



Media Release

St George tops business customer sentiment, Index finds

(31 May 2007 – Australia) Business banking customers have rated St George Bank the highest performing bank in terms of customer sentiment for the seventh consecutive months, according to East & Partners' Business Banking Sentiment Index for April 2007.

St George's Sentiment Score increased from 56.6 points in March to 57.5 points in April.

National Australia Bank is the best performer among the 'Big Four' domestic banks with NAB customers awarding their bank a Sentiment Score of 47.1 points compared to 46.5 points in March.

ANZ and Westpac customers reported marginally lower scores of 43.8 and 37.2 points respectively.

Commonwealth Bank remains the worst performer among the 'Big Four' with its Sentiment Score in April reaching 31.6 points from 32.9 the month before.

Bank of Queensland, which is second behind St George in terms of overall customer sentiment, saw its customer sentiment decline slightly in April, down to 53.1 points compared to 53.8 points in the March Index.

Of the international banks, HSBC continues to perform strongly with its customers giving the bank a Sentiment Score of 51.5 points in April compared with 51.0 in May.

The overall Business Banking Sentiment Score – an aggregate metric incorporating Empathy, Satisfaction, Loyalty and Advocacy as awarded by business customers as whole – fell in April, reaching a new low of 41.6 points out of possible 100. The Score has fallen each month since the first Index was released in June 2006.

Sentiment towards banks continues to differ geographically with businesses in Queensland and Victoria more positive about their banking relationships compared to NSW.

“St George Bank is now more than 10 points clear of its nearest major domestic rival and has improved its Sentiment Score each month while the Big Four clearly have ground to make up,” East & Partners financial markets analyst Zoran Knezevic said.

“The business segment covered by the Index is really the engine room of the Australian economy but there appears to be a disconnect on many levels between these businesses and their banks,” he said.

About East & Partners' Business Banking Sentiment Index

The East & Partners Business Banking Sentiment Index is a monthly survey of business customer sentiment towards banks, providing a monitor of customer satisfaction, loyalty, advocacy and empathy towards business banks. Each month East & Partners' research team conducts telephone interviews with a sample of 500 businesses nationally, turning over A\$1 to 100 million per annum, comprising:

- Micro Business 175 (\$1-5m turnover enterprises)
- SME 175 (\$5-20m turnover enterprises)
- Lower Commercial 150 (\$20-100m turnover enterprises)

For further information, please contact:

Zoran Knezevic
Financial Markets Analyst
East & Partners
T: 02-9004 7848
M: 0409 129 599
E: zoran.k@east.com.au