



New Zealand House of Representatives
Te Whare Māngai o Aotearoa

Petitions Committee

Komiti Whiriwhiri Take Petihana

54th Parliament
September 2026

Petition of Postal Workers Union of Aotearoa: Ensure all mail addressed to accessible business premises is delivered

Presented to the House of Representatives
by Greg O'Connor, Chairperson

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Petition of Postal Workers Union of Aotearoa

Recommendation

The Petitions Committee has considered the petition of Postal Workers Union of Aotearoa —Ensure all mail addressed to accessible business premises is delivered—and recommends to the Government that it seek a review of NZ Post’s 2024 policy change relating to mail redirection.

Request for mail not to be returned to sender

This petition was signed by 579 people. It was presented to the House by Helen White on 30 April 2026, and requests:

That the House of Representatives urge the Government to ensure that mail with the correct postage that is clearly addressed to accessible business premises is delivered and not returned to sender.

Change in NZ Post mail redirection policy

In May 2024, NZ Post announced that it would stop automatic forwarding to PO Box and Private Bag addresses in instances where mail was addressed to a non-serviced street address.¹ Since this change, mail addressed to the street address of a business or institution that has a PO Box or Private Bag is returned to sender, if the street address is not also registered as a postal address. Previously, postal workers would use their knowledge of PO Box and Private Bag holders to mark up the envelope, redirecting it to the correct box or bag.

Comments from the petitioner

The Postal Workers Union of Aotearoa told us that postal workers are frustrated at having to return mail, when the mail has a clear street address for a business or institution. We heard that NZ Post customers had also expressed frustration to postal workers at their mail being returned.

The petitioner argued that the current policy is morally wrong, describing the policy as a “very blunt, cold, and uncaring behaviour modification programme”. The union also told us that there is no process for the reimbursement of the cost of postage for mail that is returned to sender.

The union highlighted that the current policy results in mail addressed to hospitals, prisons, schools, government departments, and other public and community institutions being returned. It told us that following the death on duty of Senior Sergeant Lyn Fleming in 2025, the policy required that sympathy cards addressed to Nelson Central Police Station be returned. The union told us that postal workers chose to deliver this mail anyway. It said that adhering to the policy could have resulted in senders thinking that the Police did not want

¹ NZ Post, [Changes to PO Box and Private Bag services](#), May 2024.

their sympathy cards. We heard several other examples of important mail not being delivered following the change in policy.

The union was dissatisfied with the communication between NZ Post and its customers about the change, and was concerned that there had been insufficient media coverage about it. The union said that businesses have the option of applying for their street address to be registered as an alternative delivery point, but they were not informed of this when the change was announced.

NZ Post maintains a document called the Postal Users' Guide, which sets out the terms and conditions for the use of NZ Post services. It says:

We will deliver mail into business premises if a locked mailbox or letter slot is provided on the ground floor and in a common entrance, or if a reception desk or shop counter suitable for holding mail is close to the main entrance. We will not deliver mail above the ground floor.²

The petitioner is concerned that the guide, as well as NZ Post's address standards document, does not make it clear to the public that mail addressed to business premises may not be delivered.³

Section 16 of the Postal Services Act 1998 allows NZ Post to return mail that bears a "wrong" address. The petitioner said that, in 2024, NZ Post created a new category of mail: mail bearing a "non-valid postal address". Such mail is considered by NZ Post to be a "wrong" address. The petitioner pointed out that regulations could have been made under section 60 of the Act to define this category in law. It expressed concern that NZ Post did not seek the making of regulations when changing the policy. The petitioner does not believe that Parliament intended NZ Post to be able to make such a change without resorting to regulation.

The petitioner told us that NZ Post has taken steps to ensure that mail addressed to members of Parliament is still delivered, even if it does not have the correct Private Bag number. The petitioner would like to see NZ Post revert to its previous policy, and allow postal workers to redirect street-addressed mail to the appropriate PO Box or Private Bag, without returning it to sender. It said that people have started to get used to using the correct PO Box numbers, so reverting the policy would result in fewer pieces of mail needing to be marked up than before the change.

Comments from NZ Post

NZ Post does not support the petition. It provided a submission outlining its concerns about the redirection process, and the steps it took to engage with customers regarding the change.

² NZ Post, Postal Users' Guide, July 2026.

³ NZ Post, Address Standards, June 2011.

NZ Post described the process for marking up redirections as manual and informal. It said that postal workers would use their own knowledge as well as paper-based lists of PO Boxes and Private Bags to mark up mail. NZ Post identified several issues with this approach:

- It did not encourage senders to take care in addressing their mail correctly, and did not encourage receivers to be clear about their valid postal address.
- The process was time-consuming and costly, and was provided free of charge.
- The data used to produce the paper-based lists was outdated, as businesses often moved without informing NZ Post. This led to delays, and carried a high risk of mail being sent to the wrong place.

For these reasons, NZ Post decided to discontinue the markup process. It told us about the steps that it took to engage with customers about the change, including encouraging businesses to ensure that their senders have their correct postal address, and informing businesses that they can register their street address as a delivery point if they want physical delivery. We heard that 360 businesses sought to register for physical delivery, around 90 percent of which were approved. NZ Post also told us that businesses can apply for the redirection of mail from their street address to a PO Box or Private Bag, using the permanent redirection service.

NZ Post told us that most organisations do not want mail delivered to a physical address. It recognises that some businesses and large organisations display their physical location to the public more prominently than their postal address. It said that those organisations were encouraged to make their postal address clear and to set up paid redirections if they want to ensure incorrectly addressed mail reaches them. NZ Post said it is well understood by the public that a physical address is not always the same as a postal address, and that many organisations have separate physical and postal addresses.

Our response to the petition

We thank the Postal Workers Union of Aotearoa for bringing this petition to Parliament, and we acknowledge its frustration with the change in policy relating to marking up mail redirections.

We appreciate NZ Post taking the time to respond to our questions about the policy. We acknowledge its view that the redirection process carried a high risk of error, and did not encourage senders to take care to address mail correctly. We recognise the importance of mail being addressed correctly, and we support NZ Post continuing to encourage businesses to ensure senders have the correct postal address for their mail.

We appreciate that NZ Post has taken steps to ensure that mail addressed to members of Parliament is delivered, and we believe that similar steps should be taken to ensure that mail addressed to the street addresses of businesses and other organisations is not returned to sender. We are particularly concerned about the effect the current policy may have on people in hospitals and prisons. We therefore recommend that the Government seek a review of NZ Post's 2024 policy change relating to mail redirection.

Appendix

Committee procedure

The petition was signed by 579 people on the Parliament website. It was presented to the House by Helen White on 30 April 2026 and referred to us that day. We met between 25 June and 17 September 2026 to consider it. We received written submissions and heard oral evidence from the petitioner and NZ Post.

Committee members

Greg O'Connor (Chairperson)
Hon Andrew Bayly (from 1 July 2026)
Greg Fleming
Paulo Garcia (until 1 July 2026)
Celia Wade-Brown

Carl Bates participated in some of our work on this petition.

Related resources

The documents we received as evidence in relation to this petition are available on the [Parliament website](#).

A recording of our hearing can be accessed online on the [Parliament website](#).