

Media Release:

CPA Australia continues to support Global Reporting Initiative's Australian Focal Point

14 September 2010

CPA Australia and the Global Reporting Initiative today signed a Memorandum of Understanding to continue support for GRI's Focal Point in Australia until 2012. GRI's Focal Point in Australia was established in 2008, with the support of CPA Australia. Since then, it has developed a presence in Australia aimed at building the capacity of Australian reporters, and drawing even more organisations into sustainability reporting.

The announcement was made amidst growing interest in sustainability reporting in Australia. Sustainability reporting is increasingly common amongst major Australian companies, with over 94% of ASX 100 companies reporting in some way on sustainability, and 34% producing stand alone sustainability reports¹. GRI's Framework is the most widely used framework to guide reporting amongst the top listed Australian companies. "Investors and other stakeholders are calling for transparency and disclosure on sustainability performance, GRI provides a framework that enables a common language for reporting", said Victoria Coleman, GRI's Focal Point Manager in Australia.

GRI, a global not-for-profit organisation, is the developer of the world's most widely-used sustainability reporting guidelines, the G3 Guidelines, which enable organizations to make meaningful public transparent disclosure on their economic, environmental and social performance. Investors, government, employees, industrial buyers, consumers and NGOs are demanding this information more and more when making decisions about their interactions with a particular firm.

Alex Malley, CEO of CPA Australia, said "Disclosure on ESG is important because it provides more comprehensive information about an organization's total performance, prospective as well as retrospective."

CPA Australia has been a long term supporter of GRI. In 2006, CPA Australia became an Organisational Stakeholder and voting member of GRI. And in 2008, CPA Australia both produced their first GRI compliant sustainability report and supported the establishment of the GRI Focal Point in Australia

"Australia is in the top 5 countries reporting against GRI's Framework – it is important that we continue to support reporters in the area. The Focal Point will assist us in achieving this" said Ernst Ligteringen, CEO of GRI.

Focal Points are a critical part of GRI's Regional Network Program, which aims to reach GRI's organizational objectives for different regions by enhancing GRI's representation in different countries. Focal Points also now exist in other countries, such as Brazil, China and India. Focal Points are an integral part of GRI and fully coordinate their actions with the global Secretariat.

The role of the Australia Focal Point is to provide a presence for GRI in Australia, by further developing its regional network and creating local ownership of the GRI's G3 Guidelines in Australia. The Focal Point will assist organisations in increasing the value of sustainability reporting in Australia, and assist in harmonising GRI with other initiatives such as the UN Global Compact and the UN Principles for Responsible Investment. The Focal Point will also assist in connecting Australian organisations to the international reporting community, with the aim of driving change globally towards a transparent economy.

"CPA Australia has close ties with the GRI at an international level and with the Focal Point in Australia since its inception," said Mr Malley. "We are involved in the discussions and technical developments arising out of the GRI May conference propositions, which are at the heart of the recently announced initiative to form an International Integrated Reporting Committee (IIRC) to create a globally accepted framework that brings together financial and ESG reporting.

It makes absolute sense that we continue to support the Focal Point in Australia and we are delighted to do so."

GRI Focal Point Australia is based at St James Ethics Centre, also home to the UN Global Compact and the Corporate Responsibility Index.

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About The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)

The Global Reporting Initiative has pioneered the development of the world's most widely used Sustainability Reporting Framework and is committed to its continuous improvement and application worldwide. This framework sets out the principles and indicators that organizations can use to measure and report their economic, environmental, and social performance. www.globalreporting.org

About CPA Australia

CPA Australia is the first and only professional accounting body in the world to have produced two sustainability reports that are independently assured and have met a GRI check. It strongly advocates the GRI's sustainability reporting framework to its 129,000 members, who work in 110 countries. www.cpaustralia.com.au

ⁱ ACSI (2009) [Sustainability Reporting Practices of S&P/ASX 200 Companies: 2009](#)