



Australian Citizens Party

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MEDIA RELEASE

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The National Party's shameful betrayal of licensed post offices and regional communities

Victorian National Party Senator Bridget McKenzie deserves enormous praise and community gratitude for her fearless and powerful defence of stood-down Australia Post CEO Christine Holgate and the longsuffering small business licensed post offices (LPOs) fighting to get her reinstated.

In multiple Senate hearings Senator McKenzie has worked alongside another champion of the LPOs, Senator Pauline Hanson, to forcefully



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interrogate the Australia Post board and government witnesses. In doing so, Senator McKenzie has often crossed swords with her own government colleagues in the Liberal Party, including Senator Jane Hume and Senator Sarah Henderson, who have shamelessly tried to protect the Board and government witnesses from her questions ([and in the case of Senator Henderson also viciously attacked the LPOs](#)).

All Australians who support the fight to reinstate Christine Holgate and save Australia Post should [contact Senator McKenzie](#) to thank her for her efforts.

Shockingly, however, she is a lone warrior in her National Party; by the actions of the rest of her colleagues, or rather inaction, the National Party has betrayed the LPOs and the regional communities they serve.

The one absolute truth that should be driving every National Party MP on this issue is this:

Christine Holgate singlehandedly saved banking services for hundreds of communities in their electorates!

Without her, the 1,550 regional communities across Australia which don't have bank branches also would not be able to bank at the community post office, because the Bank@Post service would have been scrapped in October 2018. Those communities would be withering and dying as residents would be forced to travel long distances to larger centres to do their banking, taking their everyday commerce with them.

To save the communities that National Party MPs represent, Christine Holgate alone opposed an Australia Post board decision in 2018 to scrap banking services because they were losing Australia Post \$48 million per year, losses mostly coming out of the pockets of LPOs. She assembled a team of executives who worked very hard for months to convince the big banks to pay a \$20 million community representation fee. With the last-minute assistance of Treasurer Josh Frydenberg to get the banks to the table, she achieved the deal literally on the deadline set by the board for saving the service—her emotion at the announcement of the banking deal reflects how close Australia had come

to losing postal banking services. To recognise the very hard work of her team, she awarded them Cartier watches. The beneficiaries of this deal are the regional communities served by LPOs, but what are National Party MPs, with the honourable exception of Bridget McKenzie, doing for Christine Holgate and the LPOs in return?

Worse than nothing. They are betraying their communities and the LPOs, by rolling over to Prime Minister Scott Morrison's vicious agenda to drive her out. A disgusting example of this betrayal is this 26 April email by the Member for Lyne David Gillespie to a constituent. Despite all the revelations that have emerged from the inquiry, Gillespie doesn't care. He stuck fast to Scott Morrison's lies:

Gillespie: *Thank you for your email regarding Christine Holgate. The concern has never been with Christine Holgate. The issue was the inappropriate use of taxpayer's money for luxury items.*

Response: Lie! Christine Holgate opposed the privatisation agenda; the PM's attack had nothing to do with Cartier watches.

Gillespie: *Ms Holgate was stood aside for a period while an investigation was under way, and then made a decision to resign from her role, with immediate effect—she was not fired.*

Response: False! She was bullied into offering her resignation, which is a constructive dismissal that is unlawful under Australian law.

Gillespie: *The investigation report found that the purchase of watches was not a proper use of public money, as required under the PGPA [Public Governance, Performance and Accountability] Act, and was not supported by internal Australia Post policies.*

Response: The investigation cleared Christine Holgate of any actual wrongdoing; the report could only contrive a token finding against her by saying nothing in Australia Post's rules authorised her to specifically buy watches—a ludicrous demand for specificity that no corporate or government rules would meet.

Gillespie: *I and many of my colleagues fully support our local LPO's and I have written to Minister for Communications, Urban Infrastructure, Cities and the Arts, The Hon Paul Fletcher MP stating this. Thank you for taking the time to bringing your concerns to my attention.*

Response: With "supporters" like David Gillespie, who needs enemies?

David Gillespie's repetition of Scott Morrison's lies is an especially shameful betrayal of the LPOs, given LPO Group Executive Director Angela Cramp assisted him in 2018 when he was at risk of losing his seat under Section 44 of the Constitution which prohibits MPs from profiting from the Crown, because he owned a property rented by a licensed post office. Angela Cramp spoke out on Gillespie's behalf, explaining to the media and authorities that while LPOs provide postal services, they are in fact private small businesses. He kept his job—why hasn't he lifted a finger to help the woman who saved LPOs and regional banking services keep hers?

It's time Australians demanded the National Party stand up and fix the Australia Post debacle. Political point-scoring or ideological agendas like privatisation should never be allowed to destroy a CEO like Christine Holgate who protected the essential postal and banking services that regional communities rely on, and the hard-working small business families who run the licensed post offices that provide those services. If that ever does happen, as in this case, it is up to honest politicians to put it right, and not just accept that "that's politics". Call all National Party MPs and Senators to tell them their spineless inaction is unacceptable. The Liberals cannot govern without them, so they should form a delegation to Scott Morrison to demand he fix the mess he created: order his ministers to replace the Liberal-stacked board and reinstate Christine Holgate as CEO.

What you can do

Call *all* National Party MPs and Senators and demand they fight for Christine Holgate and the LPOs:

National MPs

Pat Conaghan	Cowper, NSW	02 6652 6233	Pat.Conaghan.MP@aph.gov.au
Mark Coulton	Parkes, NSW	02 6882 0999	Mark.Coulton.MP@aph.gov.au
Andrew Gee	Calare, NSW	02 6361 7138	Andrew.Gee.MP@aph.gov.au
David Gillespie	Lyne, NSW	02 6586 4462	David.Gillespie.MP@aph.gov.au
Kevin Hogan	Page, NSW	02 6621 4044	Kevin.Hogan.MP@aph.gov.au
Barnaby Joyce	New England, NSW	02 6761 3080	Barnaby.Joyce.MP@aph.gov.au
Michael McCormack	Riverina, NSW	02 6921 4600	Michael.McCormack.MP@aph.gov.au
George Christensen	Dawson, QLD	07 4944 0662	George.Christensen.MP@aph.gov.au

Michelle Landry	Capricornia, QLD	07 4922 6604	Michelle.Landry.MP@aph.gov.au
David Littleproud	Maranoa, QLD	07 4662 2715	David.Littleproud.MP@aph.gov.au
Llew O'Brien	Wide Bay, QLD	07 4121 2936	Llew.O'Brien.MP@aph.gov.au
Ken O'Dowd	Flynn, QLD	07 4972 5465	Ken.O'Dowd.MP@aph.gov.au
Keith Pitt	Hinkler, QLD	07 4152 0744	Keith.Pitt.MP@aph.gov.au
Darren Chester	Gippsland, VIC	03 5144 5744	Darren.Chester.MP@aph.gov.au
Damian Drum	Nicholls, VIC	03 5821 5371	Damian.Drum.MP@aph.gov.au
Anne Webster	Mallee, VIC	03 5021 5987	Anne.Webster.MP@aph.gov.au

National Senators

Perin Davey	NSW	02 9519 9310	senator.davey@aph.gov.au
Sam McMahon	NT	08 8948 3555	senator.mcmahon@aph.gov.au
Matthew Canavan	QLD	07 4927 2003	senator.canavan@aph.gov.au
Susan McDonald	QLD	07 4771 3066	senator.mcdonald@aph.gov.au
Bridget McKenzie	VIC	02 6024 2560	senator.mckenzie@aph.gov.au

Call Liberal Senator Sarah Henderson to express your outrage at the way, on behalf of Scott Morrison, she bullied and belittled the LPO Group to undermine its support for Christine Holgate.
Ph: (03) 5221 5900 Email: senator.henderson@aph.gov.au

[Click here to sign the new Change.org petition:](#)

[PM Morrison - apologise to Christine Holgate and reinstate her as CEO of Australia Post](#)