



# Australian Citizens Party

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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Morrison rushes to announce new Australia Post CEO before Senate hearing—what is he afraid of?**

The Prime Minister is so terrified of the implications from the Senate's inquiry into the unlawful removal of Christine Holgate that he has resorted to a brazen attempt to corrupt the process. His government and the Australia Post board have displayed extreme contempt for Parliament and due process by announcing a new CEO literally the day before the Senate hearing that is to resolve the question of Christine Holgate's resignation and employment status.

The question Australians should demand every MP answer is: does this pass your stupid pub test?

Yesterday's announcement is merely the latest in the series of illegal actions by Australia Post Chairman Lucio Di Bartolomeo that forced Christine Holgate out of the organisation, after Morrison had barked in Parliament: "She—can—go!" These actions are the subject of the Senate hearing today, which will seek to answer:

- Did Christine Holgate agree to stand aside, which is the only legal way she could have stood down, or did the Chairman lie?
- Did Christine Holgate actually resign as CEO or was the process misrepresented by the Chair?
- Was Christine Holgate's offer to resign a case of "constructive dismissal", whereby somebody is forced to resign by the intentional behaviour of their superiors?
- How does the treatment of Christine Holgate by the government and Liberal-stacked Australia Post board relate to the secret Boston Consulting Group Report the government is hiding from Parliament, which is understood to demand a service-cutting approach to managing Australia Post that Christine Holgate firmly opposed?

Many politicians, especially the Senators on the committee, are furious at yesterday's pre-emptive announcement of a new Australia Post CEO. Senator Pauline Hanson, who moved the motion that established the inquiry, turned a blowtorch on Morrison: "The announcement of a new Australia Post chief executive and managing director today shows absolute arrogance on behalf of the prime minister and two of his most senior ministers," she said. "As far as I'm concerned, the Prime Minister is nothing but an arrogant bully who has disregarded the efforts of the Senate to shine a light on the truth behind the Australia Post saga.

"Scott Morrison is attempting to deliberately destabilise witnesses ahead of tomorrow's Senate inquiry." Senator Hanson called it an "unmistakeable contempt of the process".

The Chair of the inquiry, Senator Sarah Hanson-Young, was equally incensed: "It's shameful that the Morrison government is rushing to appoint a new CEO the day before Christine Holgate has the opportunity to air her allegations that she was 'thrown under the bus' and 'humiliated' in a manner not replicated by the Morrison government when it comes to the alleged misconduct of men in its ranks."

And for the first time in this whole saga Labor didn't equivocate: ALP communications spokeswoman Michelle Rowland said the announcement showed Morrison and Communications Minister Paul Fletcher had "lost their collective marbles".

"Why was an appointment announced in panic today when the incoming CEO won't be commencing until September 2021?" she told AAP. "For the timing to be so blatantly provocative is not only disrespectful to the incoming CEO Mr [Paul] Graham but shows Scott Morrison remains entirely consumed by short-term political management."

Also furious are leading business supporters of the Liberal Party. Shopping centre billionaire and party donor Shaun Bonétt accused Morrison of fostering a "culture of bullying and harassment", reported the 12 April *Australian Financial Review*. "As is said, 'a fish rots from the head', and the deplorable and shameful way in which Ms Holgate has been treated is being watched by the world", he said.

The Citizens Party has shown that Christine Holgate was taking Australia Post in a direction that was very successful for the organisation and the hard-working small business licensed post office operators, but against the service-cutting and downsizing agenda of the Liberal government, which has long tried to privatise Australia Post. Central to her success was the 2018 deal she and a small

team of executives achieved with the big banks, to pay properly for post offices being their agents. Without that deal, Australia Post would have scrapped its Bank@Post service, which would have been a disaster for 1,550 communities around Australia without bank branches and only the local post office at which to bank. [Christine Holgate was very emotional](#) when she announced the deal in 2018, because she knew how close those communities had come to being cut off from banking services altogether.

In one of the most twisted and perverse chapters of Australian political history, it was this deal, which was so beneficial to Australia, for which she was ambushed and destroyed in Parliament two years later, on the pretext of the watches she awarded to the hard-working executives whose efforts had achieved it. As Australians have learnt the truth about the watches, they have rallied behind Christine Holgate and the licensed post offices, forcing the inquiry which is terrifying Scott Morrison, because it threatens to reveal the corrupt way power is wielded in Australia (and not just by the Liberals, as it was Labor that started the attack on Christine Holgate).

Do not tolerate Scott Morrison's behaviour! Call and email your local [federal MP, all the Senators from your state](#), and the politicians below, to express your indignation and demand they all stand up to the gangster PM and his gang of thugs and demand they replace the entire Australia Post board and reinstate Christine Holgate!

## **SENATE ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS REFERENCES COMMITTEE**

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### **Liberal**

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Member Sam McMahon 02 6277 3643

### **Labor**

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Member Nita Green 02 6277 3580  
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## **OTHERS**

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Josh Frydenberg 02 6277 7340  
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Simon Birmingham 02 6277 7400  
Amanda Stoker 02 6277 3457

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### **One Nation**

Pauline Hanson 02 6277 3184

[Click here to sign the new Change.org petition:](#)  
[PM Morrison - apologise to Christine Holgate and reinstate her as CEO of Australia Post](#)