



Our Ref.: 4.2.9  
Your Ref.:  
Enquiries: Belinda Knight

The Secretary  
Parliamentary Joint Committee on Corporations & Financial Service  
Room SG.64  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sir/Madam

**INQUIRY INTO THE LEVEL OF BANKING AND FINANCIAL SERVICES IN RURAL,  
REGIONAL AND REMOTE AREAS OF AUSTRALIA**

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission into the above inquiry. The Shire of Woodanilling is a small community that has no banking service within our municipal boundary. Our closest bank is in Katanning, which is approximately 24 kilometres away.

Some of the issues this Council deems important for our and other small communities are:

Accessibility to lending officers – it appears to be a policy of the banking industry to locate these officers only in major regional branches. For example, the closest lending officer for our community would be Albany, some two hours away. Everything relating to lending has to be done over the telephone or the internet. If rural areas could have access to "travelling" lending officers, this would be a major advantage, for example if people know that a lending officer will be at their local branch one day per month/quarter, they will soon learn to work around that. Anything urgent can still be dealt with over the telephone, this just allows a "face to face" opportunity for people to deal with lending issues.

Internet Banking - this is touted as being the future for banking. The issue for rural and remote areas, is that not everyone has access to the internet. This can be due to socio economic factors, or the fact that the internet is simply not available or a viable option in their area. This particularly relates to the far north of the State. The other issue relating to internet banking – you cannot get cash from the internet.

Cashless Society – as we move towards a cashless society, the banking industry must address the high charge applying to transactions. We will never truly achieve this as long as it costs clients more to do a small transaction that it does to get cash from an ATM and pay cash.

Aging Population – as the population ages, so does the ability or willingness to access the non-traditional forms of banking such as telephone, internet and ATM's. This may be an education problem, but it is a real one. Personal security is an issue for elderly people, and the open exposure of ATM's in rural areas is a concern for them.

Telephone access – many major banks only list their primary "13" telephone number – this is of little use when wishing to direct dial your local branch.

Shared Banking Facilities - this is something that is already being successfully addressed in rural areas of Western Australia. A shared facility does not replace a bank, but the "agency" can provide a very valuable resource for a community.

In summing up, the Shire of Woodanilling recognises that it is too small to support a banking facility, shared or otherwise, within its boundaries. We are however concerned about bank closures in rural areas and trust that this inquiry will bring about positive change for rural and remote areas of Australia.

Kind Regards,

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