



Book Review

by Stephen Tate

Adele Ferguson- Banking Bad

Whistleblowers, Corporate cover ups and one journalists fight for the truth.

Adele Ferguson is a senior business writer and columnist for leading newspapers such as The Age, The Sydney Morning Herald and the Australian Financial Review. She is a regular guest reporter on ABC's Four Corners and ABC 7:30.

This book follows her series of investigations into the activities of the major banks over a period of five years. The author looked at information shared by whistle-blowers and aggrieved clients that was associated with conduct of the banking and financial services industries. Through her research, Adele concluded that the banks were interested primarily in shareholder interests and not about the financial welfare of customers.

Adele demonstrates that the banks were selling loans that couldn't be repaid while earning fat commissions, ordered staff to sell products they believed were not suitable for customers and deducted fees from the accounts of customers who had died, or for which no adviser was appointed. Crime syndicates were laundering money through high-tech automatic machines that whisked it overseas before it could be checked.



A major accusation was the frequent refusal to pay out insurance claims in the face of medical advice that they should, and dragging out cases until their terminally ill customers died or ran out of money.

The author gained the support of a number of politicians in Parliament (Nationals and Independents) to make a reluctant Commonwealth Coalition Government to form a commission. Kenneth Hayes, a retired High Court judge, was appointed to head a commission backed by a very able legal team to investigate bank financial conduct.

They proceeded to expose poor regulator conduct, illegal corporate conduct (including fraud, egregious fees, failure to act on complaints, disregard for the financial impact on clients, aggressive loan and insurance practices, mismanagement, lack of probity, attempts at legal coverups and plain old greed). The fallout is an estimated \$10 billion in compensation to wronged clients, corporate management sackings by shareholders, a change in regulator conduct and a wave of court cases against the bank officers involved.

The book is a compelling read and will leave you wary about the conduct of some banks and financial institutions.

- Stephen Tate

For more information on the author, visit Adele's website here
<https://www.adeleferguson.com.au/>

