

We're half way there

Wednesday 12 August, 2009.

AXA Australia today announced it was progressing well with its programme aimed at regaining a leadership position in the financial protection business.

In March last year AXA announced it would invest \$30 million into a significant development programme focusing on service, relationships and product.

AXA General Manager Financial Protection Michael Rogers said the early signs are encouraging as evidenced by the results for the 6 months to 30 June 2009, released last week.

AXA Australia's Financial Protection new business was up 23 per cent to \$58.8million. Individual life new business was also up 19 per cent to \$32.2 million due to ongoing product and service improvements and growth in new sales.

"This is a good start, we have been able to make these gains because we have focussed on service and relationship management as two key areas which we believe differentiate us in a competitive market," he said.

Mr Rogers said adviser perception had also improved dramatically; "We had selected some pivotal metrics that are important to clients and advisers and we have made significant inroads.

"We are now ranked in the top four in the categories of product and new business and underwriting. We are fifth in policy maintenance and whilst we have improved in claims, we still have some work to do to improve our number seven ranking.

"The biggest improvement came in the underwriting category, where we improved our rating from 10th to fourth. This was achieved by slashing turn around times for new business and introducing same day processing.

"We have appointed a single case manager to handle claims, reducing double handling which has improved our service to advisers," he said.



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“We are now a long way down the track in reinvigorating our proposition, we have raised our standards and whilst there is still a lot of work to do, the time is right to relaunch our offer with a new name, AXA’s Elevate.

“AXA’s Elevate enhances our offer to reflect our commitment to growing our advisers’ business by building quality protection for their clients,” he said.

Mr Rogers said a key component of this new offer is AXA’s Elevate Online, a new automated underwriting system for new insurance applications.

“AXA’s Elevate Online will enable advisers to convert a quote into an application before generating an immediate underwriting decision.

“This is not a panacea, we will still do business one on one, personal engagement is important to some advisers and we will not forget that,” he said.

Mr Rogers said AXA’s recent Risk Learning Programme proved that advisers still want the support and coaching to handle the more personal aspects of selling risk insurance.

“The Risk Learning Programme aims to equip our advisers with the specialist skills and knowledge they need and it has been an overwhelming success.

“This programme features client engagement and behavioural research modules that are unique in the market-place, we have booked out all of our sessions across the country,” he said.

AXA’s Head of Individual Life, Stephen Rosengren also announced some key product enhancements aligned with the strategy of positioning AXA as an insurer that is easy to do business with.

The first major enhancement is a change to the payment on heart attacks, with AXA set to become the first insurer to pay a partial payment for minor heart attacks.

“This upgrade will cover a client who has a heart attack which doesn’t fall under the normal full heart attack definition. In this case, the client will receive a partial payment of up to 20% of sum insured up to a maximum of \$100,000.

Mr Rosengren said another key change is aimed at making Trauma cover more accessible.

“Many clients prefer to place their life insurance policy through super, due to the associated taxation benefits, but this cannot be done with Trauma.



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“Our new Superlink feature gives the client the ability to link the Trauma cover to their super cover without paying the premium rates they normally would if you they had the cover outside super,” he said.

AXA also announced significant change to its Income Protection policies by increasing the number of illnesses under which it pays the client, without a waiting period.

“Under the old policy, the no waiting period applied to only eight illnesses, it has now been expanded to include 37. In addition, this benefit has also been added to our standard level income protection contract,” Mr Rosengren said.

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