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Westpac Banking Corporation (WBC)

1H22 result preview

Recommendation

Hold (unchanged)

Price

\$24.11

Target (12 months)

\$25.00 (previously \$24.00)

GICS Sector

Banks

Expected Return

Capital growth	3.7%
Dividend yield	4.9%
Total expected return	8.6%

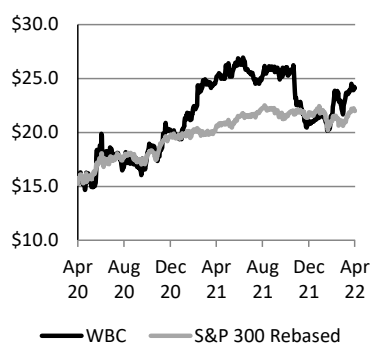
Company Data & Ratios

Enterprise value	n/m
Market cap	\$84,412m
Issued capital	3,501m
Free float	100%
Avg. daily val. (52wk)	\$217.1m
12 month price range	\$20.00 - \$27.12

Price Performance

	(1m)	(3m)	(12m)
Price (A\$)	21.77	21.35	24.54
Absolute (%)	10.75	12.93	-1.75
Rel market (%)	4.99	13.10	-10.95

Absolute Price



SOURCE: IRESS

Expecting \$3.11bn cash earnings, 59¢ interim dividend

WBC will release its 1H22 result on Monday 9 May. Our forecasts are: 1) statutory earnings \$3.09bn; 2) statutory EPS 84¢; 3) cash earnings \$3.11bn; 4) cash EPS 85¢; 5) cash earnings ex-notable items \$3.64bn; 6) cash EPS ex-notable items 99¢; 7) fully franked interim dividend 59¢, cash payout 70%; 8) cash ROE 8.6%; 9) group NIM 1.86%; 10) credit impairment charge \$0.26bn/7bp GLA; 11) CIR 54%; and 12) level 2 CET1 ratio 11.8%.

We expect cash earnings of \$3.11bn in 1H22e. This compares with \$1.82bn in 2H21 (the miss being revenue shortfalls – i.e. largely lower Consumer other banking income – and higher overall operating expenses including a slew of one-off expenses) and \$3.54bn in 1H21. The negative trend should then reverse and the 1H22e number appears to be in line with the 1Q22 cash earnings of \$1.58bn. WBC's balance sheet remains strong with a Level 2 CET1 ratio of 11.8% (vs. APRA's new benchmark of 10.25%), down from 12.2% previously. The rest of the ratios also remain adequate with LCR over 142%, NSFR around 127% and the deposits to net loans ratio close to 84%.

Price target now \$25.00 but maintain Hold rating

We have decreased cash earnings as follows: 1) FY22e nil; 2) FY23e -6%; 3) FY24e -8%; and 4) FY25e -8%. This is due to: 1) lower other income (up to 2% lower); and 2) higher operating expenses (up to 5% higher, the change being expenses at around \$9.5bn in FY24e compared to \$9.0bn previously). On the other hand and based on lower overall risk metrics, we have cut the discount rate by 0.25% to 10.00% and the dividend sustainable yield by 0.50% to 4.00%. The net impact is therefore a small increase in the valuation and price target from \$24.00 to \$25.00 per share, all else being equal. Based on a 12-month Total Shareholder Return of less than 15%, we continue to rate WBC as a Hold.

Earnings Forecast

Year end 30 September	2021	2022e	2023e	2024e
Statutory earnings (A\$m)	4,634	4,699	6,674	7,433
Cash earnings (A\$m)	5,352	6,035	6,710	7,469
EPS (cash) (A¢)	146	168	190	212
EPS (cash) growth (%)	102%	15%	13%	11%
PER (x)	16.5	14.4	12.7	11.4
P/Book (x)	1.2	1.2	1.1	1.1
P/NTA (x)	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.3
Dividend (A¢)	118	120	127	139
Yield (%)	4.9%	5.0%	5.3%	5.8%
ROE (%)	7.6%	8.4%	9.3%	10.0%
NIM (%)	2.04%	1.86%	1.82%	1.82%
Franking (%)	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

SOURCE: BELL POTTER SECURITIES ESTIMATES

1H22 result preview

Expecting \$3.11bn cash earnings, 59¢ interim dividend

WBC will release its 1H22 result on Monday 9 May. Our forecasts are:

1. Statutory earnings \$3.09bn;
2. Statutory EPS 84¢;
3. Cash earnings \$3.11bn;
4. Cash EPS 85¢;
5. Cash earnings ex-notable items \$3.64bn;
6. Cash EPS ex-notable items 99¢;
7. Fully franked interim dividend 59¢, cash payout 70%;
8. Cash ROE 8.6%;
9. Group NIM 1.86%;
10. Credit impairment charge \$0.26bn/7bp GLA;
11. CIR 54%; and
12. Level 2 CET1 ratio 11.8%.

We expect cash earnings of \$3.11bn in 1H22e. This compares with \$1.82bn in 2H21 (the miss being revenue shortfalls – i.e. largely lower Consumer other banking income – and higher overall operating expenses including a slew of one-off expenses) and \$3.54bn in 1H21. The negative trend should then reverse and the 1H22e number appears to be in line with the 1Q22 cash earnings of \$1.58bn.

To recap, WBC kept unaudited cash earnings growth excluding notable items at around 1% – that reflected lower expenses and strong T&M contribution that more than offset lower NIM, reversion of the impairment charge to a small cost and the absence of revenue from sold businesses. Mind you, total loans grew only 0.7% across Australian mortgages, institutional lending and overall New Zealand. However, total AIEA growth was much stronger at 5% based on the extra boost from \$29bn liquidity in lowering the CLF. Deposit growth was also strong and included new \$12bn wholesale funding.

Our 1H22e forecasts are as follows.

NIM – We expect NIM to be 1.86%, falling another 5bp since 2H21a. This was again mainly due to higher liquidity, pressure on mortgages – consumer and business lending – and growth in lower spread fixed rate mortgages. On the other hand, the bank continues to enjoy cheaper funding rates especially in deposits. NIE is expected to be \$7.93bn, lower than the annualised figure of \$8.36bn in 1Q22a, and WBC still expects FY22e NIM to decline further as a result.

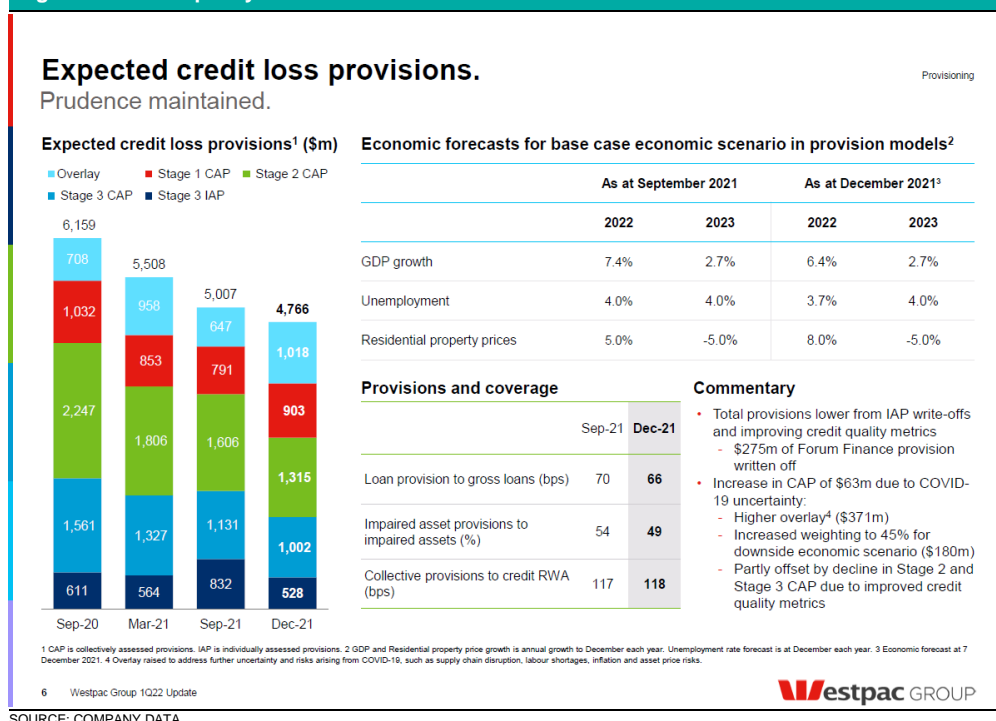
Non-interest income – As opposed to 2H21a and from the sale of the General Insurance and LMI businesses earlier, we expect other income to climb again. The reason is due to higher banking and financial markets income helped by increased market volatility. Net of lower NIE, this almost saved the day by bringing net operating income back to almost par with 2H21a.

Operating expenses – We expect this to be \$5.45bn in 1H22e (54% CIR and down from \$5.98bn in 1H21a and a massive \$7.30bn in 2H21a) and broadly in line with \$2.70bn in 1Q22a. As suggested and excluding notable items, cost reduction was \$191m in 1Q22 mainly from cost resets including lower FTEs and third party contractors (by more than 1,100, and was despite further investment in risk management activity). We think there

may be more cost savings in this space but the \$8.00bn as suggested by the bank in FY24e is highly unachievable we think. Our forecast is for \$9.00bn operating expenses instead that is still a large decrease from the current environment.

Impairment charges – This is still off to a slow start, being \$255m credit impairment charge in 1H22e (7bp GLA), and in line with the charge of \$118m in 1Q22a. As such, asset quality should remain strong as stressed assets in 1Q22a were still down by 21bp to 1.15% despite ongoing difficulties with COVID-19.

Figure 1 – Asset quality in 1Q22a



WBC's balance sheet remains strong with a Level 2 CET1 ratio of 11.8% (vs. APRA's new benchmark of 10.25%), down from 12.2% previously. The rest of the ratios also remain adequate with LCR over 142%, NSFR around 127% and the deposits to net loans ratio close to 84%.

In the meantime, WBC has completed its \$3.5bn off-market share buy-back on 14 February 2022. This is 167.5m WBC shares bought (4.6% of issued capital) at roughly \$20.90 (6% discount) and will reduce CET1 ratio by 79bp.

WBC has also completed a \$382m (NZD400m) sale of its NZ life business on 28 February 2022. A post-tax gain of roughly \$93m (NZD98m) subject to completion of adjustments and separation costs will happen in 1H22e and this adds to around 8bp to CET1 ratio. In addition, the bank in New Zealand will receive ongoing payments under a 15-year distribution agreement.

Price target now \$25.00 but maintain Hold rating

We have decreased cash earnings as follows: 1) FY22e nil; 2) FY23e -6%; 3) FY24e -8%; and 4) FY25e -8%. This is due to: 1) lower other income (up to 2% lower); and 2) higher operating expenses (up to 5% higher, the change being expenses at around \$9.5bn in FY24e compared to \$9.0bn previously). On the other hand and based on lower overall risk metrics, we have cut the discount rate by 0.25% to 10.00% and the dividend sustainable yield by 0.50% to 4.00%. The net impact is therefore a small increase in the valuation and

price target from \$24.00 to \$25.00 per share, all else being equal. Based on a 12-month Total Shareholder Return of less than 15%, we continue to rate WBC as a Hold.

Table 1 – Composite valuation					Table 2 – SOP valuation				
Composite Valuation	Value (\$m)	Per share	Weighting	Composite value per share	SOP Valuation	FY22e NPAT	Pros. PE (times)	Value (\$m)	Per share
DCF	95,494	\$27.28	25%	\$6.82	Consumer Bank	3,101	13.0	40,318	\$11.52
Dividend yield (sustainable)	105,034	\$30.00	25%	\$7.50	Business Bank	1,264	13.0	16,434	\$4.69
ROE (sustainable)	64,091	\$18.31	25%	\$4.58	Westpac Institutional Bank	469	12.5	5,867	\$1.68
Sum-of-Parts	76,780	\$21.93	25%	\$5.48	Specialist Businesses	506	10.0	5,062	\$1.45
Surplus capital *	2,838	\$0.81		\$0.81	Westpac New Zealand	842	13.0	10,942	\$3.13
Total				\$25.19	Group	-147	12.5	-1,842	-\$0.53
* Less estimated NZ new capital requirement					Total	6,035	12.7	76,780	\$21.93

SOURCE: COMPANY DATA AND BELL POTTER SECURITIES ESTIMATES

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Table 3 – Estimate changes												
Westpac Group Y/e September 30 (\$m)	FY22e			FY23e			FY24e			FY25e		
	Current	Previous	Change	Current	Previous	Change	Current	Previous	Change	Current	Previous	Change
Profit & Loss												
Net interest income	15,904	15,904	0%	15,945	15,945	0%	16,252	16,252	0%	16,609	16,609	0%
Other income	4,658	4,658	0%	4,792	5,098	-6%	4,921	5,373	-8%	5,054	5,519	-8%
Net operating income	20,562	20,562	0%	20,737	21,043	-1%	21,173	21,625	-2%	21,663	22,128	-2%
Operating expenses	-11,422	-11,422	0%	-10,320	-9,999	-3%	-9,519	-9,054	-5%	-9,536	-9,058	-5%
Impairment charges	-523	-523	0%	-839	-839	0%	-993	-993	0%	-1,155	-1,155	0%
Operating profit before income tax	8,616	8,616	0%	9,578	10,205	-6%	10,662	11,578	-8%	10,972	11,915	-8%
Income tax expense	-2,575	-2,575	0%	-2,863	-3,051	7%	-3,187	-3,462	9%	-3,280	-3,563	9%
Net profit to non-controlling interests	-6	-6	n/m	-6	-6	n/m	-6	-6	n/m	-6	-6	n/m
Cash earnings	6,035	6,035	0%	6,710	7,149	-6%	7,469	8,111	-8%	7,687	8,347	-8%
Cash earnings ex-notable items	7,087	7,087	0%	7,060	7,499	-6%	7,469	8,111	-8%	7,687	8,347	-8%
DPS (cps)	120	120	0%	127	127	0%	139	139	0%	145	145	0%
EPS (cash basis) (cps)	168	168	0%	190	204	-7%	212	231	-8%	218	238	-8%
Cash payout ratio (target 70-75%)	72%	71%	0%	67%	62%	4%	66%	60%	6%	67%	61%	6%
- Ex-notable items	61%	61%	0%	63%	59%	4%	66%	60%	6%	67%	61%	6%
ROE	8.4%	8.4%	0.0%	9.3%	9.8%	-0.6%	10.0%	10.7%	-0.7%	9.9%	10.6%	-0.6%
NIM	1.86%	1.86%	0.00%	1.82%	1.82%	0.00%	1.82%	1.82%	0.00%	1.82%	1.82%	0.00%
Cost ratio	56%	56%	0%	50%	48%	-2%	45%	42%	-3%	44%	41%	-3%
Impairment expense as % of GLA	0.07%	0.07%	0.00%	0.11%	0.11%	0.00%	0.13%	0.13%	0.00%	0.14%	0.14%	0.00%
Effective tax rate	30%	30%	0%	30%	30%	0%	30%	30%	0%	30%	30%	0%

SOURCE: COMPANY DATA AND BELL POTTER SECURITIES ESTIMATES

Westpac Banking Corporation

Company description

WBC is Australia's oldest bank with a focus in Australia and New Zealand. Following the transformational merger with SGB in December 2008, the bank is now the leading financial services player in the country (with 10m customers, ~1,000 branches and ~2,700 ATMs) and the largest provider of wealth platforms.

Investment strategy

Our current rating reflects WBC's relatively lower credit risk profile and ROE and also value upside from productivity and efficiency gains within Westpac Retail & Business Banking in the medium term in terms of rationalising the branch network with St George. The other key value drivers are scale in banking and wealth management and traditional exposure to the important NSW market.

Valuation

The price target is closely aligned with the bank's composite valuation, weighted as follows:

Table 4 – Composite valuation					Table 5 – SOP valuation				
Composite Valuation	Value (\$m)	Per share	Weighting	Composite value per share	SOP Valuation	FY22e NPAT	Pros. PE (times)	Value (\$m)	Per share
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Total				\$25.19	Group	-147	12.5	-1,842	-\$0.53
					Total	6,035	12.7	76,780	\$21.93

* Less estimated NZ new capital requirement

SOURCE: COMPANY DATA AND BELL POTTER SECURITIES ESTIMATES

SWOT analysis

Strengths

1. Conservative board/management with relevant banking experience;
2. Strong execution capabilities;
3. Scale in domestic wealth management and global markets; and
4. Domestic retail and SME banking franchise, including service and sales.

Weaknesses

1. Multiple brands – lack of synergies; and
2. Overweight NZ (but the risks are partially mitigated by exposure to relatively lower risk retail assets).

Opportunities

1. Radical restructuring of the combined WBC/SGB network especially in NSW; and
2. East coast leverage.

Threats

1. Macroeconomic factors, e.g. higher unemployment rate and slowing credit growth;
2. Changes in regulatory environment; and
3. Increased competition specifically from the other majors on the domestic front in retail and wholesale banking and wealth management.

Sensitivities**Table 6 – Sensitivities**

Y/e September 30	2022e	2023e	2024e	2025e	2026e	2027e	2028e	2029e	2030e
Sensitivities									
Group NIM +10bp									
- NPAT upside (cash basis)	9.9%	9.1%	8.4%	8.3%	8.2%	8.1%	8.0%	8.0%	8.0%
- Price target upside	\$2.49	\$2.28	\$2.09	\$2.08	\$2.06	\$2.02	\$2.01	\$2.00	\$1.99
Group Loans +1%									
- NPAT upside (cash basis)	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%
- Price target upside	\$0.19	\$0.19	\$0.19	\$0.19	\$0.19	\$0.19	\$0.19	\$0.19	\$0.19
Consumer Bank loans +1%									
- NPAT upside (cash basis)	0.5%	0.5%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%
- Price target upside	\$0.13	\$0.12	\$0.11	\$0.11	\$0.11	\$0.11	\$0.11	\$0.11	\$0.11
Business Bank loans +1%									
- NPAT upside (cash basis)	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%
- Price target upside	\$0.05	\$0.05	\$0.04	\$0.04	\$0.05	\$0.05	\$0.05	\$0.05	\$0.05
NZ loans +1%									
- NPAT upside (cash basis)	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
- Price target upside	\$0.03	\$0.03	\$0.03	\$0.03	\$0.03	\$0.03	\$0.03	\$0.03	\$0.03
Other income +1%									
- NPAT upside (cash basis)	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%
- Price target upside	\$0.14	\$0.12	\$0.12	\$0.12	\$0.11	\$0.11	\$0.11	\$0.11	\$0.11
BDD +1%									
- NPAT upside (cash basis)	-0.1%	-0.1%	-0.1%	-0.1%	-0.1%	-0.1%	-0.1%	-0.1%	-0.1%
- Price target upside	-\$0.02	-\$0.02	-\$0.02	-\$0.03	-\$0.03	-\$0.03	-\$0.03	-\$0.03	-\$0.03
Costs +1%									
- NPAT upside (cash basis)	-1.3%	-1.1%	-0.9%	-0.9%	-0.8%	-0.8%	-0.8%	-0.8%	-0.8%
- Price target upside	-\$0.33	-\$0.27	-\$0.22	-\$0.22	-\$0.21	-\$0.20	-\$0.20	-\$0.20	-\$0.20

SOURCE: COMPANY DATA AND BELL POTTER SECURITIES ESTIMATES

Recommendation structure

Buy: Expect >15% total return on a 12 month view. For stocks regarded as 'Speculative' a return of >30% is expected.

Hold: Expect total return between -5% and 15% on a 12 month view

Sell: Expect <-5% total return on a 12 month view

Speculative Investments are either start-up enterprises with nil or only prospective operations or recently commenced operations with only forecast cash flows, or companies that have commenced operations or have been in operation for some time but have only forecast cash flows and/or a stressed balance sheet.

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