

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMICS

REVIEW OF THE FOUR MAJOR BANKS

NAB

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CHAIR: ... Just going on to a few things around culture in the organisation, in light of the issues at QBE and AMP, how many nondisclosure agreements related to sexual harassment does NAB have?

Mr McEwan: Over the last three years, we have had nine nondisclosure agreements, and the majority of those were actually at the request of the complainant.

CHAIR: Right, so nine in total. Are they all related to issues of sexual harassment?

Mr McEwan: Those are the nine related to nondisclosure related to sexual harassment.

CHAIR: And how many of them were requested by the individual who was aggrieved?

Mr McEwan: There were five.

CHAIR: So the other four were at the request of the bank?

Mr McEwan: Or just an agreement as part of the settlement at the end of it. But five were at the request of the complainant.

CHAIR: So when we asked a similar question of ANZ and CBA last week, they said 'zero'. When we asked it of Westpac this morning, they said they would have to go away and find out, and you've got nine. That suggests something troublesome at the bank in policies, procedures, practice and culture. Do you want to give a reflection on that and what you're doing about it?

Mr McEwan: I don't think it's a reflection of our current policies and procedures at all. I think they are quite robust, and we've been spending some time recently having a good look at those and reporting to the board not only on these cases but also what are our reflections about the policies and procedures. We have been developing a very strong culture in the organisation of speaking up so that people actually do take action, and we want to hear about it. So, yes, I am concerned that one case of sexual harassment in this bank is one too many but I don't think it's a case of the policies and procedures not working. We are always open to having them better but we're making sure that these issues are brought forward and that people feel safe about bringing them forward. One the issues around five of our cases wanting to remain confidential was they wanted the issue dealt with but they didn't want it internally or externally made public. They wanted it addressed, and I think that's a very good sign.

CHAIR: I accept part of that but I'm not sure I accept it in totality. Can I just ask then on a matter of the geographic spread of the nine, how many occurred in Melbourne, how many occurred in Sydney, how many occurred in Brisbane or are they all in one location? Are they the same people? I haven't forgotten about other places either. I'm trying to say: what is the geographic spread of them?

Mr McEwan: I don't have those.

Mr Dooley: I don't have those with me. I can find out.

CHAIR: I think it would be helpful because obviously if they're all located in a single location or mostly in a single location, it does raise issues of culture perhaps in localised offices, including, I accept, that part of it can be that the localised culture might be to bring things forwards versus it being an issue specifically with the bank. So I appreciate if you would bring that to our attention.

Mr McEwan: We'll take that on notice.

Answer:

Since 2018 NAB has entered into nine non-disclosure agreements, with nine different people, in respect of nine separate cases. There is no factual overlap between the nine cases. The geographic spread of these nine cases is as follows: three in NSW; four in VIC; and two in QLD.