



Australian Citizens Party

Craig Isherwood, National Secretary

PO Box 376, COBURG, VIC 3058

Phone: 1800 636 432 **Email:** info@citizensparty.org.au **Web:** citizensparty.org.au

MEDIA RELEASE

19 April 2023

64 more towns in NAB's regional bank firing line

There are 64 more towns across Australia which should be concerned about losing their NAB bank branches soon.

That's because, like the pre-tremors of an earthquake, those branches are experiencing the first sign of impending closure—reduced business hours.

This is the scam NAB and other banks are running to justify closing branches: they reduce business hours, then claim there is less business, and then close the branch.

The towns in the firing line

The NAB branches with reduced hours are in:

Biggenden, Blackwater, Bourke, Bright, Chinchilla, Cloncurry, Cobar, Cohuna, Condobolin, Coonamble, Corrigin, Cunnamulla, Dongara, Dowerin, Dunsborough, Edenhope, Finley, Gilgandra, Gloucester, Inglewood Qld, Injune, Inverloch, Jamestown, Jeparit, Karratha, Katanning, Kellerberrin, Kerang, Kojonup, Kununurra, Kyogle, Lake Cargelligo, Manjimup, Miles, Millmerran, Mitchell, Mullumbimby, Mundubbera, Nagambie, Narrogin, Nhill, Northampton, Numurkah, Nyngan, Oberon, Orbost, Ouyen, Pittsworth, Port Hedland, Proserpine, Quilpie, Quirindi, Rainbow, Richmond, Scone, South West Rocks, St Arnaud, Tenterfield, Terang, Timboon, Walcha, Wallan, Warren, Winton.

Established pattern

In 2017, journalist Dale Webster identified this pattern of reduced business hours preceding branch closures [in a Weekly Times article](#) about the closure of NAB's branch in Harrow in Victoria, which had been operating on limited hours.

Webster warned: "The closure leaves a question mark over 13 other Victorian NAB branches that operate under reduced hours ... at Edenhope, Goroke, Jeparit, Kaniva, Balmoral, Rainbow, Boort, Barham, Swifts Creek, Orbost, Maffra, Heyfield and Yarram."

Of those 13 branches, NAB has since closed nine, and recently notified Jeparit it will close on 6 July (along with Inverloch). Only three others are still open—Edenhope, Rainbow, and Orbost.

NAB's arrogance

NAB was the only Big Four bank to point-blank refuse the request of the Senate committee currently inquiring into bank closures in regional Australia to pause further branch closures pending the outcome of the inquiry.

Whereas CBA complied, Westpac paused half of its planned closures, and ANZ pledged not to plan more closures, NAB replied to Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee Chair Matt Canavan: "We will be continuing our branch reshaping process during the Committee's deliberations in 2023, which will include closures, consolidations and new investments to meet our customers' needs."

NAB shamelessly claimed this decision was "in the best interest of NAB colleagues working in branches and on behalf of our customers and shareholders"; i.e. that pushing ahead with branch closures is in the interests of the customers who are losing their face-to-face service and the staff who are losing their jobs!

Misleading the inquiry?

NAB is closing branches to force customers to bank online—even those vulnerable to sophisticated online scams.

It is sending so-called "fact sheets" to the branches it is closing that claim customer visits have reduced, and around 90 per cent of customers have registered to bank online.

However, NAB's figures also show that only around 25 per cent of customers who are registered to bank online are "active" online users, and NAB uses the years 2019-21 to show a fall-off in customer

deposits without acknowledging the impact of COVID restrictions.

Even then, NAB is closing branches which show a significant increase in customer deposits, including Alexandra in Victoria.

Now-independent journalist Dale Webster exposed in a 17 March *The Regional* article, "[Senate inquiries are serious business and no place for spin](#)", that NAB was misleading at the 2 March Senate hearing in Sale, Victoria, about its Maffra agency.

NAB cited figures showing a dramatic drop in deposits in 2022, without revealing that it had significantly reduced business hours, or that the agency was "temporarily" closed for the fourth quarter of 2022.

All 64 towns in NAB's firing line should make submissions to the Senate inquiry.

One week to make submissions

The Senate inquiry into bank closures in regional Australia is taking submissions until 28 April.

The Australian Citizens Party is urging all concerned Australians to make submissions, and to contact the local Councils and other community groups in towns impacted by bank closures to encourage them to make submissions to the inquiry.

NAB's arrogant disregard for the communities it is abandoning highlights the need for, among other measures, the ACP's solution of a public postal bank, which would guarantee face-to-face banking services and cash to all communities, and break the Big Four banking cartel by forcing them to compete.

Submissions can either be mailed in, emailed, or uploaded.

Mail your submission to the Committee at this address:

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Email your submission to the Committee at rrat.sen@aph.gov.au

Upload your submission, and get more information, [at the inquiry website](#)

For more information, phone the Committee on 02 6277 3511.

[Click here to sign the Citizens Party's petition for a post office people's bank.](#)