



Australian Citizens Party

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Labor must clean up Morrison's mess at Australia Post

Australia Post is an early test of the integrity of the new Albanese Labor government.

Will Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, Finance Minister Katy Gallagher, and Communications Minister Michelle Rowland follow through on the 2021 Senate inquiry report and overhaul the process of Board appointments?

Or will they resort to the established pattern of treating Board appointments to Australia Post and other government business enterprises as spoils of war, clearing out the Liberal Party hacks and stacking the Board with their own Labor Party hacks?

The latter would not only show their participation in the Australia Post Senate inquiry was insincere, political point scoring; it would also be rank corruption, for which they should be referred to the federal integrity commission they promised in the election they would establish.

This is a question to which every Australian who cares about the ongoing viability of Australia Post as an essential service, and especially the long-suffering small business families who run its 2,850 licensed post offices (LPOs), should demand an answer.

LPOs the canary in the mine

Australia Post is an essential service on which all Australians depend, and its LPOs are the canary in the mine that indicate whether it is being run well or not.

Australia Post is only functioning properly if the LPOs are faring well; if the LPOs are struggling, it's a clear sign that Australia Post is being mismanaged.

The LPOs struggled for decades before Christine Holgate became CEO in 2017, but neither the government nor the Australia Post Board cared.

[As LPO Group Executive Director Angela Cramp explained in a 2021 Citizens Insight interview](#), Christine Holgate addressed the LPOs' pressing problems, especially the money they were losing on providing the Bank@Post service to customers of the major banks.

Christine Holgate's famous \$220 million deal with three of the Big Four banks to pay properly for Bank@Post made Australia Post profitable, and made the LPOs financially viable; they called her "the best CEO Australia Post has ever had".

Since Scott Morrison brutally bullied Christine Holgate out of her position as CEO, however, Australia Post has spiralled down into dysfunction, and the LPOs are once again anxiously facing an uncertain future.

What will Labor do?

The dramatic 2021 Senate Australia Post inquiry made specific recommendations to reform the organisation, which the ALP supported; now Labor is in government, what will it do?

Recommendation 13 is a priority: *force the Chairman, Lucio Di Bartolomeo, to resign.*

At the Morrison government's direction Di Bartolomeo unlawfully bullied Christine Holgate into standing aside, and the Senate inquiry questioned "the veracity of his evidence provided to the committee", i.e. whether he misled the Senate. He must go, and the rest of the Board with him.

Recommendation 8 is the most crucial: *The committee recommends that the Australia Post Board be restructured to ensure that its makeup is consistent with the original intent of the Australian Postal Corporation Act 1989, and so that it functions properly as a public enterprise. A restructured board should include nominees of: the House of Representatives; the Senate; the employees and unions; and the licensees.*

The employees and LPOs are the biggest direct stakeholders in Australia Post; collectively, the LPOs have invested more than \$2.5 billion of their own money in *their* businesses that provide *our* postal services, but are entirely at the mercy of politicians and management who do not have Australia

Post's best interest at heart.

To ensure Australia Post is managed by people who care about its future, post office licensees *must* have a seat on the Board.

Postal bank

The game-changing solution for Australia Post and community LPOs is to establish a public post office bank, which, in serving the community, will generate the revenue needed to fund LPOs providing postal and banking services for all Australians and communities.

On 26 April, LPO Group, which represents the interests of post office licensees, called for a postal bank in an election statement it released to political parties for response: [The Future For Community Post Offices in Australia](#).

Under "What LPOG wants?", the statement called for a number of actions from the government and Australia Post Board, including increased expense payments, a representative on the Board, and:

Establish a Postal Bank to service SMEs and help sustain the network and fund infrastructure.

This is *the* solution for Australia Post and the nation—a public bank that serves all, forces the Big Four banking monopoly to compete, sustains the post office network, supports cash payments and availability, lends to local communities, and invests in infrastructure.

Demand action

Now is the time to demand action from the Albanese government on the reforms the ALP endorsed last year when in Opposition, and on the postal bank solution.

The Citizens Party is gearing up a [major campaign](#) to present the post office bank solution to every MP and Senator, and to all communities across Australia.

To start with, because the Board appointment decision is being made *now*, all concerned Australians are encouraged to contact the new PM and the Finance and Communications Ministers, who are the shareholder Ministers for Australia Post, to demand they act on firing the chairman, restructuring the Board, and on the LPO Group's call for a postal bank.

Call and/or email:

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese (02) 9564 3588 <https://www.pm.gov.au/contact-your-pm>
Finance Minister Senator Katy Gallagher (02) 6230 0411 senator.katy.gallagher@aph.gov.au
Communications Minister Michelle Rowland (02) 9671 4780 Michelle.Rowland.MP@aph.gov.au

[Click here to sign the Citizens Party's petition for a post office people's bank.](#)