

Mooroopna Action Group

Submission to the Regional Banking Taskforce

Our group is made up of concerned residents and business people. At the beginning of November, we were notified by mail of the imminent closure of our NAB Mooroopna Branch. Generally, we are all long term residents of Mooroopna and most of us have used the branch in Mooroopna for many years, in fact decades. Our Mooroopna NAB branch will be closed on January 20th, 2022.

The Nab letter gave reasons for this closure. Other ways to bank with them were suggested.

However, the impact on our community will be significant:

It will impact all groups within our community and district, particularly:

- the traders in the shopping district
- the businesses in the town
- the elderly
- the indigenous (including Rumbalara Aboriginal Co-operative)
- the farming and orchard communities (inc. Murchison & Tatura)
- the retired, the multicultural
- the disabled and mobility challenged
- the people without transport or limited access to transport
- people with lower levels of digital literacy
- community members involved in special events and fundraising
- clubs and committees.

Overall, it will affect the integrity of the town including livability and business optimism.

Regional towns are hardest hit by bank closures. Local individuals and businesses have to travel further to the next branch, many cannot afford this time, particularly the sole traders.

We need a bank branch or agency:

- that is equipped and resourced to deal with a wide variety of bank matters. For example: sufficient staffing, banking trained staff, adequate space in the venue, specific hardware (weighing machines for bulk coin deposits & efficient counting, adequate notes & coins).
- that can provide fast and efficient service to local traders and businesses, often on a daily basis or several times a day.

- that has specialized, banking trained staff who can cope with tasks quickly and efficiently and not result in long queues.
- that is easily accessible to everyone, in an optimal location and one that doesn't incur lengthy travel time and navigation of busy intersections and the use of parking meters.
- that offers substantial trading hours that services our community needs and not the agenda of the big banks.
- that means regional towns get a bank that enables face to face transactions. Not a help line number that is complex to find a pathway through and then announces they 'are experiencing greater than normal calls' and then hangs up on you. A person with good, clear English speaking skills is always preferable.
- that can efficiently provide substantial 'floats' of coins and notes for special events and the daily needs of retailers, opening new accounts.
- that can also count and deposit the large amounts of moneys raised after the special events and the day's trading - safely and efficiently.
- where we do not have to pay ATM fees to withdraw our own money.
- that provides assistance for community members who have lower levels of digital literacy. This is a reality in regional towns.

The bank branch, presently in Mooroopna services all the above mentioned groups and it provides all these aforementioned services.

In closing the bank, the only major bank that we currently have left, the NAB bank is definitely not providing a service for all groups in this community. Regional development is severely disadvantaged when banks close. They are certainly not acting in the best interests of all their clients. Banks are cutting costs and services. We are concerned and disillusioned. Covid has impacted our community and we are now trying to get back on our feet. What a terrible lack of compassion and insight the NAB bank is demonstrating.

Ideally, we would like our bank branch to remain open. If this is not possible then a service that provides all the resources as suggested above needs to be provided.

Our government needs to encourage, incentivize and legislate that bank corporations do support the diverse groups in regional towns.

Are banks there, solely to increase their shareholders wealth at the expense of their loyal customers? Trust has been lost.

Lynette Fanning

On behalf of the Mooroopna Action Group December 7/12/2021