



Australian Citizens Party

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Will Four Corners' Australia Post story be a dishonest hit job?

Ethical journalism? Four Corners is questioning the Citizens Party's role in the Christine Holgate campaign—why isn't it asking the Citizens Party?

When Labor Senator Kimberley Kitching and Liberal Senator Sarah Henderson showed their true colours on the Australia Post issue by teaming up in the 27 April hearing to attack the Licensed Post Office Group (LPO Group) and smear the Citizens Party, Four Corners presenter Michael Brissenden was in the hearing room. So was Citizens Party Research Director Robert Barwick, who gave Brissenden his business card. So why is Brissenden, as he conducts interviews for his Four Corners story, asking questions about the Citizens Party's role in the campaign that are premised on Kitching and Henderson's smears, but not asking the Citizens Party directly?

Four Corners has a reputation as the premier investigative reporting program on Australian television. Yet it is preparing a story on one of the most dramatic incidents in recent Australian political history almost eight months after the fact! Where were the great Four Corners investigators on 22 October 2020, when gutter politicians in the Labor Party aligned with a nasty and vindictive prime minister to ambush Christine Holgate and drive her out of Australia Post? Where was the rest of the Australian media? Why weren't they doing a modicum of real journalism then, by asking basic questions about why the PM would launch such an extraordinary character-assassination of a CEO that literally everybody freely acknowledged was very good at her job? They were nowhere. With the notable exceptions of experienced business reporters Terry McCrann and Robert Gottlieb in *The Australian*, and 2GB radio host Ben Fordham, the rest of the media accepted the superficial explanation that it was about awarding Cartier watches, and they were content for Christine Holgate to sink out of sight and for the LPOs to again despair for their future, shrugging their shoulders as if "that's politics".

Why did it take the Citizens Party to do their job for them? The Citizens Party didn't accept the superficial explanation for the PM's tirade, and simply asked questions, such as:

- Why did Senator Kitching ambush Christine Holgate over watches bought two years earlier?
- Why were the LPOs so intensely loyal to "the best CEO Australia Post has ever had", as they described Christine Holgate (even mailing \$5 each to Scott Morrison to cover the cost of the watches)?

These questions led to the revelations that Christine Holgate had saved Australia Post, the LPOs, and regional banking services in 2018 through her amazing deal that made the banks cough up to cover the real cost of post offices serving the customers abandoned by the banks closing their branches; that Christine Holgate had considered turning Australia Post into a public bank, which Scott Morrison's superiors in the private banks would have fought "tooth and nail", as experienced business reporter Michael West had predicted in 2018; and that Christine Holgate's success as CEO had become an obstacle to a longstanding agenda to run down postal services and fully or partially privatise Australia Post. The Citizens Party publicised these revelations in media releases, in its weekly *Australian Alert Service* magazine, and on YouTube, and organised Australians to get involved in spreading the news and telling politicians they should act to right the wrong and reinstate Holgate.

Because the LPOs stayed loyal to Christine Holgate; because the Citizens Party ran a nationwide campaign to expose the truth; because a handful of journalists reported honestly on the developments; and because some politicians started speaking out in Christine Holgate's defence (first Bob Katter and Barnaby Joyce, and then Pauline Hanson), the issue that politicians and media assumed would fade away instead snowballed into a scandal that led to the Senate inquiry, the explosive public hearings, and the excellent final report. This was one of the most stunning political turnarounds in Australian history! Furious that it had blown up in their faces, however, Labor's Senator Kitching teamed up with the Liberals in the person of Senator Henderson to try to deflect attention from their roles in the bullying and unlawful removal of Christine Holgate, by launching a vicious and dishonest attack on the Citizens Party, which they accused of "racism" and "anti-Semitism". The only source that Senator Kitching could cite as evidence for her deeply offensive accusations was Wikipedia, but she did not reveal that the fraudulent Wikipedia entry on the Citizens Party was written by longtime ALP political staffer Adam Carr, who is now her electorate officer!

(Over the years the Citizens Party has tried to correct the Wikipedia entry, mostly to no avail, as Wikipedia is not the honest online open-source encyclopedia it promotes itself to be, but too often a political propaganda tool. However, the party did respond to the two senators' accusations in a letter to the Committee refuting their lies, which the committee has [published on its website](#).)

The Australia Post-Christine Holgate story deserves to be fully and properly investigated by Four Corners, so the political agendas that forced her out can be exposed to more scrutiny and inform the efforts of concerned Australians to hold the government and board to account. However, if Four Corners uses the story to repeat the two major parties' dishonest attacks on the Citizens Party, without giving the party right of reply, it will be a dishonest and disgraceful act of shooting the messenger, and the question will be: for whom? It's up to Four Corners to demonstrate its commitment to maintaining high journalistic standards and doing justice to the real story by interviewing the Citizens Party. Michael Brissenden has Robert Barwick's phone number.

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