My name: Chris
My town: Sydney

My Covid19 experience

Posties are normal people. One of the most confronting things this year was Covid19. While most people were at tucked up at home, we were work every day. We are not the heroes like ambos. We are ordinary people in the privileged place of serving our community. That's where we get our job satisfaction. We know we make a difference.

Covid was almost apocalyptic in some ways. I would go into a street and no one was there. There were no people and no cars. It was scary. I was worried I would bring the virus home to my family. The community went into hiding, but we were out and about making sure people got their mail. That was in the early days when we didn't know much Corona virus. We can see hazards like cars and dogs – if you do this job long enough you know you will get hit and you'll get bitten. Cars and dogs are hazards we know, and we get trained for. But for this virus there was no script. We had no protective gear for the first period of the pandemic, and we were scared. Dreadfully scared. I knew people could die from it. The average age of posties is in their 50s, we are not super athletes, we are of average fitness. We didn't know how to protect ourselves. But we still kept coming to work – and as a postie I was proud of that. We didn't want to let our community down.

On top of Covid, Australia Post cut the service. For the last 100 years or so most people could expect a daily service, five days a week. That got cut to every second day during the Pandemic, at a time when the public needed us the most. That doesn't sit well with us Posties because our community matters to us. Our community is more important to us than our employer. There was no consultation on this change and there was community anger towards us because we were only coming every second day – and this was during the Pandemic when people relied on us more than ever.

As a postie I care about my community. I am part of the community. I see people being born. I see people die. I see people go to jail. We were angry that we were put in the position of giving that poorer service to our customers. No consultation. To be dealing with this at a time when people needed us the most. I had to explain to my more vulnerable customers that I can't come every day. This job is about relationships. We are customer focused. It's about people. We build relationships. You wouldn't be in this job if you weren't. To have Covid and the cuts to service was too much.

The changes have torn a swathe through the workforce. There are posties who are not sleeping. We have an employee assistance program but that's like kicking the dog and then paying for the vet bill. If they treated us good, they wouldn't need to send us to a psychologist. We are embarrassed by what we are serving up. We are stuck in the middle and expected to remain positive. On top of Covid. We are not robots. We are not immune to stress. I was so proud of our posties who keep coming to work. There are a lot of posties on stress leave and leaving the workforce. We want the community to know that there isn't a postie in Australia that wouldn't want to delivery to the public every day.

One of the nicest things about being a postie is being part of the community. You know you have made it when people know you by your first name and they will ask about your life. We have a part in their lives. We are not family, but we have a relationship. We can ask about their family. We know we have a positive impact on people's lives. We see the good and the bad happen. The job satisfaction is the personal contact with community.

My act of intersectional kindness
I am like a lot of other Posties who see a lot of homelessness in our communities. Most posties are haunted by homelessness. We don't separate ourselves from the community, we are part of the community. If I see a person who is homeless, I will offer a kind word or food or a coffee if I can. There is nothing more heart breaking than homelessness. We want all our community members to know that we care.