

## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMICS

### REVIEW OF THE FOUR MAJOR BANKS (FOURTH REPORT)

#### Westpac Banking Corporation

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**Mr EVANS:** One of the other important topics that we covered in those hearings was around providing better visibility/transparency to small-business customers, particularly giving them access whenever Westpac has created or prepared valuations or investigations or accounting reports and so on. There was some obligation or some commitment to provide transparency to businesses in those cases. Is that happening, do you know?

**Mr Hartzler:** I remember that particular issue, but I must that I can't remember exactly where we landed on that one. I'm happy to take it on notice. As a general principle, I'm certainly amenable to the idea of sharing it. In the back of my mind, I'm thinking there may be some reasons, depending on certain circumstances, where it mightn't be appropriate to do that. But I think it would be better if we came back to you with a written response on that.

**Answer:** In December 2017, Westpac's Business Bank Credit Policy was amended to include the requirement to provide the customer (property owner) with a full copy of the:

- Australian Banking Association (ABA) Industry Guideline, "Appointing Property Valuers when Lending to Small Business and Primary Producers" (both sections);
- Valuation instructions (including any variations); and
- Valuation report.

The only exception to this requirement is where enforcement action is underway, as the information may be commercially sensitive.