

# Media Release

## from the fundraising sector

### Code Authority Embarks on Six Month ‘Mystery Shop’

Sydney, 28 February 2018

The FIA Code Authority has commissioned a six-month project to ‘mystery shop’ member compliance with the new Code.

The ‘mystery shopping’ will investigate how FIA members treat people who may sometimes be in vulnerable circumstances, or may lack capacity to consent to make a donation, the elderly and the young. It will also check on member compliance with ‘opt out’ requests from the public. A report will be delivered to the Code Authority.

The Code, which came into effect on 1 January this year, states: “Members will not accept a Donation where they have a reasonable belief that the Donor is in vulnerable circumstances or lacks capacity to make a decision to Donate.”<sup>1</sup>

FIA CEO Rob Edwards said members have committed to a high standard with regard to the treatment of people in vulnerable circumstances. “The purpose of mystery shopping is to test that commitment and verify the sector is delivering against the promise. It shows we are serious about effective self-regulation,” he said.

Mystery shoppers will also be examining whether donor preferences to “opt out” of charity solicitations are being honoured in practice. The FIA Code<sup>2</sup> states: “Members will, each time they contact a prospective Donor, provide information about how the prospective Donor can opt-out of receiving any further solicitations from the Member.” The Code makes a distinction between existing and ‘prospective’ donors. It does not require members to provide an opt-out to **existing** donors, including donors who have previously opted-in to receiving solicitations. However, it is considered good practice to regularly update records of donor preferences as part of donor care programs. A [Practice Note](#) has been developed to guide fundraisers in how to ensure they are respecting donor preferences.

Members contacted by mystery shoppers and found to have breached the Code may be subject to further investigation by the Code Authority.

#### **About Fundraising Institute Australia (FIA)**

With over 1500 members, Fundraising Institute Australia is the largest representative body for the \$12.5 billion charitable fundraising sector which is supported by some 14.9 million Australians. FIA members include charities 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.

#### **About the Code Authority**

The Code Authority is made up of distinguished individuals who are representative of the fundraising profession, charities, the consumer movement, and suppliers. It is independently chaired by former Senator Ursula Stephens and reports to the FIA Board of Directors.

For media enquiries, please contact Kai Ianssen on 0423 685 530 or [klianssen@fia.org.au](mailto:klianssen@fia.org.au).

---

<sup>1</sup> FIA Code clause 4.7. <https://www.fia.org.au/pages/fia-code.html>

<sup>2</sup> FIA Code clause 4.2.