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Media statement

Australian Professional Government Relations Association

The Australian Professional Government Relations Association (APGRA) acknowledges the release of the Finance and Public Administration References Committee report into Access to Australian Parliament House by lobbyists.

“The APGRA is pleased that the report acknowledges the important role of lobbying and the role lobbyists play in the democratic process to help ‘improve legislation and policy outcomes and strengthen democratic participation by bridging the divide between the public and decision-makers’,” APGRA President, Andrew Cox, said.

Mr Cox said the APGRA supports the Committee’s recommendations for the Government to commission an independent review of the Lobbying Code of Conduct and for the Department of Parliamentary Services and the Attorney General’s Department, as the administrator of the Lobbying Code of Conduct, to explore opportunities for “regulatory interoperability”.

The APGRA also supports the recommendation to restore the unescorted day pass for persons who require only occasional access to Parliament House.

“As we stated in our submission to the inquiry, the APGRA supports measures that do not seek to unreasonably curtail lobbying activity where it is conducted ethically and transparently by government relations practitioners in line with the requirements of the Federal Government’s integrity framework, including lobbying regulation and in the case of the APGRA, consistent with our Code of Conduct,” Mr Cox said.

“The APGRA welcomes future engagement with the Government, the Department of Parliamentary Services, the Attorney General’s Department and any Member of Parliament or Senator about any future reforms and reviews of the government relations sector.”

About the APGRA

The Australian Professional Government Relations Association (APGRA) is the professional association for consulting and in-house government relations practitioners in Australia. The APGRA was established in 2014 by a number of longstanding public affairs consulting firms and senior practitioners to promote ethical standards, greater transparency, and a binding code of conduct applicable to members conducting government relations activity.

Our vision is to be the leading voice of professional government relations practitioners by advocating our established high ethical standards, promoting greater transparency and the implementation and amplification of a binding code of conduct. We ensure key stakeholders know our profession is an essential part of Australia’s political process and a legitimate undertaking in a free and open democratic society.

Media contact – Andrew Cox – 0499 599 008