



Australian Citizens Party

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MEDIA RELEASE

9 February 2021

Watch 'The Truth about Christine Holgate: She Saved Australia Post'

Why would the Labor Party and Liberal Party team up to drive out an undeniably successful CEO of Australia Post, whose brilliant management saved an indispensable national service? This is what all Australians—who own this public asset—will demand to know when they watch the stunning new *Citizens Insight* interview with Licensed Post Office Group Executive Director Angela Cramp, "The Truth about Christine Holgate—She Saved Australia Post". When Australians see this scandal through the licensed post office operators' eyes, the penny will drop that it has nothing to do with Cartier watches, and that there are clearly backroom political agendas at play, which are emblematic of everything everyday people hate about politics, and which must be exposed and stopped.

Click here to watch: "[The Truth about Christine Holgate: She Saved Australia Post](#)".

The Licensed Post Office Group represents 2,900 post offices that are private small businesses operating as agencies for Australia Post. They are spread out all over Australia, especially in rural and regional communities, where they are often the sole supplier of face-to-face government and banking services, as well as postal services. The government of Labor Prime Minister Bob Hawke established the licensed post office model, as a way to maintain a post office network at lower cost to the government; collectively, the 2,900 licensed post office operators have invested about \$3 billion of their own capital into these businesses that are the backbone of Australia's postal network.

Angela Cramp describes in vivid terms what LPOs endured in the decades before Christine Holgate became CEO, including:

- No increase in the basic postage rate, which determined the income for LPOs, for more than a decade despite skyrocketing costs of living, which drove LPOs into bankruptcy;
- No payments to LPOs when parcels started booming with the advent of online shopping, as LPO payments were linked to letters, not parcels;
- No support from successive governments, or Australia Post management, except ridiculous suggestions such as that LPO operators could start other businesses to subsidise their LPO business (!);
- Australia Post management, who were paid much more than Christine Holgate would be, cannibalising Australia Post by selling assets, such as Sydney's iconic General Post Office, and preparing for privatisation;
- Having to bear the cost of supplying banking services to communities abandoned by the banks, amounting to at least \$50 million a year, most of which came out of LPOs' pockets.

This was the state of Australia Post when Christine Holgate took over as CEO in 2017, on a base salary of less than \$2 million a year compared with her predecessor who was on almost \$5 million base salary and had taken an \$11 million payout when he left. (Christine Holgate moved to Australia Post from Blackmores, where she had been a spectacularly successful CEO on \$8 million per year.)

"There is nothing like Christine Holgate", Angela Cramp said to *Citizens Insight*. "Her leadership, her quality, her passion—it made a difference to Australia Post."

Angela Cramp describes how Christine Holgate came into Australia Post with an intention to solve problems. Holgate embraced the whole organisation, including the LPOs, and consulted earnestly with the LPOs on their views of what problems needed to be addressed. The LPOs raised the cost of providing banking services, but Holgate had already done her due diligence by visiting successful post offices around the world, where she saw that properly compensated banking services could subsidise postal services. The new CEO then led an executive team in negotiating a visionary deal with the private banks, in which all the big banks except ANZ each paid \$25 million per year, and around 65 smaller financial institutions collectively paid \$25 million per year, for Australia Post to continue to serve their customers; Holgate also ensured the LPOs shared the revenue, literally saving their businesses. It was for this deal that she rewarded the four main executives, who had worked night, weekends and holidays finalising negotiations with 70 separate financial institutions, with a \$5,000 Cartier watch each.

Did they deserve the reward?

“Absolutely!”, Angela Cramp insists. “Every licensee thinks they deserved a lot more. ... *It wasn't their job to do this*—this was not part of their contract or their KPIs [key performance indicators]. Nobody said this could be done. Everybody said the banks will not agree to this, give it up, forget it; Christine Holgate and this team were determined to make it happen because she had committed to it, and she did it.

“It is pretty much why we are so passionate about hanging on to her, for grim death, *because we do believe it is grim death without her*, without the quality that she brings to this position.”

It is also the deal for which Christine Holgate was ambushed in Parliament two years later. Angela Cramp reveals that the 22 October attack came just before Australia Post was due to start negotiations with the banks on renewing the deals, which except for CBA's expire in September this year. As a result of the government forcing Holgate to stand aside, those negotiations still have not started, leaving the LPOs fearing they could lose the deal and return to the bad old days of imminent bankruptcy.

And this goes to the heart of the matter: why did both Labor and the Liberals destroy the undeniably successful CEO of a \$8 billion government business enterprise over \$20,000? The only reason not to want Australia Post to be successful is if they are contriving an excuse to privatise it. And the only reason to attack the deal that saved the business, and sabotage its renewal, is to do the bidding of the lobby that owns whole chunks of the Liberal and Labor parties—the private banks.

The Australian people must get involved. Australia Post is *our* asset, and this scandal exposes the major parties as more concerned with their backroom agendas than the diligent management of public services, which Christine Holgate delivered. All Australians should join with the stakeholders who know best, the LPOs, and demand the government reinstate Christine Holgate as CEO of Australia Post.

What you can do

The government has leaked through the *Australian Financial Review* that despite this fiasco over \$20,000 having cost \$100,000 of “taxpayers' money” for a lawyers' report that cleared Christine Holgate of any actual wrongdoing, and \$350,000 for an executive headhunter to find a replacement CEO, the board is close to appointing a replacement CEO from within Australia Post. They don't care about “taxpayers' money”—this was a political hit. Do not let them get away with it. This week, call the two shareholder ministers in Australia Post and demand they stop the rush to replace her, and instead reinstate Christine Holgate as CEO.

Sen. Simon Birmingham (Finance Minister)

Canberra Office: (02) 6277 7400 (if you get the answering machine, leave a message)
If you can't get through, call his Adelaide number: (08) 8354 1644

Paul Fletcher MP (Communications Minister)

Canberra Office: (02) 6277 7480 (if you get the answering machine, leave a message)
If you can't get through call his Sydney number: (02) 9465 3950

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