

COMMUNICATIONS

AUSTRALIAN POST OFFICE

Introduction

On 24 April 1974 the Prime Minister announced that the Australian Government had accepted the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry into the Australian Post Office that separate statutory corporations should be established to administer the postal and telecommunications services.

The Commission of Inquiry presented its Report to the Governor-General on 19 April 1974. Most of the Commission's principal recommendations were accepted by Federal Cabinet. The Report advocated that 50 per cent of capital expenditure should be financed from internal sources (profits, provisions for depreciation, and long service leave) to enable the Commissions to provide service at a level that would not be possible if finances were limited to loans made available through the Australian Budget. The Commission of Inquiry also recommended that the new Commissions should be independent of the Public Service Board, and that each should have the responsibility for organisation, staff, pay, and conditions of employees.

The Commissions will be free to set their own tariffs, except in the cases of basic letter postage, registered newspapers and publications, local telephone calls, telephone rentals, public telephone charges, and telegrams, which will require ministerial approval.

An important part of the Commission of Inquiry's recommendations, designed to help with the financial problems of the postal and telecommunications services, are its suggestions concerning "revenue foregone". The acceptance of these suggestions by Federal Cabinet ensures that where the Minister does not approve variations to tariffs for basic services as recommended by a Commission, the latter will be entitled to claim from the government interest-free payments equal to the amount of revenue foregone.

It was announced that following the passing of legislation to establish the Australian Postal and Telecommunications Commissions, the two Commissions would commence operations on 1 July 1975.

Looking back on the history of the Post Office in Victoria, it is interesting to note that postal services in this State were first placed under government control in April 1837. Seventeen years later, in March 1854, Australia's first commercial telegraph service was set up between Melbourne and Williamstown, providing a new form of communication that was incomparably faster than the pack-horse or mail coach. For fifteen years, until 1869, the electric telegraph was operated as a separate department to the Post Office, but in that year they were amalgamated to become the Post and Telegraph Department. This amalgamation of postal and telecommunications services has continued through Federation, in 1901, until the two services finally separated on 1 July 1975, a period of 106 years.

Since 1837, the Postmaster-General's Department in Victoria has progressed from a staff of one, and a crude bark hut, to a vast administration employing a staff of approximately 33,850 persons located in hundreds of buildings throughout the State.

At 30 June 1974 there were 330 official and 1,239 non-official post offices, 866 country automatic telephone exchanges, and 231 country manual exchanges, as well as 105 metropolitan automatic exchanges in Victoria. These offices and installations ensure that Departmental services are within the reach of all but the most isolated homes.

The following information, covering the year 1 July 1973 to 30 June 1974, relates mainly to branches and divisions of the Postmaster-General's Department which are associated with services directly available to the public.

Postal services

During the year 1 July 1973 to 30 June 1974 new official post office buildings were opened at Bundoora and Maffra. Modern and attractive in appearance, yet strictly functional and planned to meet future needs, they provide facilities for the latest mail handling techniques as well as providing greatly improved amenities for staff.

Stamps issued during 1973-74

On 11 July 1973 a series of eight definitive stamps featuring four marine life subjects and four gemstone subjects was issued. The marine life set comprises the following values and subjects: 1c—Banded Coral Shrimp, 2c—Fiddler Crab, 3c—Coral Crab, and 4c—Mauve Stinger. The gemstones set comprises: 6c—Chrysoptase, 7c—Agate, 8c—Opal, and 9c—Rhodonite.

Twelve new Australian Antarctic Territory definitive stamps were placed on sale on 15 August 1973. Six of the stamps depict the aircraft used by explorers who participated in important flights in Antarctica undertaken by Australians, Americans, and Norwegians during the 1920s and 1930s. The six values and subjects are: 5c—Mawson's DH Gipsy Moth, 1931, 8c—Rymill's DH Fox Moth, 1934-1937, 25c—Wilkins' Lockheed Vega, 1928, 30c—Ellsworth's Northrop Gamma, 1935, 35c—Christensen's Avro Avian, 1934, and 50c—Byrd's Ford Tri-Motor, 1929. The remaining six stamps deal with the subject of ecology in Antarctica. The 1c stamp depicts Plankton, 7c—Adelie Penguin, 9c—Leopard Seal, 10c—Killer Whale, 20c—Albatross, and \$1.00—Sperm Whale.

On 5 September 1973 a special 7c commemorative stamp was issued to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of Legacy—an ex-servicemen's organisation concerned with the welfare of needy families of deceased ex-servicemen. The stamp features a large "helping hand" sheltering young people at play.

The 1973 Christmas issue was released on 3 October and comprised two stamps. The 7c value illustrates a text from the New Testament (Mathew 3: 13-17), "This is my Beloved Son". The 30c value also features a New Testament text (John 10: 14), "I am the Good Shepherd".

The next issue featured four stamps each depicting an outstanding example of Australian architecture. They were released on 17 October 1973. Values and subjects were: 7c—Sydney Opera House, 10c—Buchanan's Hotel, Townsville, 40c—Como House, Melbourne, and 50c—St James Church, Sydney.

The first stamp issue for 1974 became available on 13 February and featured four examples of Australia's distinctive fauna. The issue forms part of a new series of long-term definitive stamps issued by the Post Office. Values and subjects are: 20c—Wombat, 25c—Spiny Anteater, 30c—Brushtail Possum, and 75c—Feathertailed Glider. The 150th anniversary of the proclamation of the Charter of Justice was celebrated by the issue of a special 7c commemorative stamp on 15 May 1974. The design depicts an Australian judge seated in his chair of office. The final stamp issue for the 1973-74 financial year consisted

of three high value definitive stamps that were issued to replace three similar values in the earlier "Navigator" series. All three stamps featured well-known paintings by Australian artists. The \$1.00 denomination features George Lambert's painting *A Sergeant of Light Horse*. The \$2.00 value depicts Hans Heysen's *Red Gums of the Far North*, while the \$4.00 stamp shows Tom Roberts's painting *Shearing the Rams*.

Philatelic centres

At 30 June 1974 there were fifteen philatelic centres operating at official post offices in Victoria. At these centres it is possible to purchase the commemorative issues of Australia up to six months after their date of issue (subject to stocks not being exhausted before that time). Collectors can also obtain at these centres new postage stamp issues from the Australian Antarctic Territory, Norfolk Island, Cocos Island (Keeling), Fiji, Western Samoa, Nauru, Christmas Island, and New Guinea. In addition to the philatelic centres, "first day of issue" postmarker facilities are available at 157 post offices in Victoria.

Transport Branch

The Transport Branch of the Postal Services Division had a fleet of 862 vehicles and a staff of 485 persons at 30 June 1974. This figure included 380 motor drivers who were employed largely on rostered shifts and who transport mails and clear public telephone boxes and street letter boxes throughout the Melbourne metropolitan area. The Transport Branch provides a pool of sedan cars for authorised Departmental staff, and also undertakes the movement of bulk equipment, stores, cables, and poles by semi-trailer, or truck, to specified locations.

In some areas, mails are conveyed by private contractors. There were 1,022 of these services in Victoria at 30 June 1974, operating over a total of 21,844,495 kilometres at a cost of \$1,822,903 per annum. Of the mail routes operated under private contract, the majority serve the more sparsely populated areas.

The vehicles allotted to the Transport Branch formed only a part of the total fleet of 4,779 vehicles belonging to the Department in Victoria at 30 June 1974. A large proportion of this total are vehicles allotted to the Engineering Division which are stationed at various depots throughout the State. Many have been designed for specific duties, such as the conveyance of huge items of equipment, or for use as mobile cranes. Others are fitted out as mobile workshops.

In addition to these vehicles, the Engineering Division also employed 643 major mechanical aids at 30 June 1974, which are used for earth moving activities and for the installation and maintenance of telecommunications lines and other equipment. Well over 1,000 small mobile units are also used for a variety of purposes.

Telecommunications services

Automatic telephone network

Steady progress is being maintained toward providing a totally automatic telephone network throughout Victoria. During 1973-74 several new automatic telephone exchanges were brought into service, the largest ones being at Moe, Morwell, and Cranbourne. At 30 June 1974 there were more than one million telephone services in Victoria, comprising 976,912 automatic telephone services, and 34,443 connected to manual exchanges.

Telephone directories

The 1974 alphabetical directory featured an attractive cover design depicting Captain Cook's cottage, in its pleasant setting in the Fitzroy Gardens. 1,110,000 copies were printed. The classified directory for 1973-74 featured Melbourne's "Royal Arcade". 1,120,000 copies of this directory were printed.

Each of the nine country directories for Victoria featured a particular breed of dog on the cover. The breeds selected were—Irish Setter, Cocker Spaniel, Poodle, Dobermann, Afghan Hound, Shetland Sheepdog, Australian Terrier, Dachshund, and Pekinese.

Subscriber trunk dialling (S.T.D.)

Subscriber trunk dialling facilities, which enable a telephone subscriber to dial distant subscribers without the assistance of a telephone operator, have continued to expand rapidly. At 30 June 1974, 757 exchanges in Victoria provided 947,940 services with access to S.T.D. Additional centres to which national S.T.D. became available during the year included Morwell, Yallourn, Shepparton, Warrnambool, Horsham, Swan Hill, Nhill, Creswick, Eildon, Alexandra, Sorrento, and Mt Beauty.

Telegrams

The public telegraph service is part of the national TRESS network (Teleprinter Reperforator Electric Switching System). One hundred and ninety-eight post offices were connected to TRESS at 30 June 1974. Messages are relayed through TRESS to the post office servicing the designation of the telegram. During the year, 3,338,771 telegrams were handled.

Automatic telex

Automatic telex transmits a type-written message by teleprinter to another teleprinter in a fashion similar to making an S.T.D. telephone call. During the year ended 30 June 1974 an additional 515 telex services were connected, bringing the total services in operation to 3,157. Victorian telex subscribers then had access to 12,857 services in Australia, as well as to some 100 countries overseas.

"Datel" service

There is an increasing demand for facilities to transmit digital data over telephone and telegraph lines. Known originally as "Data Transmission", the service has since been re-named "Datel". Digital data information has to be converted to a form suitable for transmission over the lines provided by the Department. This conversion is performed by a modulator/demodulator unit, known as a "Modem". The data can then be sent in three ways: over the telephone network, via private telephone or telegraph lines providing point to point circuits for the customer's exclusive use or over the telex network. Lines suitable for high transmission speeds can be provided except in the telex network. At 30 June 1974 there were 524 Modems in service in Victoria, and a total of 3,728 operating in Australia.

Radio communications systems

During March 1974 a 120 channel system was provided linking Dromana trunk network, and smaller ones providing radiotelephone subscriber services were established in various parts of Victoria, and in areas of south-western New South Wales under the jurisdiction of Victorian telecommunications administration. Eight single-channel subscriber systems were brought into service during this period, most of which were in south-western New South Wales. In the trunk network, four 24 channel systems were installed. The first, in July 1973, linked Mt Nowa Nowa with Gelantipy; the second, installed in January 1974, linked Mildura and Palinyewan; the third came into service in May 1974, and linked Coral Bank with Mt Beauty; and the remaining radio system, linking Orbost with Cabbage Tree Creek, was established in June 1974.

During March 1974 a 120 channel system was provided linking Dromana with Cowes. A 60 channel system was established in the following month linking

Morwell with Mt Baw Baw. Two broadband radiotelephone installations were completed during the year. One was a 300 channel spur system that linked Portland to Hamilton. The other was a 960 channel system linking Swan Hill and Ouyen.

Television

No new television stations were completed during 1973-74, but planning commenced for the provision of a national television translator for the Corryong area, and also for a radio link between Warrnambool and Portland to serve a commercial television translator at Portland. Several site surveys were made for future television translators in East Gippsland. During the year work began on the conversion of television stations for colour operation. A new television transmitter was installed for ABV 2 at Mt Dandenong.

Medium frequency broadcasting

During 1973-74 work commenced in providing two new solid-state transmitters for 3WL, Warrnambool. These replaced two old valve-type transmitters. Site surveys were made for a two kilowatt station, 3MT, to be established at Omeo. Planning for this station commenced during the year.

Radio Australia

During 1973-74 a number of new "curtain" aerial systems were installed at the Radio Australia transmitting site, to improve transmissions to Indonesia, New Guinea, and South-East Asia, and Darwin. Another project completed during the year was the re-location and modernising of programme input equipment from the control room to the frequency synthesiser room at Shepparton. This included the provision of new solid-state amplifiers. Other work included the replanning of the aerial lay-out at Lyndhurst, and the installation of new solid-state receivers at the High Park Receiving Station.

Radio licensing and monitoring

All civil radio transmitting stations are licensed and controlled by the Radio Branch of the Engineering Division, and rigid technical standards for equipment design and performance are enforced by regular inspection, by monitoring, and by frequent transmission checks.

As a member of the International Telecommunications Union, the Australian Post Office observes and checks all radio transmissions received in Australia. Results of these observations are forwarded to the International Frequency Registration Board in Geneva, Switzerland.

The Radio Branch investigates complaints from broadcast listeners and television viewers concerning interference to reception. On behalf of the Australian Department of Transport, its staff also inspect the radio installations aboard vessels in the ports of Melbourne and Geelong.

Statistics

VICTORIA—POST OFFICES: PERSONS EMPLOYED

Period	Number of post offices	Persons employed					Total
		Permanent	Temporary and exempt	Semi- and non-official postmasters and staffs	Mail contractors	Other (a)	
1969-70	1,827	18,346	9,429	2,036	984	768	31,563
1970-71	1,759	19,240	9,338	1,930	899	694	32,101
1971-72	1,690	20,762	8,157	1,856	824	725	32,324
1972-73	1,646	21,059	8,548	1,820	914	725	33,066
1973-74	1,569	21,479	8,948	1,713	918	793	33,851

(a) Includes telephone office-keepers and part-time temporary and exempt employees.

Particulars concerning the revenue and expenditure of the Postmaster-General's Department in Victoria for each of the years 1969-70 to 1973-74 are contained in the following table :

VICTORIA—POSTMASTER-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT :
REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE
(\$'000)

Particulars	1969-70	1970-71	1971-72	1972-73	1973-74
REVENUE					
Postal	45,607	51,138	57,873	61,525	66,529
Telephone	123,462	142,270	165,769	192,228	221,542
Telegraph	3,872	4,846	5,494	6,191	6,707
Proceeds of sales	2,100	2,222	2,122	2,279	3,004
Recoverable works	3,838	4,264	4,384	4,543	5,141
International services	118	15	191	136	361
Total	178,997	204,755	235,833	266,902	303,284
EXPENDITURE					
Salaries and wages	105,390	120,631	140,911	160,813	196,051
Material	50,986	47,957	53,474	52,877	60,413
Carriage of mails by contractors	2,927	2,999	2,961	2,797	2,881
Buildings and properties	9,539	10,901	6,667	8,944	8,309
Accommodation services	5,450	5,460	5,321	5,932	7,121
Other administrative	9,943	10,500	11,390	13,313	15,000
Total	184,235	198,448	220,724	244,676	289,775

The following table shows the total number and value of money orders and postal notes issued and paid in each of the five years 1969-70 to 1973-74 :

VICTORIA—MONEY ORDERS AND POSTAL ORDERS

Period	Money orders				Postal orders			
	Issued		Paid		Issued		Paid	
	Number	Value	Number	Value	Number	Value	Number	Value
	'000	\$'000	'000	\$'000	'000	\$'000	'000	\$'000
1969-70	1,926	38,931	1,936	37,709	3,808	8,086	3,714	7,277
1970-71	1,487	33,454	1,481	33,004	4,158	11,007	3,888	9,597
1971-72	1,179	28,887	1,101	28,467	4,415	13,295	4,028	12,042
1972-73	1,034	28,727	1,006	28,009	4,422	13,832	4,021	12,487
1973-74	917	29,808	664	29,013	3,996	14,333	3,056	11,095

Of the money orders issued in 1973-74, 803,451 for \$28,500,101 were payable in Australia and 113,796 for \$1,308,408 in other countries. The orders paid included 823,008 for \$27,998,733 issued in Australia, and 41,529 for \$1,014,610 in other countries.

VICTORIA—TELEPHONE SERVICES AT 30 JUNE

Particulars	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974
Telephone exchanges	1,312	1,274	1,253	1,229	1,071
Public telephones	7,505	7,610	7,585	7,635	7,662
Services in operation	824,227	864,044	896,615	948,344	1,011,355
Instruments connected	1,182,149	1,239,652	1,293,977	1,370,163	1,485,140
Instruments per 1,000 of population	343.3	353.9	365.0	380.6	410.6

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				
1969-70	559,138	2,262	94,188	5,652
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
DISPATCHED TO AND RECEIVED FROM PLACES OVERSEAS				
1969-70	77,142	1,249	13,860	792
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
TOTAL POSTED IN VICTORIA AND RECEIVED FROM OVERSEAS				
1969-70	636,280	3,511	108,048	6,444
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

VICTORIA—RADIO COMMUNICATION STATIONS AUTHORISED AT 30 JUNE

Class of station	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974
Transmitting and receiving—					
Fixed stations (a)—					
Aeronautical	4	4	..	..	..
Services with other countries	12	..	..	..	..
Other	262	277	260	302	345
Land stations (b)—					
Aeronautical	49	52	75	69	70
Base stations—					
Land mobile services	2,066	2,351	2,565	3,032	3,280
Harbour mobile services	31	37	37	45	47
Coast (c)	25	27	1	1	1
Limited coast	..	..	32	37	44
Repeater	..	..	40	41	41
Special experimental	169	159	138	137	136
Mobile stations (d)—					
Aeronautical	512	510	449	502	590
Land mobile services	25,005	27,447	29,592	33,015	34,843
Harbour mobile services	257	252	270	283	351
Radiodetermination	..	..	9	9	9
Radiotelephone subscribers service	..	..	159	87	93
Ships	914	989	1,088	1,284	1,460
Space services (e)	..	..	1	1	1
Amateur stations	1,925	1,966	1,989	2,012	2,054
Total transmitting and receiving	31,231	34,071	36,705	40,857	43,365
Receiving only—					
Fixed stations (a)	198	198	34	15	13
Mobile stations (d)	..	..	..	21	21
Grand total	31,429	34,269	36,739	40,893	43,399

(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 force

The number of stations licensed for broadcasting and television, and the number of holders of broadcast listeners' and television viewers' licences in Victoria at 30 June 1970 to 1974 are shown in the following table :

VICTORIA—NUMBER OF BROADCASTING AND TELEVISION LICENCES IN FORCE AT 30 JUNE

Class of licence	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974
Broadcasting station (a)	20	20	20	20	20
Television station (b)	9	9	9	9	9
Broadcast receiver	72,051	64,298	58,390	53,588	48,870
Television receiver	107,362	115,613	111,921	114,721	103,451
Combined broadcast and television receiver	675,457	690,464	699,652	722,583	732,832
Amateur	1,925	1,966	1,989	2,012	2,054

(a) Excluding five broadcasting stations (including three shortwave) operated by the national broadcasting service.
 (b) Excluding eight television stations operated by the national television service.

Further reference, 1975 ; 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

The Overseas Telecommunications Commission (Australia) was established by the *Overseas Telecommunications Act* 1946. The Commission is the authority responsible for the establishment, maintenance, and operation of telecommunication services between Australia and other countries with ships at sea, and to and between the external Territories of the Commonwealth.

With most other Commonwealth countries, the Commission is a member of the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation, the purpose of which is to promote the efficient exploitation and development of the Commonwealth external telecommunications system. It is a three-tier structure comprising the Commonwealth Conference on Telecommunications, the Commonwealth Telecommunications Council, and the Commonwealth Telecommunications Bureau. The Commonwealth Telecommunications Council is the continuing management body of the Organisation with the role of promoting the purposes of the Organisation and carrying out the policies agreed to by governments. The Commonwealth Telecommunications Bureau is the Secretariat for the Organisation and functions under the control and direction of the Council. The 1972 Commonwealth Telecommunications Conference reviewed the working of the Organisation and recommended new collaborative financial arrangements governing the use of the Commonwealth telecommunications systems.

Public message telegram, telephone, telex, phototelegram, and leased circuit services are provided to most countries and places throughout the world and television to those with access to satellite communication facilities. A switched data service is also available to some countries. These services are provided by cables, communication satellites, and high frequency radio.

The following table shows particulars of overseas telecommunication traffic other than telegraphic between Australia and overseas countries for the years ended 31 March 1973 and 1974 :

AUSTRALIA—INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION SERVICES OTHER THAN TELEGRAPHIC SERVICES, YEARS ENDED 31 MARCH 1973 AND 1974
(paid minutes)

Service	Transmissions					
	From Australia		To Australia		Total	
	1973	1974	1973	1974	1973	1974
Telephone	9,000	12,108	8,426	13,359	17,426	25,467
Telex	5,181	6,444	4,986	6,101	10,167	12,545
Television programmes	1,097	1,008	4,226	4,401	5,323	5,409

Particulars of the volume of international telegraphic services originating and terminating in Australia during the years ended 31 March 1973 and 1974 are shown in the following table :

AUSTRALIA—INTERNATIONAL TELEGRAPH SERVICES,
YEARS ENDED 31 MARCH 1973 AND 1974
(^{'000} words)

Class of traffic	Words transmitted					
	From Australia		To Australia		Total	
	1973	1974	1973	1974	1973	1974
Letter	31,558	36,494	24,385	28,484	55,943	64,978
Ordinary	27,891	32,741	23,888	28,988	51,779	61,729
Press	2,410	1,944	2,580	1,854	4,990	3,798
Greetings	1,696	1,608	2,007	2,000	3,703	3,608
Urgent	1,862	2,322	1,302	1,648	3,164	3,970
Other	518	531	2,265	2,380	2,783	2,911
Total	65,935	75,640	56,427	65,354	122,362	140,994

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