

The Secretariat
Regional Banking Taskforce
Financial System Division
The Treasury, Langton Crescent
PARKES ACT 2600
By email: regionalbanking@treasury.gov.au

17 December 2021

Dear Secretariat,

Re: Submission to Regional Banking Taskforce Financial System Division

I refer to your terms of references which are to bring together banks and other key stakeholders to work together in partnership to share information and identify ways in which banks, in collaboration with Government, assess the impact of bank branch closures in the regions.

In the Context, you said:

Banks provide a variety of services to their customers. These include enabling customers to open and close accounts, to deposit and withdraw cash and to obtain various types of loans.

Over time, however, the provision of banking services has changed. Changes in financial regulation, technological developments like the growing use of electronic banking, shifts in consumer demands and demographic shifts towards larger cities and towns have contributed to the pressure on banks to reduce their branch networks.

Other data show that more than 80 per cent of Australians prefer to transfer money, pay bills or check account balances online and less than 20 per cent of Australians say they prefer to do their banking activities in branches, with 72 per cent of Australians reporting that they did not visit the branch of their main bank in the month leading up to September 2021

This submission will affect 17 million customers of [REDACTED]

Background

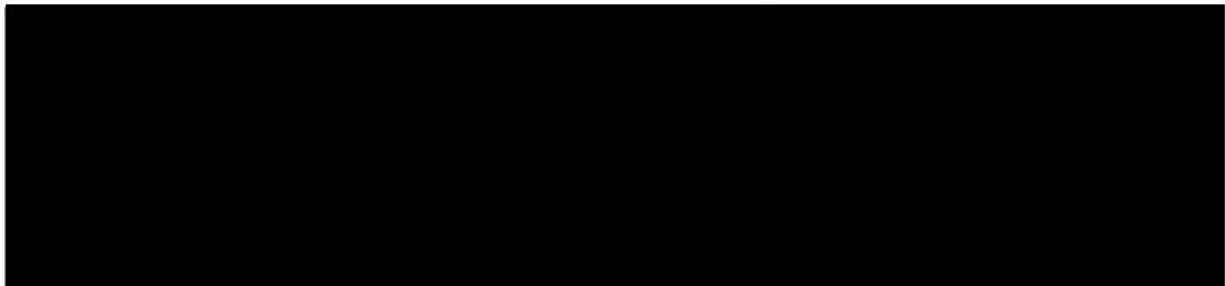
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From my perspective, I would like to provide the response to the questions of the Regional Banking Taskforce Issues Paper as follow:

Question 1: *How are Australians changing the ways they are accessing banking services? What are driving these changes?*

Answer:

Accessing information electronically which mean the banks can avoid having to provide full details of their loan contract.

Saving cost, more convenient for the bank.

Question 2: *What banking facilities, services and products are used in regional bank branches?*

Answer:

Living in [REDACTED] where there was no [REDACTED] We contacted [REDACTED] by telephone to ask if we could get a loan, and we went to Perth to meet them.

[REDACTED]

Question 3: *Are there particular banking products or services that need to be delivered face-to-face or have support provided face-to-face? Are any of these particularly important for regional customers?*

Answer:

Yes, our loan contracted had to be signed after we had a face to face meeting. We think this would also be important to other people in [REDACTED] if they were in our position.

Question 4: *What are the impacts of regional bank branch closures on the banking needs of individuals?*

Answer:

Without the ability to meet face to face we have to trust in the Bank or, in our case, drive for 13 hours to meet the bank in Perth.

Question 5: *What are the impacts on the banking needs of businesses, community organisations and communities?*

Answer:

Having to rely on the bank's controls, their trust and their managers acting responsibly.

Question 6: *Are there particular issues in the provision of banking services in regional Australia for specific vulnerable groups?*

Answer:

They have to trust the banks will act responsibly.

Question 7: *What more could banks do to help customers transition to alternative banking services that would enable them to do their banking in a timely, efficient and cost-effective way?*

Answer:

Comply with the Law, and everyone has a right to sign loan contracts with honest banks.

Question 8: *Are there facilities, services and products provided in bank branches that are not available through alternatives like ATMs, Bank@Post, phone banking, mobile banking, the telephone and the internet?*

Answer:

Face to face meetings, which is only important if the banks don't have to act honestly.

Question 9: *What are alternatives to bank branch models that would maintain or improve banking services and accessibility in areas where branches have been closed?*

Answer:

The only alternative is internet or not at all. Which mean people in remote communities should only use the building societies.

Question 10: *Are there any alternative models for the provision of banking services that could be considered for adoption by banks in Australia?*

Answer:

Regulators should remove people from the industry where there is evidence where they have not complied with the law.

Question 11: *What are the lessons from Australian and international experiences that can help improve banking services and accessibility in regional communities where bank branches have been closed?*

Answer:

There has misconduct in banks in US and Europe... but the people involved have been dealt with harshly.

Earlier this year, we advised the bank that we and other farmers who attended meetings at Parliament House 2 years ago were not provided copies of the 2004 Code. We did not know [REDACTED] had to provide us with the Code and the Standard, but it did not. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

I believe the Regional Banking Taskforce Financial System Division can use my case to demonstrate how farmers, like my family, who have businesses in regional areas have dealt with the changes introduced since we signed loan contracts with [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Should you require further documents, please contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Michael Murphy