

Thursday 13 June 2019

Dear [Name],

CHEQUES

Thank you for your letter of 30 May 2019 challenging Kiwibank's decision to go cheque-free by 28 February 2020, your concern for older people and their independence and your proposal for a win-win outcome.

I'd first like to acknowledge your custom and assure you that the decision to go cheque-free was not an easy one to make. While I appreciate your view that it is not timely to cease the cheque service, there are several technical and commercial reasons which mean we cannot extend the transition period beyond 28 February 2020.

A key issue for us in implementing the decision is ensuring our customers can adapt their banking needs without using cheques. To this end:

- We are directly contacting the 5,400 customers who use cheques frequently to discuss their specific needs and banking option;
- Kiwibank's own specially-trained 'Digital Angels' are already in stores and facilitating one-on-one sessions with customers as well as group Tech Teas where they introduce customers to safer, cheaper and faster banking alternatives. This includes methods where computer access is not required, such as the use of ATMs, EFTPOS, setting up direct debits, automatic payments and telephone banking;
- Kiwibank has partnered with the Digital Inclusion Aotearoa Alliance and its Stepping UP programme to provide online banking training that could empower people, particularly the elderly. Kiwibank shares the Alliance's value of a digitally-inclusive Aotearoa and acknowledges its existing track record of supporting people who have never used computers before.
- We will continue to actively engage with stakeholders, including GreyPower and Age Concern to work collaboratively where we can to allay concerns that the decision to go cheque-free will lead to a loss of independence, or an increase in fraud or elder abuse.

Our General Manager of Retail, Geoff Waller, has already reached out to you about meeting in Christchurch, and is keen to continue the conversation. Our team can also provide information and articles for your publications if you think this would be helpful.

Like you, we too were encouraged that Government has committed to further narrowing New Zealand's digital divide and will allocate \$600,000 in public funding to boost computer and online skills for older people, so they won't "miss out".

We hope through our support of the Stepping UP programme we can play our part in meeting this goal. Kiwibank is committed to being the better banking alternative and making Kiwis better off more generally. Achieving this requires difficult decisions and as I said before, this is not a decision we took lightly.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan Macken".

Dr Susan Macken
Kiwibank Board Chair