

**Community Bank®
Annual General Meeting
Generic Speech Notes 2006**

Thank you for the opportunity to attend tonight's Annual General Meeting of this very special company - your Community Bank® Company.

Congratulations to the **Heathcote & District** board of directors and branch staff on your achievements to date. Bendigo Bank is proud to partner your community.

Your community is one of 186 Australian towns, regional cities and metropolitan suburbs which has had the spirit and determination to undertake the Community Bank® journey. It is not an easy task and you really are in elite company when it comes to Australian communities which are committed to putting their hand up and making things happen.

I have no doubt that this year has been both challenging and rewarding one for your Board and your community - it certainly has been an exciting year for the Community Bank® network.

We opened our first ever Bendigo Bank branch in the Northern Territory in September - a **Community Bank®** branch just south of Darwin at Coolalinga.

It marks the start of Bendigo Bank's expansion into the top end, with three more Community Bank® campaigns underway, and plans to open a company branch in Darwin.

Plus, this year, the contributions to community from the Community Bank® network topped the \$10 million mark. That's right - \$6 million in community sponsorships and grants and more than \$4.6 million returned to shareholders as dividends.

It is a fantastic achievement and as part of our growing network, something you should all be very proud of.

The **Community Bank®** network has created more than 800 jobs, and more than 1300 Australians are now directors of the locally owned public companies that run Community Bank® branches.

There is also anecdotal evidence, supported by some limited research, of increases in takings by local businesses once the doors of the Community Bank® branch open.

Bendigo Bank has participated in the development of the Community Bank® model with an enormous sense of pride.

We are fortunate to be your partner and honoured that we are welcomed into your community. This is an honour that we value and that we jealously guard, not only for the pleasure that it gives us as individuals but because we know the future of our company, Bendigo Bank, depends on the relationships that we build with Australian communities such as yours.

Again, congratulations to **Barry Cail** and directors, congratulations to branch manager **Sally** and staff and congratulations to you, the people of **Heathcote**. We look forward to continuing to work with you through the next financial year, and beyond.

Thank you

David Boromeo
Regional Manager