



Negotiable / Transferable Instruments Conventions

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AFMA Code of Conduct

AFMA promotes efficiency, integrity and professionalism in Australia's financial markets. The AFMA Code of Conduct (the Code) clearly articulates the ethical principles for minimum acceptable standards of behaviour and supports responsible decision making by firms and individuals engaged in financial markets activities.

All AFMA Financial Markets Members and Partner Members¹ are expected to observe the Code and operate with integrity, professionalism and competence. The Code is designed to support behaviors that put the interests of clients, the firm and the wider community ahead of personal or individual interests, and promotes confident participation by users in Australia's OTC markets.

The Code is presented in two parts – the [Ethical Principles](#) and the [Guidelines](#).

Market participants are reminded that they are generally expected to observe and adhere to the market standards and conventions² as set out below when engaging in any form of market dealing.

1. Description

The short dated securities market is conducted by participants who buy and sell discounted instruments with a maturity of less than 365 days.

Instruments in this market raise funds when they are first issued. The purchaser of the new securities is the lender and the issuer is the borrower. Securities can be traded until they mature when their redemption extinguishes the debt.

2. Products

2.1. Bills of Exchange

A bill of exchange is defined in the Bills of Exchange Act 1909 as an unconditional order in writing, addressed by one person to another, signed by the person giving it, requiring the person to whom it is addressed to pay on demand or at a fixed or determinable future time, a sum certain in money or to the order of a specific person, or to bearer.

At a more practical level a bill of exchange is generally described as a negotiable instrument maturing within six months (at which time it will be redeemed for its face value). It is sold at a discount to face value which the market believes to be the obligation (debt) of a first class credit.

¹ As defined in the AFMA Constitution

² The Negotiable/Transferable Instruments Conventions are maintained by the AFMA NTI Committee

2.2. Bills of Exchange (bank accepted/endorsed bill)

These are bills of exchange on which the name of a bank appears as either acceptor or endorser. Where the bank is the acceptor the bill ranks as a bank accepted bill. Where the bank has endorsed the bill on the back, either through buying the bill in the market or for a fee to raise the bill's status, it ranks as a bank endorsed bill.

2.3. Negotiable Certificates of Deposit (NCD)

This is a certificate issued by a bank evidencing an interest bearing deposit with it. Terms range from a few days to several years however only those having a term of less than one year are considered short term securities.

2.4. Promissory Notes

A promissory note (also known as commercial paper or one name paper) is defined in the Bills of Exchange Act as an unconditional promise in writing made by one person to another, signed by the maker, engaging to pay on demand or at a fixed or determinable future time a sum certain in money for or to the order of a specified person or to bearer.

At a practical level promissory notes are usually issued for terms of 185 days or less, must be signed by the party making the promise, must be for a specific sum of money, must specify the time for repayment, must be in bearer form, are transferable by delivery without endorsement, are issued and traded at a discount and are redeemable at maturity.

2.5. Treasury Notes

Treasury notes, which are in effect promissory notes issued by the Australian Office of Financial Management (AOFM) on behalf of the Commonwealth government, are primarily used as a short term funding instrument to smooth seasonal fluctuations in Commonwealth government cash flows. Treasury notes are generally issued for terms of 9 months or less.

Treasury notes are issued by competitive tender. Tenders for the issue of Treasury notes are normally conducted on a Thursday. The process for the conduct of Treasury note tenders is as follows:

- Official notice of Treasury note tender at 4:00pm on the business day prior to tender.
- Opening time for bidding is 10:15am on the day of tender.
- Closing time for bidding is 10:30am on the day of tender and results are announced shortly thereafter.
- Treasury notes are allotted to successful bidders on the day of tender (see above) for settlement the next business day.

Treasury notes are:

- Inscribed, meaning that ownership of the stock is recognised by way of a registry maintained by the RBA. In practice, almost all settlement is conducted in the Austraclear System.
- Issued through AOFM on a tender basis. Bids (yield to maturity to 2 decimal places) must be submitted through the AOFM tender system which is accessed via the Yieldbroker DEBTS system. Bids may only be submitted by parties that are registered with the AOFM. Minimum bid parcel is AUD\$1,000,000 face value and thereafter in multiples of AUD\$1,000,000. Subsequent to the issue of Treasury notes at tender, Treasury notes may be transferred to other persons in parcels that are a multiple of AUD\$5,000 face value.
- Discounted instruments, where the discount is based on yield and term to maturity. That is, payment at maturity is fixed with the price varying depending on the market interest rate and remaining term to maturity.

Treasury notes are mainly used by banks and financial institutions for liquidity management purposes. Under the RTGS/RITS systems Treasury notes may be sold to the RBA and bought back (repo'ed) intraday to help manage banks' intraday liquidity mismatches.

3. Dealing

The dealing conventions set out below apply to all trading in discounted short dated securities unless all parties to a transaction mutually agree otherwise.

3.1. Methods of Dealing

Via telephone or brokers

3.2. Electronic Dealing

The increasing sophistication of financial markets has created a space for brokers, dealers and clients to access markets via electronic platforms.

3.3. Business Days

3.3.1. Good Business Day

A good business day is defined as any day on which banks in the state of New South Wales (NSW) are generally open for business, or a day other than one on which banks in NSW are obliged or permitted to close, excluding Saturday and Sunday.

Essentially, NSW business days are weekdays (Monday to Friday) other than NSW public holidays as gazetted under the NSW State Government's Banks and Bank Holidays Act 1912.

That said Australian OTC markets generally tend to operate in a reduced capacity on gazetted NSW public holidays that are not similarly gazetted in Victoria.

3.3.2. Non Business Day

A non-business day is defined as any day on which banks in the State of NSW are generally obliged or permitted to close, including Saturday and Sunday.

In general, AFMA recommends that transactions should not be negotiated for settlement or price fixing (rollover) on a non-business day.

3.4. Standard Transaction Size (market parcel)

For maturities out to 6 months

Unless mutually agreed otherwise the minimum market parcel is AUD\$20million of acceptable short term debt instruments composed of parcels of not less than AUD\$1million and in multiples of AUD\$1million, with the maximum number of lines of stock per transaction defined below.

Market Parcel Size	Lines of Stock
\$ 20 million	2
\$ 30 million	3
\$ 40 million	4
\$ 50 million	5
\$ 100 million	10
\$ 150 million+	15

Last reviewed June 2014

No greater than two lines of stock may be delivered for any standard \$20m market parcel.

Lines of stock is defined as short term debt instruments with the same drawer, the same maturity date and in the case of bank accepted/endorsed bills, the same acceptor/endorser.

For maturities greater than 6 months but less than 12 months

Unless mutually agreed otherwise the minimum market parcel is AUD\$10million of acceptable short term debt instruments, comprising of one line of stock per AUD\$10million.

3.5. Two Way Pricing

This is a situation where a market participant quotes both a buy and a sell price for a particular financial instrument. Two way pricing is not generally accepted market practice in the NTI market. Two way prices are given on a bilateral basis only as agreed between specific counterparties.

3.6. Quotation and Dealing

Standard tick size is 1 basis point

Interest rates are quoted to 2 decimal places

3.7. Other Instrument Conventions

3.7.1. Prime Bank Names

The list of AFMA Prime Banks and the processes used in the determination of Prime Bank eligibility, subsequent election, potential exclusion and other contingent arrangements are recorded in the AFMA [Prime Bank Conventions](#)

3.7.2. Denominations

Unless mutually agreed otherwise the standard denominations for each line with an identical drawer, acceptor and maturity date on each bill or in the case of negotiable certificates of deposit and promissory notes, an identical issuer and maturity date, are:

- 10 securities of \$ 100,000 per million
- 2 securities of \$ 500,000 per million
- 1 security of \$ 1,000,000
- 1 security of \$ 5,000,000

3.7.3. Fungibility of Treasury Notes

The buyer of a market parcel of bank accepted bills or certificates of deposit cannot reject treasury notes as a substitute in a transaction where a minimum of \$ 10 million is delivered with a single maturity date.

3.7.4. Electronic Paper - E/Bills, E/CDs, E/PNs

The buyer has the right to accept or decline trades where e-paper is offered but if so declined the deal stands with physical paper being substituted.

3.8. Basis

All rates are quoted on an actual/365 day fixed basis. The standard convention denominator doesn't adjust for leap years unless otherwise stated.

3.9. Maturity Conventions

Maturities are traded in half month periods. Instruments maturing on business days from the 1st to the 15th of a month inclusive are designated early month, those from the 16th to the last working day are late month.

3.10. Settlement Rate or Index

Not applicable.

3.11. Premium Payment Date(s)

Not applicable.

3.12. Expiry Conventions

Not applicable.

3.13. Broker Conventions

For physical prime bank paper traded via a broker screen dealing systems *Section 3.15* applies.

The buyer has the right to accept or decline trades where e-paper is offered, but if so declined the deal stands with physical paper being substituted.

3.14. Confidentiality

No specific conventions apply. Refer to 1. AFMA Code of Conduct

3.15. Credit

Market participants should accept prime bank credit subject to their available credit limits. There is an onus on the seller to provide the buyer with details of the transaction in a timely manner. There is also an onus on the buyer to notify the seller of any rejection of the transaction due to lack of available credit limits in a timely manner (generally within 10 minutes of being advised of the details of the transaction).

3.16. Exercise of Options

Not applicable.

3.17. Data Source

End of day prices can be found on *AFMAdata* page Short Dated End of Day Rates.

3.18. Pricing Formulae

Simple interest (or simple discounting) is the basis of the pricing of short dated securities. The formula for pricing discount securities is as follows:

$$P = \frac{FV}{1 + (r \times t)}$$

FV = face value of the security
r = per annum yield to maturity
t = time to maturity in years (days/365)

4. Confirmations

Refer to the [Australian Dollar Debt Instrument Confirmation & Settlement Standards](#).

4.1. Timing

The details of short dated securities deals (maturity date, drawer & acceptor as applicable) dealt for same day settlement should be provided to the buying counterparty within 90 minutes of trade execution.

The details of short dated securities deals (maturity date, drawer & acceptor as applicable) dealt for next day settlement should be provided to the buying counterparty as soon as possible on a best endeavours basis, but in any event, by no later than 9:00am on the day of settlement.

4.2. Obligations of Dealers

Dealers should ensure that deal tickets or inputs to front office dealing systems are completed in a timely fashion to allow for compliance with *Section 4.1*.

4.3. Documentation

Not applicable.

5. Settlements

Refer to the [Australian Dollar Debt Instrument Confirmation & Settlement Standards](#).

5.1. Physical Settlements

Unless mutually agreed otherwise transactions negotiated before 12:00pm are for settlement on the same day and transactions negotiated after 12:00pm are for settlement on the following business day.

In general AFMA recommends that transactions should not be negotiated for settlement or price fixing (rollover) on a non-business day. Other conventions can be utilised if agreed upon at the time of dealing.

5.2. Cash Settlements

Not applicable.

5.3. Premium Payments

Not applicable.

5.4. Exercise of Options

Not applicable.

5.5. Settlement Failures

No specific convention.
