

## **Submission. To Regional Banking Taskforce.**

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please permit me to comment on the issue of the closure of Bank Branches over the years.

Firstly, these closures are not only occurring in Country/Regional Australia, they seem to be in full swing in Urban areas as well.

In my area of a south-Eastern Suburb of Melbourne I noted a bank branch closure 3 suburbs closer to the C.B.D. a year or two ago.

Whilst the same bank branch (which I frequent) appears to be safe, being in a major Shopping Strip in BENTLEIGH, it seems the nearest bank branch of the same colour appears to be some kilometres away. Not very good for the more senior members of our community who reside in my area, particularly if relying on public transport and are computer challenged (as I am).

Now I recently heard of another bank closure, (different brand) in a suburb a number of kilometres S.W. of mine which will force the customers to have to hunt further afield in another suburb to transact their business.

Then only a week or so ago, walking down a major shopping strip - even bigger than mine - I came across closed doors of a bank branch - "we have moved" the notice proclaimed - "to an adjoining suburb!"

Only last week, whilst journeying on yet another 'train replacement bus' through the inner west suburb of Melbourne a fellow traveller - disapprovingly, I felt - told me that his local Bank Branch was closing but one could still have the pleasure of visiting other branches in other suburbs which he named (About 2.4 kms in one direction and 4.7kms in the other according to my calculations).

Now, out into the sticks! Recently, I have heard that the adjoining town (about 40 kms or so) from the larger Centre I resided in for 16 years in N.W. N.S.W had lost it's last bank branch, causing business to have to go journeying to the larger centre for bank business. If I recall correctly, the larger centre's population was about 7,000 souls, the smaller bank denuded centre, 1,500-2,000 citizens.

Some may say all the above is of no concern, people can use their local Post Office to conduct their banking requirements. That may be o.k. but I understand one is charged a fee for this service, also, how many Post Offices could economically handle commercial banking transactions at the present time?

I submit that where bank closures leave the post office as the communities' only financial option, the last bank out should supply enough financial resources for the Post Office to operate a viable banking service at no cost to the public or the Post Office.

This should also apply where a suburb or retail centre becomes bank-less!

If the Banking Industry won't come to the party on this issue, then the Government should immediately take steps to set up a Post Office Bank so that the citizens of these bank-less centres have a real banking option in their centre again.

I believe countries like New Zealand and Japan have Post Office type banks.

Regards,

Allan J. Clark.

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