




Speech By
Deb Frecklington

MEMBER FOR NANANGO

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ADJOURNMENT

Toogoolawah, ANZ Bank

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (1.57 am): Earlier this month the ANZ bank announced its decision to close the doors of the Toogoolawah local branch. Several hours ago, a group of some 200 Toogoolawah and Somerset community members held a public meeting at the Alexandra Hall in Toogoolawah to announce their objections to the closure. While I could not be there to support the newly formed Save our Bank group, I would like to add my support to their objections and join them in their fight to overturn this extremely disappointing decision by the ANZ. Nerida Freestun and her group, including the local mayor, Graeme Lehmann, did a wonderful job of organising this meeting.

Toogoolawah is a small regional town in the southern part of my electorate. The loss of any service to any of our regional towns is devastating. Too often we feel the brunt of large companies overturning their commitment to serve regional areas. Unfortunately, this has become a common theme for the big banks, who close their face-to-face banking services and believe they can provide this service just as well online. Unfortunately, for many people in the country this is just not the case. We have poor internet connection or none at all, and some people do not even have a computer.

The ANZ has suggested customers should travel to the Kilcoy branch. From Toogoolawah, this is at least 40 kilometres away on very busy highways, but that is if you live in Toogoolawah. It is too bad if you live an hour the other side of Toogoolawah. This is not always possible and it is sometimes impossible for busy business owners and older members of our community with limited transport options. I also question the ANZ's real reasons for pulling out of Toogoolawah. It is very difficult for my community to fathom this when the Somerset Regional Council has publicly stated—

Council alone has more than \$36 million invested at the ANZ bank at Toogoolawah and has multiple ANZ credit card accounts.

This decision came as a surprise to the council, which relies on the branch to manage their loans, investments and general day-to-day banking. What about the community groups, like the Toogoolawah Campdraft and the Toogoolawah Show Society? They actually access the bank to physically deposit large amounts of money. Obviously, the job losses are also of a concern and we will lose a dedicated group of employees who understand our local community.

On behalf of the customers of ANZ Toogoolawah and the community in general, I have written to ANZ expressing my extreme disappointment and have asked them to reconsider this on behalf of my community. Apparently, the ANZ has decided to desert some 19 other communities across regional Australia. I encourage big businesses to always retain their interests in our regional towns. Loyalty works both ways, as does trust. Let us hope the ANZ reverse their decision in Toogoolawah.