



# Australian Citizens Party

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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### Bob Katter: Reinstate Christine Holgate as Australia Post CEO

The Member for Kennedy Bob Katter [has warned Parliament](#) that unless Christine Holgate is reinstated as CEO of Australia Post, the politicians would be setting themselves against the 3,000 small businesses who run licensed post offices (LPOs). These LPO small businesses are fighting for their lives, fearing financial ruin since dishonest Labor politicians and the Prime Minister jointly character-assassinated and drove out the only CEO to make their businesses viable.

Their desperate message is getting through:

- the Citizens Party is supporting their fight to bring back Christine Holgate and is promoting the establishment of an Australia Post “people’s bank” as a long-term win-win solution for post offices and for the nation;
- Bob Katter is advocating for Christine Holgate and the LPOs in Parliament; and
- former Nationals leader Barnaby Joyce has also spoken up for Christine Holgate and the local post offices in Parliament on 2 December, admitting he changed his mind about Holgate when presented with the facts that showed she had been falsely and unjustly maligned, and attacked the agenda to privatise Australia Post.

Barnaby Joyce’s intervention was explosive. It showed a member of the government is prepared to acknowledge that it was not actions at Australia Post, but political machinations in Parliament that destroyed an excellent CEO’s career and put at risk a very important government service. Given they know the truth, the Nationals should go further and support Bob Katter and the LPOs’ call to replace the Australia Post board and reinstate Christine Holgate.

The Citizens Party has presented the truth about the scandal in a new online video: [An Australia Post ‘people’s bank’—a win-win solution for the nation](#)

Briefly, this is what happened:

Labor Senator Kimberley Kitching ambushed Christine Holgate in a 22 October Senate Estimates hearing, with a premeditated line of questioning about Cartier watches that Holgate had purchased *two years earlier*. Kitching accused Holgate of using taxpayers’ money and attacked Holgate when she replied that it wasn’t taxpayers’ money.

A few hours later, Labor leader Anthony Albanese asked the prime minister this very misleading question in Parliament: “My question is addressed to the Prime Minister. How is it that on his watch, in the middle of the worst recession in almost a century, with one million Australians unemployed, businesses collapsing and a trillion dollars of Liberal debt, this government is taking no action against the Liberal-appointed Australia Post board, which spent \$12,000 of taxpayers’ money on Cartier watches?”

(The only part of Albanese’s question that was true was his reference to the “Liberal-appointed Australia Post board”—the two major parties take turns stacking the boards of government business enterprises with party loyalists when they are in government. The rest of the question dishonestly implied that Christine Holgate purchased the watches “in the middle of the worst recession in almost a century”, whereas she had purchased them two years earlier. The question is: did Albanese deliberately lie, or was he also misled by Kimberley Kitching?)

In response to this misleading question, the prime minister hyped up the outrage, declaring he was “appalled” at the misuse of taxpayers’ money, and demanding the Australia Post board stand Holgate aside.

The truth is Christine Holgate did *not* misuse taxpayers’ money. While Australia Post is owned by the taxpayer, by law it operates commercially and does *not* receive taxpayers’ funds. It competes with the large salaries private corporations pay for executive talent, but Holgate received *one third* of the remuneration of her predecessor. And, as noted, she did *not* buy the watches during the mass unemployment conditions of 2020, but in 2018 as a reward for an incredible deal that profited Australia Post, saved the small business LPO families, and actually *earned* money for taxpayers—\$20 million in GST. Rewarding the executives was an entirely appropriate decision approved by the Chair.

The 3,000 LPOs know better than anybody that the deal was brilliant and the reward was justified, so to protest Holgate's treatment each of them mailed \$5 to Scott Morrison to cover the cost of the watches themselves—which the government hasn't acknowledged!

### **Challenge your MP to support the truth!**

The Citizens Party has drafted the following parliamentary motion as an example of what politicians should pass to correct this injustice and support their local post offices.

*That the House:*

*(1) notes:*

*(a) that the government's decision to require the Australia Post board to stand aside CEO Christine Holgate from her position was predicated on a false insinuation that her purchase in 2018 of Cartier watches for Australia Post executives was a misuse of taxpayers' money;*

*(b) that while Australia Post is owned by taxpayers it is required to operate commercially and does not receive taxpayers' money;*

*(c) that Ms Holgate's decision, approved by the Chair, to reward the Australia Post executives was entirely appropriate recognition for their success in negotiating an agreement with banks that profited Australia Post, ensured the viability of its 3,600 licensed post offices and postal points and the communities they serve, and earned taxpayers \$20 million;*

*(d) that the licensed post office operators are small businesses which have each invested on average \$1.2 million of their own money, and this collective \$3 billion investment is crucial to the success of this essential government service;*

*(e) that the licensed post offices call Christine Holgate "the best CEO Australia Post has ever had" and due to her departure fear they will again face the same financial disaster they faced before her appointment as CEO;*

*(g) that the financial failure of the licensed post offices is the real risk to taxpayers' money, as it would require a \$3 billion injection from taxpayers into Australia Post; and*

*(2) calls on the government to:*

*(a) replace the current board with non-political appointees, including a representative each from the licensed post offices and from Australia Post employees;*

*(b) direct the board to reinstate Christine Holgate as CEO of Australia Post.*

*The Citizens Party calls on all Australians to forward this suggested Parliamentary motion to your local MP, tell them to support it, and insist on an answer.*

[Click here to watch An Australia Post 'people's bank'—a win-win solution for the nation](#)