Post to provide important postal services to all Australians.

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