

Media Release

from the fundraising sector

New FIA Code now monitored through ‘mystery shopping’

Sydney, 30 January 2018 -- Fundraising Institute Australia (FIA) is using a quality assurance method borrowed from the retail sector to monitor compliance with its new Code, which became enforceable on 1 January.

The technique, known as ‘mystery shopping,’ involves conducting random spot checks by telephone, mail, email or in person to make sure staff are adhering to the organisation’s policies. A Code Monitor was appointed in late 2017 and has now started checking member compliance.

“The new Code lends itself to this kind of proactive monitoring,” said FIA CEO Rob Edwards.

“It contains a number of specific commitments by fundraisers in how they must treat donors, beneficiaries and suppliers. By occasionally checking on their adherence to the Code, we believe standards will improve across the sector and that will be good for charitable giving. The more confidence people have in our sector, the more willing they will be to support Australian charities.”

Mr. Edwards explained how the monitoring system works. “For example, the new Code says: ‘Members will make readily available, on request, information about the charitable cause for which they are fundraising, including its objects and how it intends to use the donated funds.’ The Code Monitor may choose to test compliance with this requirement by simply asking a fundraiser, who is making calls on behalf of a charity, if they are able to provide this information.”

In the past, FIA relied on complaints to gauge if its members were following the Code.

“One problem with a complaints-driven process is that you are always reacting to something that has gone wrong,” said Mr. Edwards. “By then, the damage has been done. This new approach helps prevent things from going wrong in the first place.”

Every FIA member agrees to abide by the Code as a condition of their membership. FIA is also providing web-based training in the new Code to all professional fundraisers.

“If we find evidence of non-compliance we will, in the first instance, privately inform the member of the breach. It is not our intention to embarrass any member by publicly reporting on a breach occurrence. It is only in cases of ongoing or wilful non-compliance that the Code Authority would publicly sanction the member,” said Mr. Edwards.

About Fundraising Institute Australia (FIA)

With over 1500 members, Fundraising Institute Australia is the largest representative body for the \$12.5 billion fundraising sector which is supported by some 14.9 million Australians. FIA members include charities and other fundraising not-for-profits operating domestically and internationally as well as the organisations and professionals that provide services to them. FIA advocates for the interests of the sector, administers a self-regulatory Code, educates fundraising practitioners, promotes research, and creates forums for the exchange of knowledge and ideas.

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