



Australian Citizens Party

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Get behind the momentum for a public post office bank!

Now is the time to approach your local Council to ask them to join the other Councils around Australia passing motions endorsing an Australian postal bank.

The campaign for a public post office bank passed a major milestone on 7 September, [with a forum in Parliament House in Canberra demonstrating the growing support for the policy](#).

Hosted by the Licensed Post Office Group (LPOG), which represents the interests of the almost 3,000 licensees who run community post offices as small businesses, the forum attracted politicians and staffers from all Parliamentary parties for a briefing on the necessity and benefits of a public bank that can prioritise service above maximum profit, and also force the Big Four private banks to compete.

The Communications, Electrical and Plumbing Union (CEPU), which represents postal workers, sent apologies that they couldn't participate on the day, but all attendees were given copies of the CEPU-commissioned Per Capita report issued in 2020, "[PostBank: Filling a Void, Securing Essential Services](#)".

A special guest was award-winning journalist Dale Webster, whose reporting on the true extent of regional bank branch closures through her news service [The Regional](#) has won the Melbourne Press Club's 2021 Quill award for rural and regional journalism and the Walkley Foundation's 2022 June Andrews Award for Freelance Journalist of the Year.

Featured speaker Matt Robson, an Australian-born former New Zealand Cabinet Minister whose party started NZ's postal bank called Kiwibank in 2002, spoke about how previous generations recognised the danger of countries becoming hostage to unrestrained financial power and established public banks, like the Commonwealth Bank of Australia and the Bank of New Zealand.

The privatisation of those public banks in the 1980s and 1990s unshackled the private banks, which in both countries—NZ's banks are owned by Australia's banks—gouged customers with fees and high interest rate margins and slashed services by shutting branches.

Kiwibank restored public banking in NZ, and has been a great success, Mr Robson said, because it shows that a public bank can be re-established and it can compete.

And what do you know? When Kiwibank started, suddenly the private banks stopped shutting branches, dropped their fees, and lowered their interest rates—that's what *real* competition does!

Member for Kennedy Bob Katter, One Nation Senator Malcolm Roberts, Liberal Senator Gerard Rennick, and Nationals Senator Ross Cadell all participated in the forum.

Bob Katter emphasised the need for a public bank to invest in economic development, the way public banks in China and Japan do. Australia needed a bank that understood the bigger picture, not a narrow, short-term view wedded to the profit needs of shareholders, he said.

Senator Roberts said a postal bank was necessary to hold the private banks accountable, and to ensure all communities had banking services.

Senator Rennick endorsed the postal bank as a "people's bank", which could also be an instrument of monetary policy to direct investment into the economy.

LPOG Chairman Andrew Hirst and Executive Director Angela Cramp, who co-chaired the forum, said they were delighted at the show of support.

"We have the network; we're ready for the work," Mrs Cramp said. "Bring it on."

Council endorsements

Local governments have the clearest perspective on the problems that a postal bank will solve, because they see the impact of bank branch closures and the need for services and investment in their communities.

The night before the forum, Strathfield City Council in Sydney became the fifth Australian Council to

pass a motion endorsing an Australian postal bank.

The motion read:

“That Council write to each member and senator of the Federal Parliament urging that they support the Commonwealth Postal Savings Bank Bill 2021 for: (i) the betterment of every Strathfield and Australian citizen and (ii) the betterment of Strathfield Council’s and all Australian Councils’ finances.”

The other Councils that have endorsed the postal bank are all regional: Banana Shire Council in Queensland, Narrabri Shire Council and Cobar Shire Council in New South Wales, and Yilgarn Shire Council in Western Australia.

Enlist *your* community’s support

Matt Robson joined Angela Cramp, Andrew Hirst, and Citizens Party Research Director Robert Barwick for a week of meetings with politicians, including government ministers, on the postal bank, which were all very positive.

To turn the postal bank from a good idea into actual government policy, we have to demonstrate to the politicians that it has broad public support.

Only then will politicians be prepared to take on a political fight against the powerful private banks, which will fight tooth and nail against a public bank.

Key to demonstrating support is getting many more Councils to pass motions endorsing the postal bank, and communicating their endorsement to Canberra through their local federal MPs and Senators.

Councils can speak on behalf of their towns which are losing bank branches, and also for the need for local investment, including in infrastructure—[the Citizens Party has just produced this video explaining how a postal bank can lend to local Councils for their infrastructure needs](#).

This is where you can help: approach your local Council, either by email, or in person, or through a Councillor you know, to inform them of the campaign and ask them to pass a motion of support.

Inform them they can be briefed on the policy by the experts at the Citizens Party, who have drafted the bill for the postal bank.

Matt Robson noted to the forum that when his party achieved Kiwibank in 2002, they were the only party that supported it, whereas in Australia there is broad cross-party support for a postal bank.

This is a policy we can win, and deliver immense economic benefits to all Australian communities at the time they are needed most—get involved!

For explanatory material for Councillors:

[Click here for the Citizens Party’s short flyer](#) explaining the benefits of the postal bank.

[Click here for the draft Commonwealth Postal Savings Bank Bill](#).