

Australia Post campaign rocks the Establishment



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Lead Editorial

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Pauline Hanson moving for the Senate inquiry, which passed without opposition. Photo: Screenshot

Establishment Canberra is in shock, following the Senate supporting Pauline Hanson's motion for an inquiry into the removal of Christine Holgate as CEO of Australia Post. Up to the last moment, government insiders who are sympathetic to Holgate were nevertheless predicting that nobody would support Hanson's motion, yet in the end it passed unopposed. Technically that means everyone supported it, including the government! A mainstream journalist called one of the campaign leaders to ask how it was achieved, pointing out that it usually takes months to establish an inquiry, and laughed in delight when briefed on how the support from the general public overwhelmed the politicians and made it impossible to oppose. The government insiders are quietly furious at Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Communications Minister Paul Fletcher for not caving in first and reinstating Holgate to avert a Senate inquiry, because the inquiry will be far more damaging for the government than the short-term embarrassment of backing down.

The government did try to head off the inquiry. Ministers repeatedly communicated that they didn't want it to go ahead, but by then it was too late. For the politicians who supported an inquiry, this was not an issue they were going to bargain away. That's because they were all acutely aware that it was the public demanding action, as communicated in the thousands of phone calls that flooded Canberra for three weeks. When the public rise up on a matter of principle, smart politicians respond.

All activists, members and supporters of the Citizens Party should be very proud of their role in leading this revolt and forcing Parliament to act. Your efforts have achieved a political miracle. Back in October, defending Holgate was politically toxic, because the politicians who ambushed her, and the media which covered it, convinced the public it was about fat cats splurging taxpayers' money on luxury watches. But the Citizens Party quickly detected the hand of the banks and privatisers behind Scott Morrison's confected outrage, and took it head on. And thanks to the energetic efforts of Citizens Party supporters to get the message out right around Australia, including to post offices, in a matter of four months we were able to turn this issue around and make it blow up in the government's face. Licensed post offices deserve a special acknowledgement too, because their fierce loyalty to the truth about Christine Holgate, and willingness to fight, helped to inspire the Citizens Party and the general public to get involved and see this fight through.

The issue now is putting maximum pressure on the Senate Committee to conduct a proper inquiry into the details of Holgate's removal by flooding the inquiry with thoughtful submissions (p. 3), while expanding the public's awareness of the big picture. Put simply, Christine Holgate got in the way of powerful agendas—the "wider play" former Australia Post chairman John Stanhope hinted at in the 24

October 2020 *Australian Financial Review*—involving longstanding plans to privatise Australia Post and the determination of the big banks to protect their banking monopoly from any moves to establish a public bank like a postal bank. The fight for truth and justice for Christine Holgate and the LPOs is one and the same with the fight to save Australia Post from privatisation and expand it into a public postal bank, for which Christine Holgate proved it is ideally suited. And one thing we should all learn from the mounting victories on issues that the Citizens Party has been involved in, including the defeat of the cash ban and exposing the “bail-in” of bank deposits, is that this is a fight we can win! Our political opponents certainly know that, and it terrifies them (many in other political parties already support a postal bank).

Continue to escalate: make your submission ASAP (p. 3); and widely share the “Taking on the banks” YouTube documentary.

In this week's issue:

- *You* are the public—tell the Senate’s Australia Post inquiry your ‘expectations’
- Massive breakthrough! Pauline Hanson forces Christine Holgate removal scandal to a Senate inquiry
- Time to force real competition on the Big Four!
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