



ORDINARY MEETING

AGENDA

15 NOVEMBER 2022

Your attendance is required at an Ordinary meeting of Council to be held in the Council Chambers, 4 Lagoon Place, Yeppoon on 15 November 2022 commencing at 9.00am for transaction of the enclosed business.

Cale Dendle
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
10 November 2022

Next Meeting Date: 20.12.22

Please note:

In accordance with the *Local Government Regulation 2012*, please be advised that all discussion held during the meeting is recorded for the purpose of verifying the minutes. This will include any discussion involving a Councillor, staff member or a member of the public.

9 COUNCILLOR/DELEGATE REPORTS

9.1 POSTAL SAVINGS BANK

File No:	GV13.05.07
Attachments:	1. Further Correspondence Dated 7 October 2022
Responsible Officer:	Cale Dendle - Chief Executive Officer
Author:	Andrew Ireland - Mayor

SUMMARY

Correspondence was received by the Australian Citizens Party seeking support for the establishment of a Postal Savings Bank in Australia.

OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council:

1. Calls on the Commonwealth Parliament to pass the Commonwealth Postal Savings Bank Bill to establish a post office people's bank, fully guaranteed by the Commonwealth, as a dedicated postal savings bank, operating exclusively through Australia Post's corporate and licensed post offices, which will ensure basic banking services—including deposit-taking, business and personal lending, and access to cash—are available to all Australians, and will contribute to Australia's national economic development.
2. Write to the Local State and Federal Members of Parliament, to inform them of Councils desire to support the passage of the Commonwealth Postal Savings Bank Bill through Parliament.

BACKGROUND

The reduction in bank branches has resulted in reduced access to banking and financial services particularly in rural communities. Arrangements such as those with Australia Post do not provide long-term security of access to services. The establishment of a Commonwealth Postal Savings Bank would provide a secure way for rural communities to access banking services.

COMMENTARY

Council received the below correspondence from the Australian Citizens Party on 16 August 2021, including draft legislation, seeking support for a Commonwealth Postal Savings Bank. This comes as a response to the withdrawal of banking services across Australia.

Dear CEO of Livingstone Shire Council,

My name is Jan Pukallus. I am an organiser with the Australian Citizens Party. I am emailing you today because we are campaigning for the establishment of a Postal Savings Bank. I spoke to Lucy and request a deputation to address councillors, however, please note that I will only be in Livingstone Shire region on Tues 24 & Wed 25 August.

I am contacting Councillors and organisations to inform them, and to call upon them, to join me in fighting for federal legislation to create a Postal Bank. The legislation for such a bank has been drafted by the Citizens Party, the [Commonwealth Postal Savings Bank Bill 2021](#).

There are many reasons why, but this is an important local issue because local access to banking services is critical to every community. With the banks increasingly withdrawing their face-to-face services and also ATMs, the reliance on the Post Office offering those services is critical, but that too is vulnerable to commercial decision-making by the banks. I know you probably already know this but the withdrawal of these services disproportionately affects rural and regional communities.

On 1 July, Australia Post announced CBA and NAB had agreed to renew their Bank@Post deals for ten years although since the details are not being made public there is no knowledge of what the agreement actually contains and this makes a great many people nervous. Speculation is that it's far less than the \$20 million per year that Christine Holgate negotiated and may contain exit clauses. The Citizens Party has it on good authority that the Community Access Fee to be paid by NAB and CBA is \$10 million per year, half of the original deal and there are no written guarantees that the Licenced Post Offices will continue to receive the same fee structure they have currently. Freedom of information requests by the Citizens Party for clarity on those issues have been rejected.

Whilst it's important that post offices can provide Bank@Post services, the banks currently have the upper hand—they pay Australia Post what they like, they can pull out unexpectedly, and they charge whatever fees they like. A public postal savings bank will guarantee banking services at post offices in perpetuity.

On 27 July, Councillors at the Narrabri Shire Council in NSW unanimously passed a resolution supporting the Commonwealth Postal Savings Bank Bill, calling on the Parliament to pass the legislation and on 28 July, the Banana Shire Council in QLD carried a similar resolution with no opposition.

We have also just been informed that on 3 August, the Licensed Post Office Group endorsed the Commonwealth Postal Savings Bank Bill.

The Citizens Party has drafted the following motion/resolution as a guide, which I am asking you to discuss and move at your next meeting, to endorse the Commonwealth Postal Savings Bank Bill.

Draft motion/resolution for a Post Office People's Bank:

3. That Council notes that:

- Bank branch and ATM closures are leaving many communities without access to financial services, especially in regional Australia;
- Since 1975 the number of bank branches in regional Australia has fallen by more than 60 per cent, and there are more than 1,500 communities across Australia with no bank branches at all;
- A large proportion of the population, including the elderly, disabled, small businesses, and local schools and charities, will always have a need for face-to-face financial services, despite advances in technology;
- For hundreds of communities, their only access to cash and financial services is through Bank@Post at their local post office;
- Bank@Post is an essential service to all communities, but is vulnerable to commercial decision-making by the banks, which can choose to withdraw their participation, and charge excessive fees on transactions;
- With four major banks controlling 80 per cent of the financial system, Australian consumers suffer from a lack of real banking competition;

2. That Council calls on the Commonwealth Parliament to pass the Commonwealth Postal Savings Bank Bill to establish a post office people's bank, fully guaranteed by the Commonwealth, as a dedicated postal savings bank, operating exclusively through Australia Post's corporate and licensed post offices, which will ensure basic banking services—including deposit-taking, business and personal lending, and access to cash—are available to all Australians, and will contribute to Australia's national economic development.

3. That Council write to the Local State and Federal Members of Parliament, to inform them of Councils desire to support the passage of the Commonwealth Postal Savings Bank Bill through Parliament.

I wanted to keep this email brief as possible, as I know your busy, so I have attached are some additional documents that I hope you will find useful when you get some time to look at them.

Looking forward to discussing this with you further.

Regards,

Jan Pukallus

QLD State Secretary

Australian Citizens Party

Further correspondence was received in relation to this matter on the 3rd October 2022. This correspondence is included as an attachment and contains links to the motions passed by other Councils.

PREVIOUS DECISIONS

NA

ACCESS AND INCLUSION

NA

ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

NA

HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

NA

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

NA

LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

NA

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

NA

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

NA

RISK ASSESSMENT

NA

CORPORATE PLAN REFERENCE

Future Livingstone

Community Plan Goal 5.2 - Connected places, people and services

5.2.1 Implement an integrated transport strategy which encourages alternative transport usage to maximum economic, environmental, and liveability outcomes.

CONCLUSION

THAT Council calls on the Commonwealth Parliament to pass the Commonwealth Postal Savings Bank Bill to establish a post office people's bank, fully guaranteed by the Commonwealth, as a dedicated postal savings bank, operating exclusively through Australia Post's corporate and licensed post offices, which will ensure basic banking services—including deposit-taking, business and personal lending, and access to cash—are available to all Australians, and will contribute to Australia's national economic development.



Robert Barwick
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Australian Citizens Party
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Dear Mayor Ireland,

I am writing to ask you and your Council for your support for the growing campaign for a public post office bank in Australia, like those which operate successfully in many countries around the world.

As a local councillor, you would know the impact that the wave of closures of bank branches is having on communities, especially regional communities.

This impact is compounded by the reduction in bank lending into regional communities.

The Australian Citizens Party is part of a nationwide campaign to establish a new government bank, like the original Commonwealth Bank, to operate in post offices, which would guarantee face-to-face financial services for all communities, and force the Big Four banks to compete on both cost and service.

The post office bank would also:

- Guarantee deposits, because it is a government bank;
- Maintain cash payments and processing, which the private banks are trying to do away with;
- Increase lending to individuals and small businesses in regional communities;
- Invest in more infrastructure, including through local government.

Please note: This policy is different to the existing banking service in post offices, Bank@Post, because it is a dedicated postal bank that will increase competition, whereas Bank@Post is just an agency service for the existing banks which can withdraw any time. It is also different to community banks, which do an admirable job, but, again, they don't increase competition.

This campaign is supported by the Licensed Post Office Group (LPOG), which represents the interests of the almost 3,000 community post offices which are run as small businesses, the majority of the Australia Post network.

And it is supported by Katter's Australian Party, One Nation, the Greens, senior members of the National Party, and members of the Liberal and Labor parties.

On 7 September, the [LPOG hosted a public forum in Parliament House on the postal bank policy](#), which was attended by Member for Kennedy Bob Katter, Liberal Senator Gerard Rennick, Nationals Senator Ross Cadell, One Nation Senator Malcolm Roberts, and staffers

representing MPs from all the parties in Parliament. You can view the entire forum at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yWizMx7BgJs>

The featured speaker was former New Zealand Cabinet Minister Matt Robson, whose party started NZ's postal bank, called Kiwibank, in 2002.

Mr Robson recounted Kiwibank's immediate success, including how New Zealanders flocked to open accounts, and how the private banks, suddenly having to compete, announced a moratorium on branch closures.

A public postal bank would have a similar impact in Australia.

We are seeking local government support for this campaign, to send a message to Canberra that this policy is what local communities need to improve essential services and investment.

The Citizens Party has produced the following short videos to explain benefits of the policy:

1. [CREATE A PUBLIC POST OFFICE BANK! – The solution to the closure of local bank branches](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eMiwrvvNnPO) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eMiwrvvNnPO>)

The major banks have closed more than 350 bank branches in the last two years and research shows that since 1975, regional Australia has lost 62% of its banks!

2. [CREATE A PUBLIC POST OFFICE BANK! The solution to the financing needs of local government](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oNve8bPPNAM)

This second video shows how a postal bank, because it is a public bank, could be a source of long-term, low-interest, flexible credit for local governments to meet their infrastructure responsibilities, as the Commonwealth Bank was when it started in post offices in 1912. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oNve8bPPNAM>)

How Councils can support

Bob Katter MP is preparing a bill to introduce into Parliament, called the Commonwealth Postal Savings Bank Bill.

We are asking local Councils to pass motions to endorse the bill, and communicate the endorsement to your local federal Member of Parliament.

Five Councils have now passed motions:

1. Narrabri Shire Council (NSW)
2. Banana Shire Council (QLD)
3. Yilgarn Shire Council (WA)
4. Cobar Shire Council (NSW)
5. Strathfield City Council (NSW)

You can see the motions on our website: <https://citizensparty.org.au/campaigns/public-post-office-bank/post-bank-resolutions>.

Alternatively, download a PDF of the five motions:

<https://citizensparty.org.au/sites/default/files/2022-09/202209-Post-Office-Bank-PASSED-Council-Motions.pdf>

Please raise this policy for consideration by your council, with a view to passing a motion of support.

I am available for a phone call and to address your council and answer questions on the policy. Please don't hesitate to contact me on the numbers below.



Yours sincerely,

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Australian Citizens Party

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