



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

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The plot thickens! Did Morrison and Kitching coordinate their ambush of Australia Post?

The political assassination of Australia Post CEO Christine Holgate was over four Cartier watches purchased two years ago in October 2018. Labor Senator Kimberley Kitching ambushed Christine Holgate and her executive team over the watches, and the banking deal for which they were rewarded, three weeks ago in a 22 October 2020 Senate Estimates hearing. This premeditated attack caught the Australia Post executives at the hearing completely unaware, and a few hours later Prime Minister Scott Morrison dealt the fatal blow to Christine Holgate with an over-the-top, staged condemnation in Question Time, demanding she stand aside.

The histrionics of Kitching and Morrison, and the media's reporting of the story, gave most Australians, including many people who pay attention to politics, the impression that Holgate had purchased the watches this year, like some kind of Marie Antoinette splurging public money with callous indifference to the pandemic conditions of rising unemployment and economic hardship. The truth is it had nothing to do with the pandemic because it was two years ago, and in fact it was a modest reward for four executives who had landed an amazing deal that saved Australia Post and the 3,000 or so small businesses which run its licensed post offices, by forcing the banks to pay an extra \$100 million a year for Australia Post to provide banking services to their customers. Thanks to this deal, the licensed post offices call Holgate the "best CEO Australia Post has ever had". So why did Kimberley Kitching ambush Holgate over this deal two years later? And why was Scott Morrison so eager to play along, and use it to force Holgate out?

Australia Post bank?

The Citizens Party questioned in a 4 November release, "Scott Morrison should resign, not Christine Holgate", whether Morrison had attacked Holgate because she was reportedly interested in the idea of Australia Post becoming a public post office savings bank. The private banking oligopoly despise any form of public bank, because they would be forced to compete for the first time since the Commonwealth Bank was privatised in 1996. An Australia Post bank would attract a flood of deposits from bank customers who are sick of being exploited and are desperate to put their savings somewhere safe—deposits in a postal bank would be government-guaranteed. The banks are the most powerful lobby in Australia, and they own the Morrison government lock, stock and barrel. If they had the slightest whiff that Christine Holgate was interested in Australia Post becoming a bank, they would express their furious opposition to the Morrison government in no uncertain terms. The Citizens Party has now confirmed directly that Christine Holgate had indeed engaged in discussions with a number of interested parties on a possible post office bank. (That said, even the deal Holgate and her team had made with the banks—forcing them to actually pay up to cover their costs—was likely enough to have made her enemies in the banks.)

The footage of Kimberley Kitching's ambush of Australia Post on 22 October is very revealing. The Citizens Party played the footage in the 6 November episode of the *Citizens Report*: "[Why did Labor and the Liberals gang up on Christine Holgate?](#)" It shows that Kitching's attack was premeditated, entirely dishonest, and that she had clearly been put up to launch an attack for the purpose of creating a media narrative—she was performing for the cameras. It also shows she was obsessed with the 2018 banking deal.

The footage is revealing of something else, however, which adds to the strong suspicion of collusion between Kitching's ambush and the government. And that is that when Kitching was attacking Holgate and her team, the government conspicuously did nothing. This is an important point, because usually in Senate Estimates, the relevant Minister will intervene if a line of questioning of public servants or government business enterprise executives gets too political, or crosses a line. Often Senators use Senate Estimates to grandstand politically for the cameras, but the public servants and executives can't hit back at them the way politicians can and do, so the Minister must intervene on their behalf.

In this case, the Minister was Senator Jane Hume, a.k.a. the "Senator for bankers". Jane Hume is a former NAB, Rothschild Australia and Deutsche Bank executive who has used her time in Parliament to protect the interests of the banks. She chaired the 2017-18 Senate inquiry that signed off on the "bail-in" law rushed through the Senate on Valentine's Day 2018 with just eight senators present, and

she blatantly rigged the 2019 Senate inquiry into the Citizens Party's bill for a Glass-Steagall separation of the banks.

It therefore speaks volumes that Senator Hume just sat there saying nothing when her ostensible political opponent Kimberley Kitching badgered the Australia Post executives with accusations that anybody could tell were entirely unreasonable and dishonest. Either Hume is incompetent, or she was in on it. For instance, in one ridiculous exchange Kitching attacked Chief Financial Officer Rodney Boys for not knowing which credit card had been used to buy the watches two years earlier. "You can't tell me what credit card this was purchased on", Kitching grandstanded, "and you're the CFO." Yet Kitching already knew that the CFO had only joined Australia Post in 2019, and so wasn't even there when the watches were purchased. This is the type of questioning that Hume should have intervened in, but the Senator for bankers just sat quietly while Kitching created the entirely false impression that allowed Scott Morrison to force Christine Holgate out of Australia Post.

It's time Australians stopped tolerating the corruption of politics, which starts with the criminal banks' influence over both major parties. Achieving a national postal savings bank will smash the private banks' monopoly power, and protect Australians from criminal policies such as bail-in, de-banking, and the cash ban. Join the fight to make this happen.

19 days to end the 'bail-in' nightmare

In 19 days the Senate votes on Senator Malcolm Roberts' Banking Amendment (Deposits) Bill 2020, which would end the threat that Australian bank deposits could be "bailed in" once and for all. Parliament sits this week, which presents a unique opportunity to flood Senators and MPs with calls into their Parliament House offices, so that as people walk the long halls of Parliament House all they hear is phones ringing off the hook about one subject—bail-in. So it's especially important this week that you call your MP and Senators straight away and demand they vote for the [Banking Amendment \(Deposits\) Bill 2020](#). [Click here to find contact details for your MP and Senators](#).

Click here to sign the petition: [Hands off our bank deposits—stop 'bail-in'!](#)