



Bob Black, left and Rod Hooper stand in front of the new machine at Dandenong Letters Centre in November 2019. 201705

Working to deliver on record post

By Danielle Kutchel

A new parcel sorting machine installed at Dandenong Letters Centre almost a year ago is working around the clock to keep up with current demand.

An Australia Post spokesperson confirmed that the machine, which was officially opened in November 2019, is currently processing around 200,000 parcels a day - its expected peak, as announced at the opening - and operating seven days a week.

But residents are taking to social media to tell of extended wait times for parcel delivery as *Victorians in lockdown opt for online shopping*.

The spokesperson acknowledged that Australia Post is currently dealing with "record parcel volumes at the same time as our workforce capacity has been reduced due to stage four restrictions", adding that demand and restraints on Australia Post's workforce added up to "an additional three-day delay for deliveries ... within and into Victoria."

Distribution centres in metropolitan Melbourne, including the one in Dandenong South, have been hit with a 10 percent reduction in daily workforce and 33 percent in peak times, along with split shifts to adhere to Covid-safe requirements.

Tracking numbers show many parcels are making detours to other centres for processing, even as far as Sydney.

The spokesperson said this was to help "ensure we keep moving items through our network as quickly as we can, whilst adhering to stage four restrictions."

The majority of Melbourne parcels have been processed in Melbourne, with any parcels sent to Sydney sent overnight, processed the next day and sent back to Melbourne that night.

Earlier this month, The Age reported that Australia Post had asked its workers to "volunteer" to assist with delivery of parcels from the Dandenong South facility, to help cope with the backlog.

According to the article, staff who volunteered on weekends would receive time off in lieu, and volunteers would also be reimbursed for the use of their cars.

When asked about this scenario, the Australia Post spokesperson said: "non-operational team members are now working alongside our posties in Victoria to help us deliver while receiving their normal salary."

In addition, they said, 1000 new casuals had been brought on board to manage the "unprecedented parcel volumes".

"In the lead up to Christmas, we'll recruit an additional 2,500 people into our network so we can continue to serve the community and deliver these essential supplies," the spokesperson said.

dandenong.starcommunity.com.au

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