

## **CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE TASMANIA**

### **SUBMISSION**

#### **Inquiry Into the level of banking and financial services in rural, regional and remote areas of Australia.**

When considering the options for making additional banking services available to rural and regional communities, including the potential for shared banking facilities, we would recommend that a basic format be established.

The average person using banking facilities, specially those restricted to social security payments, does not possess personal computers and / or modems. They do not bank through the internet or by telephone.

Due to their limited income they have to keep overhead costs to a minimum.

If it were not for the Post Office (Commonwealth Agents ), building societies and credit unions, the level of banking service currently available to rural and regional residents around Tasmania, in most cases is NIL.

Here in Tasmania, between Devonport and Hobart, a distance of 400 kilometres, there is not one Westpac ( advertised as Australia's no 1 bank ) bank or branch.

This is a very busy highway, passing through numerous towns. it would seem that ,that bank does not need to cater for the small or rural investors.

Members have suggested a system which is operating in the UK and known as the mobile bank. It works on the same lines as the mobile library units that service rural areas in Tasmania. The mobile bank visit s set locations on set days and customers can enjoy normal banking facilities. This also includes business people banking their takings.

The League offers the following recommendations to the inquiry for its deliberations:

- \* Banks to provide zero cost ATM facilities in all regional centres and country towns.
- \* Allow post offices in country towns to act as agencies for ALL major Australian owned banks, credit unions and building societies.

The above suggestions represent only the minimum of services to help restore easier banking services to remote areas.

While it is recognised that banks are moving towards banking via the internet, the benefits will only service relatively few, that enjoy access to personal computers and even this will be available at a cost.