



Australian Citizens Party

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Apologise, resign—scathing Senate report a huge win for Christine Holgate/Australia Post campaign!

The months of relentless campaigning for justice for Christine Holgate by licensed post offices (LPOs), the Citizens Party, and thousands of concerned Australians has culminated in a powerful and scathing [report by the Senate's Australia Post inquiry](#). Among its many findings, the report recommends: Prime Minister Scott Morrison, his Ministers, and the Australia Post board apologise to Christine Holgate; Lucio Di Bartolomeo resign as Australia Post Chair; an investigation into the legality of Communications Minister Paul Fletcher's order to the Chair to stand Christine Holgate aside; and the government expressly rule out privatising Australia Post.

This report is a great victory for the campaign to save Australia Post and the LPOs. The campaign fired up when it became obvious that the removal of Christine Holgate from her position as CEO of Australia Post had nothing to do with Cartier watches, but because she had made vicious enemies in the two major political parties. Nobody in Parliament except Bob Katter had been prepared to defend a CEO accused of splurging "taxpayers' money" on luxury watches in a pandemic recession, but the intensely loyal LPOs stood behind her, adamant she was "the best CEO Australia Post has ever had", and the Citizens Party shared their side of the story across Australia through the *Citizens Report* on YouTube, distributing hundreds of thousands of flyers, and emails and phone calls to politicians. Other YouTube channels including Nugget's News and Digital Finance Analytics also joined the campaign. While the original goal of reinstating Christine Holgate as CEO won't be achieved, the campaign exposed the agenda of the big four banks opposed to Christine Holgate's plans for an Australia Post bank that would break their banking monopoly, the longstanding plot to downsize and privatise Australia Post, and the corrupted management structure of the company involving the board being stacked with Liberal Party apparatchiks. The inquiry (achieved thanks to Senator Pauline Hanson), and now this report, has shone a floodlight on these issues, and the report is demanding far-reaching changes.

In scathing tones, the report excoriates the actions of the government and board towards both Christine Holgate and the management of Australia's national postal service. The Executive Summary slams Prime Minister Scott Morrison: "The evidence before this Committee indicates the ultimatum that 'the chief executive has been instructed to stand aside and, if she doesn't wish to do that, she can go' was not a spur of the moment reaction, but rather a calculated response aimed at achieving a predetermined outcome." Moreover, it declares: "It is undeniable that the Board and the government (including the Shareholder Ministers and the Prime Minister) abandoned Ms Holgate to suffer immeasurably and ultimately to tender her resignation only ten days later."

It goes on to criticise Morrison personally for "a lack of respect for due process and procedural fairness". It pinpoints "a culture operating outside the legislated framework that results in so-called 'independent' government agencies being controlled by ministers and their advisers through informal directions in a completely unaccountable manner". It notes that political "pressure appears to have led the Board to breach its duties under the Act, standing Ms Holgate aside without any evidence that she had acted improperly". And it blasts "the appointment of political apparatchiks to the boards of government business enterprises". Ominously for Australia Post Chair Lucio Di Bartolomeo, the report foreshadows further action against him for misleading Parliament: "The committee notes with concern the apparent inconsistencies and discrepancies with the evidence provided by the Chair of Australia Post, Mr Di Bartolomeo", it states. "The committee has decided to examine these matters thoroughly and will decide when and how to report its findings on this issue to the Senate after detailed examination and deliberation." (Emphasis added).

Recommendations

The Environment and Communications References Committee has made 25 recommendations, many of which define a necessary new standard of management for Australia Post that the Morrison government will oppose, but the Australian people must demand. They include:

- **Recommendation 4:** An Auditor-General investigation of the legality of Communications Minister Paul Fletcher's "instruction" that the Chair stand Christine Holgate aside;
- **Recommendation 5:** The PM, Shareholder Ministers, and Board apologise to Christine Holgate;
- **Recommendation 6:** The Solicitor-General investigate the legality of the instruction to stand

Christine Holgate aside;

- **Recommendation 7:** Restore the independence of the Board;
- **Recommendation 8:** Restructure the Board to include nominees from the House of Representatives, the Senate, the employees, and the LPOs;
- **Recommendation 13:** The Chair should resign to accept responsibility for the organisation's failings with respect to the Holgate matter;
- **Recommendation 14:** All banks should be required to allow Australia Post to serve their customers, and pay for the cost of that service, as part of their banking license;
- **Recommendation 16:** The government immediately release the secret Boston Consulting Group review of Australia Post in full;
- **Recommendation 17:** The government expressly rule out privatising Australia Post in whole or part;
- **Recommendation 23:** The government work with all Australia Post stakeholders to find new ways to support LPOs and regional communities.

True to form, PM Scott Morrison has rejected this report, on the grounds that the committee is controlled by Labor and the Greens. However, his own reasoning reinforces one of the key findings of the inquiry—that the board of Australia Post should not be stacked with members of the Liberal Party, as Morrison has done. The fact is that the membership of the committee reflects the numbers in the Senate, as elected by the Australian people, so this report has the full imprimatur of the democratic mandate of the Senate of the Parliament of Australia.

This report is a huge win for the grassroots political process that started outside of Parliament and mainstream media coverage, but snowballed into a Senate inquiry and now a scathing report with hard-hitting recommendations. The campaign's most definitive victory has been stopping the plans to privatise Australia Post, from which the politicians involved are now running a mile. The Australian people who got behind the LPOs and this campaign achieved this result; it's up to us to follow it through and both reform Australia Post and expand it into its full potential, which includes becoming a post office "people's bank".

[Click here to sign the petition:](#)

[An Australia Post 'people's bank'—a win-win solution for the nation](#)