



## Australian Citizens Party

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### MEDIA RELEASE

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## Katter, Hanson call out lies against Australia Post CEO Christine Holgate

Proving the value of minor parties in Parliament, Bob Katter MP and Senator Pauline Hanson have each called out lies used to force Christine Holgate out of Australia Post. All the major-party politicians know they are lies, but would usually never say so—to them they are politics-as-usual, the typical dirty tricks used to remove an innocent person who has become an inconvenience. Katter and Hanson have spoken out in response to both the injustice against Ms Holgate *and* the backlash from the public becoming aware of the ulterior motive to destroy her because [she took on the banks](#) and stymied the longstanding [agenda to privatise Australia Post](#). This has suddenly become a serious political problem for the government.

On 18 February, [Bob Katter reacted angrily](#) to Communications Minister Paul Fletcher's statement in Question Time that "the former chief executive of Australia Post chose to resign". Katter knew the truth, and knew that the Minister knew the truth: Christine Holgate had *offered* to resign, but *only* on the condition that she be released immediately *without conditions*; doing the government's dirty work, the Chairman of Australia Post, Lucio di Bartolomeo, did not accept her terms but demanded she agree to conditions and even though she did not agree, he announced she had resigned anyway. Now that he's the longest-serving MP, Bob Katter is the Father of the House, and knows all the rules, including which ones to break. He raced into the chamber and called a point of order: "Mr Speaker, if a person knows that a Minister is lying, isn't it his duty to stand up and say that he is lying? Christine Holgate never resigned. Don't tell lies to the House!" The Minister did not respond, and the Speaker made Katter withdraw his "unparliamentary" use of the word "lie", but his intervention fired a shot across the government's bow.

In Senate Question Time on 22 February, [Senator Hanson interrogated the Finance Minister](#), Senator Simon Birmingham, who is one of two shareholder Ministers for Australia Post, about the lies told by Chairman Lucio di Bartolomeo:

"Minister, Christine Holgate led Australia Post to record revenue levels in a period of immense challenge and has previously been praised by the Prime Minister and the Australia Post board", Senator Hanson said. "Given the stakeholder ministers were briefed in late November by Ms Holgate and in December and January at meetings with members of the Licensed Post Office Group, that the Chair of Australia Post made several incorrect statements when attending Senate estimates on November the 9th—in particular with reference to Ms Holgate—why more than three months since the Prime Minister was first made aware the Chair, Lucio di Bartolomeo, had lied to and misled Senate Estimates in evidence regarding Ms Holgate and after she was completely exonerated by Australia Post independent inquiry, has he not taken action to hold the chair accountable?"

The Minister tried lamely to deflect to avoid the question, saying that "I don't accept all of the characterisations made in Senator Hanson's question, particularly those in relation to Mr Bartolomeo." But Senator Hanson was spot on: as the person who had done the government's bidding to force out Christine Holgate, Lucio di Bartolomeo had given false testimony to Senate Estimates on 9 November to cover up the way she had been removed.

In that testimony, Mr Bartolomeo said: "We had discussions with Christine, and *ultimately she agreed that she would stand aside* while the investigation took place." ALP Senator Nita Green asked him: "Did you and Ms Holgate come to that decision mutually—that she would stand aside—or was it more of a case of relaying what the Minister had said to you?" He answered: "We had a number of conversations that afternoon, and *the concluding position was that she would stand aside.*" (Emphasis added.)

None of that is true. Christine Holgate did not agree to stand aside; she merely offered to take two weeks' annual leave. She resisted because she knew that the watches issue had been a complete beat-up, and in fact the banking deal for which they had been awarded—before Lucio di Bartolomeo became Chair—was a great success story for Australia Post. All Australians have seen the proof that she hadn't agreed to stand aside, because her refusal was the reason Prime Minister Scott Morrison attacked her angrily in Question Time on 22 October, threatening that if she didn't agree to stand aside, "[she can go!](#)" Nevertheless, that afternoon, Mr Bartolomeo released a statement saying: "Group CEO & Managing Director Christine Holgate will stand aside during the investigation." And he

followed that up on 2 November with his other false statement announcing Ms Holgate had resigned effective immediately.

(Mr Bartolomeo also misled Senate Estimates on 9 November when he was asked about a Boston Consulting Group review of Australia Post, which the government had commissioned in 2019 specifically to inform him as incoming Chairman. Mr Bartolomeo claimed to the Senate committee: “We haven’t seen the report.” Yet in an appearance four months earlier before the Senate Environment and Communications Committee on 8 July 2020, Christine Holgate and Australian Post General Counsel Nick McDonald acknowledged that Australia Post had received the report, on 21 February. The only reason Mr Bartolomeo would answer falsely is to cover for the government, which is hiding the report from Parliament; stakeholders suspect the BCG report spells out the privatisation agenda that the current Chair was installed to implement, and which Christine Holgate was upsetting by making Australia Post profitable.)

This Christine Holgate issue started off about watches, but the truth has now been laid bare and is blowing up! With the resignation of Craig Kelly, PM Scott Morrison has suddenly lost his majority. Thousands of Australians are bombarding Parliament with calls to reinstate Christine Holgate, and the government cannot afford to be arrogant. Keep calling all MPs and Senators with this message:

“Tell Minister Fletcher to order the Australia Post Board to reinstate Christine Holgate.”

### **What you can do**

All the calls made by everyone so far to reinstate Christine Holgate have been excellent—thank you! We need to keep them going for the rest of this week—today and tomorrow—while the MPs are together in Canberra. If you haven’t yet, call the Canberra office of your local MP, and all 12 Senators from your state. Keep the call simple:

“Christine Holgate did nothing wrong. She saved Australia Post and the licensed post offices. The report cleared her. Tell Minister Fletcher to order the Australia Post Board to reinstate her.”

If 12 Senators is too much, just call the Liberal and National Senators in your state. However, if you are able, feel free to call as many other MPs as possible, and Senators in other states too.

[Click here to find the Canberra numbers of your local MPs.](#)

Use the above link or click on your state below for your list Senators.

[QLD](#) - [NSW](#) - [VIC](#) - [TAS](#) - [ACT](#) - [NT](#) - [SA](#) - [WA](#)

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