

March 19, 2021

TO:

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Subject: Enquiry into Australia Post and the Dismissal of Ms. Holgate (CEO).

Dear Committee Secretary,

I would like to make a submission to the Senate Enquiry into the treatment by various organisations and individuals of Ms. Christine Holgate.

I believe that Aust post network provides a critical and essential service for the proper functioning of Australia's economy and our citizens.

I am Australian citizen living in Victoria and a member of the leading committee of the Assyrian Chaldean Syriac Council of Australia and have followed this case, commencing with my viewing our Prime Minister's theatrical outburst in Parliament over the Cartier watches affair.

'Public expectations'

Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Communications Minister Paul Fletcher used "public expectations" as a cynical political ruse to force out Christine Holgate as CEO of Australia Post over the purchase of Cartier watches.

As a public our real expectations are that Australia Post should be managed properly so it remains a public service for all Australians, and not stripped down to be sold off to private interests. Contrast the \$20,000 Holgate spent on Cartier watches, to her actual achievements in managing Australia Post since taking over in October 2017.

Looking beyond the mainstream media, I discovered an entirely different reality. The sacking of Christine Holgate was a serious mistake by the Prime Minister and the board of Australia Post and she must be reinstated immediately.

1. Christine Holgate has evidence that she informed the board. And the watches were purchased two years prior to the Pandemic.
2. The Maddocks report into the circumstances of Ms. Holgate's dismissal has cleared her of any wrongdoing. She did not exceed her authority in approving gifts to her senior executives in 2019, in the form of four Cartier watches valued at around \$20,000. And self-evidently, these gifts are extremely modest in comparison with the economic value arising from the success of their work in negotiating ongoing multi-million-dollar payments to Australia Post for the financial services provided to the customers of Australian banks and other financial institutions.
3. The Chair has been in my opinion unduly influenced by the Prime Minister and others to force Christine out of her position. The Maddocks report proved Christine did nothing wrong, but it does sound like the Chair and the board are purposely trying to undermine Christine's credibility and her reputation – and the board should be sacked!

4. This affair is possibly also exposing the secret plan that the Australian Government has to privatise Australia Post and it needed to weaken Aus Post to the point that there was an excuse to privatize an important public asset and the largest retail network across Australia.

Your Committee could make a true history by deeply reflecting upon these events, and to consider the measures necessary to repair the damage, not only to Ms. Holgate and Australia Post, but also to the members of this Committee's reputation and of the Parliament itself.

Sincerely

Sleiman Yohanna

Assyrian Chaldean Syriac Council of Australia