

## AGENDA PAPER

**Item Number:** 6  
**Date of Meeting:** 9 December 2024  
**Subject:** Update on APESB's Work Program for 2024

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Action Required     For Discussion     For Noting     For Information

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### Purpose

To provide an update on activities undertaken in 2024 with respect to APESB's work program.

### Background

APESB's vision is to achieve exemplary levels of professionalism and ethical behaviour in the accounting profession. APESB promotes professionalism and ethical behaviour and strives to maximise the integrity of the accounting profession through [four strategic pillars](#); Standards, Engagement, Influence and Ethics Outreach.

### Matters for Noting

#### Standards

During 2024, APESB developed and issued the following high-quality professional and ethical standards, guidance notes and guidance material in the public interest:

- The Amending Standard to APES 110 [Technology-related Revisions to the Code](#) aligns with IESBA's final pronouncement, which incorporates technology-related considerations into the fundamental principles of Professional Competence and Due Care and Confidentiality. The revisions also clarify the independence requirements for firms and network firms as to whether technology-related non-assurance services can be provided to audit or non-assurance clients.
- Issued the following pronouncements as part of APESB's Code Conforming Amendments project, with key revisions including updated cross-references, revised paragraphs, and definitions such as Confidential Information, to align to the Compiled Code and Amending Standards:
  - [APES 210 Conformity with Auditing and Assurance Standards](#)
  - [APES 215 Forensic Accounting Services](#)
  - [APES 225 Valuation Services](#)

- [APES 305 Terms of Engagement](#)
- APES GN 20 *Scope and Extent of Work for Valuation Service* (expected to be released by the end of December 2024)
- The revised [APES 310 Client Monies](#) (APES 310) provides practical options for professional accountants in establishing trust accounts to comply with the Standard and includes updated template assurance reports that incorporate quality management-related conforming amendments, references to APES 110 and align with the ASAE 3100 *Compliance Engagements*.
- The proposed *Revisions to APES 110 Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including Independence Standards) Relating to Tax Planning and Related Services* aligns with the IESBA's final pronouncement, incorporating new Sections 280 and 380 for Members engaging in tax planning and related services. The proposed Amending Standard will be presented for the Board's approval (refer to Agenda Item 10 of this Board meeting).
- The proposed revised APES 220 *Taxation Services* (APES 220) incorporates proposed Tax Planning and Related Services amendments to APES 110 and addresses matters on the APESB Issues Register relating to quality management-related conforming amendments and revised guidance issued by the TPB regarding supervisory arrangements. The proposed standard will be presented to the Board for approval (refer to Agenda Item 11 of this Board meeting).
- The proposed revisions to APESB's Transaction Advisory Services Related Pronouncements as part of the Code Conforming Amendments project, will be presented for the Board's approval (refer to Agenda Item 9 of this Board meeting):
  - APES 345 *Reporting on Prospective Financial Information Prepared in connection with a Public Document* (APES 345) incorporates a new definition of Confidential Information and consequential amendments to align with APES 110.
  - APES 350 *Participation by Members in Public Practice in Due Diligence Committees in connection with a Public Document* (APES 350) confirms the retention of the definition of Listed Entity and incorporates a new definition of Confidential Information and consequential amendments to align with APES 110.
  - APES GN 31 *Professional and Ethical Considerations relating to Low Doc Offering Sign-offs* (APES GN 31) to align with APES 350, which confirms the retention of the definition of Listed Entity and incorporates a new definition of Confidential Information and consequential amendments to align with APES 110.
- The new Compiled Code 2024, consisting of the Compiled Code (June 2023) and incorporating the revisions to the [Definition of Listed Entity and Public Interest Entity](#) and [Technology-related Revisions](#), will be released by the end of December 2024.
- The revised guidance *APES 110 Code Prohibitions applicable to Auditors for all Audit and Review Engagements 2024* will be issued following the release of the new Compiled Code, which is by the end of December 2024.
- Researched the reporting of breaches and whistleblowing protections in Australia and other jurisdictions.

APESB continued its commitment to creating awareness of its standards and promoting ethical behaviour within the accounting profession in 2024. The following activities demonstrate APESB's significant efforts to increase awareness of APESB's pronouncements under the other three strategic pillars: Engagement, Influence and Ethics Outreach.

**Engagement:** *with key stakeholders, including professional accountants, the public, government bodies, regulators and professional accounting bodies.*

- [APESB Roundtable on IESBA's ED on Sustainability Assurance and Use of Experts](#): on 26 March 2024, APESB held a virtual roundtable to seek stakeholder feedback on IESBA's Exposure Drafts on International Ethics Standards for Sustainability Assurance (IESSA) and Using the Work of an External Expert.
- [Presentation at CA ANZ Audit Conference](#): on 15 May 2024, Channa Wijesinghe (APESB CEO) presented to the CA ANZ members on the topic of *Understanding Auditor Independence under the Code*. The presentation covered an overview of independence requirements for group audit team members, Technology-related revisions to the Code, definitions of Listed Entities and Public Interest Entities, and the latest developments in the IESBA's Sustainability Project.
- [Presentation to Rawson Verco Need](#): on 2 September 2024, Channa Wijesinghe (APESB CEO) presented with Nancy Milne OAM (APESB Chairman) to the staff at Rawson Verco Need in Adelaide. The presentation provided an update on the IESBA's Standard on Tax Planning and Related Services, APES 220 *Taxation Services*, parliamentary inquiries relating to the accounting profession and IESBA's Firm Culture and Governance Project.
- [Presentation to Central Queensland University](#): on 10 September 2024, Channa Wijesinghe (APESB CEO) delivered a Professional Standards Update to final-year accounting students at Central Queensland University. The presentation covered APESB's role and mandate, parliamentary inquiries relating to the accounting profession and IESBA's Firm Culture and Governance Project.
- [Presentation to CPA Australia's Forensic and Financial Investigations Discussion Group](#): on 25 September 2024, Channa Wijesinghe (APESB CEO) presented an overview of the revised APES 215 and APES 225 issued in October 2024 to CPA Australia's Forensic and Financial Investigations Discussion Group. The presentation also covered the parliamentary inquiries relating to the accounting profession and IESBA's Firm Culture and Governance Project.
- Consultation with the Corporate Finance Taskforce to assist APESB in reviewing the standards and obtaining industry-specific expertise.
- Engagement with TPB and ATO on the proposed revisions to APES 110 and APES 220 addressing tax planning and related services.

**Influence:** *the national and international agenda in relation to professional and ethical standards.*

• **International developments:**

- APESB made two submissions to the IESBA:
  - IESBA's [Proposed Revisions to the Code Relating to Using the Work of an External Expert](#) on 3 May 2024 and
  - IESBA's [Proposed IESSA and Other Revisions to the Code Relating to Sustainability Assurance and Reporting](#) on 30 May 2024.
- Throughout the year, APESB CEO Channa Wijesinghe, in his role as an IESBA Board Member, attended IESBA Board meetings and numerous other IESBA-related

engagements, including the IESBA Planning Committee meetings and taskforce meetings for the Tax Planning and Related Services Taskforce, the Sustainability Taskforce. He is also Chair of the Firm Culture and Governance Working Group and Sustainability Reference Group.

- On 3 April 2024, APESB CEO and IESBA Board Member Channa Wijesinghe delivered a presentation to the New Zealand Auditing and Assurance Standards Board (NZAuASB) on firm culture and governance, including an update on developments in Australia and IESBA's Firm Culture and Governance project.
- APESB Director Rachel Grimes AM and Technical Principal Jacinta Hanrahan participated in the IESBA's National Standard Setters Group in-person meeting in May 2024.
- Continued engagement with NZAuASB on Trans-Tasman matters of mutual interest.
- Continued engagement with CPA Papua New Guinea on the establishment of professional standards addressing forensic accounting services.
- **National developments:**
  - APESB Chairman Nancy Milne and CEO Channa Wijesinghe provided evidence at public hearings of two federal parliamentary inquiries:
    - Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee's Inquiry into management and assurance of integrity by consulting services (FPAR Inquiry) in February 2024.
    - Parliamentary Joint Committee on Corporations and Financial Services Inquiry into Ethics and Professional Accountability: Structural Challenges in the Audit, Assurance and Consultancy Industry (PJC Inquiry) in March 2024.
  - APESB also made three national submissions to the Treasury's Consultation Paper and Exposure Drafts:
    - A [submission](#) to the Treasury's Exposure Draft on Tax Agent Services (Code of Professional Conduct) Determination 2023 on 24 January 2024.
    - A [submission](#) to the Treasury's Exposure Draft on Climate-related financial disclosure on 9 February 2024
    - A [submission](#) to the Treasury's Consultation Paper on Regulation for Accounting, Auditing and Consulting Firms in Australia on 28 June 2024.
  - APESB made a [submission](#) to the Department of Finance's Consultation Paper on Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Review on 30 July 2024.
  - APESB made a [submission](#) to the Tax Practitioners Board on its draft guidance on Sections 15, 20 and 25 of the *Tax Agent Services (Code of Professional Conduct) Determination 2024* on 24 September 2024.
  - On 5 June 2024, APESB CEO Channa Wijesinghe and Technical Director Jacinta Hanrahan attended a Treasury roundtable discussion on its consultation paper relating to the regulation of accounting, auditing and consulting firms in Australia.
  - APESB is developing a submission to the Tax Practitioners Board on its draft guidance on the *Tax Agent Services (Code of Professional Conduct) Determination 2024*. The comment period closes on 21 November 2024.

**Ethics Outreach:** promoting that professionalism and ethical conduct drive the behaviour of accountants and conducting outreach activities in collaboration with key stakeholders.

- On 9 May 2024, APESB hosted a [Thought Leadership Dinner Event](#) – “An evening with IESBA Chair Gabriela Figueiredo Dias” in Melbourne with a [keynote address](#) on the critical role of ethics in the success of global businesses, the ethical journey for accountants and IESBA’s recent advancements in ethics relating to technology, tax planning and sustainability. The event was attended by around 80 guests from professional accounting bodies, firms, regulators, standard setters, academics, the public sector, and industry.
- During the week of 6 May 2024, APESB CEO and IESBA Board Member Channa Wijesinghe joined IESBA Chair Gabriela Figueiredo Dias, former IESBA Board Member Jens Poll and IESBA Director Geoff Kwan for its stakeholder activities in Australia. Across the week, there were 23 meetings, 10 presentations, speeches or panels, and 17 stakeholder group meetings hosted by the three professional accounting bodies. APESB participated in the below events organised by professional accounting bodies:
  - CA ANZ Tax Forum to discuss IESBA’s Tax Planning Standards
  - IPA Member Update Event on IESBA Activities
  - CPA Australia-IESBA Event on Sustainability
  - CPA Australia-IESBA Event on Firm Culture & Governance
- On 22 August 2024, APESB CEO Channa Wijesinghe provided a [keynote address](#) at the Pacioli Society dinner event at the University of Sydney on the topic of Ethics and the Accounting Profession: Global and Australian Perspectives on Contemporary Developments.
- On 14 November 2024, APESB CEO Channa Wijesinghe participated in a panel discussion of “Corporate Culture - How can Boards Drive Effective Values and Behaviours in their Organisations?” at the International Corporate Governance Network (ICGN) Melbourne Conference.

## Recommendation

The Board note the update on activities undertaken during the 2024 year with respect to APESB's work program.

**Authors:** Jacinta Hanrahan  
Jim Lui

**Date:** 21 November 2024