

Governance

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Payments System Board

The Payments System Board has responsibility for the Reserve Bank's payments system policy. The Board comprises the Governor, who is the Chair, one representative of the Reserve Bank appointed by the Governor, who is the Deputy Chair, one representative of the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (APRA) appointed by APRA, and up to five other members appointed by the Treasurer for terms of up to five years. Members of the Board during 2014/15 are shown right and details of the qualifications and experience of members are provided on pages 9 to 13.

Meetings of the Payments System Board

The *Reserve Bank Act 1959* does not stipulate the frequency of Board meetings. Since its inception, the Board's practice has been to meet at least four times a year and more often as needed. Four meetings were held in 2014/15, all at the Reserve Bank's Head Office in Sydney. Five members form a quorum at a meeting of the Board or are required to pass a written resolution.

Board Meetings in 2014/15 Attendance by Members

Number of meetings

	Attended	Eligible to attend
Glenn Stevens (Governor)	4	4
Malcolm Edey (RBA)	4	4
Wayne Byres (APRA) ^(a)	4	4
Gina Cass-Gottlieb	3	4
Paul Costello	4	4
Robert McLean	4	4
Catherine Walter	4	4
Brian Wilson	4	4

(a) Wayne Byres' term on the Board commenced on 9 July 2014

Conduct of Payments System Board Members

On appointment to the Payments System Board, each member is required under the Reserve Bank Act to sign a declaration to maintain confidentiality in relation to the affairs of the Board and the Reserve Bank.

Members of the Board must comply with their statutory obligations in that capacity. The main sources of those obligations are the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act) and the Reserve Bank Act. Their obligations under the PGPA Act include obligations to exercise their powers and discharge their duties with care and diligence, honestly, in good faith and for a proper purpose. Members must not use their position, or any information obtained by virtue of their position, to benefit themselves or any other person, or to cause detriment to the Reserve Bank or any other person. Members must declare to the other members of the Board any material personal interest they have in a matter relating to the affairs of the Board. Members may give standing notice to other members outlining the nature and extent of a material personal interest.

Over and above these statutory requirements, members recognise their responsibility for maintaining a reputation for integrity and propriety on the part of the Board and the Reserve Bank in all respects. Members have therefore adopted a Code of Conduct that provides a number of general principles as a guide for their conduct in fulfilling their duties and responsibilities as members of the Board; a copy of the Code is on the Bank's website. The Code was updated in August 2015 to reflect legislative changes.

Remuneration and Allowances

Remuneration and travel allowances for the non-executive members of the Payments System Board are set by the Remuneration Tribunal.

Induction of Board Members

The induction program assists newly appointed Board members in understanding their role and responsibilities, and provides them with an overview of the Bank's role in the payments system and details of relevant developments in preceding years. Separate briefing sessions are tailored to meet particular needs or interests.

Indemnities

During 2014/15, members of the Payments System Board continued to be indemnified against liabilities incurred by reason of their appointment to the relevant Board or by virtue of holding and discharging such office. Indemnities given prior to 1 July 2014, the date of repeal of the *Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997* (CAC Act), were in accordance with section 27M of the CAC Act. New members of the Board whose term of office commenced during 2014/15 were indemnified in substantially similar terms.

Conflict of Interest Audit

The Reserve Bank has several distinct areas of responsibility in the Australian payments system: it owns, operates and participates in Australia's real-time gross settlement system, the Reserve Bank Information and Transfer System; it is a provider of transactional banking services to the Australian Government and its agencies; and it is the principal regulator of the payments system through the Board. This combination of functions is conventional internationally. The operation of the high-value payment system is a core central banking function in most major economies. In addition, central banks in advanced economies typically have regulatory responsibilities for the payments system (though the breadth of mandates varies) and most also provide banking services to government.

While the various functions are conceptually distinct, their existence may give rise to concerns about actual or perceived conflicts of interest. The Board and the senior management of the Bank take very seriously the possibility of any perception that the Bank's policy and operational roles may be conflicted, especially since this could undermine public confidence in the regulatory and policy process. Accordingly, the Bank has policies in place for avoiding conflicts and dealing with them when they do occur. The Board has formally adopted a policy on the management of conflicts of interests,

which is published on the Bank's website.¹ Details of the steps taken to achieve compliance with these arrangements, including the minutes of informal meetings between departments, are audited annually with the results presented to the Board. The most recent audit was conducted in July 2015 and reviewed by the Board in August 2015.

¹ Available at <<http://www.rba.gov.au/payments-system/policy-framework/conflict-of-interest.html>>.

