



**COOTAMUNDRA-
GUNDAGAI REGIONAL
COUNCIL**

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Teresa Breslin
REC-230727-TMB-161401.doc

Senator The Hon Matt Canavan
Chair
Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Reference Committee
Parliament House
CANBERRA NSW 2600

Dear Senator,

RE: Closure of Gundagai NAB Branch on 28 September 2023

Please find attached a copy of correspondence provided today to the NAB Board.

I am writing to you on behalf of Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council and in particular the residents of Gundagai township and surrounds, to express my extreme disappointment and concern regarding the closure of the Gundagai NAB branch in September 2023.

Yours faithfully

Cr Charlie Sheahan
Mayor

27 July 2023



Teresa Breslin
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Mr Phillip Chronican
Chair
National Australia Bank Limited
Level 28, 395 Bourke St
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

COPY

Dear Mr Chronican,

RE: Closure of Gundagai NAB Branch on 28 September 2023

I am writing to you on behalf of Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council and in particular the residents of Gundagai township and surrounds, to express my extreme disappointment and concern regarding the closure of the Gundagai NAB branch in September 2023.

It would appear to those of us who live in regional NSW, that decisions made by banks to remove rural branches across regional Australia, has shown disdain and little respect for their customers who choose to live in country towns. Also, no consideration at all has been given to the large increase in numbers of residents moving from the city to the country in recent years with Gundagai being a perfect example of the transforming tree change demographic.

The provision of face-to-face services are regularly being downgraded or removed completely. This obvious strategy of forcing customers to take up online services or attend the local Post Office is truly unsettling and is another outrageous example of cost shifting impacting our communities. This is a major concern for me as Mayor of Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council with a large proportion of our community unable to utilise online platforms and relying completely on our local bank branch to do business.

In addition, at a time when mental health issues are at record levels in NSW regional towns, your decision to close yet another rural branch only adds another element of stress and anxiety for those already facing a range of immense challenges living in the regions.

The NAB factsheet provided by you, advises customers to access their local Post Office or local branch services in Wagga Wagga (83 kilometres away) and Cootamundra (60 kilometres away). We appreciate the wonderful role Australia Post play in rural towns but it is obviously not a viable alternative to any acceptable idea of a bank service. Also, the trip to both Cootamundra and Wagga Wagga to access branch services would be only available for those who have private transport and the time to make the two hour round journey, very limiting indeed.

The NAB factsheet also advises that NAB Wagga Wagga "will be completely refurbished and relocated". To announce this as one of the main reasons why NAB made this decision is insulting and hypocritical. Seemingly, it is satisfactory to expend substantial funding on branch refurbishment and relocation and as a trade-off, close a branch impacting a whole community, robbing Peter to pay Paul perhaps.

I am appalled that there was no opportunity for community consultation to discuss possible options regarding the Gundagai bank closure. With the Regional Banking Enquiries recommendations due in December this year it will mean the Gundagai Branch will be closing its doors before any potential positive announcements are made from that enquiry. This may have an impact on the Gundagai NAB closure decision.

We have recently seen the decision to close the Junee branch of the Commonwealth Bank overturned due to community consultancy and public outcry.

I welcome the opportunity to further discuss the impacts of rural bank branch closures with yourself and the Referral Committee and respectfully request you reconsider the closure of the Gundagai NAB Branch.

Yours faithfully

Cr Charlie Sheahan
Mayor

24 July 2023

CC The Hon Matt Canavan, Senator