



Australian Citizens Party

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MEDIA RELEASE

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LPOs launch petition: Help grow our Local Community Post Office

The Licensed Post Office Group (LPOG) this week launched a petition asking the House of Representatives to lift restrictions that stop local post offices from expanding their services.

[Click here to sign Help grow our Local Community Post Office.](#)

(Note: this is a Change.org petition, which asks for donations that go to Change.org, not to the post office campaign. You are not obliged to donate.)

LPOG, which represents the interests of Australia's 2,850 small business LPOs, explains that expanding services is the only way post offices will survive under Australia Post's commercial imperative.

"We're launching a crucial petition today to bring to light the reduction in products and services and the restrictions on Licensees", LPOG said in a statement.

"We are all well aware of the cost-cutting programs and reduction in goods and services that Australia Post has been undertaking for the last two years. We understand that AP is a commercial operation. However, we need more than cost-cutting to save the business. We must find new products and services to replace those that are declining or have been removed. LPOG has asked (in almost every meeting with AP for the last two years) when we can expect to introduce new products or services. While there has been plenty of talk, we can all see that there has been very little tangible action. Meanwhile, the services we provide are becoming slower and less reliable."

LPOG opposes current CEO Paul Graham's agenda to close post offices instead of helping to expand their retail offering to help them survive, as former CEO Christine Holgate did. Unlike her predecessors—who wanted to privatise AP—and her successor, Holgate saw that the size and spread of the post office network was AP's best asset. She also appreciated that the 2,850 small business post office licensees who operated the majority of the 4,300 post offices had collectively invested around \$3 billion of their own capital into providing postal services. Underpaid for years and teetering on the brink of bankruptcy, LPOs were amazed when Christine Holgate set out to make them viable, which she achieved by expanding banking services, and expanding their retail products. Readers may remember when Australia Post advertised products, such as collectibles for children, to encourage people to shop at post offices. By contrast, LPOG complains, the current management is only interested in the parcels business.

"Our Licensor, Australia Post, is failing in its obligation to offer us profitable products and services so that we can remain viable businesses, while simultaneously prohibiting us from offering alternatives to our customers", the statement continued. "Many of us can't afford to wait while our businesses are run into the ground."

LPOG warns that if the LPO business fails, the community will lose its post office, but the closure will be blamed on the licensees' "bad management". They don't have to actively close post offices, LPOG said, economics will do it for them. "Don't let this happen", they pleaded.

LPOG concluded: "Our post offices should be Australia's Front Counter. All the many businesses and services that have abandoned our communities and forced their customers to 'go online' must recognise that not everything or everyone can 'go digital'. For those customers who still value face-to-face interaction, there is their local community post office, Australia's Front Counter.

"We are at a crossroads: We can maintain our Main Street locations, manned by staff trained to provide Identity Services, Financial Transactions, and the importance of customer privacy, or we can move our outlets to cheaper industrial warehouses, manned by 17-year-olds who just handle parcels all day. If we want to keep the network we have, we need to have new products and services to offer our communities. This petition calls for the House of Representatives to help us do this."

Petition

Following is the text of the petition LPOG has initiated. The Australian Citizens Party (ACP) is supporting LPOG's campaign for expanded services, including by actively campaigning for a public post office People's Bank, which will increase revenue to post offices. ACP encourages all Australians to support the campaign by, signing the Change.org petition below, and by visiting post offices and signing the petition in person.

Help grow our Local Community Post Office

Reasons:

1. For our community to remain vibrant and relevant, it is essential that people can stay, live and work here, supported by essential infrastructure and services.
2. Our Post Office provides essential services to this community. It must therefore remain viable by being able to provide an increasing number of services to the communities, not less.
3. Our Community Post Office faces cuts in services and is unfairly blocked by Australia Post from providing other services. For the benefit of the whole community, our Community Post Office should be the local hub for ALL of my parcels, regardless of who sent my parcel to me or which delivery service they used.
4. Many Local Community Post Offices are independently-owned small businesses run by members of our community. It is essential that all businesses have an opportunity to grow. This can be achieved by increasing the number of services they provide and being able to choose how to serve their community better.
5. It will benefit our community if the Local Community Post Office is allowed to work with additional service providers, so they can provide more choice and more services to my community, allowing it to remain a viable business that can provide valuable services to our community for years to come.

Request:

We therefore ask the House to remove restrictions and allow the Licensees of Independent Local Post Offices to provide additional services and choice to better serve our local communities and remain sustainable for many years to come.

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[Click here to sign the Citizens Party's petition for a post office people's bank.](#)