

Crookwell Shire Council

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Our Ref:

bw:ab

Please quote when responding:

10 September, 2002



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

Dear Madam,

Re: Inquiry into the level of banking and financial services in rural, regional and remote areas of Australia.

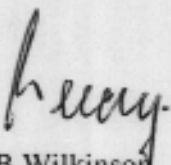
Crookwell Shire Council and the Crookwell Shire Community have a keen interest in this matter and provide the following as input to the inquiry:

- The Crookwell Shire has a population of 4,373 and the township of Crookwell is located 42 kilometres north west of Goulburn.
- The economic and community health of rural locations such as Crookwell depend on the availability of services to the community.
- Since February 2001 the Crookwell Shire Community have engaged in self driven economic development initiatives. The catalyst for same were two well attended community workshops. Those workshops identified a number of issues and projects that the community considered should be pursued. One such item was the retention and provision of banking services.
- Banking services are considered to be an important base service for communities and although Crookwell is located within reasonable travel distance from larger centres, there is a clear desire of the community to have banking services available within the town.

- A recent human services study in the Crookwell Shire demonstrated a high dependence on private transport by Shire residents. The lack of public transport and other rural "isolation" factors makes access to services difficult and this is the case with banking services.
- As part of the community development undertaken by the Council and the community in recent years, there has been a focus on increasing the awareness, skill level and facilities in relation to the use of technology. However, the personal contact factor should not be underestimated as an important part of the community fabric. In this respect banking services provide a "social" benefit as well as a "business" benefit.
- It is considered that rural communities such as Crookwell should retain at least one "operating bank branch". Provided that the services available from same are "acceptable" to the community there will undoubtedly be sufficient business to warrant same.
- The option of partnership agreements with local government, communities and the private sector should also be considered in relation to banking services.

The opportunity to participate in this submission process is appreciated by Council.

Yours faithfully



For
B Wilkinson
General Manager