

183 million reasons Bendigo Bank's Community Bank® has prospered for 20 years

*Bendigo Bank marks the 20th anniversary of its pioneering **Community Bank**® model as big four continue to abandon regional Australia.*

Tuesday 26 June, 2018: At a time when focus on community standards in banking has never been more important, Bendigo and Adelaide Bank and hundreds of Australian communities will today mark 20 years of its pioneering and innovative [Community Bank](#)® model.

The model, which has long bucked a trend of banks pulling out of regional Australia, has sparked a community-led movement across the country, which has delivered \$183 million in profits back to local communities, generating jobs and local economic growth.

The **Community Bank**® network last year returned more than \$5.5 million in shareholder dividends and employed over 1,500 people, with \$100 million in wages and services spent locally. In the next 12 months, Bendigo and Adelaide Bank plans to introduce six more locally owned and operated branches.

While the big four banks have closed more than 100 branches across Australia over the past financial year, six new **Community Bank**® sites have opened across Tasmania, Queensland, Victoria and New South Wales, with \$18.4 million invested into local communities, backing a variety of new local sporting, infrastructure, education, arts and cultural initiatives.

Engaged communities decide on the priority of community investments, and then couple **Community Bank**® company profits with business and government support.

The first **Community Bank**® branches were established on 26 June 1998, in the small Western Victorian towns of Rupanyup and Minyip. Around 200 families from the district formed a not for profit company, chaired by local farmer and businessman David Matthews, to partner with Bendigo Bank. The initiative came at a critical time in Australia's history, when 29 percent of Australia's bank branches closed, leaving many communities without branch banking facilities and driving local capital losses. Since then, the model has seen a further 320 branches open across the country.

"It's a fitting time to celebrate the 20th anniversary of Australia's first **Community Bank**® branches, especially given the Financial Services Royal Commission is contemplating the community's expectations of the banking industry. One of those expectations must be for an inclusive financial system and the **Community Bank**® model is a proven remedy in addressing that issue for the many communities that lost their banks," said Mike Hirst, Managing Director, Bendigo and Adelaide Bank.

"Bendigo and Adelaide Bank created the **Community Bank**® model with a belief all Australians were entitled to receive quality banking services and specialist financial advice, no matter where they lived. This alternative banking model has today become a network of people and communities taking greater control of their financial futures, investing something of themselves to create prosperous and sustainable communities," said Robert Johanson, Chairman, Bendigo and Adelaide Bank.

To highlight its positive effect on local communities, more than \$50,000 of the \$300,000 relief fund raised during the recent South West Victorian bushfires came from the **Community Bank**® network.

Beyond providing quality banking services, the model also enables employment opportunities, a local investment option for shareholders, local business leadership opportunities and a revenue source for projects determined by local people. Bendigo and Adelaide Bank provides the banking infrastructure and licensing requirements, while the community runs the branch.

"**Community Bank**[®] came to life at a time when the big four banks were significantly reducing their branch presence, and in many cases, leaving towns with no bank at all. The community was resolute in its view something needed to be done," said David Matthews, inaugural Chairman, Rupanyup/Minyip **Community Bank**[®] branches.

"We believed that to solve this problem, all participants - customers, communities and the Bank alike - would need to each invest something significant to derive benefit. Twenty years on, we have really strengthened Rupanyup and Minyip and its people. We no longer expect others to solve our problems. Instead of holding protest meetings we hold planning meetings. We identify a need, develop a solution and partner with Government and business to deliver an outcome," said Matthews.

"After 20 years of operating the **Community Bank**[®] model, we are proud of the commitment of our customers and communities who play an important role in helping local people to shape the communities they want to live in," concluded Hirst.

Bendigo and Adelaide Bank will mark the anniversary today with local events hosted by local and Bendigo and Adelaide Bank dignitaries at the founding Rupanyup/Minyip **Community Bank**[®] branches.

In September 2016, Bendigo and Adelaide Bank was ranked the top Australian company in the Fortune Annual "Change the World" list of companies that are doing well by doing good. The annual list competitively ranks enterprises based on their innovative strategies that positively impact the world. Bendigo and Adelaide Bank was ranked thirteenth globally due to its measurable social impact, business results and level of innovation.

Bendigo and Adelaide Bank was the only company recognised for its business model, and not a one-off project.

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