



Australian Citizens Party

Craig Isherwood, National Secretary

PO Box 376, COBURG, VIC 3058

Phone: 1800 636 432 **Email:** info@citizensparty.org.au **Web:** citizensparty.org.au

MEDIA RELEASE

30 June 2021

Four Corners exposes Australia Post privatisation, but not the full story

The 28 June ABC Four Corners episode on Australia Post, "[Post Mortem: The story behind the turmoil that's engulfed Australia Post](#)", confirmed the privatisation agenda behind the unlawful removal of Christine Holgate. However, it failed to tell the full story of the orchestrated Cartier watches scandal and the campaign that made it blow back in the government's face, which can only be found on the Citizens Party's website.

On a positive note, the Four Corners program demonstrated that Liberal Senator Sarah Henderson's vile and dishonest attack on the Licensed Post Office Group (LPO Group) for accepting the support of the Citizens Party has backfired. Ironically, her attack forced Four Corners to report on the Citizens Party and its central role in the campaign that badly embarrassed her government and blocked its privatisation agenda. Four Corners also acknowledged the Citizens Party's campaign to expand Australia Post into a people's bank.

Privatisation

The secret agenda to privatise Australia Post was first exposed in a 10 March 2021 article, "[Getting in the way—how Christine Holgate upset a \\$75 trillion privatisation agenda targeting Australia Post](#)", published in the Citizens Party's weekly magazine, the *Australian Alert Service*. (The "\$75 trillion" refers to a 2018 Boston Consulting Group (BCG) article identifying the value of public assets worldwide that could be targeted for privatisation.) Christine Holgate's submission to the Australia Post inquiry, and her testimony to the Senate hearings, laid bare the contents of a secret BCG review of Australia Post, which proved the government's intention to fully or partially sell the company.

The strongest part of the Four Corners report was its confirmation that privatisation had been a long-term intention of the government. The program played a 6 January 2014 ABC PM radio interview with Finance Minister Mathias Cormann, who was asked: "Can you rule out the sale of Australia Post?" Cormann replied: "Well, again, I'm not going to speculate on what the Commission of Audit may or may not recommend right now."

Four Corners journalist Michael Brissenden reported that the 2014 National Commission of Audit report recommended privatising Australia Post in the "medium term", which, at the time, Treasurer Joe Hockey refused to rule out. In a 13 February 2014 exchange, ABC journalist Sabra Lane asked Hockey: "How confident are you in your abilities to sell contentious things like Australia Post, given there's a campaign out there already?" Hockey let the cat out of the bag: "Look, governments around the world have run out of money", he said. "And governments around the world have assets. The private sector is loaded up with cash. This is not some ideological bent on privatisation."

According to Four Corners, the National Party's opposition to privatisation forced the Abbott government to shelve the plan, albeit temporarily. However, the government, and Australia Post management under then-CEO Ahmed Fahour (a former BCG executive), pushed ahead to prepare Australia Post for privatisation, by downsizing and cutting services. When she took over as CEO, Christine Holgate got in the way of these preparations, preferring to grow the business instead. The only positive to come from her removal is that it was the campaign to reinstate her that discovered and exposed the privatisation agenda, which has now made it politically impossible for the indefinite future. This was made clear at the end of the program, when Michael Brissenden asked Communications Minister Paul Fletcher: "You can see why privatisation is such a hot issue. Even your government before the 2014 budget floated the possibility. Can you understand why people might find it hard to believe you when you say you won't be privatising any aspect of Australia Post?" Resigned to the political reality, Fletcher answered: "Look, when you say privatisation is a hot issue, my response to you is privatisation is a non-issue. I've made it clear that the Australia Post is publicly owned, and it will stay in public ownership."

Full story

The story that Four Corners glossed over is the story of how the Australia Post inquiry came about in the first place. Without the campaign to defend and reinstate Christine Holgate, there would have been no inquiry, no revelations about privatisation, and no Four Corners story. It is the story of the LPO Group, including their years of financial suffering at the hands of successive governments and

politically-stacked Australia Post boards, and the extraordinary difference Christine Holgate made to their businesses and lives, especially by forcing the banks to pay properly for post offices serving the banks' customers. The LPOs are the canary in the Australia Post mine, and their intense loyalty to Christine Holgate is all the evidence that's needed to prove she was indeed "the best CEO Australia Post has ever had", as the LPOs insist.

Pivotal to the story is how the Australia Post campaign only came about because the Citizens Party listened to the LPO Group's side of the Cartier watches scandal, recognised the truth in what they said, and mobilised its supporters to get the truth heard all across Australia. This included the truth, also missed by Four Corners, that Christine Holgate was a threat to the banks, by virtue of her interest in turning Australia Post into a public bank, which would break the monopoly of the Big Four. The campaign is captured chronologically in the media releases issued by the Citizens Party since November 2020, available [on the party's website](#), and on the [Citizens Report YouTube channel](#), which includes Robert Barwick's powerful *Citizens Insight* interview with Angela Cramp: [The truth about Christine Holgate: She saved Australia Post!](#)

The Four Corners coverage ultimately reflects the fact that the Australia Post campaign has been a stunning success, showing what people outside of the Canberra club can do to force Parliament to address an issue. The fight is not over, however: we must hold the government and Australia Post board to account; and we must, for the sake of the whole nation, establish a postal people's bank.

[Click here to sign the petition:](#)
[An Australia Post 'people's bank'—a win-win solution for the nation](#)