

## COMMUNICATIONS

---

### POSTAL AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES

#### **New Commissions**

Early in 1973, the Postmaster-General announced the establishment of a Commission of Inquiry to determine the true functions of the Post Office; how best those functions could be carried out; and the sort of organisation that was necessary to meet the postal and telecommunications needs of the future. The Commission of Inquiry consisted of three commissioners and presented its report to the Governor-General on 19 April 1974; most of its recommendations were accepted by the Commonwealth Government. The Report favoured the establishment of two statutory corporations to administer the postal and telecommunications services. The two corporations would be independent of the Public Service Board on matters of organisation, staff, pay, and conditions of service.

The Report contained more than one hundred principal recommendations and conclusions, and after the Commonwealth Government had considered the broad issues involved, an inter-departmental working group, comprising representatives from the Postmaster-General's Department, the Department of the Special Minister of State, the Treasury, the Public Service Board, and the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, was set up to study the detailed recommendations, and to report their findings to the Postmaster-General and the Special Minister of State. Other government departments which were affected by the recommendations were also consulted.

The Report of the inter-departmental working group was considered by the Commonwealth Government in February 1975, and some of the more important suggestions subsequently endorsed by it included the following principles. The Commissions were to be financed by Treasury advances subject to interest payment, each to be responsible for financing at least 50 per cent of new capital investment from internal sources. The Commissions were to be free to set tariffs, subject to ministerial approval of tariffs, for basic services. Past postal losses were to be written off. The Commissions were to be independent of the Public Service Board and the arbitral authority between the Commissions and their staff was to be the Australian Conciliation and Arbitration Commission; consultative facilities would also be established. Legislation was to be introduced to preserve the rights of existing staff, and to continue the sponsorship of the Australian Postal Institute.

A major factor contributing to the enormity of the legislative task was the sheer size of the department and its place within the Commonwealth Public Service in particular, and in the economy in general. Since the department provided employment for more than 120,000 persons, or about one half of the Commonwealth Public Service, any changes in staffing provisions were bound to have significant repercussions on the remainder of the Commonwealth Public Service, as well as on private employment. The task was further complicated by the need to preserve, for all staff, existing terms and conditions of employment

under changed service conditions, and also to incorporate improved staffing provisions, some of which were likely to be implemented in the Commonwealth Public Service in the near future.

The legislation covering the establishment of the new Commissions comprised, initially, three Bills—the Postal Services Bill, the Telecommunications Bill, and the Postal and Telecommunications Commissions (Transitional Provisions) Bill. On 23 April 1975, these three Bills were introduced into the Senate by the Postmaster-General, and, following debate, were passed by the Senate in May 1975, though with some substantial amendments. The most important of the amendments introduced by the Opposition parties in the Senate was the deletion of the provision for the merging of the functions of the Overseas Telecommunications Commission with those of the new Australian Telecommunications Commission. The Commonwealth Government then introduced a further Bill, the Telecommunications Bill No. 2, on 29 May 1975. This Bill reinstated the provisions which had been deleted from the earlier Telecommunications Bill by the Opposition parties in the Senate, and which related to the incorporation of the Overseas Telecommunications Commission with the national service. Although this fourth Bill was passed in the House of Representatives, it was later defeated in the Senate, with the result that the Overseas Telecommunications Commission remains as a separate organisation.

The Governor-General gave Royal Assent to the Postal Services Act, the Telecommunications Act, and the Postal and Telecommunications (Transitional Provisions) Act on 12 June 1975, and, from midnight on Monday, 30 June 1975, all postal services, and most of the services provided by telecommunications, ceased to operate as the Postmaster-General's Department, but were embodied in two separate Commissions—the Australian Postal Commission and the Australian Telecommunications Commission. Radio licensing and monitoring activities remained as a part of the Postmaster-General's Department.

The Postmaster-General's Department was changed to the Department of Post and Telecommunications late in December 1975.

## POSTAL SERVICES IN VICTORIA

### Historical outline

Postal services in Victoria were first placed under government control in April 1837. Seventeen years later, in March 1854, Australia's first commercial telegraph service was established between Melbourne and Williamstown, providing a new form of communication that was much more rapid than the pack-horse or mail coach. For fifteen years, until 1869, the electric telegraph was operated as a government department separate from the Post Office, but in that year the two were amalgamated to become the Post and Telegraph Department. This amalgamation of postal and telecommunications services continued through Federation, in 1901, until the two services finally separated on 1 July 1975.

### Present activities

On 1 July 1975, a new statutory authority, the Australian Postal Commission, took over the operation and management of Australia's postal services from the Postmaster-General's Department. The Commission, which operates under the trading name Australia Post, was granted considerable flexibility in the management of its own affairs, and significant changes were made in the style of operation, organisation, financing, and in some cases in the provision of postal services. Despite the greater flexibility, it is still part of the total government services, and as such is subject to many of the constraints applicable to government departments.

At 30 June 1976, Australia Post served 4,362,639 residential and 394,076 business addresses in Australia, as well as the international postal network. In Victoria 1,170,204 householders and 103,137 businesses were served. The network

was based on 5,888 post offices throughout Australia of which 1,441 were official offices. In Victoria the respective figures were 1,442 and 333. The transport fleet, covering both urban and rural areas numbered 923 vehicles in Victoria (4,500 Australia).

#### **Distribution of mail**

Mail was distributed between capital cities and to country areas by rail, road, and air. Express buses and other road transport were used, while over 50,000 tonnes of mail were carried by the railways. In addition, over 5,000 contractors carried the mail to communities beyond the rail system and delivered it to rural properties and stations throughout the country. In Victoria, a total of 17.097 million km were covered in the course of postal deliveries.

Jet aircraft moved letters and airmail between capital cities, and to and from overseas countries. Smaller aircraft were used to and between rural cities and towns and isolated stations. Over 500 million pieces of mail, weighing over 6,000 tonnes, were moved by air within Australia.

During 1975-76 three mail handling centres were established in Victoria as part of a programme to decentralise some mail processing and distribution work from the Central Mail Exchange in Melbourne to a number of suburban and country locations. They were located at Blackburn in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne (August), and in Geelong (November) and Ballarat (May).

Australia Post continued to rearrange country mail service in line with reductions in rail services. This has been achieved by extensions of road services, both by Australia Post's own fleet and by contractors, over many routes previously serviced by rail. These moves were designed to maintain overall network standards.

With the introduction of mail centres at Ballarat and Geelong, road services, operating to time tables giving a better mail service, have replaced trains in the areas served by these centres.

Three new post offices were completed and opened during the year in Victoria, at Foster, Shepparton, and Sunshine.

A major campaign called Project Service Improvement was initiated during the year to improve the mail service. Aimed at meeting reasonable community needs, studies included a thorough review of all existing service standards and action to provide a more comprehensive set of standards covering all aspects of the mail service.

The most significant of these standards, which cover about 75 per cent of all letter mail, is next day delivery: within the same city or town; between most capital cities if posted by the specified times; from the capital city to most places within 500 km and to other places in the State served by air if posted by the specified time. Customers obtain the best service if they make themselves aware of the final posting times. Trading hours at all mainland GPO's, including Melbourne, were extended to offer full counter business at 8.15 a.m.

In response to public demand, Australia Post introduced in November a "local priority paid" service, with a guarantee of next day delivery within a metropolitan area or a refund of charges if the item is not delivered in that time. This service supplemented the existing interstate priority paid service.

#### **New developments**

In February 1976, Australia Post launched the Australia Post Courier Service in Melbourne, Sydney, and Canberra. Operating initially with 20 vehicles in the two larger cities and 10 in Canberra, Australia Post Courier quickly established itself in a strongly competitive industry. By 30 June the fleet had expanded to 31 small radio-controlled vans in Melbourne alone. Australia Post Courier is not to be subsidised from public revenue but is required to recover the full cost of its operation.

There were two other developments during 1975-76: the introduction of a special rate of 15 cents for Christmas cards posted in November and December to Australian addresses; and of lower charges for private boxholders not served by a postman or mailman, for private mail bags conveyed by a mailman, and for private bags collected by a private messenger from a post office.

About five million undeliverable postal articles without a return address on the cover were processed by Dead Letter Offices during the year. After examination approximately two million were able to be returned to the sender. Victoria's figures were 1,084,566 and 407,992, respectively.

About 25,000 of the undeliverable articles handled were postcards sent by tourists—fully stamped, they carried messages but none showed the address of the addressee or sender.

#### Postage stamp issues

The first stamp issue released by the Australian Postal Commission, commemorated its creation and that of the Australian Telecommunications Commission on 1 July 1975. The two 10c stamps, printed in se-tenant format (horizontally and vertically) within the same sheet, show the symbols, trading names, and house colours of each of the Commissions.

The second stamp issue to be released by Australia Post comprised six 10c values featuring famous Australian women. The famous women portrayed are Edith Cowan, the first woman elected to an Australian parliament; Louisa Lawson, leading suffragette and journalist; Henry Handel Richardson (pen name of Ethel Florence Richardson), celebrated Australian novelist; Catherine Spence, writer and social worker; Constance Stone, first Australian woman to qualify as a doctor; and Truganini, last of the full-blooded Tasmanian Aborigines.

The third issue, an 18c and 45c stamp, was released on September 1975 as a result of the introduction of new postal charges, and featured rare Australian wildflowers in their design. Also during September two stamps were issued to mark the independence of Papua New Guinea. The 18c denomination links the similarity in the outline of the Sydney Opera House and a typical native spirit house, while the 25c value shows a bird in flight, symbolising freedom.

Two Christmas stamps were released on 29 October 1975. The 15c value, which depicts the three wise men approaching Mary and the crib, was issued to provide a special concessional rate for Christmas cards posted in standard-sized envelopes, for delivery within Australia, and endorsed "Card Only". The 45c value, based on a text from the Gospel according to St John (1:5) "And the light shineth in darkness", depicts a star radiating rays of light. The 45c rate represented the air mail charge to Europe and the United Kingdom, for letters not exceeding 10 grams.

The sixth stamp issue by Australia Post was an 18c commemorative stamp released on 10 March 1976 to celebrate one hundred years of communication by the telephone. To commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of Australia's nationhood a special 18c stamp featuring the Australian coat of arms was released on 5 January 1976.

The eighth issue comprised a series of six 18c commemorative stamps featuring well-known Australian explorers. The explorers shown in this series are John Oxley, Surveyor-General, N.S.W.; Hamilton Hume and William Hovell, who carried out a journey of exploration from Appin in New South Wales to Geelong in Victoria; Peter Warburton, who led an expedition from Alice Springs to Perth; William Gosse, who discovered Ayers Rock; Sir John Forrest, who led several expeditions in Central and Western Australia; and William Giles, who also led expeditions in Central and Western Australia.

The fiftieth anniversary of the C.S.I.R.O. was commemorated by the issue of a special 18c stamp on 15 June 1976. The stamp shows a hand holding a measuring device with a graph and a computer tape in the background which symbolises the two important activities in scientific work—measuring and recording.

The tenth issue of postage stamps was a set of four stamps commemorating the 1976 Olympic Games. The set consisted of two different 18c stamps depicting gymnastics and soccer, diving shown on the 25c value, and cycling on the 40c stamp.

A selection of scenic views of Australia are featured on the issue of stamps released on 25 August 1976. The series includes the following values and scenes: 5c, Richmond Bridge; 25c, Broken Bay; 35c, Wittenoom Gorge; 50c, Mt Buffalo; 70c, Great Barrier Reef; and 85c, Ayers Rock.

A special miniature sheet of four 18c stamps (the third miniature sheet issued in Australian philatelic history) was released on the opening day of National Stamp Week, 27 September 1976. A unique feature of this miniature sheet is that it illustrates progressive colour steps in photogravure stamp printing. The top left stamp is printed in yellow, the top right has red added to the yellow base, the bottom left stamp shows the addition of blue, while the bottom right stamp shows the process completed by the addition of dark brown. The stamp features a portrait of Blamire Young, an English-born artist who played a leading part in the design of the 1913 "Kangaroo and Map" series—Australia's first uniform stamp issue.

The thirteenth set of stamps was the 1976 Christmas issue and consisted of two values. The design for the 15c denomination was that of the winning entrant in a specially organised competition, and features the Madonna and Child. The 45c value design incorporates a selection of objects familiarly associated with Yuletide.

The final stamp issue released by Australia Post for 1976 was a set of four 18c stamps in the "Famous Australians" series. The stamps, released on 10 November 1976, feature the famous Australians Baldwin Spencer, biologist and anthropologist; Thomas Laby, Professor of Physics, consulting physicist to the Commonwealth Department of Health and a specialist in nuclear physics; Griffith Taylor, a noted geographer; and John Gould, celebrated ornithologist.

#### **Postage Stamps of Victoria, 1974**

### **TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES IN VICTORIA**

#### **General**

Telecom Australia (the Australian Telecommunications Commission) was established on 1 July 1975 under the *Telecommunications Act* 1975, to plan, establish, operate, and maintain telecommunications services within Australia.

Management of Telecom Australia is vested in a Commission of seven commissioners, the chairman of which is full-time managing director. Day-to-day operations are managed by a chief general manager who has responsible to him six State managers controlling activities in each State, and a group of specialist managers responsible for the development and review of policies and the co-ordination of national operations.

The Victorian Administration which employs some 22,000 people, consists of five Departments and two major branches, each making a contribution toward the provision of telecommunications services within the State.

The Operations Department is responsible for installing and maintaining telecommunications equipment and providing advisory services to customers. It also provides such services as the public telegraph system, the national and international trunk telephone system, and the directory assistance service. The Operations Department is organised on a regional basis with a district telecommunications manager in charge of each district.

The Engineering Department is responsible for the planned development of the total telecommunications network which ensures that such development accords with engineering standards prescribed by the Commission. This

Department also helps install facilities and is responsible for large scale projects which are undertaken.

The Customer Services Department oversees the standards of service offered to customers and liaises with both the Engineering and Operations Department to ensure the maintenance of these standards. It is responsible for the assessment of the telecommunications requirements of the community, for the marketing of facilities, and the preparation and distribution of Telephone and Telex Directories.

The Finance and Accounting Department is responsible for budgetary planning, the development and maintenance of accounting systems and the overall management of all financial transactions undertaken by the Commission.

The Personnel and Industrial Relations Department is responsible for the development and implementation of personnel policies and the provision of staff services such as salary assessment, training and development, and welfare and amenities. It also provides industrial relations and recruitment services and oversees the manpower requirements and structure of the Commission within the State.

The provision of stores and equipment of all sorts in such quantities and at such locations as required by the operations of the Commission is the responsibility of the Stores Branch.

The Information Systems Branch is a growing unit with a wide range of modern data processing equipment. It currently undertakes the processing of telephone accounts and the maintenance of management information systems.

### **Present activities**

#### *Automatic telephone network*

The number of telephone services in Victoria has risen by 21.7 per cent in the three years to 30 June 1976. At that time there were 1,105,000 services in operation of which 23,000 were manual services. Between 1976 and 1979 a net increase of 66 automatic exchanges has been planned for Victoria which will reduce the number of manual subscribers to approximately 14,000 by June 1979.

#### *Subscriber trunk dialling (S.T.D.)*

Subscriber trunk dialling was introduced to Victoria in 1960 and 97.5 per cent of subscribers now have access to the facility. With the adoption of the new S.T.D. public telephone, additional subscribed dialling benefits will also become available to the public as a very large changeover programme progresses. Additional centres to which national S.T.D. became available during 1975-76 included Donald, Dunkeld, Lake Bolac, Molyullah, Murrayville, Ouyen, Port Fairy, Thorpedale, Trafalgar, Underbool, Walpeup, Willow Grove, Winchelsea and Yea.

#### *International subscribed dialling (I.S.D.)*

The international subscriber dialling service has been in operation in Melbourne since April 1976. The I.S.D. facility, an extension of the S.T.D. system, enables telephone subscribers to make their own international telephone calls without the assistance of an operator.

As at 30 June 1976, the I.S.D. facility was available from 36 metropolitan exchanges; 401 services had been provided with I.S.D. access and the countries available to subscribers were as follows: Austria, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, Fiji, Federal Republic of Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Singapore, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and U.S.A. including Hawaii.

*Telegrams*

During the past decade, the public telegraph service has continued to handle less traffic each year. The 2,840,000 telegrams originated in 1975-76 compared to the 4,460,000 messages handled in 1966 constituted a decrease of 61 per cent over the ten years. The reduction in traffic for the last twelve months was 16.7 per cent.

*Automatic telex*

Automatic telex transmits a type-written message from one teleprinter to another teleprinter in a similar way to an S.T.D. telephone call. During the year ended 30 June 1976, an additional 489 telex services were connected, bringing the total services in operation to 4,030.

## COMMUNICATIONS STATISTICS

Particulars concerning the revenue and expenditure in Victoria of the Australian Postal and Telecommunications Commissions for the year 1975-76 are shown in the following tables :

VICTORIA—AUSTRALIAN POSTAL COMMISSION :  
REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE, 1975-76  
(\$ '000)

Revenue		Expenditure	
Mail services	402,221	Operating and general	354,995
Money and postal order services	7,481	Transportation	46,723
Commission or agency services	85,892	Superannuation	43,994
Other	10,044	Other	28,264
Total	505,638	Total	473,976

VICTORIA—AUSTRALIAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION :  
REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE, 1975-76  
(\$ '000)

Revenue		Expenditure	
Telephone	361,846	Salaries and wages	192,443
Telegraph	11,606	Material	81,978
Proceeds of sales	2,060	Building	11,569
Other	5,529	Other	45,116
Total	381,040	Total	331,105

At 30 June 1976, the Australian Telecommunications Commission employed 22,110 people in Victoria, including 21,598 full-time staff. On the same date the Australian Postal Commission employed 11,571 people in Victoria, 9,978 of whom were full-time staff.

## VICTORIA—TELEPHONE SERVICES AT 30 JUNE

Particulars	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976
Telephone exchanges	1,253	1,229	1,071	1,180	1,179
Public telephones	7,585	7,635	7,662	7,800	7,779
Services in operation	896,615	948,344	1,011,355	1,061,965	1,105,248
Instruments connected	1,293,977	1,370,163	1,485,140	1,544,098	1,598,447
Instruments per 1,000 of population	365.0	380.6	410.6	423.0	431.0

VICTORIA—LETTERS, ETC., POSTED AND RECEIVED  
(‘000)

Period	Letters, postcards, etc.	Registered articles (except parcels)	Newspapers and packets	Parcels (including those registered)
POSTED FOR DELIVERY WITHIN AUSTRALIA				
1970-71	640,991	2,145	85,800	5,777
1971-72	631,969	1,929	78,763	5,810
1972-73	646,581	1,724	91,676	5,970
1973-74	649,157	1,510	84,811	6,488
1974-75	596,148	1,556	102,910	5,574
1975-76	520,184	971	80,564	4,107
DISPATCHED TO AND RECEIVED FROM PLACES OVERSEAS				
1970-71	86,076	1,326	14,846	899
1971-72	84,251	1,349	8,842	881
1972-73	80,198	1,301	9,218	950
1973-74	80,345	1,479	12,845	1,040
1974-75	79,423	1,507	15,027	1,142
1975-76	76,408	1,294	13,298	1,123
TOTAL POSTED IN VICTORIA AND RECEIVED FROM OVERSEAS				
1970-71	727,067	3,471	100,646	6,676
1971-72	716,220	3,278	87,605	6,691
1972-73	726,779	3,025	100,894	6,920
1973-74	729,502	2,990	97,656	7,528
1974-75	675,571	3,064	117,938	6,716
1975-76	596,592	2,265	93,862	5,230

VICTORIA—RADIO COMMUNICATION STATIONS AUTHORISED AT 30 JUNE

Class of station	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976
Transmitting and receiving—					
Fixed stations (a)—					
Aeronautical	..	..	..	..	..
Services with other countries	..	..	..	..	..
Other	260	302	345	366	379
Land stations (b)—					
Aeronautical	75	69	70	72	94
Base stations—					
Land mobile services	2,565	3,032	3,280	3,535	3,774
Harbour mobile services	37	45	47	77	88
Coast (c)	1	1	1	1	1
Limited coast	32	37	44	44	47
Repeater	40	41	41	41	42
Special experimental	138	137	136	140	130
Mobile stations (d)—					
Aeronautical	449	502	590	651	666
Land mobile services	29,592	33,015	34,843	42,144	46,230
Harbour mobile services	270	283	351	622	985
Radiodetermination	9	9	9	12	7
Radiotelephone subscribers’ service	159	87	93	93	94
Ships	1,088	1,284	1,460	1,501	1,463
Space services (e)	1	1	1	2	2
Amateur stations	1,989	2,012	2,054	2,140	2,135
Total transmitting and receiving	36,705	40,857	43,365	51,441	56,137
Receiving only—					
Fixed stations (a)	34	15	13	13	7
Mobile stations (d)	..	21	21	24	7
Grand total	36,739	40,893	43,399	51,478	56,151

(a) Stations established at fixed locations for communication with other stations similarly established.

(b) Stations established at fixed locations for communication with mobile stations.

(c) Land stations for communication with ocean-going vessels.

(d) Equipment installed in motor vehicles and harbour vessels.

(e) A radio communication service between earth stations and/or space stations.



*Broadcast and television licences in effect*

There were 20 commercial broadcasting stations and nine commercial television stations with licences in Victoria at 30 June 1976. In addition there were eight broadcasting stations operated by the national broadcasting service and eight television stations operated by the national television service.

**Further reference, 1977 ; History of Post Office in Victoria, 1961 ; Melbourne-Sydney Co-axial Cable, 1964 ; Postage stamps of Victoria, 1974 ; Post Office Museum, 1975 ; Overseas telecommunications services, 1977**

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

**Victorian Office**

1303.2 Victorian monthly statistical review

**Central Office**

1303.0 Quarterly summary of Australian statistics

1304.0 Monthly review of business statistics

5502.0 Public authority finance : Federal authorities