

# RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

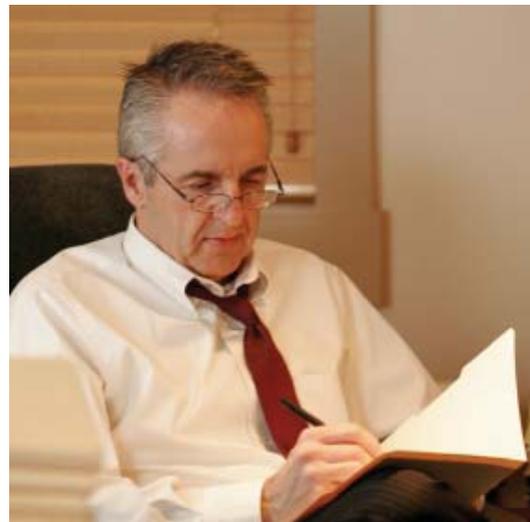
## The Essence of Ethics

**Dr Colleen Puttee and Mr Peter Humphreys from the School of Accounting are exploring the meaning and application of a code of ethics for professional accountants through a Certified Practising Accountants (CPA) Australia Research Grant.**

'A key feature in the success of any profession is the code of ethics embedded in its policies and procedures of practice', says Dr Puttee.

'Professional groups often hold a privileged position in society that arises from the community's expectation and trust in the moral image they project. Professional ethical codes highlight the moral sign-posts that guide members as to appropriate behaviour in their relationships with clients, colleagues and the broader community. However, the accounting profession can encounter conflicts of interest between the needs of different clients and the application of ethical standards. Failure to uphold their ethical values may result in loss of reputation, negligent business decisions, failure of client businesses, and even criminal charges. This research will attempt to define and validate the ethical values and behaviours of the accounting profession, to alleviate misconceptions or misinterpretations of the current code of ethics.'

The research team will conduct a discourse and content analysis of the current professional accountants' code of ethics to analyse the content into principles and meanings that will provide information about the underlying political, social and cultural context in which accountants operate. By looking at these meanings and the language employed in the code, the investigators will be able to construct a preamble to the current code that



clearly articulates the sentiment of ethics in today's business sector.

This research will provide a link between the theory and philosophy of ethics and how to apply ethical practice in the day-to-day working life of accountants. This will assist the profession and CPA Australia's members to maintain or improve their moral standing within Australian businesses and the general community, and provide their clients with confidence that their professional accounting services are being conducted in a responsible and ethical manner.

**Project Title:** Finding the Essence of Ethics in the Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants

**Funding has been set at:** \$5,000

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