




Speech By
Ann Leahy

MEMBER FOR WARREGO

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Warrego Electorate, Banking Services

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (2.55 pm): I rise to express disappointment on behalf of my constituents in the ANZ bank, Heritage Bank, Suncorp Bank and Bank of Queensland. The lack of business confidence in Queensland caused by the do-nothing Palaszczuk state Labor government is echoing in the financial sector. This is clearly evident in rural and regional communities, some of which are losing their only financial institution in the town. These institutions should extend the courtesy to meet with the affected communities and provide their customer usage rates on which they are making their decisions. Elderly members in the Warrego community are being discriminated against as many do not have access to a computer or feel comfortable accessing online platforms. The ANZ bank announced its branch closure in Jandowae despite the last two years of some of the best grain harvests on record and new solar farms recently approved in the region. A piggery expansion will enable the Jimbour abattoir to employ an estimated 45 additional staff. Many are expected to be located in Jandowae. ANZ was the only full bank in the community of Jandowae—a community which is surging ahead. ANZ might say it is 'Your world, your way', but in Jandowae they say it is not their world or their way.

Heritage Bank's motto is about people first. In Dirranbandi, Tara, Miles, Chinchilla, Meandarra and Roma, Heritage mini branches are being closed. It is the people of my electorate that are being put last. Pat Stephens runs a great local small business in Dirranbandi and advised me that he will not be able to bank third-party cheques into his account through Australia Post and nor will the agency carry enough cash to satisfy his business interests. He will now have to drive a 200-kilometre round trip to do his banking. Suncorp Bank has also announced its intention to close the branch in Miles. Miles will lose three banking institutions with the announcement of the closure of the Bank of Queensland with the loss of three positions. In Miles they are finding it very hard to love the Bank of Queensland—or love any bank for that matter! The Western Downs Regional Council and I are working with major companies to encourage staff to live in the community of Miles.

These bank closures are at a time when the agricultural industries across the region are turning the corner from drought following good winter rains and strengthening commodity prices. To use Pat Stephens's words, we have to sometimes still use that old-fashioned item called cash and we need a financial institution to do that. I call on these banking institutions to reconsider their decisions and to continue to support rural communities just as those rural communities have previously supported the banks in their communities.