

Former ACCC chairman Professor Allan Fels says a “concerted campaign” has been waged by franchisees of 7Eleven against underpaid workers to prevent them seeking compensation.

And he has spoken of the need for Australia’s banks to follow the example of the United Kingdom and structurally separate commercial activities from its lending and deposit taking operations, as calls for a royal commission into the sector continues.

Professor Fels was speaking at the Melbourne Press Club with Fairfax Media investigative journalist Adele Ferguson - whose reporting helped reveal systematic underpayment by 7Eleven and misconduct in the financial planning arm of the Commonwealth Bank - and CBA whistleblower Jeff Morris.

Prof Fels, a Professorial Fellow for the University of Melbourne, headed an independent panel that examined the underpayment of 7Eleven workers after a joint Fairfax/ABC investigation. He said 2000 claims were actively being processed, with 343 claims being paid \$12 million, an average of \$35,000 per claim.

He said there was a “very strong campaign by franchisees to deter them” and that there needs to be shared liability for compensation between franchisers and franchisees:

Professor Allan Fels speaks about 7eleven. The Conversation, [CC BY](#) 2.93 MB ([download](#))

Prof Fels says in the banking sector there are some “deep conflicts of interests” that have been exacerbated by the need to prop up “too big to fail” banks. Conflicts had been intensified by banks expanding into funds management, an area which the [Vickers Report in the UK](#) recommended be separate from the traditional deposit taking activities of banks:

Professor Fels comments on banking culture. The Conversation, [CC BY](#) 2.53 MB ([download](#))

“My message to the bank would be get a lot more serious about compliance, ethics and a pro-consumer culture or basic questions will come up”.

Allan Fels: 7Eleven franchisees 'waging campaign' to block workers' compo (audio)

Written by The Conversation

The event focused on the role of whistleblowers in exposing corporate corruption and also heard from consumer advocate Michael Fraser.

Read more <http://theconversation.com/allan-fels-7eleven-franchisees-waging-campaign-to-block-workers-compo-audio-57819>