

<b>Date:</b>	11 November 2002
<b>Subject</b>	Members will not be inconvenienced with the closure of 3 branches

NIB Health Fund members will not be inconvenienced by the closure of three branches, NIB Chief Executive Mark Fitzgibbon said today.

NIB has informed employees that branches in the Hunter St Mall, Newcastle; Mid-City in Sydney's CBD; and Canberra City would close from January 1, 2003. Letters to members will be issued shortly.

Mr Fitzgibbon said the closures would not result in job losses, nor would it leave members with less access to NIB services.

"Our research has shown that members want options that make it easier to do business with NIB, and we are enhancing and improving these services," Mr Fitzgibbon said.

"The three branches in question have shown a sharp decline in member utilisation as more and more payment and claims settlement options become available.

"More than 70% of our members are now using direct debit to pay contributions, while the number of electronic claims transactions continues to grow."

Mr Fitzgibbon said NIB would continue to offer personal contact at other branches in the Newcastle CBD, Sydney CBD and Canberra, while members could also take advantage of a new arrangement which enables contributions to be paid at Australia Post agencies.

"While our branch network will remain an integral part of NIB's future, we have a responsibility to invest in options and technology that builds greater convenience into membership," he said.

"We will be offering all branch staff positions in other areas of our operations and we will continue to have a strong presence in each of these areas with all products and services available at other branches nearby."

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