



## Australian Citizens Party

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### MEDIA RELEASE

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## NAB branch closure convinces NSW Shire to support a public postal bank

After voting down a similar motion in September 2022, this month Temora Shire in NSW reversed its position and carried a motion to support a public post office bank.

The dramatic change of view follows NAB announcing the closure of the local Temora branch, one of 38 regional bank branches NAB has closed or announced to close this year.

The stated concern of some Councillors who opposed the motion in November was that a public post office bank would encourage the private banks to close more branches.

NAB's abandonment of their town, leaving NAB customers with a 54 km drive to Cootamundra or a 86 km drive to Wagga Wagga, proves that it is the banks' intention to close branches anyway.

One of the arguments for a public bank is that it would force the Big Four banks to truly compete, and that extra competition would scare them into keeping their branches open lest they lose customers to the public bank.

This happened in New Zealand in 2002 when the government started Kiwibank as a public post office bank.

Temora Shire councillor Anthony Irvine, who moved the motion, urged support saying, "If we don't help ourselves I think we're going to end up with no banking services in rural and regional NSW and Australia."

Councillor Claire McLaren supported the motion, citing her recent trip to Uluru in central Australia where cash can't be used because there are no banks for businesses to deposit their takings.

Cr Lindy Reinhold seconded the motion, saying, "I think if we sit back and say nothing we're compliant ... we need to say 'enough is enough'."

While all Big Four banks are closing branches, NAB is the only one to push ahead with regional branch closures in open defiance of the Senate committee that is conducting an inquiry into bank closures in regional Australia, which requested all banks pause branch closures pending the outcome of the inquiry in December.

Not only has NAB closed or announced the closure of 38 branches this year, but it has also put dozens more regional branches on limited trading hours, which is the main precursor to it closing the branch.

NAB has been exposed as being extremely deceptive in announcing these closures, in terms of both justification and timing.

It sends the towns it is leaving a "fact sheet" blaming the closure on reduced customer visits to the branch, but in July NAB's top executives were forced to admit to a Parliamentary hearing that they only measure visits that involve deposit and withdrawal transactions.

NAB does not measure any of the visits people make to bank branches for many other reasons, which means NAB has no idea if branch visits are declining.

Also, NAB waited until after the Senate inquiry visited WA for hearings in Carnamah and Beverley to announce the closure of its Waroona branch, to avoid being called before the hearings in WA.

Waroona Shire includes the giant Alcoa aluminium refinery and other large employers, so it is not an area with a declining economy. In the past a large employer in Waroona warned NAB that it would change banks if they removed the branch, but this time NAB said it doesn't care.

Particularly grating on the town is that not only is NAB closing the branch, but it is taking away the ATM too.

**Expect more**

In a 19 April 2023 release, the Australian Citizens Party warned that 64 towns were on NAB's chopping block, as their branches had been placed on reduced trading hours. They were:

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.

Since then, Jeparit, Biggenden, Gilgandra, Warren, and Lake Cargelligo have closed, and Dunsborough, Inglewood, Inverloch, Kyogle and Mitchell have been slated to close; 11 other NAB branches not on the list have also closed, or, in the case of Gosford, Tatura, Gundagai, Temora, Kilmore, and Woolgoolga, have received notification they will close.

## **Revolt**

Australian Citizens Party Research Director Robert Barwick has attended all of the hearings of the Senate inquiry, and has written to all of the Councils in Australia asking them to support the campaign for a public post office bank. Barwick said today:

"The Senate hearings, and Temora Shire's change of mind, reflect the growing revolt in regional Australia against the arrogance, predation, and dystopian agenda of the Big Four banks.

"The banks are forcing Australia to go cashless and digital so they can get all the profit for no service.

"The townspeople are saying enough is enough and demanding solutions, including a public bank to take on the Big Four."

## **What you can do**

If you are in one of the towns on this list, or know anyone in the towns on this list, urge the locals to:

- Contact the federal MP and Senators and demand action against NAB;
- Contact the local Councillors and urge them to join forces with the other towns that are fighting NAB;
- Ask the Council to pass a motion supporting the private banks' worst nightmare—a public post office bank that would force them to compete.

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