

Media Release

from the fundraising sector

Friday October 29, 2010

How does your charity measure up?

Does your charity of choice have the “tick of confidence” from the national peak body for charities - the Fundraising Institute Australia?

“This is the question all those generous Australians who donate to charities have the right to ask,” FIA chairman Leo Orland said today.

“If the answer is ‘yes, my charity has the FIA tick of confidence’, then you can check exactly how your charity should be operating by glancing through the FIA’s code of practice launched today.”

Mr Orland said the FIA’s code of practice – the Principles & Standards of Fundraising Practice – empowers donors.

“We want Australians to know they have the power and the right to ask if a charity is a member of their peak body - the FIA,” Mr Orland said.

“And we want Australians to know they have the right to be reassured their charity is fundraising and managing their funds in a transparent and accountable manner,” Mr Orland said.

“The FIA’s code of practice for charities is really a bill of rights for donors.

“Donors should look for the symbols of FIA membership [see at end of release] or at least ask if their chosen charity or its fundraisers are FIA members.

“Donors have rights too. It’s their money they’re donating, and they have the right to be confident it’s being used carefully, wisely and ethically.

“Just like the red tick on food means it’s good for your heart, when you see the FIA tick of approval for a charity, it means your donation will be used carefully and wisely – and in keeping with why you donated in the first place,” Mr Orland said.

FIA CEO Chris McMillan said the Principles & Standards had been developed in consultation with FIA members and were “very comprehensive”, endeavouring to cover every aspect of fundraising including bequests, telemarketing, direct mail, overseas aid and face-to-face.

“We constantly monitor and update our code of practice, and are just finalising our guidelines for using social media to fundraise,” Ms McMillan said.

Federal Minister for Social Inclusion, the Hon Tanya Plibersek MP, welcomed the public launch of the FIA’s Principles & Standards of Fundraising Practice.

“Australians are generous when it comes to donating to charities, but they want to be sure their money is doing the maximum good.” Ms Plibersek said.

"FIA's Principles & Standards will give Australians further confidence when it comes to donating to charity.

"FIA's Principles & Standards complement the Gillard Labor Government's not-for-profit sector reform agenda which aims to deliver smarter regulation, reduced red tape and improved transparency of the sector.

"The Gillard Labor Government recognises the invaluable role charities and not-for-profit organisations play in enriching Australian communities.

"A strong, innovative and accountable non-profit sector is essential to building an inclusive Australia." Ms Plibersek said.

Many organisations - including leading charities, CHOICE, the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) and the Centre for Social Impact – have also swung their combined weight behind the push to heighten public awareness of the FIA's code of practice for charities.

"Having looked into the issues around donations, CHOICE is very supportive of the FIA's efforts to provide enhanced accountability around charitable giving," CHOICE CEO Nick Stace said.

"Our role is to ensure the consumer's voice is heard loudly and clearly, and the FIA's Principles & Standards are an important way for donors to be clearer about the way their money is being spent.

"People making donations have a right to expect their hard-earned cash will be used responsibly for the benefit of causes promoted. CHOICE looks forward to members of the FIA implementing the Principles & Standards," Mr Stace said.

Marc Purcell, CEO for ACFID - the co-ordinating body for non-government overseas aid and international development organisations in Australia – said the FIA and ACFID were "very much on the same page regarding ethical fundraising".

"The FIA's code of practice for charities works hand-in-hand with ACFID's code of conduct to ensure public confidence is maintained in how donations to overseas aid are used to reduce poverty through effective and sustainable development," Mr Purcell said.

"Public confidence is crucial to the ongoing support of campaigns to save lives across the Third World, and the FIA's code of fundraising practice is a major factor in shoring up that confidence," Mr Purcell said.

Professor Peter Shergold AM, Macquarie Group Foundation Professor at the Centre for Social Impact and chair of the FIA's Ethics Committee, welcomed the public launch of the FIA's Principles & Standards as a key step in meeting the needs of the third sector in a responsible and sustainable way.

"Ethical fundraising is absolutely crucial to public trust in not-for-profit organisations," Professor Shergold said.

"These FIA Principles & Standards play an important part in setting the framework for appropriate transparency and accountability, and ensuring ethical practice."

Greenpeace Australia Pacific's head of fundraising and marketing, Chris Washington-Sare, and Vision Australia national fundraising manager Jo-Anne Reeves both congratulated the FIA on the launch of the Principles & Standards of Fundraising Practice.

"As an organisational member of the FIA, Greenpeace believes it's crucial donors feel confident their support will be used as effectively as possible," Mr Washington-Sare said.

“The FIA’s Principles & Standards play a key role within the Australian not-for-profit landscape.

“Organisations that adhere to the principles are giving their supporters the reassurance that the highest fundraising standards are being maintained at all times.

“Whenever we make a significant change to a program, we refer to the FIA’s Principles & Standards to ensure we continue to comply with these high standards,” Mr Washington-Sare said.

Ms Reeves said Vision Australia’s organisational membership of the FIA was a key factor in publicly demonstrating the charity’s 100 per cent commitment to ethical fundraising.

“It is only through public confidence in our fundraising practices that we will be able to deliver on our mission to deliver exceptional and efficient services that open up exciting possibilities for people who are blind or have low vision,” Ms Reeves said.

“We regularly conduct ethics training based on the FIA’s Principles & Standards so our team at Vision Australia has a clear understanding how to make the right decision under difficult circumstances,” Ms Reeves said.

FIA CEO Chris McMillan said the FIA was leading the way nationally in creating standards for fundraising practices.

“The FIA is committed to ensuring the best possible practice by all our members, and we urge non-member charities to come on board and ensure the public has confidence in our sector,” Ms McMillan said.

Media contact for FIA and to interview charity representatives:

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SYMBOLS OF FIA MEMBERSHIP

Logo for FIA organisational members:



Mark for FIA individual members:



Public endorsement by leading charities of FIA's Principles & Standards of Fundraising Practice

SALVATION ARMY

"The FIA's Principles & Standards are important guidelines when ensuring an organisation is working towards best practice in the standards of ethical fundraising.

"The key ethical principles being, honesty, respect, integrity, empathy and transparency are paramount when providing the community with confidence in your organisation.

"The principles engender an environment where supporters have the trust that donations are used appropriately at all times ensuring the beneficiary's are given the most appropriate help possible."

Major Neil Venables, Territorial Public Relations Secretary, Australian Southern Territory, The Salvation Army

MISSION AUSTRALIA

"Mission Australia is a strong supporter of transparency and accountability in the fundraising/charity sector.

"Our annual reviews have won awards for accuracy in reporting, and we support the Productivity Commission's recommendations for harmonisation of fundraising regulations and the publication of a standard charter of accounts.

"Wherever possible Mission Australia consults and complies with the FIA's Principles & Standards for fundraising. They're a practical and useful guide to ensuring ethical fundraising and best practice."

Floyd Larsen, Head of Fundraising, Mission Australia

REDKITE

"Our congratulations to the FIA for formally launching the Principles and Standards to the [fundraising] sector.

"At Redkite we are absolutely committed to conduct all fundraising efforts in an ethical and transparent manner to our board of directors, donors, patrons, valued corporate partners and ambassadors.

"We believe it is important to encourage all organisations across the sector to get on board and benchmark with the FIA's Principles & Standards.

"Like FIA, our aim is to nurture the full confidence, trust and mutual respect of our donors."

Jane Endacot, General Manager, Fundraising and Marketing, Redkite

AUSTRALIA FOR UNHCR

"As an organisational member of the FIA, Australia for UNHCR believes a commitment to the FIA's Principles and Standards is essential for fundraisers working in the international aid arena.

"In particular, the FIA's Standard of Overseas Aid Fundraising Practice provides guidelines for handling donations and managing relationships with overseas aid agencies to help minimise the risks associated with overseas aid transactions and ensure donations are used as effectively as possible overseas."

Naomi Steer, National Director, Australia for UNHCR

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

"Just as IWDA's adherence to the ACFID code of conduct ensures confidence in the transparency of our processes and practice, our adherence to the FIA'S Principles & Standards is both a support to our own fundraising strategies, and a reassurance to donors that our funds are raised and used ethically.

"The code is explicit and detailed, and provides a ready reference in circumstances where decision making is required.

"We aim for best practice in our fundraising and the guidelines represent this."

**Anne Frankenberg, Strategic Partnerships Manager,
International Women's Development Agency**

PARAQUAD NSW

"ParaQuad NSW aims to meet the highest standards of quality with the clinical and community care we provide people with a spinal cord injury. As such, it is relevant that we apply the same approach to quality to our fundraising activities.

"ParaQuad is proud to support the FIA's Principles & Standards with relation to our fundraising.

"Donors and supporters can have confidence that their contribution to ParaQuad is used to fund our core services to the maximum benefit of our members."

Max Bosotti, CEO, ParaQuad

NORTH SHORE HEART RESEARCH FOUNDATION

"Australians are generous charity supporters; they are equally generous in their belief that those charities they support are 'doing the right thing' with their much in-demand, hard-earned donations.

"These newly launched Fundraising Principles & Standards from the FIA add extra 'warranty' and assurance for donors, allowing them to see which charities have embraced the standards.

"The transparent and ethical use of donated funds are paramount criteria in ensuring donors can feel satisfied that their gifts are helping their chosen charity to make an important difference, regardless of the size of their contribution.

"Organisational membership of FIA is a prerequisite for any charity seeking public support both now and longer term."

**Derek Minett, CEO, North Shore Heart Research Foundation
Director, FIA**

BUSH HERITAGE

"Bush Heritage began face-to-face fundraising in early 2010. We looked to the FIA's Standard of Face-to-Face Fundraising Practice to guide us in drawing up a contract with our supplier.

"By referencing the FIA Standard in our contract we know our face-to-face fundraisers are behaving appropriately, improving our donor care and ensuring that the public knows Bush Heritage is an ethical fundraising organisation."

Alice Walter, Fundraising and Communications Manager, Bush Heritage Australia

"As Bush Heritage grows, our generous supporters propose donations of assets other than cash, and donations with conditions to express the donor's wishes. With proposals which are occasionally novel for the organisation, a comprehensive set of guiding principles is needed.

“The FIA Code of Acceptance and Refusal of Donations has proved a useful reference point in current policy development.

“For example, the code points to the need for consideration of financial risks in certain gifts, and reputational risks of acceptance of certain gifts.

“The first point, for example, has led to detailed draft provisions covering assessment of the costs and risks of donated property and financial obligations in case of gifts with a life interest retained by a donor or family member.

“The second point has led to clear limits on how Bush Heritage will arrange donations to enable donors to maximise tax deductions.”

**Roewan Wishart, Philanthropy Executive, Bush Heritage Australia
Member, FIA’s Ethics Committee**

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