

Paroo Shire Council

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Our Ref.:

ASW:CMB

Your Ref.:

Banking - 7478

21st August 2002

The Secretary
Parliamentary Joint Committee on
Corporations and Financial Services
Room SG.64
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600



Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Inquiry into the Level of Banking and Financial Services in Rural, Regional and Remote Australia

The Paroo Shire would like to express its concern that the de regulation of the banking system has not served the Paroo Shire Communities that of Eulo, Yowah Wyandra and of particular reference to Cunnamulla with any benefits what so ever and it could be said that the actions of the bank following the deregulation processes has added to some of the commercial decline of our community to which the deregulation process could be directly attributed to.

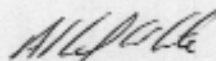
Cunnamulla like many rural communities had a choice of banks; we had a Westpac Bank, a Commonwealth Bank and a National Australia Bank. Subsequent to deregulation we have one bank, the National Australia Bank, who is now providing limited service opportunities as a branch probably because it is cheaper to pay staff than put in an automatic teller and have it serviced in terms of community obligations to rural areas: with its no doubt disappointment that it did not act as fast as the Westpac Bank and the Commonwealth Bank in abandoning their loyal customers to be left as the last bank in Cunnamulla and therein focus of the concern of loss of these facilities. Where can be found choice for the foot soldier business people on farms, shops and industry such as they conduct their business face to face with somebody that may assist them and be able to exercise some choice in seeking banking options without having to spend 2 hours travel to Charleville, 2 ½ hours to St George, 4 hours to Bourke or 7 hours to Toowoomba the varying government processes involved in this have not served country people well in an era where competition is supposed to be accessible, small business is supposed to be the great creator of employment in the future and the stated government aims if cares of concern by all levels of government for

the continued provision of services to people in bush would appear to be hollow given the actions of the banks in these matters.

Council is pleased that the National Australia Bank has not closed even though it is on a diminished service, however what has change that we should end up with one bank with a diminished service therein disempowering all ranges of ethnic groupings access to reasonable banking services many of which have come from the defined disadvantaged groups to which many programs are designed to assist, unemployed people and indigenous people, small business noting that many people do not ready access to internet services nor for that matter do they have educational opportunities to upgrade their skills to use impersonal internet banking or other ridiculous services which involve call services where you can spend an hour waiting for somebody to bounce you from one place to another where you end up hanging up with frustration or you waste an hour of your time trying to find the right person that can help you over the phone where a person over the counter may have been able to assist in five to ten minutes, therein saving everyone time and that time which is saved actually adds value to the economic wealth of Australia which I am quite sure is the governments ultimate intent the creation on wealth no the creation of wealth through people holding onto Telstra lines relative to help centres.

In essence we do not believe that any of the reforms that have been introduce by successive governments had benefited the people in the bush one little bit, and whilst we are thankful that the National Australia Bank has elected to maintain a presence in Cunnamulla it is no more than a cash dispensary service in lieu of a Automatic Teller with friendly faces and helpful people that can take you through most transactions to a limited degree. This is not how Australia should be advancing through the provision of weakened services to struggling communities. If anything communities that are struggling should be given the upmost support so that they can come out of the struggle vortex to again be the champions in leading commerce and industry in the rural regions to which Australia owes its foundations.

Yours faithfully,



Allan S. White
Chief Executive Officer