



Australian Citizens Party

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Senate cash ban cowards block important witnesses and thousands of opponents from 'public' hearing

Demand Parliament sack the Liberal Chairman Slade Brockman and Secretary Mark 'Sir Humphrey' Fitt from the Senate Economics Legislation Committee!

You'd think that as the Morrison government is planning a radical change that upends centuries of tradition by banning transactions in the legal tender of cash, it would want to know the views of the public.

Hell no! When it comes to extreme measures to benefit criminal banks, this government is hell-bent on not only ignoring the widespread and deep-seated objections of the public to its radical agenda, but on actively suppressing their ability to object.

In doing so, they have demonstrated for all of Australia to see that they hold the democratic processes of Parliament in contempt, as mere formalities to "go through the motions" while fixing the outcome between the major parties behind closed doors.

The latest example is today's public hearing in Canberra on the [cash ban law](#). First, the committee has not invited anybody who would destroy the government's claim that this ban is necessary to combat the so-called "black economy". Since crooked accounting giant KPMG cooked up that pretext, and the government adopted its recommendation, expert researchers have shown that not only does Australia not have a serious black economy problem, but the small black economy that does exist has been shrinking for two decades without any radical cash ban. As that's the only excuse for this law, therefore that's the only issue to clarify, but Liberal Chairman Slade Brockman has refused to invite witnesses such as independent economist John Adams and former APRA Principal Researcher Dr Wilson Sy who could set the record straight.

Instead of inviting the people who could address the central issue, the committee has invited [witnesses](#) such as the spokesman of the Uniting Church, who endorses the cash ban. The church has no special expertise, but its financial operations are completely enmeshed with KPMG, which audits its finances and oversees management of its funds.

Second, while the committee must have planned this hearing well in advance and invited the scheduled witnesses more than a week ago, it deliberately waited until 5:30 PM last night to notify the thousands of other people who made submissions that this hearing would be on, to ensure that the interested public wouldn't have time to come. With proper notice, the hearing room would have been packed with everyday Australians who oppose the law, and they know it! They are determined to lock the real public out of this inquiry process.

When Citizens Party spokesman Robert Barwick challenged the "public servant" directing the inquiry, Mark "Sir Humphrey" Fitt, to explain why he emailed people so late, he chose to split hairs and give a bureaucratic answer: "I haven't emailed anybody." *No Mr Fitt, the committee secretariat did, of which you are in charge!* Mr Fitt behaves as a gatekeeper for the committee that oversees all banking legislation, whose job is to lock the public out so nothing interferes with the committee rubber-stamping everything the banks want. Fitt was secretary when this same committee waved through the 2018 "bail-in" law, and earlier this year when the committee conducted a farcical non-inquiry into the Separation of Banks Bill 2019, because the banks hysterically opposed it.

Between them, Slade Brockman and Mark Fitt had already shown their contempt for the public's interest in this inquiry when they rubbish almost 3,000 submissions from the public, dismissing them as "correspondence" and refusing to publish them.

The Citizens Party calls on Parliament to restore public confidence in the integrity of its processes by firing committee Chairman Slade Brockman and Secretary Mark Fitt, and replacing them with a new chairman and secretary who will conduct a genuine inquiry.

Parliament debased

The conduct of this inquiry has deliberately debased the democratic procedures of Parliament which exist to hear the views of the public on laws that affect them.

Australian Senate Practice Chapter 16: Committees states of the purpose of committees: “Most significantly, committees provide a means of access for citizens to participate in law making and policy review. Anyone may make a submission to a committee inquiry.... Committees frequently meet outside Canberra, thereby taking the Senate to the people and gaining first-hand knowledge of and exposure to issues of concern to the public. Inquiries by committees allow citizens to air grievances about government and bring to light mistreatment of citizens by government.”

It adds: “The taking of evidence at public hearings is a key element of most Senate committee inquiries and is an opportunity to test, in public, views expressed in the written submissions already received by the committee.”

Clearly the committee is in breach of this standard for proper practice. Their contempt follows Treasury rigging its initial consultation on the same law, by first not acknowledging the more than 3,500 submissions received from the public in just two weeks; then being exposed by an FOI for having, in its communication with the government, falsely dismissed almost all of them as the campaign of just one group, the CEC; then publishing most of them on its website in one big data dump, but hiding KPMG’s submission among those from individuals, to bury the fact that KPMG was openly calling for the \$10,000 limit to be reduced to \$2,000, and for the limit to be included in the associated regulation so the minister can easily reduce it further.

Will Labor aid and abet the government?

The question is: given Labor pushed for this extended inquiry, does it approve of the government rigging it so blatantly, or will it object? Labor leader Anthony Albanese has appointed KPMG boffin Andrew Dempster to be his policy director—will KPMG get its way in the Labor Party, or will the party take on the banks and crooked accounting firms to defend the rights of the Australian people?

Call Labor leader Anthony Albanese, and all Labor MPs and Senators, to demand they stop the government from rigging this inquiry.

- Contact Albanese on (02) 9564 3588 or A.Albanese.MP@aph.gov.au
- [Click here](#) for contact details of Senators.
- Find your local MP [here](#).

If you haven’t signed the “Stop the cash ban” petition, now is the time to do it. [Click here to add your name](#) to the growing rebellion against the criminal banking cartel’s desperate push for greater powers to prop up their failing system at our expense!