



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

7 February 2024

Save the dates! Channel 7 to air the TV drama that rocked Britain, and should rock Australia

Watch 'Mr Bates vs the Post Office' on Channel 7 and 7Plus, 14 and 21 February

Last week was the global launch of "Banks gone everywhere" by Lakka Cash, a new take on a classic Aussie song.

The lyricist, Australian Citizens Party (ACP) Queensland State Secretary Jan Pukallus, was inspired by the fightback against the banks closing branches in hundreds of towns across Australia, many of which are in the original "I've been everywhere".

Jan's version calls for "post banks everywhere", to replace the branches closed by the major private banks with a government-owned public bank operating through Australia's 4,000 post offices, a retail network now bigger than all private bank branches combined.

Watch "[Banks gone everywhere](#)".

The post office bank solution won't just save face-to-face banking services for all communities; the increased revenue from banking will also save Australia Post and the licensees who run 2,850 post offices as small businesses.

Australia Post is in crisis, but nobody is talking about it except the Licensed Post Office Group (LPOG), which represents the interests of the small business licensees.

The LPOs are in despair at the dysfunction of Australia Post and the way they have been treated by its corporate management.

What should really shock Australians, however, is that LPOs in Australia see parallels between their plight and the truly shocking UK Post Office scandal dramatised in "Mr Bates vs the Post Office".

That's why all Australians should watch this excellent drama on Channel 7 on 14 and 21 February—we all need post offices, so we should all be concerned that they are in crisis.

"Mr Bates vs the Post Office" is the true story of how the corporate management of UK Post Office, and the British subsidiary of the giant Japanese corporation Fujitsu, rolled out expensive new point-of-sale software called Horizon to the UK's 11,500 post offices starting in 1999, but the software was faulty.

Instead of acknowledging the software's problems, Post Office management acted to protect their profits and personal bonuses by blaming the daily imbalances on the local post office operators, called sub-postmasters, who were contractually obliged to make up any shortfalls out of their own pockets.

When sub-postmasters called the Horizon helpline for assistance, each was lied to that they were the only ones experiencing problems.

Post Office management prosecuted more than 700 sub-postmasters they knew to be innocent for false accounting, fraud and theft, and more than 400 went to jail—while Post Office executives received bonuses for each successful prosecution!

Mr Alan Bates led a 20-year fight that eventually succeeded in having sub-postmasters cleared in the courts in 2019 and 2020, but it was the airing of the TV drama in the first week of January this year that rocked the British public and politicians into action.

Australia's post office licensees hope to see similar action in Australia before their crisis spirals into the collapse of postal services here.

While their experience is not as extreme as going to jail, they have suffered the same corporate bastardry and political disregard as their UK counterparts.

For years, Australia Post's corporate management, overseen by a board stacked with political appointees, has run postal services into the ground but inflated profits and bonuses by underpaying LPOs and driving them to bankruptcy.

Christine Holgate made LPOs viable for the first time in 2018 with her deal to make the banks pay for Bank@Post, but politicians from both major parties ambushed her and forced her out.

Now LPOs are sinking back into crisis and despair, ignored by Australia Post corporate management intent on cutting postal services and shutting post offices.

All Australians should watch Mr Bates, and support the LPOG's fight for solutions, starting with the win-win solution of a government-owned bank operating through post offices which would serve all communities and financially support the provision of postal services and retaining the post office network, which LPOG endorses.

[Click here to watch Channel 7's trailer for Mr Bates vs the Post Office .](#)

Tell your MP and Senators to watch Mr Bates!

To maximise the impact of Channel 7's broadcast of Mr Bates, call and/or email your federal MP and Senators to tell them they must watch the TV show. Tell them that they need to learn from the UK disaster just how bad things can get when governments ignore post office problems, and they should look into the parallels with Australia Post that post office licensees are trying to get them to address.

[Click here to find your local federal MP, by electorate.](#)

[Click here for the contact details of the Senators in your state .](#)

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