

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMICS

REVIEW OF THE FOUR MAJOR BANKS

Westpac

WBC66QON:

Mr BANDT: Just shifting to a related matter that's still sticking with COVID, has the bank purchased government debt in connection with the COVID crisis—that is, since the government started issuing debt in order to fund its support and recovery packages? Has the bank purchased any of that government debt, federal or state?

Mr King: Yes, we would have because we run a liquidity book which allows us to manage differences in cash flows in the bank and so, yes, we would have bought debt issued by the government.

Mr BANDT: Are you able to tell us how much additional debt you'd have bought since the COVID crisis hit?

Mr King: I'll take that on notice.

Answer: Between 1 March 2020 and 18 September 2020 Westpac has purchased approximately \$14.7bn of federal and state government debt for its liquid asset portfolio.