**73 post offices gone in 2024! When will Albanese save postal and banking services with a post office bank?**

The Queensland towns of Maroochydore on the Sunshine Coast, and Burketown up in the Gulf of Carpentaria, are two of the latest communities to face losing one of their most essential services—the post office.

They will soon join the 73 other communities which lost their post offices in 2024, all because Australia Post CEO Paul Graham has a goal to close as many post offices as possible so he can reinvent Australia Post as a commercial parcels business, instead of a postal service.

On 24 October 2023, Graham revealed in Senate Estimates that he planned to close at least 271 post offices: “We have a regulatory obligation to maintain 4,000 post offices. We have 4,271 today, and two and a half thousand of those have to be in regional and rural areas. We have no goal other than to maintain that obligation.”

A year later, in Senate Estimates on 11 November 2024, Senator Ross Cadell noted to Paul Graham that at the rate of closures since July 2024, Australia Post was on track for 100 post office closures for the fiscal year ending June 2025.

Paul Graham explained how post office closures were happening: “We have a number of unexpected closures where a licensee will retire or leave through illness *or simply walk away because it's not financially viable* or their lease is terminated and expired and they don't want to renew that. *We have planned closures, again, on similar lines*.” (Emphasis added.)

Speaking of regional Australia, the CEO gave this shocking prognosis: “I have been to a lot of those regional post offices. … [A] lot of them are hanging on because they really feel they have an obligation to the community and no-one else wants to pick up the baton and take it over. … It is more to do with a community obligation; they feel it is an important role they play. It is a very difficult situation. … *What we don't have is a viable alternative*.”

Maroochydore’s post office is slated to close on 7 March, and the Australian Citizens Party (ACP) will hold a protest rally on 18 February against the closure.

Burketown’s post office is closing because the elderly licensee who has operated the post office for more than 40 years is retiring, but hasn’t been able to find a buyer for the license, which means, unless Australia Post intervenes in this case to take responsibility for the provision of postal services, remote Burketown will lose an essential service that is its lifeline to the rest of Australia.

**A postal bank is *the* solution!**

ACP Research Director Robert Barwick today blamed Prime Minister Albanese for the post office closures crisis, for sitting on his hands when there is a solution on the table.

“Too many Australian communities are copping the double-whammy of losing bank branches and now post offices”, Barwick said.

“This is a crisis, especially in regional Australia, because losing both essential banking and postal services will make many communities unviable.

“Last year the Senate inquiry into bank closures in regional Australia pointed to the solution by calling for an expert panel to examine establishing a public bank in post offices.”

Barwick said a public bank operating in 4,000-plus post offices would save essential banking services in all communities, and the extra revenue would keep post offices financially viable.

“It’s win-win”, he said, “but what’s the government doing?

“*The Australian* newspaper reported in August that ‘a postal bank is back on Labor’s agenda’, but where is it?

“What is Albanese actually doing, to save these essential services and communities?”