

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 12 May 2023 10:53 AM
To: Financial Services Competition
Subject: Submission re: Retail Deposits Inquiry

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To whom it may concern,

I have recently been through an AFCA complaints process with Members Equity Bank regarding misleading and deceptive conduct in relation to their "Online Savings" accounts. My complaint has been settled with a payout to me by ME Bank, however I feel that compensation to myself is an inadequate punishment/disincentive to their behaviour knowing that they are probably still ripping off/fleecing a large proportion of their savings customers.

The complaint related to my discovery that, during the COVID emergency, ME Bank had surreptitiously de-linked the base interest rate payable on their "Online Savings" accounts from the RBA Cash rate that it had previously met or exceeded. This change was implemented by means of making any interest rate beyond 0.05% conditional as "bonus" interest that is only qualified for if making "tap and go" payments via a *separate account*.

This change was made with no specific notification to existing customers (I only discovered this via my own checking). This means that their online savings customers who were accustomed to receiving interest at the level of the RBA cash rate are being unknowingly fleeced by a bank that had been generally regarded as highly trustworthy (I understand the bank has been taken over by Bank of Queensland which probably coincides with this change of "policy").

This outrageous conduct borders on fraud - how can you offer a product called an "Online Savings Account" and make earning of ANY interest conditional on SPENDING using an entirely separate account, and not even notify your customers of the change?

I have retained a full trail of correspondence with ME Bank, including their attempt to justify their non-payment of interest with three pages of complex legalese which would baffle a lawyer, let alone someone elderly or with English-as-a-second-language (ie: a large proportion of their customers).

I have also retained all correspondence with AFCA, who informed me that addressing the deeper systemic issues behind the complaint were beyond its powers. All correspondence can be supplied on request and I am happy to provide the ACCC inquiry with any further information if requested.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]