



Dale **LAST** MP

Shadow Minister for Natural Resources and Mines and
Shadow Minister for North Queensland

Media Release

Banks need to deliver for the Bush

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Liberal National Party Shadow Minister for North Queensland Dale Last has called on the Banking Royal Commission to ensure regional Queenslanders have access to suitable services.

Mr Last said banks needed to have a bricks and mortar presence in smaller centres - not just a virtual one.

"The Royal Commission must take the interests of regional Queenslanders on board when preparing recommendations or it won't be just bank branches closing, it could be whole towns," Mr Last said.

"For years the banks have put profits ahead of people, especially in regional areas, and now is the time for that to stop.

"I have communities like Clermont and Middelmount who have been left without a bank and it's not fair on business owners or the residents."

Mr Last said it was common for people to travel hundreds of kilometres to access banking services in some areas of his electorate and that the tyranny of distance was not the only issue.

"The only way to access banking services is at the post office in some communities," Mr Last said.

"Post offices were never built to be banks and many people have security concerns handling large transactions."

"I want to see the banks improve services in smaller and regional towns, who have limited or no services right now.

"If the banks won't do it voluntarily, the Commission should look at forcing them to do it with regulation."

Mr Last said reports of primary producers enduring harsh and sometimes heartless treatment from the big banks have been heard at the Commission.

Mr Last said banks could address some of the key issues by moving closer to their customers.

"If the banks had staff in some of these areas they would know how drought and issues like that affect people and they have the chance to work with customers before things get out of hand," he said.

"People in regional Queensland are realists and understand there are limitations due to living in small towns, but they deserve the same access to basics like banking as the people in the cities."