

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.

Australia Post is the trading name of the Australian Postal Commission while the Australian Telecommunications Commission trades under the name of Telecom Australia.

POSTAL SERVICES IN VICTORIA

The Victorian operations of Australia Post are part of the national network of postal facilities which provides Australia with an internal postal system and a link with the international postal network. The network of postal facilities provided in Victoria at 30 June 1979 was as follows: 5,125 street posting boxes; 332 official post offices; 970 non-official post offices — which are small post offices normally conducted in conjunction with some other business; and 12 major mail handling centres.

At 30 June 1979, 1,262,281 residential points and 108,769 businesses in Victoria were being provided with a mail delivery service. Approximately 96 per cent of the points would be served daily Monday to Friday. During 1978-79, 698,085 million postal articles were either posted in Victoria or received in Victoria from overseas countries.

A total official staff of 8,311 persons were engaged in providing postal services in Victoria at 30 June 1979. A further 1,271 persons were engaged at non-official post offices and 701 mail contractors provided services.

Types of service

Australia Post has monopoly powers with respect to the carriage of letters 500 grams and less in weight. Other services offered by Australia Post generally face competition from other enterprises. Australia Post's services include surface, air, and express mail services, both within Australia and to and from other countries, for the carriage of letters, cards, aerogrammes, newspapers, packages, and parcels.

Among its mail services, there are special arrangements such as messenger delivery, cash on delivery, security mail services, response services (e.g., business reply), and acknowledgement of delivery. Private boxes and locked bags can be provided for the delivery of mails to customers who require such special services. Australia Post also operates a courier service and a postal money order service.

Reduced rate services are provided for bulk direct mail advertising, bulk local delivery mail, bulk pre-sorted mail, articles for the blind, unaddressed householder delivery articles, and registered publications. It sells postal products such as padded post bags,

postal stationery and packaging materials, and philatelic items. It provides postmarking slogans for advertising purposes and postmarkers to commemorate special events.

Australia Post acts as an agent for a number of Commonwealth and State Government authorities and existing agency services include: Commonwealth Savings Bank, deposits and withdrawals; Defence Forces Home Loan repayments; taxation (PAYE) stamp sales, and information; overseas telephone and telegraph business; telephone account collections and other services on behalf of Telecom Australia including telegrams, telephone orders, and public telephone coin collections; customs payments and documentation for Department of Business and Consumer Affairs; weather reports for Bureau of Meteorology; electoral documents for Electoral Departments; and State Duty Stamp sales for the Victorian Government.

Distribution of mail

Soon after being created in 1975, the Australian Postal Commission approved a plan for a new concept in mail processing and distribution in Victoria. The plan provided for the decentralisation of mail processing from a major establishment located in the Central Business District of Melbourne to new type smaller Mail Centres at Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong, Morwell, and Seymour in country Victoria, and at Blackburn, Clayton South, Footscray West, and Preston in the Melbourne suburban region. The mail circulation network together with the location of Mail Centres in Victoria is shown in Figure 10 below. In addition, Mail Centres were to be provided in the Melbourne city area for dispatching and delivery of mail in that area and for handling interstate and overseas mail.



FIGURE 10. Victoria—mail circulation network. Mail Centre locations are shown in block letters. Spencer Street, City Delivery, and State Mail Centres are located in the Melbourne metropolitan area.

The first of the Mail Centres was opened in Ballarat in 1976 and since then the Centres at Bendigo, Geelong, Morwell, Seymour, Blackburn, Clayton South, and in the Melbourne city area have been opened. The Footscray West and Preston Centres were scheduled to become operational in October 1979.

The decentralised mail handling arrangements provide for smaller and better operations which in turn assist to maintain a high and reliable standard of service. At the same time, the arrangements provide for improved efficiency and lower costs. Better working conditions are provided for staff and the operatives can work closer to their homes.

Service developments

Service developments have included a new Postal Money Order Service which was introduced in November 1977. This service replaced postal order and money order services. The Registered Publication Service was revamped to provide a simplified system of classification. An Overnight Parcel Service was introduced to provide customers with a fast and reliable overnight service between post offices in the Melbourne metropolitan area and the provincial cities and suburbs of Ballarat, Bendigo, and Geelong.

An extensive programme of visits by Postmasters to businesses has been undertaken throughout Victoria. The purpose of the visits was to inform businessmen of Australia Post's services and to learn about any postal problems being experienced. Regular meetings have been held between senior management and representatives of businesses and employer organisations as a means of informing customers about proposed changes and learning about their needs for postal services.

The conduct of regular Mailing Courses was introduced at all official post offices. The aim of these courses is to provide mail room staff in business organisations with a better understanding of postal services.

Australia Post and Telecom Australia have combined to conduct a trial of a facsimile transmission service which makes use of the Courier Post Service, Telephone Service, and facsimile machines. The service enables a document to be picked up by an Australia Post courier and taken to a central point where it is transmitted through a facsimile machine to another capital city. From there it is delivered to the addressee by courier. The service also provides an option for a portable facsimile machine to be taken to a customer's premises for direct transmission of documents between two business points, e.g., between offices in Melbourne and Perth. The service known as Courier-Fax commenced on 30 July 1979.

Industrial relations

A small Departmental group is provided in the Victorian Administration for the purpose of developing and maintaining better working relationships between management and staff organisations. Consultative processes in matters relating to changes to work areas are a feature of the liaison established with the organisations.

Philatelic functions

Philately is a hobby of thousands of Victorians and Australia Post caters to the needs of these hobbyists. It is actively associated with National Stamp Week held in September each year and during that period, Postmasters and their staff visit schools throughout the State and lecture on philately to thousands of children.

Postage stamp issues

Postage stamp issues in 1978-79 were as follows:

3 July 1978	Australian Birds — 2 stamps; 20c Little Grebe and 55c Lotus Bird.
17 July 1978	Australian Birds — 3 stamps; 5c Hooded Dotterel, 25c Spur-wing Plover, and 30c Pied Oystercatcher.
25 September 1978	National Stamp Week 1978 — 20c stamp featuring a 3d Blue Kookaburra Stamp issued in 1928 and a miniature sheet containing a block of four of the 20c stamps.
3 October 1978	Christmas 1978 — 25c stamp featuring The Virgin and Child.
18 October 1978	Australian Horse Racing — 4 stamps; 20c Tulloch, 35c Bernborough, 50c Phar Lap, and 55c Peter Pan.
1 November 1978	Christmas 1978 — 2 stamps; 15c stamp featuring The Madonna and the Child and 55c stamp featuring The Holy Family.

- 26 January 1979 Australia Day 1979 — 20c stamp featuring the flag-raising ceremony at Sydney Cove.
- 14 February 1979 Ferries and Murray River Steamers — 4 stamps; 20c P.S. Canberra, 35c M.V. Lady Denman, 50c P.S. Murray River Queen, and 55c H.V. Curl Curl.
- 14 March 1979 Australian Paintings Series; \$5 stamp featuring reproduction of Sir Arthur Streeton's painting "McMahon's Point".
- 9 April 1979 National Parks — 7 x 20c stamps, featuring a scene from a national park in each Australian State.
- 16 May 1979 Australian Steam Locomotives — 4 stamps; 20c Double Fairlie, 35c Puffing Billy, 50c Pichi Richi, and 55c Zig Zag.
- 6 June 1979 150th Anniversary of Western Australia — 20c stamp featuring a contemporary drawing of a swan.

A new range of pre-stamped white envelopes, featuring fine art paintings of Australian birds, were introduced in September 1978. Commemorative envelopes pre-stamped with 20c postage were issued for the 30th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (29 November 1978); Centenary of the Birth of Norman Lindsay (22 February 1979); 175th Anniversary of the Establishment of Hobart (30 May 1979); and 350th Anniversary of the Wreck of the "Batavia" (5 June 1979). In October 1978, a range of pre-stamped postcards, featuring popular scenes in Australia, were also introduced.

Further references: *History of the Post Office in Victoria*, *Victorian Year Book* 1961, pp. 702-5; *Postage stamps of Victoria*, 1974, pp. 799-802; *Post Office Museum*, 1975, p. 693; *New developments of Australia Post*, 1978, pp. 602-3; *Postage stamp issues*, 1978, pp. 603-4; 1979, pp. 550-2

TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES IN VICTORIA

Introduction

Telecom Australia (the Australian Telecommunications Commission) was established under the *Telecommunications Act* 1975, to take over the responsibility for telecommunications services which had been vested in the Postmaster-General's Department since Federation.

The Commission which took over its responsibilities on 1 July 1975 reports to the Minister for Post and Telecommunications who is supported by a Department of State—the Postal and Telecommunications Department.

The responsibilities placed upon Telecom Australia by the *Telecommunications Act* 1975 are summarised in the Commission's Charter which states:

- (1) Telecom Australia is responsible to provide, maintain, and operate telecommunication services in Australia which best meet the social, industrial, and commercial needs of the people of Australia and to make its services available throughout the country so far as is reasonably practicable;
- (2) revenue must cover current expenses each year and provide no less than one-half of capital requirements; and
- (3) services are to be kept up to date and operated efficiently and economically with charges as low as practicable.

Telecom Australia organisation

The Commission

The Act provides that the Commission shall consist of seven Commissioners, of whom one is the Managing Director. The Commissioners are appointed by the Commonwealth Government.

National, State, and district structure

Telecom national headquarters is located in Melbourne. All State Managers are responsible to the Chief General Manager, who in turn is responsible to the Managing Director.

The formulation of corporate policies and objectives is the responsibility of the national headquarters. The translation of these policies and objectives into operational fact is the responsibility of the State administrations. The Victorian State Administration which employs some 21,800 persons has an Operations Department, four functional Departments, and two other Branches.

The Operations Department has the major role of dealing with customers, installing and maintaining telecommunications equipment, and operating the telecommunications system.

The Operations Department is organised on a geographical basis with a District Telecommunications Manager in charge of each District. There are 20 Districts with Head Offices at Ararat, Ballarat, Benalla, Bendigo, Camberwell, Cheltenham, City, Clayton, Coburg, Croydon, Dandenong, Footscray, Frankston, Geelong, Hamilton, Ivanhoe, Mildura, Ringwood, Sale, and Shepparton. In addition, there are three special offices based in Melbourne, one dealing with Trunk Exchange and Manual Assistance Centres, another with Telegraph and Data, and the third with PABX facilities.

Functional organisational units which support the State Manager and the Operations Department are Engineering, Customer Services, Finance and Accounting, Personnel and Industrial Relations, and the Supply and Information Systems Branches. During 1978-79, material worth \$113m was issued from Main Store. Approximately 90 per cent was made in Australia. The Information Systems Branch is a growing unit with a wide range of modern data processing equipment. The computer installation at Clayton was to be further augmented by the end of 1979 and together with a similar installation in Sydney, serves all States. Further details of these functional units can be found on pages 604-5 of the *Victorian Year Book 1978*.

Corporate Plan

In December 1977, Telecom produced a Corporate Plan to cover the years 1977-78 to 1986-87. The four main thrusts of the Plan are in the areas of quality of service, efficiency, staff relations and development, and technological improvement. Specific corporate actions have been developed in each of these areas.

Telecommunications network

The present system comprises networks of individual subscribers' lines connected mainly to automatic exchanges, the exchanges being inter-connected by common-use circuits known as junctions or trunks. All new exchanges under construction at present are either of the crossbar or electronic type employing a common control method of connection. Each telephone subscriber in a particular community is connected to a terminal exchange. Terminal exchanges are grouped into zones for charging purposes. Melbourne has a network of more than one hundred automatic local exchanges.

In 1977, Telecom embarked on a modernisation programme which applies processors using computer techniques to control switching operations in local telephone exchanges, known as Stored Program Control (SPC). There are two phases, the first of which is to add processor controls to the current crossbar exchange equipment. At June 1979, there were three local crossbar exchanges under varying degrees of SPC control representing 26,000 lines of equipment. This phase will continue for the next four to five years. The second phase is to introduce a new generation of electronic exchanges using the AXE system. The first installation of this type of system has commenced at Endeavour Hills. The modernisation programme will be an important factor in containing cost increases and prices to the customer as well as allowing for the introduction of new facilities such as diversion of service, abbreviated dialling, and automatic reminder calls.

The Melbourne local call area covers some 4,170 square kilometres and is one of the largest in the world. New York's is 650 square kilometres and London's is 3,300 square kilometres.

In the national trunk network, automatic access through the Subscribers Trunk Dialling (STD) network was further extended. At June 1979, 93.9 per cent of all national trunk calls were dialled direct by subscribers with 98.5 per cent of Victorian subscribers having access to this facility. During 1978-79, 37 new centres were given access to the network.

International Subscriber Dialling (ISD) has been available in Victoria since April 1976 to those who request this facility. At June 1979, there were 128 exchanges and 49,528 services with outgoing ISD access. Subscribers with ISD access can dial overseas directly to any of 320 million telephone services in a total of 71 countries. During 1978-79, approximately 34 per cent of all international telephone calls originating in Victoria were dialled direct by ISD.

During 1978-79, the capital investment in Victoria was \$227m of which \$85m was spent on the local network and \$15m on the trunk network. Other major areas of expenditure were customer equipment \$92m and buildings \$15m.

Use of solar power—Glen Valley telephone exchange

During 1979, the commissioning of the first solar powered telephone exchange in Victoria at Glen Valley in the Omeo district of Gippsland took place. The remote location of the exchange made the use of conventional exchange network access difficult and a six-channel radio link was installed between Glen Valley and Mt Sam with the circuits being extended to Omeo through an underground cable. In addition, the rugged terrain and its remoteness from reticulated electricity supply presented a power supply problem. Transport and maintenance requirements made the use of diesel or gas powered electric generating plants unattractive and it was decided to install a solar power unit.

Solar power arrays were developed by Telecom staff from commercial solar panels. The two solar arrays produce an average of 40 watts at 24 volts and 15 watts at 48 volts for charging a 24 volt 400 ampere hour and a 48 volt 200 ampere hour battery, respectively, in order to power the radio and exchange equipment. Each solar panel produces 0.7 ampere at 12 volts in bright sunlight. Even covered in 5 centimetres of snow, the arrays continue to provide a satisfactory charge provided there is sunshine. In the depth of winter the minimum charge does not drop below 45 per cent of normal.

Both the exchange and the 60 watt radio transmitter are designed to rely completely on solar energy and to conserve this as much as possible; they only draw power when calls are being made and received. The maximum capacity of the exchange equipment is 40 lines and there are currently sixteen services connected. The type of exchange equipment installed (RAX) was selected because it has a lower continuous power requirement than the more modern crossbar type ARK unit.

Telecommunications facilities

The programme for the modernisation of public telephone facilities by replacement with modern CT3 type instruments continued with the replacement of a further 1,503 instruments. The programme for upgrading of these facilities is scheduled for completion in 1982.

Telecom is also responsible for the provision of telex services, data transmission facilities, and private lines, the demand for which is growing at a faster rate than for telephone facilities.

In 1978-79, 119,007 new telephone services were added to the network and 1,310 telex services were provided, increasing the capacity of the Victoria telex network to 6,169. In addition, 2,258 new data modems were provided.

The first extension of the Telefinder service to a country area was completed in 1978-79 with the opening of the radio paging service in the Morwell area.

The policy of keeping charges as low as possible continued with the introduction in November 1978 of reduced charges for some daytime STD calls and an economy rate for STD trunk line calls made between 9 p.m. and 8 a.m. daily. Further reductions in some trunk line charges are planned for May 1980, with the introduction of Community Access 80.

Further references: Melbourne—Sydney co-axial cable, *Victorian Year Book* 1964, pp. 848-50; Overseas telecommunications services, 1977, pp. 698-700, 1978 pp. 604-6

COMMUNICATIONS STATISTICS

General

Particulars concerning the revenue and expenditure in Victoria of the Australian Postal and Telecommunications Commissions for the year 1977-78 are shown in the following tables:

VICTORIA—AUSTRALIAN POSTAL COMMISSION:
REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE, 1977-78
(\$'000)

Revenue		Expenditure	
Mail services	129,200	Operating and general	110,100
Money and postal order services	1,300	Transportation	13,500
Commission or agency services	19,400	Superannuation	15,500
Other	3,700	Other	8,300
Total	153,600	Total	147,400

VICTORIA—AUSTRALIAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION:
REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE, 1977-78
(\$'000)

Revenue		Expenditure	
Telephone	459,172	Salaries and wages	238,748
Telegraph	15,009	Material	97,118
Proceeds of sales	3,672	Building	9,807
Other	4,794	Other	51,008
Total	482,647	Total	396,681

At 30 June 1978, the Australian Telecommunications Commission employed 22,226 persons in Victoria, including 21,804 full-time staff. On the same date, the Australian Postal Commission employed a total of 10,853 persons in Victoria, 8,357 of whom were full-time staff.

VICTORIA—TELEPHONE SERVICES AT 30 JUNE

Particulars	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978
Telephone exchanges	1,071	1,180	1,179	1,158	1,128
Public telephones	7,662	7,800	7,779	7,928	7,387
Services in operation	1,011,355	1,061,965	1,105,248	1,158,306	1,221,067
Instruments connected	1,485,140	1,544,098	1,598,447	1,701,769	1,749,733
Instruments per 1,000 of population	410.6	423.0	431.0	452.0	454.78

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				
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
1976-77	519,142	862	83,590	4,766
1977-78	477,281	699	87,311	4,728
DISPATCHED TO AND RECEIVED FROM PLACES OVERSEAS				
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
1976-77	78,683	1,234	13,742	1,129
1977-78	62,270	1,441	15,667	1,125
TOTAL POSTED IN VICTORIA AND RECEIVED FROM OVERSEAS				
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
1976-77	597,825	2,096	97,332	5,895
1977-78	539,551	2,140	102,978	5,853

VICTORIA—RADIO COMMUNICATION STATIONS AUTHORISED AT 30 JUNE

Class of station	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978
Transmitting and receiving—					
Fixed stations (a)—					
Aeronautical	—	—	—	—	—
Services with other countries	—	—	—	—	—
Other	345	366	379	412	438
Land stations (b)—					
Aeronautical	70	72	94	92	100
Base stations—					
Land mobile services	3,280	3,535	3,774	4,038	4,192
Harbour mobile services	47	77	88	104	115

VICTORIA—RADIO COMMUNICATION STATIONS AUTHORISED AT 30 JUNE—*continued*

Class of station	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978
Coast (c)	1	1	1	1	1
Limited coast	44	44	47	57	58
Repeater	41	41	42	43	43
Special experimental	136	140	130	149	443
Mobile stations (d)—					
Aeronautical	590	651	666	695	667
Citizens—					
HF	—	—	—	—	46,488
UHF	—	—	—	—	—
Land mobile services	34,843	42,144	46,230	49,263	50,977
Harbour mobile services	351	622	985	1,418	1,775
Radiodetermination	9	12	7	8	8
Radiotelephone subscribers' service	93	93	94	94	93
Ships	1,460	1,501	1,463	1,449	1,408
Space services (e)	1	2	2	2	2
Amateur stations	2,054	2,140	2,135	2,314	2,615
Total transmitting and receiving	43,365	51,441	56,137	60,139	109,423
Receiving only—					
Fixed stations (a)	13	13	7	9	10
Mobile stations (d)	21	24	7	7	48
Grand total	43,399	51,478	56,151	60,155	109,481

(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 21 commercial broadcasting stations and eight commercial television stations with licences in Victoria at 30 June 1978. In addition, there were seven broadcasting stations operated by the national broadcasting service and eight television stations operated by the national television service.

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