



Australian Citizens Party

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Massive breakthrough! Pauline Hanson forces Christine Holgate removal scandal to a Senate inquiry

The campaign to expose the truth about the Christine Holgate-Australia Post Cartier watches affair has achieved a stunning political turnaround. In October and November, the issue—and Christine Holgate—was politically dead, as by any normal measure Australians would never support “fat-cat public executives getting luxury watches in a recession”, as the scandal had been framed by politicians and media. But thanks to the intense loyalty and passion of the Licensed Post Office Group (LPO Group), whose members knew the truth better than anybody, and the support of the Citizens Party, other political leaders, and outspoken media commentators who bothered to investigate the details, the truth started to prevail, and the issue boiled over in this latest fortnight sitting of Parliament. On the last sitting day, 25 February, Senator Pauline Hanson moved a motion for a wide-ranging Senate inquiry into Christine Holgate’s removal, *which passed without opposition*—the government realised it would be futile to try to stop it!

Here is the Hansard record of Senator Hanson’s motion:

Leader of Pauline Hanson’s One Nation (Senator Hanson): *To move—That the following matter be referred to the Environment and Communications References Committee for inquiry and report by 30 April 2021:*

The circumstances leading to the direction by the Minister for Communications to the Chair of Australia Post on 22 October 2020, that the Chief Executive Officer of Australia Post, Christine Holgate, be stood down pending an investigation into her gifting in 2018 of watches to four managers who secured a \$225 million investment into the organisation, with particular reference to:

- (a) if the gift of the watches was with the knowledge of the then Australia Post Chair and within existing Australia Post policy;*
- (b) how the gifting of four watches compares with bonuses and gifts provided during the term of the previous Chief Executive Officers and within other government owned corporations such as the National Broadband Network;*
- (c) actions of the Board of Australia Post following Ms Holgate’s offer of resignation on 2 November 2020 leading up to the Chair’s request for her to sign an amendment to her contract which would mean the immediate termination of her employment without any benefits, as against the \$11 million bonus paid to her predecessor when he stepped down;*
- (d) the veracity of evidence provided by the Chair of Australia Post to the Environment and Communications Legislation Committee during an estimates hearing on 9 November 2020;*
- (e) the current status of Ms Holgate’s employment with Australia Post;*
- (f) the issues surrounding the secret review of Australia Post by the Boston Consulting Group leading to the introduction of changes to Australia Post’s service model;*
- (g) the future of reductions to Australia Post’s service model; and*
- (h) any other related matters.*

Informed citizens again make the difference!

This Senate inquiry, which means all the truth can now come out, is a victory for all the Australians who informed themselves on this issue and acted on it by spreading the word and making phone calls to the Ministers, MPs and Senators. Just as the outcry of everyday Australians defeated the cash ban law last year, this outcome shows what is possible when informed citizens engage in the political process.

The Citizens Party first got involved because it was clear that PM Scott Morrison’s hysterical attack on Christine Holgate in Question Time on 22 October had “nothing to do with bloody watches”, as LPO Group Executive Director Angela Cramp said. As documented in the Citizens Party’s new video [“Taking on the banks: the truth about the Australia Post Cartier watches affair”](#), the assault on

Christine Holgate had been a bipartisan, premeditated attack. It involved politicians, starting with the PM, who are shameless toadies for the banks—the same banks Christine Holgate had taken on to make them pay properly for post offices serving their customers, and which experienced business journalist Michael West had warned in 2018 would “fight ... tooth and nail” against any moves to expand Australia Post into a bank.

The Citizens Party soon discovered other crucial dimensions to the issue, including how transformative Christine Holgate’s management had been for the longsuffering small business families who run Australia Post’s 2,900 LPOs; and the longstanding bipartisan agenda to cost-cut and downsize Australia Post’s services to prepare it for privatisation, which Christine Holgate’s success had upset. This quickly became a fight not for Christine Holgate personally, but for truth, justice, and the survival of Australia Post as a national service which has the potential to expand into a public postal bank that can break the monopoly of the Big Four banks.

In December, politicians Barnaby Joyce and Bob Katter spoke up for Christine Holgate in Parliament, and business commentators Robert Gottlieb and Terry McCrann reported the truth in their newspaper columns.

In early January, the Citizens Party launched the “Three Rs” campaign:

- Release the Maddocks lawyers report, which cleared Christine Holgate of wrongdoing, but which the government had intended to keep cabinet-in-confidence;
- Replace the Australia Post Board, who had thrown her under a bus;
- Reinstating Christine Holgate.

That campaign had immediate effect. In mid-January the government caved in to the pressure and released the Maddocks report, which caused an uproar. It proved Ms Holgate had done nothing wrong and how spineless the board had been, which proved the need for the second of the “three Rs”. Combined with the calls of thousands of Australians to the Finance and Communications Ministers to “reinstating Holgate”, the campaign was super-charged when a Citizens Party and LPO Group delegation went to Parliament on 16-18 February to meet with politicians, which is when the issue boiled over. Bob Katter and Pauline Hanson took the lead in taking on the government, which got the media’s attention, and thanks to [Senator Hanson’s extraordinarily powerful intervention on 24 February](#), all opposition parties agreed to support the Senate inquiry.

Details of the inquiry and how people can participate will be provided soon, but in the meantime keep up the pressure on your MP to reinstate Christine Holgate!

What you can do

It is very important to continue to inform politicians and the general population of the wider agenda behind the attack on Christine Holgate. Share as widely as possible the link to the documentary, “[Taking on the banks: the truth about the Australia Post Cartier watches affair](#)”, with your MPs, Senators, and friends and family.

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