

Establishment scrambles to contain Aus Post fallout



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Lead Editorial

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The campaign to reinstate Christine Holgate has stunned the establishment, prompting a full-page feature in AFR (fully reproduced on p. 16).

All hell has broken loose behind the scenes of the Christine Holgate-Australia Post battle. The Citizens Party is aware that some of the most senior members of Australia's political establishment are trying desperately to manage the issue and re-assert the political control that was lost as soon as the Citizens Party got involved back in November.

The establishment panic reached fever pitch on Saturday 13 March, when the Weekend *Australian Financial Review* ran a full-page feature article on the campaign by Tom McIlroy: "Going postal: The fight to get Holgate back". The whole article screamed panic and damage control. While reporter Tom McIlroy did a good job in conveying the perspective of the licensed post offices, most of which he learned for the first time from watching the Citizens Party's *Citizens Insight* interview with LPO Group Executive Director Angela Cramp, the feature tried, and failed miserably, to downplay the support for Christine Holgate, and deny the basis facts of her removal.

"The former Australia Post chief quit after her purchase of luxury watches was slammed by the Prime Minister as disgraceful", AFR feature noted in its subtitle. "But now a motley crew is taking up her cause." (Emphasis added.) Nice try by AFR, but a motley crew wouldn't warrant a full-page feature. In

truth, *AFR* reflects the financial establishment, which is stunned by the dramatic turnaround on this issue that by any measure should have been dead and buried back in early November when Australia Post announced Christine Holgate had resigned. Despite the truth being very different to how it had been reported, nobody was interested, because nobody in politics in their right mind would defend splurging taxpayers' money on luxury watches for fat-cat executives. The only people who really knew the truth were considered powerless to do anything: Christine Holgate was expected to slink away and nurse her wounds, and the LPOs were expected to curl up in the foetal position and accept their fate was again out of their hands and they would be at the mercy of a new CEO. Instead, with the involvement of the Citizens Party, and the fierce determination of the LPOs and Christine Holgate to fight, the whole issue has been turned on its head.

"For months the motley crew behind the push might have been dismissed as fringe dwellers", McIlroy wrote, "but their success in convincing politicians Pauline Hanson, Bob Katter and Matt Canavan to take up the cause means a potentially messy Senate inquiry could breathe new life into the controversy. ... *Citizens Insight*, a YouTube series by the Citizens Party, has covered the story extensively. Research director Robert Barwick's 48-minute interview with Cramp has been watched 3,500 times. ... Barwick's latest article on the matter runs to 3,000 words. The party has campaigned for the big banks to be broken up, wants to scrap the GST and impose financial speculation taxes. ... Phones in Parliament's ministerial wing have continued to ring over the controversy. The office of Communications Minister Paul Fletcher has been a target, receiving as many as 80 calls a day."

AFR added their usual token descriptions of the Citizens Party as fringe conspiracy theorists, but their efforts to marginalise the Citizens Party are lame and futile. The establishment is painfully aware that the Citizens Party keeps winning on major issues, having played a major role in getting the \$10,000 cash ban dumped from Parliament (p. 3), forcing the government to release the Maddocks Report on Australia Post and then getting the current Senate inquiry. Another victory came this week with the government postponing a Senate vote on its bill to scrap responsible lending laws, knowing it didn't have the numbers— a win for the Citizens Party and allies including Bank Reform Now and Digital Finance Analytics' Martin North. The Citizens Party's power is its activist supporters—keep up the good work!

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