

E-COMMERCE

Four things you'll envy about Australia's 'post office for the future'

Adapted for the e-commerce era, it includes changing rooms, a retail marketplace, and a barista.



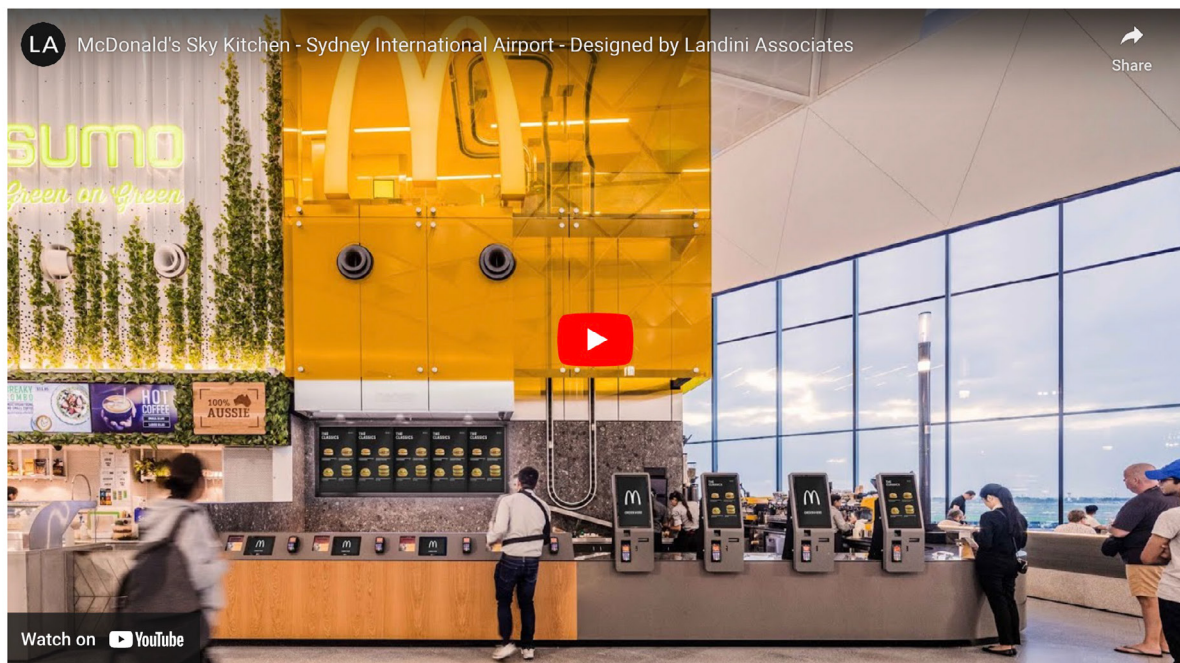
Trevor Mein/Landini Associates

By [Andrew Adam Newman](#)

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The thing about Landini Associates, an Australia-based retail design and brand consultancy, is that it produces work of sublimity in places you least expect them.

Take, for example, Landini's [futuristic McDonald's](#) in Sydney Airport's Terminal 1. It has a second-story kitchen that seems to float above the ordering counter, and an ingenious Rube Goldberg contraption—it's like a chairlift for Happy Meals—that transports them from the kitchen down to the counter.



Now Landini is at it again, with a head-turning vision for, of all places, the post office.

Australia Post hired Landini in 2022 to help develop and implement a new design for the country's 4,000-plus post offices. Just a few weeks ago, a prototype of a dramatically different (and retail-oriented) post office was unveiled in Orange, a city in New South Wales with a population of ~44,000. Australia Post Group CEO Paul Graham called it, "the post office for the future."

It introduces a level of service that may seem otherworldly to Americans, who have bestowed upon the US Postal Service a rating of 1.2 out of 5 on Trustpilot.

Warning: These four things being piloted at the Orange post office may fill you with jealous rage:



1. It has fitting rooms

Like much of the world, but *not* the US (Why can't we have nice things?), Australia has a vast network of convenient and secure parcel delivery lockers where retailers can deliver packages without fear of porch pirates.

Down under, Australia Post has helped lead the charge, installing 57,000 parcel lockers, which generally are inside or adjacent to post offices and accessible around the clock.

- In FY 2023, Australia Post delivered more than 6 million parcels to its lockers, an increase of 30% over the prior year.

Mark Landini, creative director of Landini Associates, told Retail Brew that because e-commerce returns are so high, particularly with clothing and the custom of bracketing, when shoppers order a size up and down and return two, fitting rooms make sense at the post office because it's where customers are both receiving and returning online purchases.

“What we were doing in terms of the changing room is to actually provide people with an opportunity to try it on at the point where they're going to return it, knowing that they are going to return a very high percentage,” Landini told us.



Trevor Mein/Landini Associates

2. There's a retail marketplace (with a mini Apple Store)

With so many post offices built in an era when letters and bills proliferated, but which have disappeared in our paperless email era, “they're left with a lot of space that they don't have to use but it would make sense that they tried to use [it] in some other way,” Landini explained.

That's why the Orange post office is now featuring a marketplace. Along with goods from Australian artists and craftspeople, Apple has set up a nook. Landini noted that while Apple doubtless has many customers in Orange, it's not a big enough market to justify a free-standing Apple Store, so to “have some physical presence there actually makes a lot of sense” for both the brand and consumers.



Trevor Mein/Landini Associates

3. You don't have to wait in line

If customers are standing in line looking at the back of someone's noggin, though, the new offerings just add to the time people were spending at the post office before the redesign.

But at the new post office, customers can scan a QR code, indicate what service they need, and receive a text message when it's their turn.



Trevor Mein/Landini Associates

4. Cappuccinos anyone?

Yes, there's an on-site barista. If you want a perspective about why coffee at the post office is *not* an excellent idea, perhaps you should look somewhere other than a media outlet whose logo is a coffee mug.