

## **Bank closures**

To whom it may concern:

Thank you for this opportunity to voice my opinion about rural banking through the Regional Banking Taskforce.

We live in a rural area of Tasmania, NE Coast, considered by many as remote. Our nearest large city is Launceston, two and half hours away on a good driving day, depending on weather, the road condition and log trucks or caravans.

We have been ANZ customers all of our adult life, and as we have transferred in our employment around Australia found this most convenient with always an ANZ bank in every country town we have ever lived in.

Several years ago the local ANZ branch here in St Helens closed its doors and told us to take our banking to Scottsdale. Scottsdale is over a range of mountains, and takes approximately one hour and three quarters to drive. But no sooner had ANZ said that – they closed Scottsdale too. Fortunately we chose to stay local and joined the Commonwealth Bank, and now we also have in our town, our very own Bendigo Bank as well. Thank you Bendigo for coming to town!

However the Commonwealth in the last few weeks has decided they only want to open for 3.5 hours each day. How convenient this is for local bank customers ! I think not. So each day at 1pm they close their doors. For people out of town, or businesses within the town needing change or advice – do it in the mornings or you miss out.

The other section of our community who are not catered for in these new arrangements are our elderly. Many of them are not familiar with digital banking and prefer face to face customer service. Mornings are not always convenient for them and so again they are missing out.

As a child we were told the CBA was a bank for all Australians. It seems in this modern era banks have forgotten they are a service to communities either in the cities or in rural and regional Australia. It is all about making a profit. Service is sadly lacking now, and many people are in despair as to how they will bank in the future. The tin under the bed is looking good again!

Thank you for reading our comments.

Alexander & Carole Withers  
St Helens, Tasmania