



Citizens Party members and supporters attend the April 2024 Bribie Island public hearing of the Senate Inquiry into regional bank branch closures.

# Who are the Australian Citizens Party and what have they ever done for you?



## If you haven't heard of the ACP, ask yourself—why?



There seem to be dozens of "splinter" political parties now, but the Australian Citizens Party (ACP) is not one of them.

The ACP started 36 years ago in 1988, originally under the name Citizens Electoral Council (CEC) before members voted for a name change in 2019.

The party has been federally registered for more than three decades, and has contested 12 federal elections and numerous state elections.

If you haven't heard of the ACP before, ask yourself—*why?*

The short answer is the ACP represents a threat to the vested interests who control Australian politics through the two major political parties, which include the mainstream corporate media who act as gatekeepers for what information gets mass publicity.

Here's what the Australian Citizens Party has fought for and achieved.

*Citizens taking Responsibility*

# Economic and national sovereignty

From when the ACP (then CEC) first started in 1988, winning the by-election for the seat of Barambah in Queensland's state parliament, the party has stood for restoring Australia's national and economic sovereignty so that the government and the economy serve the people of Australia.

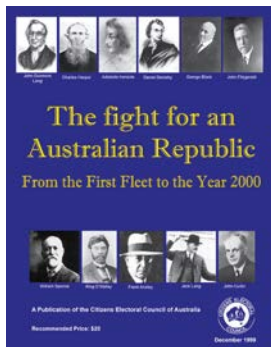
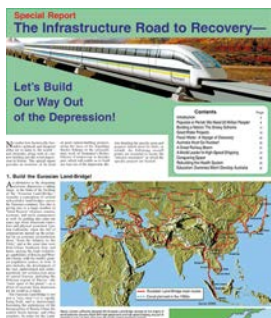
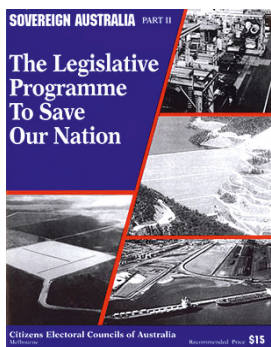
Australia was then at the beginning of the neoliberal revolution sweeping the world, when governments rushed to deregulate the financial system and privatise state assets including all-important electricity systems.

They sabotaged the democratic principle of *government of, by and for the people*: neoliberalism dismantled the ability of governments to provide essential services for the people, but increased and concentrated economic power in the big four banks and other giant corporations motivated solely to maximise profit.

As public discontent against this grew in Australia and around the world, our governments increasingly enacted extreme police-state powers that stripped the people of fundamental civil liberties.

At the same time, they increasingly embedded Australia into the US-UK war machine, joining in the illegal invasion of Iraq and its aftermath in the Middle East, partnering with NATO on the other side of the world, and handing Australia over to be a US military base for a military confrontation with our biggest trading partner China.

The ACP fought this destruction of Australia's economic and national sovereignty every step of the way:



- Opposed deindustrialisation and outsourcing of industries overseas, and the shift to a so-called "services" economy, from when it started in the early 1990s.
- Promoted a vision for Australia's economic development, published in a succession of in-depth studies, on using a national bank like the original Commonwealth Bank to fund Snowy Mountains Scheme-style grand infrastructure projects, and investment in manufacturing and agricultural industries.
- Fought to save Australia's industries and infrastructure from being destroyed by extreme "green" ideology that opposes industry and human activity; opposed and exposed the Murray Darling Basin Plan (including water speculation), which sabotaged irrigated food production on a spurious environmental pretext; and, for decades, when no other party would touch it, led the debate on the benefits of clean, safe, peaceful nuclear power.
- Fought the mass-privatisation of state-owned assets, including Qantas, the Commonwealth Bank, Telstra, and crucial infrastructure, that existed to serve the people and economy, and exposed the secretive international neoliberal think tank network directing the privatisation agenda worldwide.
- Worked with like-minded political organisations around the world to reform the international financial architecture to reduce unproductive and risky financial speculation and boost global productivity and economic development.
- Conducted and published in-depth original research on Australian history, which revealed the early colonial fight for a truly independent Australian republic, and the history of the early labour movement and old Australian Labor Party's fight to establish and use the original Commonwealth Bank, to develop Australia and serve the people.
- Fought against the illegal invasion of Iraq on a lie and other disastrous regime-change wars that Australia followed the United States and United Kingdom into, including Afghanistan, Syria, and now the utterly insane war build-up against China.
- Mobilised a coalition of opposition to the draconian police-state laws governments enacted starting in the late 1990s, but which they turbo-charged after 9/11 (the Howard government enacted seven draconian laws in 2002-03—now there are more than 100), which shredded important legal principles and stripped Australians of their civil liberties.
- Debunked the litany of lies from government and media intended to justify police-state laws and incite domestic support for Australia participating in US-UK wars, including lies vilifying Australia's Muslim and Chinese communities.
- Warned repeatedly before 2008 that financial gambling unleashed by deregulation threatened the Australian and global financial systems, and after the 2008 banking crash led the campaign for financial reorganisation and "Glass-Steagall" regulation to make the banking system secure and keep deposits safe.

# What has the Australian Citizens Party achieved for you?

Since 2017, the ACP has become a major factor in federal Parliament's debates and processes for advancing, scrutinising and passing policies and bills. ACP campaigns mobilise thousands of citizens to engage in policy debates and parliamentary inquiries, with great success: the ACP has been directly responsible for initiating nine Senate inquiries since 2017, and on four occasions ACP-drafted bills have been introduced into Parliament. These policy issues, principally economic, go to the heart of who controls the financial system, and whether it serves the people or global corporate interests. The ACP's approach is to work with any politicians on issues on which we have common ground, which has led to productive collaborations with politicians from all parties.

## Bail-in

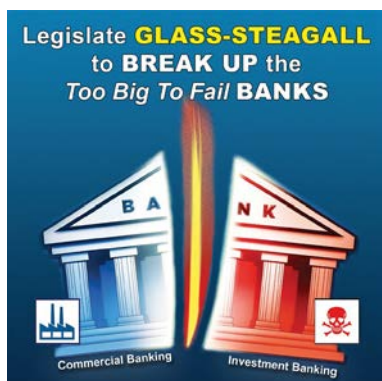
In 2017 the ACP exposed that the Turnbull-Morrison government's "bail-in" bill contained provisions that created a back door to steal customer deposits to prop up banks. The ACP's campaign triggered a Senate inquiry into the bill, and swamped the inquiry with submissions from everyday citizens; however, the government denied it was a bail-in law, but rushed the bill into law on St. Valentine's Day 2018, with only eight Senators present in the chamber. The ACP kept fighting, attracting significant experts to the campaign, and in 2020 the ACP drafted a bill which Senator Malcolm Roberts introduced in Parliament to repeal the bail-in provisions in the 2018 bill. This achieved another Senate



inquiry that drew out authoritative financial experts who confirmed the bail-in danger was real, but the Liberals and Labor voted down Senator Roberts' bill.

## 'Glass-Steagall' separation of banks

In 2018, the ACP drafted the Separation of Banks Bill 2018, to make Australia's banking system truly secure by separating deposit-taking banks from investment banking and other forms of speculation, on the principle of the US Glass-Steagall Act 1933. Independent MP Bob Katter introduced the bill into Parliament, but even though the evidence being heard at the Banking Royal Commission, which was underway at the time, confirmed the need for the ACP's bill, the Morrison government sided with the banks and stopped the bill going to a vote. In 2019 One Nation re-introduced the ACP's Glass-Steagall bill into the Senate, and it was referred to a Senate inquiry, but the government again sided with the banks and refused to hold public hearings.



On 1 Dec. 2023, ACP Research Director Robert Barwick and ACP National Executive Member Glen Isherwood testify before the Senate Inquiry into regional bank branch closures.

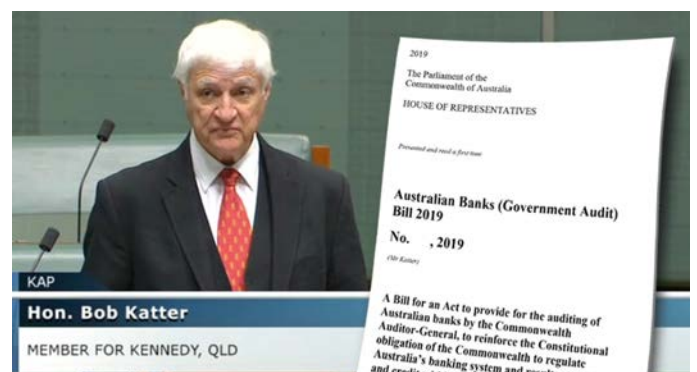
## Stopped the cash ban

When the Morrison government introduced a bill in 2019 to ban cash transactions above \$10,000, enforced by jail terms, the ACP helped to lead a nationwide fight which derailed the plan of the two major parties to rush the bill into law, and eventually forced them to drop it from Parliament. The campaign generated thousands of public submissions against the bill, forced the Senate to hold hearings which embarrassed the government by demonstrating they had no evidence of the need for this law, and exposed that the law would only benefit the banks' agenda to get rid of cash to force all transactions through their computers. The campaign showed the politicians Australians emphatically do not want a cashless society.



## Transparency for the banking system

The ACP was first to expose the corruption of the global Big Four accounting firms—PwC, KPMG, EY, and Deloitte—years ahead of the current PwC scandal. Because the Big Four firms, which audit more than 90 per cent of the world's biggest corporations, had given clean audits to all the banks that collapsed in the 2008 financial crisis, in 2019 the ACP drafted a bill which Bob Katter introduced into Parliament to require Australia's Big Four banks to be audited by the public Auditor-General, instead of the untrustworthy global Big Four accounting firms.



## The truth about Christine Holgate and Australia Post

When Prime Minister Scott Morrison bullied Christine Holgate out of her job as CEO of Australia Post in October 2020, only the ACP questioned the true motive. The ACP's subsequent campaign exposed that Christine Holgate had saved the postal network, but upset the banks which had been exploiting post offices, and had blocked the government's secret privatisation agenda. Working with small business licensees who supported Christine Holgate, the ACP's campaign achieved a major Senate inquiry which cleared Christine Holgate's name and launched the ACP's campaign for a public post office People's Bank.

### Financial victims

In 2021, the ACP helped to establish a Senate inquiry into the collapse of the Sterling First rent-for-life scheme which had left 130 elderly tenants facing eviction and homelessness. The inquiry exposed the culpability of the corporate regulator ASIC (and the WA government). The ACP's Sterling First campaign exposed that decades of weak ASIC regulation had turned Australia into a "paradise for white collar criminals", with literally hundreds of thousands of financial victims left financially broken and uncompensated. The campaign forced the Labor Party to take up the Sterling First case as an election issue, and promise the victims would be included in a Compensation Scheme of Last Resort; however, once in government Labor broke its promise, but the ACP continues to fight for all financial victims.



### Reform of failed regulator ASIC

In fighting for financial victims, the ACP helped to lobby for the 2022-24 inquiry into ASIC's investigation and enforcement failures, which became a major inquiry that recommended the government abolish the discredited ASIC and replace it with specialised regulators.

### Regional bank branch closures

The ACP worked with key collaborators to achieve a Senate inquiry into the major banks closing branches and abandoning regional communities. The inquiry became

With the world becoming more volatile, Australia's security and prosperity can only be achieved through regaining our economic and national sovereignty. Sovereignty will be our top-priority policy in the upcoming federal election. Please follow us online for regular updates, and more importantly join us in our fight to return Australia to the people!



## Australian Citizens Party

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one of the most powerful the Senate has ever conducted, and its chairman said it was the most successful he had ever participated in. The ACP used the inquiry to promote the solution of re-establishing a public bank to operate in post offices, which would ensure all communities retained access to full banking services and force the Big Four banking cartel to actually compete on service, and ACP representatives were able to testify on a post office People's Bank at the biggest hearing in Canberra. After 13 hearings, the Senate committee handed down powerful recommendations, including for the government to consider a post office bank.

### Democratic oversight of the banking system

The ACP successfully defended the principle of democratic accountability for the Reserve Bank by leading the opposition to Treasurer Jim Chalmers repealing Section 11 of the Reserve Bank Act, which gives the democratically elected government veto power over the unelected RBA board. The ACP's campaign forced the Opposition to break their backroom agreement with the government to pass the bill, and establish a Senate inquiry at which most experts backed the ACP's position. The ACP's campaign has succeeded in saving a power that Australia's greatest prime ministers John Curtin and Ben Chifley fought so hard to enshrine in law.



### Post Office People's Bank

The ACP's campaign for a public post office People's Bank, to re-establish a government bank like the original Commonwealth Bank, is potentially our biggest political victory to date: after four years of tireless campaigning in the context of other campaigns, including Christine Holgate/Australia Post and regional bank closures, in August the media announced the Albanese government has put a post office bank back on Labor's agenda. The ACP's vision is for a bank that guarantees face-to-face banking services and access to cash for all communities, lends to local individuals, small businesses and industries, and supports the 4,200-plus post offices across Australia.

**Membership**  
**Join the Citizens Party**

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