

# Media Release

## Government Relations Professionals Association Formed in Qld

10 February 2010

Australia's first association to represent the interests of government relations consultants will be established in Queensland.

The Government Relations Professionals Association (GRPA) was agreed to be formed at a meeting of senior consultants in Brisbane yesterday (Tuesday 9 February).

GRPA spokesmen Shaun Drabsch (Rowland) and Barton Green (Three Plus) said the association would be formed to provide a single voice for government relations consultants in Queensland.

Mr Drabsch and Mr Green said the intent was for the GRPA to operate similarly to other professional bodies such as the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance, which represents journalists, and the Public Relations Institute of Australia.

"In response to the Integrity Act, the proposal by government to develop a new Code of Conduct for lobbyists, and the heightened community interest in the activities of our industry, a number of senior consultants in Queensland agreed it was appropriate to form an Association which could best represent their interests," Mr Drabsch and Mr Green said.

"Over the next few weeks we will finalise the structure and formally register the association."

Mr Drabsch and Mr Green said the GRPA's immediate priority was to promote its Code of Conduct (*attached*) which was prepared by a number of GRPA foundation members and provided to the Integrity Commissioner last week.

"Our industry Code of Conduct was developed after considering the principles of client representation and engaging with democratic institutions and researching other professional bodies' Codes of Conduct and/or Ethics and we believe that our Code should be the foundation of any formal Code finalised by the Integrity Commissioner.

"As a significant representative body we look forward to being consulted on matters relevant to our industry by the Premier, the Parliamentary Integrity Committee and the Integrity Commissioner."

Mr Drabsch and Mr Green said the GRPA would represent the interests of experienced, professional government relations practitioners who had an interest in fair, open and accountable access to government on behalf of their clients and employers.

*For further information, please contact:*

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**Government Relations Professionals Association Foundation Members**

Andrew Soter (Open Door Consulting)  
Barton Green (Three Plus)  
Cameron Milner (Milner Strategic Services)  
Con Sciacca (SAS Consulting Group)  
Cory Heathwood (The Phillips Group)  
Damian Power (Govstrat)  
David St George (The Phillips Group)  
Geoffrey Rodgers (Rowland)  
Ian Gray (Rowland)  
Jeff Wall CBE (Jeff Wall Public Affairs)  
John Rochester (Rowland)  
Ken Macpherson (Government and Community Relations Specialists)  
Larry Anthony (SAS Consulting Group)  
Luke Giribon (SAS Consulting Group)  
Michelle Barisic (Three Plus)  
Molly Robson (Three Plus)  
Noel Harvey (Three Plus)  
Paul Bird (Three Plus)  
Paul Clauson (Open Door Consulting)  
Peter Costantini (SAS Consulting Group)  
Peter Kelly (Three Plus)  
Richard Owen (Three Plus)  
Robert Allan (Three Plus)  
Santo Santoro (SAS Consulting Group)  
Shaun Drabsch (Rowland)  
Sunayana Shetty (Three Plus)  
Suzanne Cryle (Rowland)  
Tim Grau (Springboard)  
Tom Hulett (Open Door Consulting)

## CODE OF CONDUCT FOR GOVERNMENT RELATIONS PROFESSIONALS IN QUEENSLAND

### PREAMBLE

Free and open access to the institutions of government, and the rights of individuals and organisations to promote and exchange views with government, are basic tenets of a strong democracy.

But the operations of government can be challenging, which is when individuals and organisations seek the professional advice of specialists who provide counsel on the intricacies of dealing with government. Similarly, government can be assisted by independent advisors to understand the needs of commercial businesses.

Through the provision of advice to individuals and organisations on public policy processes, and by facilitating contact with government, government relations advisors perform an important and legitimate function in the democratic process.

Activities of government relations individuals and organisations are governed in Queensland through the *Integrity Act 2009*.

### PRINCIPLES OF CONDUCT

Respect for the democratic process and the institutions of government are the fundamental principles which underpin good government relations.

In pursuit of quality outcomes for clients, government relations advisors:

- Commit themselves to conducting their activities in accordance with public expectations of transparency, integrity and honesty; and
- Strive for ethical behaviour, client service excellence, equality of opportunity and social justice.

Government relations advisors are committed to uphold the principals of the Code of Conduct and encourage their employers, clients and prospective clients to demand adherence to the Code.

The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to provide guidance and support to government relations advisors to ensure they undertake their activities with the highest ethical and professional standards and earn the confidence and respect of government and the community.

This Code of Conduct provides a statement of principles upon which government relations advisors shall conduct their activities. A breach of any one principle shall be regarded as unethical conduct.

Ultimately, the integrity of government and its functions relies upon the integrity of the individuals who participate in its processes.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

Government relations advisors shall:

1. Conduct their business to the highest professional and ethical standards, and in accordance with all relevant law and regulation with respect to lobbying;
2. Act with honesty, integrity and good faith and avoid conduct or practices likely to bring discredit upon themselves, government representatives, their employer or clients;
3. Apply their skill and knowledge to diligently advance and advocate their clients' interests, without compromising any other obligation under this Code;
4. Not make misleading, exaggerated or extravagant claims about the nature or extent of their ability to achieve outcomes;
5. Use reasonable endeavours to satisfy themselves of the truth and accuracy of all statements and information provided by and to clients, and to the public, government and agencies;
6. Not knowingly disseminate false or misleading information and take care to avoid doing so inadvertently;
7. Advise clients where their objectives may be illegal or unethical, and refuse to act for a client in pursuit of any such objective;
8. Not engage in conduct that is corrupt, dishonest or illegal, or causes or threatens any detriment;

9. Identify themselves, their employer (where relevant) and their client when making contact with a government representative;
10. Disclose to clients any actual or potential conflict of interest;
11. Keep confidential all information provided to them during the course of their work and not disclose or use that information without the express approval of the legal owner of that information, or where required by law, or where necessary to prevent a substantial damage to the public interest;
12. Where relevant, take reasonable steps to inform themselves, their clients and employers of any social, environmental and economic consequences which may arise from their actions;
13. Promote the elimination of discrimination on the grounds of race, creed, gender, age, location, social status, disability or any other form of unlawful discrimination;
14. Keep separate from their government relations activities any personal activity or involvement on behalf of a political party.