

Post prices to rise as delivery slows

Heath Aston

The cost of sending letters through the post will as much as double within months.

Without any fanfare, the federal government last week established the legal framework for Australia Post to implement a two-speed system for stamped post.

The price of "ordinary" mail is expected to rise from 70¢ a letter to \$1 from as early as next month, despite taking an additional two days to reach its destination.

A new class of mail – known as

"priority post" – which will take the same time to deliver as today's ordinary mail – will cost about \$1.40 a stamp.

About 70 per cent of all business mail is already sent under the slower system.

Pensioners and concession card holders will be partly insulated from price rises to "social mail" by the continuation of access to 50 discounted stamps a year and Christmas stamps will be anchored at 65 cents for now.

Introduction of a split system has been overseen by Communica-

tions Minister Malcolm Turnbull, who responded to Australia Post pleas. The company faces multi-billion-dollar losses in the decade ahead without sharp price rises.

Australians send a billion fewer letters than in 2008 and Australia Post faces losses of \$6.6 billion over the next decade without substantial reform.

But amid signs that the uncapped nature of the proposed priority service will be deeply unpopular, Mr Turnbull has made a significant last-minute concession.

A poll of 1200 people conducted

by Essential Media Communications on behalf of the Communications Union found 70 per cent of people do not support a two-tiered system.

Mr Turnbull had originally promised the priority system would be a "commercial product with no ACCC [Australian Competition and Consumer Commission] or ministerial pricing oversight" but last week he agreed to partial oversight by the pricing watchdog.

The ACCC will now be required to assess any price rises in which the cost of priority post rises above

1.5 times the value of ordinary post.

The ACCC last ticked off a rise in stamp prices in March last year when stamps rose from 60¢ to 70¢.

Surveys by Australia Post have found that customers, particularly in rural and regional areas, value retaining the network of 4400 post offices over cheaper stamps.

Australia Post chief executive Ahmed Fahour – Australia's highest-paid public servant on \$4.6 million a year – has forecast that the government-approved changes will cut losses over the next decade by about \$6 billion.

Grand dome with a view to match

Shane Green

Richard and Maryann Pope and daughter Sara have spent an exhausting but exhilarating day at the Melbourne International Exhibition in the new Exhibition Building. Yet there is one more thing to see on this summer's day in 1881: the view of Marvellous Melbourne from the dome.

For a threepence admission, they climb more than 80 steep steps to a promenade, the highest point in Melbourne.

This is what they would have seen. Government House, opened five years before, sits magnificently across the Yarra. Atop the city are Parliament House and the Treasury Building. The bay and coast are in clear sight.

"There is a grand view of the city," Richard Pope tells us in his diary, "which well repays one for the trouble of climbing up the long stairs."

Some 134 years later, we are following in their footsteps, climbing the same long stairs, worn shallow by countless visitors. And just like the Popes, the trouble is worth it: the view is still grand.

At our feet spreads a Melbourne still marvellous, but different. The view south is now obscured by a tall forest of skyscrapers. Gaps provide a glimpse of the Mornington Peninsula, a hint of the granite You Yangs.

Move around the dome, however, and the outlook hasn't changed all that much. To the east, there is the 1850s Royal Terrace on Nicholson Street. On the horizon, the Dandenongs. To the north, you follow the line of the Great Dividing Range around to Mount Macedon.

Our journey to the top today is privileged: the dome has been closed to the public for more than a century.

That is about to change.

Work will soon start on a \$20 million federally funded project that will reinstate the dome promenade, providing the 360-degree view of Melbourne that was such a great attraction at the 1880 and 1888 international exhibitions.

Dr Patrick Greene, Museum Victoria's chief executive, is leading our climb. When he was appointed in 2002, one of the first things he did was head up to the dome of the World Heritage-listed building.

His reaction? "Wow."

He knew then that a way needed to be found to reopen the dome to the public.

Museum Victoria, which is responsible for the World Heritage site, will soon announce the design team for one of the city's most exciting heritage projects, with a 2017 completion date.

There will be work on the basement, a lift installed, and the promenade reinstated and made all-weather. It will be a 21st century experience of a 19th century treasure, the place where the nation was born in 1901 with the opening of the first Australian federal parliament.

On the balcony just above where the official dais was positioned that day, an anonymous door leads to the stairs, divided by a banister that would have ordered the crowds ascending and descending. A lift was added for the 1888 exhibition.

From a distance, the dome looks magnificent. The Australian flag snaps in the wind above the dome's gilded cap. (The flag flew for the first time here in 1901).

Up close, the dome's age is showing. The render is cracked, and part of the project will be to restore the dome to its former glory.

Our viewing platform today is narrow, strictly utilitarian steel walkways. Yet it was very different in the 1880s when the exhibitions were held. "Everybody wanted to see the exhibitions and they

wanted to be seen at the exhibitions," Dr Greene says. "And where better than up here on the dome?"

What was it like? Pictorially, we have an 1880 sketch depicting crowds gazing across the gardens to Government House.

In 1888, the views were recorded by Charles Nettleton, the great Melbourne photographer. The south view shows the Princess Theatre, the Windsor, Parliament House and the Treasury Building. The view west shows the Supreme Court dome.

The Pope family excursion is detailed in an excellent book, *Visions of Colonial Grandeur*, that tells the

story of the international exhibitions.

Richard Pope, a miner from Cornwall who would settle in Australia, kept detailed diaries over 41 years. The family rose early, and travelled from Sandhurst (now Bendigo). A day of sightseeing was fol-

lowed by a second marvelling at the Great Exhibition's displays of industry and art from around the world.

The book notes they ended the day with a trip to the dome. But what did they think?

So to the primary source.

The Pope diaries are held by the State Library of Victoria.

I feel a frisson turning the yellowing leaves, finding the entry on page 70, under the heading "In the Dome".

"On payment of threepence, we were permitted to ascend the dome, which is surrounded by an open gallery, protected by a parapet so that there is no danger of falling over," Pope records in his beautiful hand.

And of course, that grand view will soon be available to us again.

Charles Nettleton's 1890 photographs from the tower of the Royal Exhibition Building. The top shows the west view across the gardens towards the city. Work has begun to reopen the building's promenade by 2017. Photo: Eddie Jim



5.6 The identification of growth opportunities in the City of Melbourne.

- The City of Melbourne is currently considering a new Housing Strategy *Homes for People* for the city.
- The map at page 19 [reproduced below] clearly indicates that the designated growth areas are expected to absorb 86% of the new housing in the municipality.
- The Carlton site the subject of this appeal is NOT within one of these growth areas.

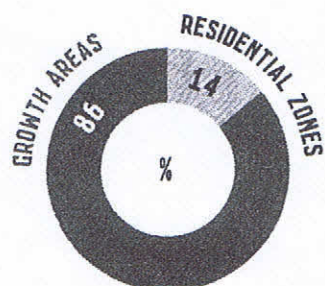
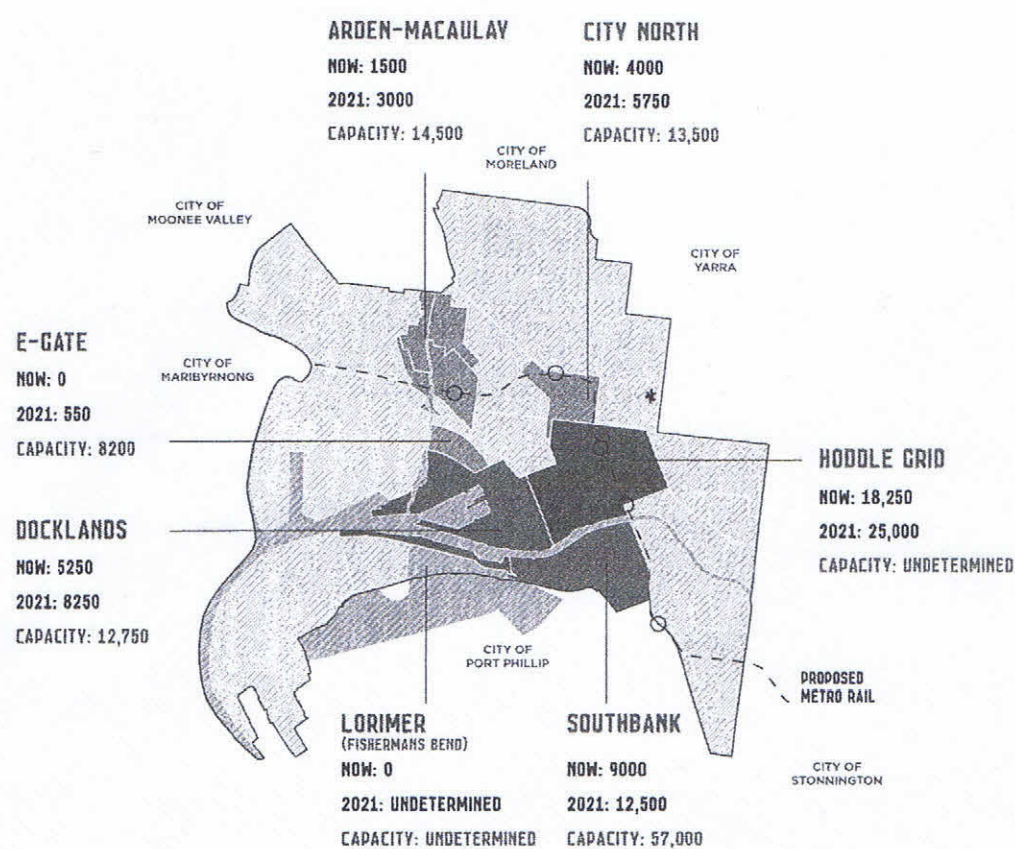


Figure 2.2 (top): Our growth areas including our urban renewal areas and the Hoddle Grid and the current number of dwellings now, the expected number of dwellings by 2021 and the total capacity of each area where known. (capacities derived from structure plans and the Victorian Government's discussion paper Melbourne, lets talk about the future)

Figure 2.3 (left): The percentage of new housing expected to be within our growth areas (urban renewal areas and the Hoddle Grid) compared to in the proposed residential zones.



Looking East from West End of Drummond Place - Building Centre - 4 Storeys

Fig 1



Looking East from Cnr Grattan and Cardigan Streets - Carlton Clocktower Centre

Fig 2