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5 June 2008

Mr Stephen Palethorpe
Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

By email: fpa.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Mr Palethorpe

Lobbying Code of Conduct Inquiry

I am writing to you in relation to the abovementioned Inquiry. Our organisation has concerns about the scope of the recently released Lobbying Code of Conduct, particularly as to whether it applies to advocacy activities undertaken by professional member organisations such as CPA Australia.

We believe that it is in the public interest to have a Lobbyists Register which is available for inspection by members of the public. As currently drafted, however, it is unclear to us whether some organisations such as professional accounting bodies, including CPA Australia, which may carry on certain advocacy activities on behalf of their members, are required to apply for registration on the abovementioned register.

While we are generally supportive of the register, we do not believe that it should be extended to those organisations which undertake advocacy and representation activities on behalf of their members and in the public interest.

We note in this regard that there are a number of organisations which may conduct advocacy activities on behalf of their members but which are explicitly excluded, and arguably CPA Australia may fall within one or more of these exclusions. But this is not clear and accordingly must be clarified, not just for our organisation, but also for other professional bodies who may find themselves in a similar position.

I might add that, for the reasons mentioned above, we have not yet applied for registration on the Lobbyists Register and we are forwarding a copy of this letter to the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.

Further details on the role and activities of CPA Australia are contained in an attachment to this letter. If you have any questions regarding the above, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Drum', written in a cursive style.

PAUL DRUM FCPA
Director – Policy and Research
CPA Australia

Copy: Secretary, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet

ATTACHMENT**Outline of Role and Activities of CPA Australia**

CPA Australia represents the diverse interests of more than 117,000 finance, accounting and business advisers. We are committed to working with governments and their agencies to ensure that current and future economic and social policies foster an environment that facilitates sustainable economic growth.

The organisation effectively provides a self-regulatory framework for eligible university graduates who enrol as members and complete the CPA program within the prescribed period. To become a Certified Practising Accountant (CPA), members must complete the CPA education program and have three years' mentored experience working in the area of accounting or finance. All active members are also required to fulfil continuing professional development (CPD) commitments of 120 CPD hours every three years.

The Public Practice Certificate is open to all CPAs who desire to be a principal in public practice. They must complete CPA Australia's Public Practice Program and meet a number of other requirements.

CPA Australia is the 6th largest accounting body in the world and has a significant international presence, including via offices in a number of countries which service our overseas members as well as representation on international bodies.

Education, training, technical support and advocacy are our core services for members. Staff and members work together with local and international bodies to represent the views and concerns of the profession to federal, state and territory governments and to regulators, industry, academia and the general public.

We should emphasise in this regard that CPA Australia seeks to act in the public interest first and foremost via:

- influencing external decision/policy makers on behalf of members, and
- representing and acting in the best interests of our profession in Australia and globally, and
- acting as thought leaders.

In 2007, we researched and represented members' concerns on the following issues which were important to the profession, business and government:

- professional liability
- financial planning
- insolvency
- anti-money laundering
- auditing
- draft tax agents services code
- sustainability issues
- emissions trading and greenhouse reporting
- financial reporting for not-for-profit entities
- bankruptcy law survey, and
- IFRS (international financial reporting standards)

More information on CPA Australia is available from our website (www.cpaaustralia.com.au)