

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMICS

Suncorp

SCB10QON:

Dr MULINO: ... It would be interesting to see some summaries of the benchmarking [relating to complaints handling], particularly pre and post and the extent to which you can attribute any improvement in any particular areas to specific process changes.

Mr Carter: ... I'd be happy to share back with the committee some of those examples.

Answer:

- In October 2017, Suncorp identified that a significant portion of external dispute resolution complaints (at the time coming through the Financial Ombudsman Service (**FOS**)) were due to our financial hardship process and approach.
- Suncorp made the decision to re-think our approach to customers experiencing financial hardship and used learnings from Uniting Kildonan (following a full external review) to re-design the financial hardship application and management process. This process started in December 2017.
- The result was a dedicated program of work incorporating process and cultural improvements. For example, Suncorp's application to decision turnaround time is now three days (reducing from 15), against legislative requirement of 21 days. This offers customers in financial difficulty certainty that Suncorp will respond quickly to their needs. Further, Suncorp's assessment process considers a customer's entire financial position, not only their Suncorp facilities. Suncorp believes this is best practice by allowing customers to navigate through the period of financial difficulty holistically. Suncorp also offers support beyond the program of referrals to Financial Counsellors and support organisations, including Beyond Blue and Uniting Care, to ensure where possible Suncorp delivers on its commitment to help customers improve their overall circumstances.
- Bank financial hardship FOS disputes from November 2017 to October 2018 declined by 200% compared to the prior corresponding period (**PCP**).
- Before the change program, financial hardship complaints accounted for 38% of FOS complaints. This has since reduced, and currently, financial hardship complaints (through AFCA) account for just 19% of all complaints.
- In the latest AFCA benchmarking report, AFCA accepts on average 3.5 Suncorp Bank complaints per month relating to financial hardship, whereas on average, the other "tier 2 banks" result is 6.6.
- Suncorp is continually working to understand what is driving complaints for our customers.
- The banking teams meet monthly with the Group Customer Advocate complaints teams and talk about complaint themes, trends and what the business could do differently to address customer issues.
- Our Customer Advocate meets fortnightly with our CEO's Office to discuss new AFCA banking matters to expedite outcomes for our customers.