



Agenda and Business Paper

Ordinary Meeting of Council

To be held on
Monday 17 October 2022
at 6.00pm

Civic Centre cnr Baylis and Morrow Streets,
Wagga Wagga NSW 2650 (PO Box 20)
P 1300 292 442
P council@wagga.nsw.gov.au

wagga.nsw.gov.au

NOM-2 NOTICE OF MOTION - POST OFFICE PEOPLES BANK**Author:** Councillor Richard Foley**Summary:**

In light of recent bank branch closures in the Riverina and throughout regional Australia, this Council calls on the Commonwealth Government to establish a Post Office peoples bank, guaranteed by the Commonwealth, which will ensure that basic banking services are available for all Australians.

Recommendation

That Council:

- a supports the establishment of a Post Office peoples bank, guaranteed by the Commonwealth Government, which will ensure that basic banking services are available for all Australians
- b requests that the Mayor writes to all relevant Federal Ministers regarding this motion within seven (7) days

Report

Throughout the past three decades banking services across regional Australia have been withdrawn from numerous regional centres and small rural communities. These ongoing bank closures have adversely disadvantaged and disproportionately affected these communities particularly aged members of these communities and small businesses.

The following are just some of the reasons why our regional communities need access to physical banking services:

1. Since the early 1980's the number of bank branches across Australia has fallen by more than 60%. These closures have impacted more than 1500 communities across regional Australia leaving them with no access to bank branches.
2. Despite recent advances in technology with online banking many sectors of the population are still in great need of physical banking services including elderly persons, disabled persons, small business sector, local schools and charitable organisations.
3. Bank branch closures have been further exacerbated by the removal of ATM machines from these regional communities forcing many to travel to other towns to access cash and/or banking services. This is now the case for the people of nearby Junee who now do not have access to a Commonwealth Bank branch leaving citizens in Junee to travel to Wagga Wagga to access physical banking services.
4. There is an agenda to completely eliminate cash entirely from our society in order to lock the savings of Australians into the major big four banks forcing us all to transact electronically for everything. This is an attack on the financial privacy of all Australians.

5. Small businesses that cannot physically bank their cash are forced to keep it on their premises creating serious security risks likewise, elderly Australians end up keeping cash on their premises which is also risky.

The most straight forward and cost effective way to establish a Postal Bank is using the existing infrastructure of post offices. Australia Post has the biggest retail footprint of any business in Australia which is required and mandated by law to maintain services to all Australians. Post offices already have limited banking infrastructure via the provision of the Bank@Post service which is an agreement Australia Post has with the big four banks for serving their customers many of which they rejected by closing their bank branches. The big four banks can withdraw from this agreement at their whim.

Clearly none of the above is acceptable anymore to most Australians at a time when these big four banks are raking in massive record profits at the expense of regional Australian communities. Therefore, it seems logical that calling upon the Commonwealth Government to re-establish a public bank using the Australia Post infrastructure would be an ideal answer to provide face to face banking services to more Australians than any of the big four banks combined which collectively are continuing to withdraw these services from regional Australians.

I propose that this council endorses and supports the following motion:

1. The reduction and continuing closure of bank branches in our local regional communities has had detrimental effects to these communities.
2. The current existing commercial arrangement between the big four banks and Australia Post via Bank@Post does not provide surety or any real long term access to physical banking services to regional and rural Australians.
3. Wagga Wagga City Council supports the establishment by this Commonwealth Government, a Commonwealth Postal Savings Bank as a solid, reliable and secure way to ensure access to physical banking services for regional and rural Australians.
4. Upon the passing of this Notice of Motion that the Mayor of the City of Wagga Wagga writes to the appropriate Federal Ministers expressing our support as a council for the above three points. This correspondence is to be written and submitted within 7 days of the passing of this Notice of Motion by council on the 17 October 2022.

Financial Implications

N/A

Policy and Legislation

N/A

Link to Strategic Plan

Community leadership and collaboration

Objective: Wagga Wagga has strong community leadership and a shared vision for the future

Our leaders represent our community

Risk Management Issues for Council

N/A

Internal / External Consultation

N/A

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Councillor T Koschel declared a Pecuniary Interest and remained vacated from the chamber, the time being 7:58pm.

22/338 RESOLVED:

On the Motion of Councillors R Foley and J McKinnon

That Council writes to the relevant Federal Minister expressing our concern about ongoing regional bank closures and request the Government to consider policies and programs such as Post Office people’s bank or other options that will enable regional and rural communities suitable access to meet their banking needs.

CARRIED

RECORD OF VOTING ON THE MOTION

For the Motion

Against the Motion

- D Tout
- G Davies
- D Hayes
- M Henderson
- R Foley
- R Kendall
- J McKinnon
- A Parkins

Councillor T Koschel re-entered the chamber, the time being 8:11pm.

Councillor R Foley vacated the Chamber the time being 8:11pm.

Councillor R Foley re-entered the Chamber the time being 8:12pm.