Australian Citizens Party

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Senator for bankers kills Separation of Banks inquiry under cover of election

There can be no doubt that the Morrison Liberal government and its senator for bankers, Jane Hume, exist to serve the criminal banks and not the Australian people. The latest proof is that the senator for bankers is killing off the Separation of Banks Bill inquiry under the cover of the election campaign—by pretending to conduct the inquiry while she herself is campaigning to be re-elected!

The question must be asked: following the banking royal commission, shouldn't we be seeing bankers going to jail? Instead, we have ex-bankers running for parliament and rigging banking inquiries to protect them.

The banks have shown by their words and deeds that the potential reform they most hate is structural separation. Why? Because it will destroy their parasitical business model. When they were regulated, banks had to serve the economy, and make their profits from normal lending, to business and individuals, that helped the economy grow. Deregulated, they have been able to feed off the economy, like a parasite, and to grow at the expense of business and families. Structural separation would cut bank predators off from their prey—from gambling with customers' deposits, and from being able to lure customers into buying products and making investments that they don't need, all of which has been massively profitable for the banks but destructive to both their customers and the economy.

It is to shield the banks from this policy that the senator for bankers, Jane Hume, refused to extend the Senate Economics Legislation Committee inquiry into the Banking System Reform (Separation of Banks) Bill 2019, which she chairs, until after the election. When the inquiry started, it was not known that the reporting date, set for 13 May, would be five days before voting day. If the inquiry was conducted properly, it would have been extended by two or three months, to allow time for the committee to read the more than 900 public submissions, hold public hearings, and produce a considered report.

By not extending the inquiry, the former NAB, Rothschild Australia and Deutsche Bank executive is pretending she can conduct an inquiry during an election campaign in which she is also campaigning for re-election as the senator for bankers.

What a farce! Senator Hume isn't even going through the motions of chairing an inquiry; rather, she is treating Australians and the democratic parliamentary process with utter contempt, for the sole purpose of suppressing the only legislation in Parliament that would truly reform the banks following their exposure by the royal commission as vast criminal enterprises.

Suppressing submissions

Senator Hume's committee has disclosed that it received "more than" 900 public submissions to the inquiry. This is huge for an inquiry into banking legislation, which are usually cosy affairs between the banks, regulators and Treasury, and a few other stakeholders. However, there are likely many more submissions, as the committee has admitted that there are many they haven't processed yet.

Of these submissions, Senator Hume initially decided to only publish 30 "which represent the recurring views expressed". This is bureaucratic-speak for "the overwhelming number of submissions, perhaps 99+ per cent, support separation, so to downplay that enormous public support we'll only publish a handful". Under pressure, the committee has now published 54 submissions, but that is not good enough.

An experienced parliamentary source informed the CEC that the only legitimate reason for the committee not to publish all submissions is if they are "form" letters—pre-written letters that all say exactly the same thing which the submitters just sign. That is *not* true for most of the submissions to this inquiry. The source said the committee has contrived a new excuse to not publish these submissions, for the reason that the sheer number of submissions has been overwhelming.

That's the point—the number of submissions proves the massive public support for the policy of bank separation, which the senator for bankers is determined to suppress.

Among the submissions that the committee has refused to publish are a number from overseas experts, including from the United States which successfully separated banks for almost 70 years. Only one overseas submission, from former IMF macro-economist Alphecca Muttardy, has been published. Why? The committee has no right to suppress the submissions from overseas experts who have taken the time to advise Australia that bank separation is a crucial, necessary reform.

Accessories before, during and after the fact

Before the royal commission, the Liberals denied the plethora of evidence of bank misconduct and crimes (as did the regulators, and Labor until 2016).

During the royal commission, when evidence of criminality was coming thick and fast, they feigned ignorance—"we didn't know how bad it was". But their actions since the royal commission finished, with its pathetic final report that the banks actually celebrated, expose them to be accessories to the banks' crimes.

They have zero intention of really reforming the banks. They have zero intention of cleaning up bank crimes, nor properly compensating the victims, nor reforming the complicit captured regulators.

Ask yourself: with the Liberals so desperate to win the election, why aren't they taking on the banks, to repair their shredded reputation from being seen as bank protectors, which would be very popular? Because the banks own them lock, stock and barrel, that's why.

You could draw the conclusion that Jane Hume, the senator for bankers, is in Parliament to enforce this relationship. Upon her election in 2016 Hume was immediately installed as chair of the Senate Economics Legislation Committee to control legislation that applies to banks. She pulls rank on fellow Liberal MPs who question bank practices. She harangues fellow committee members who question her. She cuts off fellow senators when they question bank regulators. She protects the RBA from public scrutiny by holding hearings behind closed doors. She chaired the 2017-18 inquiry that shepherded through the "bail-in" powers for APRA with a loophole to seize deposits to prop up failing banks. And now she has made a farce of this bank separation inquiry, to kill it off under the cover of the election campaign.

The banks have corrupted politics, and it must no longer be tolerated. It would be no coincidence that One Nation is currently the target of a coordinated establishment media take-down. However self-inflicted, the timing of the attack is revealing, as it was Pauline Hanson who introduced the Separation of Banks bill that is such a threat to the powerful banking cartel. These are the lengths to which the banks are prepared to go to save their looting racket, but out of desperation, not strength. Everything they do causes a backlash against them—the CEC is leading the fight to turn that backlash into real change.

What you can do

- If you made a submission to the inquiry which wasn't published, call or email Senator Hume's office and demand they publish your submission. If they try to fob you off, don't let them—every other member of the committee has confirmed that Hume calls the shots, so she is responsible for directing the secretariat on which submissions to publish. Ph: (03) 9428 1773 Email: senator.hume@aph.gov.au

- Contact every candidate in your electorate, to complain about Senator Hume rigging this inquiry, and demand to know if they support bank separation and oppose bail-in. To find the contact details for the candidates in your electorate, click on this link and type in your post code.

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