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Developing a Self-Assessment Package for Members to Comply with the FPA Australia Code of Practice

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Developing a Self-Assessment Package for Members to Comply with the FPA Australia Code of Practice

An Interactive Qualifying Project Report

for the Melbourne Project Site

submitted to the Faculty

of the

WORCESTER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Degree of Bachelor of Science

By

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Abstract

Fire Protection Association (FPA) Australia is a non-profit organization committed to fire safety. Through their Code of Practice (COP), FPA Australia encourages ethical business practices of its member companies in the fire protection industry. This project proposes a self-assessment system to aid FPA Australia in increasing compliance with the COP. This was accomplished by obtaining member opinions of the COP and by designing a prototype self-assessment package.

Authorship

This report was created through the equal contribution and efforts of all three of its group members; Chris Putnam, Matt Clark, and Adam Panzica.

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Thanks,

Adam Panzica

Chris Putnam

Matt Clark

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Nomenclature

ACCC: Australian Competition and Consumer Commission. A government organization responsible for maintaining and enforcing anti-trust and fair practice laws.

Assessing Company: A company which performs some form of inspection to enforce regulations.

Audit: “The inspection or examination of a building or other facility to evaluate or improve its appropriateness, safety, efficiency, or the like, typically performed by an independent body” (Dictionary.com, 2008).

Code of Practice: “A set of non-legislatively required commitments that are agreed to by one or more individuals or corporations; are designed to influence, shape, control or benchmark behavior; and are applied in a consistent manner and/or reach a consistent outcome by all participants” (Industry Canada, 2006).

Consumer/Customer/Client: A person or company who purchases goods or services from a member company.

Corporate Member: Member companies of FPA Australia involved in the manufacture and supply of fire protection equipment and services (FPA Australia, 2008). They are broken up into four categories based on the revenue and size of the company. The four categories are, in increasing order, Corporate (CCORP), Silver (CSILV), Gold (CGOLD) and Platinum (CPLAT).

FPA Australia: Fire Protection Association Australia

IQP: Interactive Qualifying Project. A Project performed by WPI students with the aid of faculty advisers. The objective of the IQP is to enable WPI graduates to understand, as citizens and as professionals, how their careers will affect the larger society of which they are part. Generally, these projects involve some analysis of how technology affects, and is affected by, individuals and communities.

Non-Signatory Member: A corporate member that has decided, for whatever reason, not to re-sign the FPA Australia Code of Practice Declaration form on an annual basis.

Organization: Organizations are part of FPA Australia's membership, but are classified separately from corporate members. Organizations are primarily consumer advocacy groups, non fire protection industry companies, clients of fire protection companies, and the like. Organizations do not provide fire protection goods or services.

Self-Assessment: An examination, performed by the party needing the information, to ensure compliance with an official standard (Dictionary.com, 2008). In relation to this project, the standard is the FPA's Code of Practice

Signatory Member: A corporate member that has signed the FPA Australia Code of Practice Declaration form, and has continued to do so annually. They have pledged to uphold the guidelines set forth by the COP.

Executive Summary

The Fire Protection Association Australia (FPA Australia) is a non-profit organization dedicated to fire safety. Their efforts are concentrated on the creation of educational materials, training programs, and promotion of voluntary compliance with regulations for the fire protection industry. They produced a Code of Practice in 2001 which set guidelines for FPA Australia members to voluntarily comply with a code of ethics and best business practices as they service the fire protection industry in Australia.

Unfortunately, the implementation of the COP has not fully met expectations. A 2005 study found that there were two primary problems in increasing signatory enrollment levels: low client confidence in the credibility of the COP, and the complex formatting and wording of the COP (Sullivan et al. 2005). There was also no provision in the 2001 version of the COP to verify and enforce compliance; it was simply left to the good will of the company to comply with the standards that they agreed to. This was due in part to the application process, which consisted of only a declaration, where-by the company simply signed a document stating they would follow the procedures and requirements of the COP. FPA Australia improved significantly the readability of the previous version of the COP by drafting a new, radically different edition of the COP for release in 2008, which is expected to greatly simplify it and made its scope broader and more generally applicable to the industry as a whole.

To address the issue of client confidence, further changes needed to be made for the 2008 COP revision. After further study of the 2005 project results, it was determined that some form of auditing or assessment was necessary to ensure that signatories were in fact in compliance with the COP. Due to the fact that FPA Australia could not afford to perform full audits of companies using their own staff, it was decided that the assessment of compliance would need to be performed by the company applying for signatory status. This would provide FPA Australia with detailed information pertaining to the applicant's documentation and procedures that ensure their compliance with the COP.

FPA Australia decided to commission a project to aid in their ongoing efforts to help increase compliance and confidence in the COP. The primary goal of this project was to develop

a system for FPA Australia that would allow its member companies to perform a self-assessment to ensure compliance with the Code of Practice. This should not only improve the ability of companies to comply with the Code, but also help FPA Australia promote the Code of Practice as clients would be more confident in the credibility of the Code. Both of these are equally important to FPA Australia; the Code should not be promoted if its credibility cannot be increased. Therefore, both need to be accomplished simultaneously.

To reach this goal, two primary objectives were completed. First, the authors collected member and non-member opinions regarding the use of the COP and the effectiveness of its signatory application process. Second, the authors designed the self-assessment package itself.

Opinions from member and non-member companies regarding the knowledge and use of the COP were obtained from 30 interviews. It was determined that there was unanimous support for the introduction of a self-assessment system. The member companies felt the original application process held no compliance enforcement, in its current form, and that a self-assessment system would improve this.

To design the self-assessment package for FPA Australia, several information sources were incorporated. The interviews provided ideas for ways to structure and smooth the implementation of the system, and background research was done to determine important aspects of existing systems to incorporate into our self-assessment system. We used information obtained from these two sources and designed a preliminary version of the self-assessment to meet the FPA Australia's objectives. We also performed validation testing to check our design against our original goals, as well as to see how the self-assessment would perform in the field.

Using the information from the interviews and the final design of the self-assessment system, we were then able to produce a pamphlet on the benefits of self-assessment entitled "Understanding the FPA Australia Code of Practice Self-Assessment". The pamphlet was designed for use in FPA Australia's marketing packages as a way to quickly summarize the self-assessment and its advantages to the existing membership and potential new members.

The project completed the original goal set by FPA Australia by producing two tangible documents that they can use to increase compliance with the COP. The project also developed a

list of recommendations on aspects of the project for further consideration of FPA Australia, these included web implementation of the self-assessment system, and ideas of how to promote the COP more effectively. In the long term, the implementation of the documents produced by the project as well as consideration of its recommendations will help to further FPA Australia's mission to 'promote the protection of life, assets and the environment from fire and other emergencies'.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Fire protection regulation is an issue of global concern. Every year, damage occurs to both commercial and residential property. In Australia, there were 0.64 deaths per 100,000 people in 2003 (Balesano et al. 2007), and it is the goal of many organizations, both governmental and independent, to lower this number by further improvement to fire-safety practices and regulations.

However, a report presented by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission found that companies in the fire protection industry were not always practicing at a professional ethical level (Hodge, 2008). This causes a problem for consumers and contractors, as they have little way of knowing which fire protection service providers are reputable and deliver the best services. FPA Australia, an independent non-profit company founded in its most recent form in 1997, tried to address this issue by introducing a Code of Practice (COP) in 2000. This document attempted to regulate the fire protection service industry and hold members to a high standard of best business practices. The COP is a voluntary compliance document, where companies desiring to follow it apply to FPA Australia to become a signatory member company. Once a signatory member company is approved by FPA Australia, they are allowed to display the FPA Australia Code of Practice logo on their premise and documents to show clients they are in compliance with the COP and are a reputable company to work with.

Unfortunately, the implementation of the COP has not met expectations. In 2005, a research study was conducted for FPA Australia by students of Worcester Polytechnic Institute on potential problems with the COP. The study found that there were two primary problems in increasing signatory enrollment levels: low client confidence in the credibility of the COP, which was reducing the return on investment for signatory companies, and the formatting of the COP, which was proving to be difficult for potential signatory companies to understand it fully and comply with it (Sullivan et al. 2005). This research concluded that the best way to increase consumer confidence in the COP was to introduce an auditing system. It also determined that a 'user friendly' version of the COP, written in easier to understand language, would be needed in

order for companies to easily determine their level of compliance with the COP. This would allow companies to quickly identify and rectify areas of non-compliance. FPA Australia continued this research, and has created a simplified version of the COP scheduled for a 2008 release. It was also determined that a traditional audit performed by FPA Australia would not be economically feasible due to the necessary cost of hiring additional employees to perform the audits.

FPA Australia decided that assessing compliance with the COP would be left to the company applying for signatory status. Companies would internally determine their level of compliance through the use of a self-assessment form, which would be submitted to FPA Australia for approval. This potentially would improve the ability of companies to comply with the COP. It would also help FPA Australia promote the Code of Practice as clients would be more confident in the credibility of the COP with the increased assurance of compliance that the assessment provides.

The primary goal of this project was to develop a system for FPA Australia that would allow its member companies to perform a self-assessment to evaluate their compliance with the Code of Practice. To reach this goal, two primary objectives were completed. First, the group collected member and non-member opinions regarding the use of the COP and the effectiveness of its signatory application process. Second, the group designed the self-assessment package itself. The project completed the original goal set by FPA Australia by producing two tangible documents that they can be used to increase compliance with the COP. The project also developed a list of recommendations on aspects of the project for further consideration of FPA Australia, these included web implementation of the self-assessment system, and ideas of how to promote the COP more effectively.

Chapter 2: Background

This section explains the needs for fire protection and how FPA Australia's work fits into the fire protection industry. It contains a general overview of the fire protection industry as well the various types of codes and regulations that it follows. It also describes the Code of Practice's content and its current method of enforcement. Finally, it illustrates the difference between self-assessment and auditing, and the benefits and limitations/risks of using self-assessment as the primary means of determining compliance to a regulation.

2.1 The Need for Fire protection

The danger of fire poses an enormous risk to both life and property to corporate and residential sectors alike. For example, in the United States fire is the fourth leading cause of accidental death (Hemenway, 1985), claiming some 4,300 lives in 2003. In Australia, the death toll is far smaller, at only 135, which per capita is still about ½ of the American loss of life (Balesano et al. 2007). One likely cause for the difference between the Australian numbers and the U.S. numbers is the fact that the most common cause of accidental fire in the US are heating systems, and since Australia is a far warmer climate on average than the US, they have less need for heating in their homes (Wolski, A., Dembsey, N. A., & Meacham, B. J., 2000). The damage to property is even more telling, with US damages topping a staggering \$9 Billion US dollars per year, and Australian damages reaching AU\$610 Million (approximately US\$550 Million). Both statistics ignore the subsequent damages caused by loss of business due to fire damage (Balesano et al. 2007).

Various forms of fire protection are used to help reduce the loss of life and property. This protection includes: passive protection such as building materials and better design, and active protection such as the use of smoke alarms, fire extinguishers and automatic sprinkler systems. Fire protection is a big business, with U.S. spending reaching \$36.5 billion dollars in 2003 and Australian spending in the range of AU\$13 billion (US\$11.7 billion) (Balesano et al. 2007). With the large amounts of money being spent on the industry, and severe consequences measured in both lives and dollars if practiced incorrectly, regulation is used to help ensure that the common welfare of society is maintained. This is accomplished on both the governmental and private levels via the use of official fire protection regulations, codes and standards.

2.2 Fire Protection Codes

As fire is such a danger, and fire prevention such a necessity, rules and guidelines are set in place to govern and regulate the installation, use, and maintenance of fire protection equipment and practices. Builders, contractors and designers all use these codes and standards as the basis for building fire safety in their projects, meaning it is extremely important that not only are the regulations carefully and accurately written, but also that they are closely followed in the design, construction and operation as this directly determines the level of expected fire safety. The US, Australia, and most developed nations all have various levels of fire protection regulations. Some of these policies are government written, regulated and enforced. Others are created by independent organizations, both government sponsored and otherwise. Some fire protection codes are mandatory in nature, while others are voluntary. Generally, fire protection codes and standards can be broken down into two sub-categories: National Regulations, and National and Non-National Standards and Codes (Deakin, 1999)

2.2.1 National Regulations

National Regulations are government conceived and enforced mandatory fire protection regulations. Their primary concern is usually the protection of human life, rather than property, and they are the “Province of government acting in interest of society” (Deakin, 1999). National Regulations are built from the top down, looking at the larger general issue of fire protection first and then working down to specific cases. They are traditionally prescriptive based; that is, a very specific regulation is formulated for each specific situation based on gathered ‘expert’ opinions and on the trial and error of previous implementations. As new situations arise this leads to new regulations being continually added to and appended, rather than re-written, and so these regulations are usually documented in books that are many hundreds of pages in length, filled with sections and subsections that make them very difficult to wade through and understand for a person not specialized in fire protection (Deakin, 1999).

In recent years, there has been a trend in the fire protection industry of moving towards engineering based or performance-based regulations (Johnson, 1996). These regulations are very different from prescriptive-based in that instead of having a regulation for each and every situation that may arise in the design of a structure or piece of equipment, performance-based

regulations simply state the functional requirements needed for a given situation. Designers can then use whatever methods they choose to fulfill these requirements. For example, prescriptive based requirements would state that a room of a given size and shape needs to have X number sprinkler heads, Y windows, and Z doors. Performance-based regulations would simply state that a room of a given size must have systems or features such that a fire of X magnitude can be extinguished, the room must be able to ventilate air at Y cubic feet per minute, and occupants must be able to evacuate before ‘hazardous’ conditions occur. This performance style allows for far greater flexibility in building design. Engineers can develop unique ways to meet performance targets using novel concepts specific to the building they are trying to design, rather than having to use a specific fire prevention method for a specific cause. This also greatly reduces the size and complexity of the regulations, as they need only to address the general engineering performance targets, rather than giving specific regulations and guidelines for every situation (Deakin, 1999).

An immediate concern is whether or not the specifications used in a performance based system will in fact be adequate. In the fire protection industry there are many fire protection computers programs that can be used to model a given room or building to make it performs as expected. Some of these programs are Fire Demand Modeling (FDM), which is used to measure solid fuel fires being suppressed by sprinklers or hoses, and Evacuation Simulation Model (ESM) or Egress, which model the ability of occupants to escape a building fire. Using products like these, design following performance-based standards can be approved (NIST, 2008). For further examples of performance based specifications, see Appendix C.

2.2.2 National and Other Standards and Codes

National standards and codes are regulations which have been “established by consensus and approved by a recognized body that provides, for common and repeated use, rules, guidelines or characteristics for activities or their results, aimed at the achievement of the optimum degree of order in a given context” (Deakin, 1999). They can be government backed or independently developed, and run a mix between being mandatory and voluntary, depending on who developed them. Typically these are formed to work in conjunction with existing national regulations or designed to hold companies to a higher and stricter standard than national regulations. They are

developed from the bottom up, looking at specific instances and then working back to its relevance to fire safety as a whole. They usually fit into one of three categories:

- **Specifications**- requirements for products, materials, processes or systems, as well as methods to verify conformity. Specifications dictate the requirements that anything that is to be used for fire safety must conform to. These are generally prescriptive-based requirements, but performance based requirements can be used as well (Deakin, 1999).
- **Methods**- formalized ways of doing things. These dictate the ways in which fire safety practices and materials must be implemented (Deakin, 1999).
- **Codes of Practice**- COP's are guidelines for those that are responsible for the fire protection industry. They set out moral and ethical guidelines, which practitioners (suppliers/manufacturers, engineers, contractors, etc) of fire protection must adhere to (Deakin, 1999).

Other standards and codes are developed by independent bodies, are not legally binding, and are voluntary. They are created with the intent of assisting in the design and implementation of specific fire protection devices, or as attempts to self-regulate the fire protection industry by trade organizations. While they certainly can be helpful, as the company producing a product generally has the greatest knowledge of its workings, a level of caution must be observed; the intent and agenda of the company behind the creation of the regulations must be taken into account. As a private organization the COP produced by FPA Australia fits into this category

2.3 Description of FPA Australia's COP

The *Fire Protection Association Australia Code of Practice*, is a COP produced by FPA Australia to encourage member companies to comply both to fire code and a proper business code of ethics in order to be successful in the Fire Protection industry. The COP was first published in June of 2000 and has since been updated in 2001 and 2008. Various pertinent groups within the fire industry, representative of building, construction, property management industries and fire authorities, were consulted throughout the development of the Code of Practice (FPA Australia, 2001).

2.3.1 Purpose and Objectives

The Purpose of the COP is twofold. First, it is intended to set a high standard of behavior for contractors, consultants, and suppliers that are signatories. Second, it promotes fire safety by requiring signatory companies to comply with the best practices and fire code requirements available in the fire protection industry. The Code aims to increase communication, cooperation, and competitiveness within the industry and to prevent malpractice. It is also used to provide a means for clients, as well as the general public, to easily identify Code compliant companies through the use of badges and logos easily recognizable on company premises as well as in their promotional material (FPA Australia, 2008).

2.3.2 Contents of COP

To fulfill the purpose and objectives previously discussed, the Code of Practice was written to clearly state the duties of FPA Australia and its signatories. The COP is not written in a way that tells the signatories how they should run their business. Instead it sets a standard for ethics in business practices which can be achieved however the signatory feels is most appropriate. The Code features sections ranging from conditions of proper business and project tendering to design, supply, installation, and maintenance of fire protection equipment.

The COP also details some of FPA Australia's primary responsibilities, which include monitoring compliance with the Code as well as updating the code when necessary. Other duties of FPA Australia are: facilitating open communication and cooperation between member companies, clients, government, and fire authorities, establishing procedures for the review of the Code, and encouraging signatories to comply with the COP. FPA Australia deals with violations of the Code and establishes methods for dealing with such violations or breaches, which will be especially important as signatory companies become more reliant on their own practices when staying in compliance (FPA Australia, 2008).

2.3.3 Compliance

In order to become a signatory, companies voluntarily agree to comply with the COP. Currently, to become a signatory of the Code of Practice, a company submits a signed Code of Practice Declaration form, corporate membership application, and membership fee. The

membership fee is determined by a number of factors, including the gross profit and number of employees in the company, but typically ranges from AU\$429 to over AU\$2000. (Balesano et al. 2007). The Code of Practice Declaration states that the member companies have read, understand, and will comply with the Code in its entirety. However, no test is administered ensuring compliance with the business morals set forth by the COP (FPA Australia, 2008). Currently, existing member companies reapply for corporate membership each year, receiving a 'membership renewal package' consisting of the COP declaration form and membership fee request.

When membership has been achieved, signatory companies are listed on the FPA Australia website under their registry of code compliant businesses. This list is available to the public free of charge and is intended to aid outside businesses in finding trustworthy companies to work with. Signatory companies can also then display the Code of Practice Compliant logo, further helping potential clients identify them (FPA Australia, 2008).

FPA Australia has an obligation to make sure all signatory companies of the COP are in fact complying with the Code. Currently, FPA Australia relies on complaints from outside sources to start an audit of a signatory company. If the signatory company is found to be non-compliant, various actions can be taken ranging from fines to revocation of membership (FPA Australia, 2001). This system, however, weakens the credibility of the COP because FPA Australia is forced to take a reactive, rather than proactive, approach to enforcing compliance with the COP. If applied correctly, a possible solution to this could be a self-assessment system that would allow FPA Australia to frequently check up on the compliance of companies with minimal effort on their part.

2.4 Self-Assessment and Auditing Systems

Self-assessment and auditing systems are used in various industries to ensure compliance with given codes or regulations which may or may not be legally mandatory. The differences between the two systems will be clarified, followed by details of the general structure of self-assessment systems along with its benefits and risks.

2.4.1 The Difference between an Audit and a Self-Assessment

Both auditing and self-assessment systems serve as important tools to increase the industry's performance, standards, and morals through ensuring compliance with given codes and regulations. A self-assessment is described as: "The person or unit performing the work itself undertakes self-evaluations. These evaluations may be completed using formal, standardized procedures or informal guidelines." (Karapetrovic & Willborn, 2001). These evaluations are generally derived from a simplified version of the original standards.

In contrast, trained professionals with specialized knowledge of the standards they are auditing carry out auditing. Either the company or organization producing the standard or a 3rd party company whose sole responsibility is to administer audits employs these auditors. One reason for this system is that certain compliances must be certified by a professional since they are too complex, technical, or sensitive to be checked by individuals within the company being audited. In addition, compliance may be checked for state or other legal codes, which must be checked by a professional by law.

2.4.2 Description of Self-Assessment Systems and their Intended Function

Self-assessment is generally used to test compliance in preparation for an official audit by an inspection organization such as ISO 900x. However, it can also be used as a stand-alone way to determine compliance in some situations (Light, R. V., & Moore, C. A., 2002). According to Light and Moore (Light, R. V., & Moore, C. A., 2002), robust self-inspection system requires:

- **Complete Leadership Support-** Without support and direction from both the management of the auditing organization as well as the management of the company performing the self-assessment, the assessment process will not work. Goals must be clearly set, and organization must be paramount. Also, a clear message must be sent that the assessment is important and actually means something. If the self-assessment isn't taken seriously, then its results will not be accurate and it becomes worthless.
- **Implementation Plan-** There must be a clear plan of implementation for the assessment. How the assessment is going to be distributed, who needs to do the inspecting, who the assessment forms need to be returned to, etc, all have to be specifically addressed in the documentation for the assessment.

- **Timeframe-** Deadlines must be set and adhered to. The industry standard for performing a self-assessment is quarterly, however that may not be practical in every application. Also, once an assessment is requested, how long the company has to conduct it must be clearly defined.
- **Assessment tools-** The companies which will be conducting the self-assessment must be given all of the forms and tools required to complete the assessment. Standardized forms should be used whenever possible, as this will not only make the auditor who reviews the assessment's job easier as they do not need to figure out how each company is gathering what data, but it will also insure that there is little question as to what needs to be inspected by the company performing the assessment. Ideally all assessment forms should be pass/fail checklists, as again this makes the reviewer's job simpler by speeding the tabulation of results, and ensures as little chance for error as possible, since either the company performing the assessment is complying with a regulation or is not. The auditing company will interpret the results of the self-assessment as they see fit. If the self-assessment passes, that may be all that is necessary for approval. If it fails, a full audit on the assessed company at their own expense is usually in order, although the exact procedure used is at the discretion of the auditing company.
- **Monitoring and Redesign-** The organization responsible for creating the self-assessment must be open to feedback from the companies performing the self-assessments. Using this feedback, they should re-examine sections of the self-assessment that may need to be added, updated or removed. This could be brought up by complaints from member companies performing the self-assessment or perhaps by a committee run by the auditing company finding an error or an opportunity for improvement in the self-assessment system the Auditing company must also monitor the implementation of the self-assessment to ensure that it is being applied as they intended it to be, as well as to try and insure the legitimacy of the results. This can again be kept track of through feedback from member companies

2.4.3 How can a Self-Assessment System Increase Efficiency of Auditors Inspecting Codes and Regulations?

Auditing requires direct involvement from the auditing company to ensure the compliance of the member company. It is almost always necessary to have a professional auditor familiar with the material being audited involved when assessing the compliance of a company. It is also possible to expedite the process as long as these expediting measures do not decrease the reliability of the procedure (Light, R. V., & Moore, C. A., 2002).

If a potential member company can perform the bulk of the assessment process themselves, i.e. signing documents, documenting proof of code compliance and other such work, the amount of time needed from the auditor can be greatly reduced. This reduces the cost of certification, thereby improving the value of the certification. With a system like this in place, the actual processing performed by the auditing company would be reduced to simply approving an application (the self-assessment) written by the potential member company. Even in situations where a full traditional audit must be undertaken, a self-assessment can reduce the amount of work that would need to be done on-site by the auditor (Light, R. V., & Moore, C. A., 2002).

2.4.4 The Benefits of Self-Assessment

There are several benefits realized from self-assessments, especially for the companies performing them. The first is economical. The Return on Investment (ROI) for becoming certified must be positive -the fees and work needed is less than the cost of the goods obtained- for companies to have a reason to become certified. In a signatory member's case, the return would be the increased confidence clients have in the signatory company due to the higher compliance with the COP. This increased confidence will lead to more business for the signatory.

Another beneficial aspect is incorporated simply into the way the self-assessment is structured. In performing the self-assessment, companies may realize that there are certain aspects of their business that have not been regulated or maintained ethically. Therefore, a self-assessment system can act as a learning tool, showing companies areas where improvements could be made. For example, if the self-assessment system asked a company what methods were taken to educate its employees on the purposes and regulation of the Code of Practice, and the

company had no practices in place for educating its members on this subject, they would realize this could be an important topic to add to employee education (Ross Hodge, 2008).

2.4.5 The Limitations and Risk of Self-assessment

With the use of self-assessments, ethical concerns can arise. The companies being assessed can perform the self-assessment and not perform a complete job or they might submit false information to the assessing organization. Although the certifying organization does not immediately lose out on its business if this occurs, its certification system will develop a poor reputation in the industry. With the reputation of the company marred, a chain reaction of events can occur ranging from dissemination of members to lack of faith by clients in the enforcement ability of the certifying company. This removes all value in the certification.

Another limitation of a self-assessment system run by a private organization is that it has no legal strength. If there is a breach of contract or code, the assessing organization cannot normally take any legal action against the offending company. Since the code is not of legal nature, the assessing organization cannot use government authority to require its compliance. However, this does prevent the assessing organization from being liable if one of their members is in violation of code.

The use of self-assessment can affect the assessing organization and also be a risk for the companies being assessed. If the companies do not keep up with compliance and are found in violation, the assessing organization can distribute fines or take legal actions depending on the offense. In a self-monitoring system dealing with emissions of waste it “Noted that when an operator of a firm or a verifier would make false statements, he can be prosecuted under criminal law for e.g. fraud or corruption. This criminal prosecution, which could lead to financial penalties or even imprisonment, could of course be another incentive for providing correct data (Peeters, 2006).” Even though self-assessments maybe easy to conduct, they do create a possibility of risks and damages if not properly done and reported with truthful data.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The primary goal of this project was to develop a system for FPA Australia that would allow its member companies to perform a self-assessment to ensure compliance with the Code of Practice. This would improve the ability of companies to comply with the Code, and would help FPA Australia promote the Code of Practice as clients would be more confident in the credibility of the Code with the increased assurance of compliance that the assessment provides.

This goal was accomplished by meeting the following objectives:

- Determine member and non-member opinions regarding the use of the COP
- Design a self-assessment package

The flowchart on the following page graphically describes the process that was followed to accomplish these objectives and the methods chosen to accomplish them. The process flow is laid out such that they fall into sequential order progressing from top to bottom. The legend for the chart is as follows:

- Square Box: Process
- Diamond: Decision
- Box with Wave on the Bottom: Document/Product to be Generated

A Timeline Detailing the work done through the course of the project can be found in Appendix G.

FPA-Australia Project Flowchart

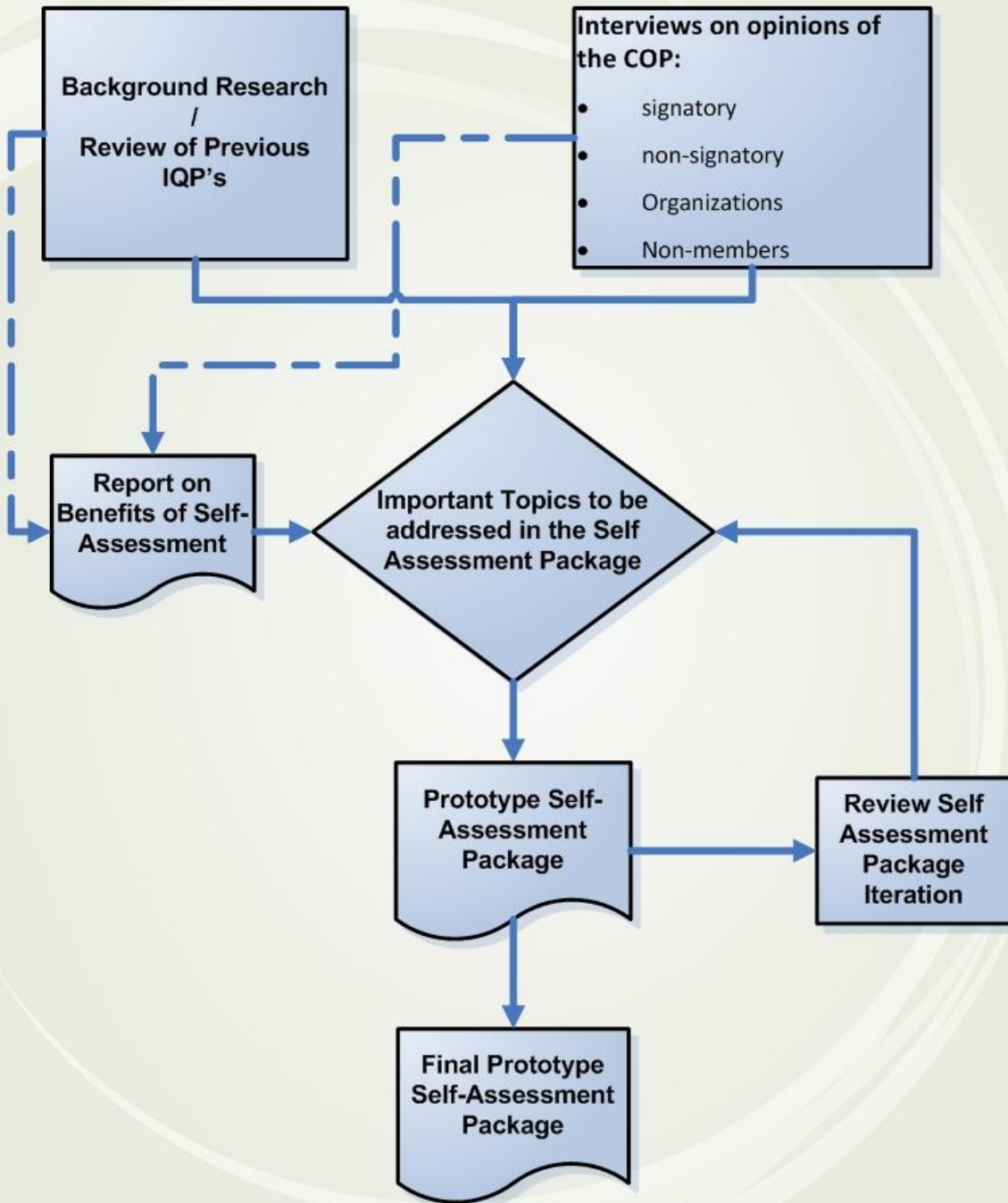


Figure 3-1: Methodology Flowchart

3.1 Determine Member and Non-Member Opinions Regarding the Use of the COP

In order to create a successful self-assessment package, we determined what companies and clients were concerned about regarding the COP as these would direct the focus of the content in the assessment forms. To accomplish this objective, our group studied the IQP's completed in previous years for FPA Australia, as they had conducted interviews and gathered various data that would be useful in providing a starting point for continued work. We also conducted a new series of interviews to determine if member and non-member opinions had changed since the previous IQP were completed.

3.1.1 Review of Previous IQP's

Our project was formed by FPA Australia with the intent of building off the results from previous projects. Therefore, their data was useful in providing background and context for our project. Also, the 2007 IQP included minutes from all of the interviews conducted with member companies in regards to the important aspects of the COP (Balesano et al. 2007). With this information, we were able to create a model to base our interviews on.

3.1.2 Interviews

In order to determine the member and non-member opinions of the COP and the interest level in the application of a self-assessment system, interviews were conducted with four main groups: signatory members (13), non-signatory members (3), organizations (4) and non members (15). Each group provided a different prospective on the COP: Signatories actively support the COP, non-signatories have chosen to no longer support it, organizations give a clients prospective to the COP, and non-members are 'outside looking in'. We used these interviews to determine what features should be included in the self-assessment package for it to be successful, and to ensure that self-assessment was the correct direction to move in.

The interviews were conducted both over the phone and in person. Since many of the member companies were local to the Melbourne area, we encouraged companies to interview in person. Thirty-six companies were interviewed in order to ensure that solid cross section of member company types, both in terms of company size and industry specialization, were

represented. Confidentiality was also respected for any company that wished. If members were concerned about their personal opinions being stated they may have been more reserved in their answers, which could have provided inaccurate data. The following groups were interviewed, with FPA Australia only participating in informal discussions and the latter four participating in formal interviews.

- **FPA Australia Employees:** Those most knowledgeable about the COP are the FPA Australia employees who wrote it. An informal interview was conducted over the phone during the preparation for the project while the team was still in Worcester (See Appendix B for interview minutes), and further discussions continued once we were on site. The discussions took place with our liaison, Ross Hodge, as well as some of his supporting staff. These provided additional background information about the organization, data about COP membership, information on what FPA Australia considered the most important aspects of the COP, and suggestions on how the self-assessment and auditing system should be structured. Most information was gathered on an as-needed basis - as questions arose about the project, the group approached employees of FPA Australia in order to receive clarification or recommendations.
- **Signatory Member Company Representatives:** As the main purpose of the COP is to benefit the signatories and their business with clients, we sought the opinions that member companies had of the COP and its functions. Signatories should be familiar with the COP and were thus able to give insight into how well organized the application process is and what aspects of the COP are most useful to their company. In addition, by presenting the idea of a self-assessment system to them, feedback was gained regarding how large of a factor it would be in maintaining their signatory status, and if they felt that it would increase both industry and client confidence in the COP. For signatory interview questions, see Appendix A.1.
- **Non-Signatory Member Company Representatives:** The non-signatory member's interviews focused on why these members are no longer signatories. Non-signatory members are usually aware of the COP but have let their signatory status default. With the non-signatory interviews, we focused more attention on the proposed self-assessment

system, and less on the important aspects of the COP; we wanted to find out if the modified application system would motivate these members to become signatories, and if so, determine features they would find most appealing. Some questions still focused on which parts of the COP interested these companies the most; this allowed us to gauge what level of understanding these companies had regarding the COP. It also determined any misinformation believed that could be preventing them from becoming signatories. The information gained from these interviews was most useful in determining what subject matter to include in the self-assessment package, and how it should be marketed to the member companies.

- **Organizations:** Obtaining the viewpoints of the clients was as important as those of the members. Organizations are FPA Australia members but cannot apply for signatory status; however they frequently work with signatories. Because of this, they were able to provide feedback regarding if the signatory status improves the business practices of the member companies. Furthermore, the organization interviews provided information focusing on if being a signatory is an effective form of certification that provides clients and organizations with confidence in the member company's services.
- **Non-Members:** While conducting these interviews, the team also wished to gather feedback from non-member companies. This allowed us to determine possible reasons why they are not members and if by becoming members whether they thought their clients' confidence in their business practices would increase through the use of a self-assessment package. FPA Australia employees performed these interviews over the phone during their recruitment campaign.

3.2 Design and Implement a Self-Assessment Package

As part of the design process for the self-assessment system, research was performed on self-assessment systems to be able to determine a foundation for the structure that this project's self-assessment would employ. Additionally, all of the data from our interviews were compiled and analyzed. Finally, a prototype was created, which we then ran through validation testing, consisting a trial run of the self-assessment system with a company previously interviewed. This

was done to ensure that the final prototype met the goals of the project and the needs of both FPA Australia and its membership as closely as possible.

3.2.1 Researched Self-Assessment and Auditing Systems

In order to create a successful self-assessment system, we examined many forms of auditing and self-assessment systems that were in use in industry. Because we could not identify any self-assessment systems in use in the fire protection industry at the time of this project, our group looked at different types of auditing and self-assessments that were implemented in other industries. By reviewing these types of systems, we formed a better understanding as to what would best meet FPA Australia's design goals.

Several self-assessment and traditional auditing systems were reviewed during the course of this project, one of which was the ISO 9000 system. ISO 9000 is readily used in the business world and is generally considered to be very effective (Karapetrovic & Willborn, June 2001). Through studying how the ISO system is implemented so effectively, we expected to identify some techniques that we could apply to the FPA Australia's Self-Assessment package. ISO 9000 certification is achieved through a traditional auditing system run by the independent ISO organization, however there are internal self-assessments done by the companies being audited to insure that they are in compliance before the official auditor makes their visit, and it is these which we tried to focus upon.

Another relevant application of self-assessment that was reviewed involved routine inspection of environmentally harmful factory output. This assessment is a government requirement and so is tried and true, so the techniques from this package were useful to what FPA Australia is trying to achieve. We focused on the aspect of how the government polices the assessment to ensure that it is being completed properly and truthfully to show compliance (Peeters, 2006).

Finally, FPA Australia recently produced the *Certification Guide for BPAD-A Certified Business*, a document which contained guidelines on quality assurance. These guidelines were useful because of the educational format of the document. It allows a company to gain insight

into what aspects of their company must improve upon to achieve compliance before certification is possible.

3.2.2 Structure

After obtaining and analyzing all of the information about self-assessment systems that the group could find, and taking into consideration the input from FPA Australia, a final decision was made regarding what the structure of the self-assessment system would be. In order to ensure that an informed decision was made; information gathered from the interviews on member and non-member companies were taken into account. Flexibility was kept in mind when planning the structure of the self-assessment system to accommodate changes that may need to be made in the future as the system is put into full implementation.

3.2.3 Develop a “Benefits of Self-Assessment” Document

The end result of the 2007 IQP was a document entitled “Benefits of the COP” which outlined, in a single double-sided sheet of paper, all of the major points and advantages of the COP. The document was intended to be used for marketing purposes by FPA Australia, as it provided them with a document that could be included in the membership application pack or distributed at conventions to promote the highlights of the COP (Balesano et al. 2007).

This document proved to be a success. As a result, FPA Australia decided that they wanted a similar document to promote the Self-Assessment package to both new and existing members. Using the information gained from the interviews and background research, and with the 2007 document as a template, we created a new document that would meet these goals. Background research on existing self-assessment systems were used to find examples of positives outcomes of a properly implemented self-assessment. We also used the interview data to determine what features members and potential members were looking for in a self-assessment package, so that we could then highlight them in the document for maximum marketing impact.

3.2.4 Produce a Self-Assessment Package for FPA Australia

In order to develop the Self-Assessment package, there were several parts that needed to be completed and integrated together. The first task was to develop the assessment application

for the member companies to use. The intention was to create a set of standardized forms that could be used by the member companies. This would allow them to easily and without error complete the assessment, and would also greatly improve the ability of FPA Australia to tabulate the results and determine compliance. We used both information from background research, as well as data from the interviews, to identify the best structure for the self-assessment forms.

Feedback and modification was also essential to the self-assessment package creation and implementation process. Validation testing was performed on the prototype Self-Assessment package to improve the design. Selected companies previously interviewed regarding the COP and self-assessment system were used to review the system and perform a trial run. The results of this test were then used to improve areas of confusion or difficulty that may have remained in the Self-Assessment package. We also gave recommendations to FPA Australia as to how they could continue to monitor and redesign the system after it has been implemented in order to insure that it continues to best serve its purpose.

Chapter 4: Determine Member Opinions Regarding the use of the COP

In order to successfully create a self-assessment system for the Code of Practice, the concerns of the current membership regarding the use of the COP in its current form had to be considered. It was also important to determine if they would be receptive to the idea of a self-assessment, and how they would like to see it implemented.

4.1 Interviews

Our primary way of gathering this data was by conducting face to face and phone interviews. This gave us direct feedback on what the membership and non-members thought was missing from the current implementation, and potential ways it could be improved. We proposed the idea of a self-assessment to them after they had given us their own ideas in order to see if they approved of that direction, and if they felt it would help to address their concerns.

Our interview data came from four groups, each with distinct viewpoints on the COP: signatory members, non-signatory members, organizations and non-members. The distribution of member types can be seen in figure 4-1. Effort was made to keep the interview spread such that the number of companies interviewed from each member type was representative of the percentage of that member type in the membership as a whole. Further interview distribution

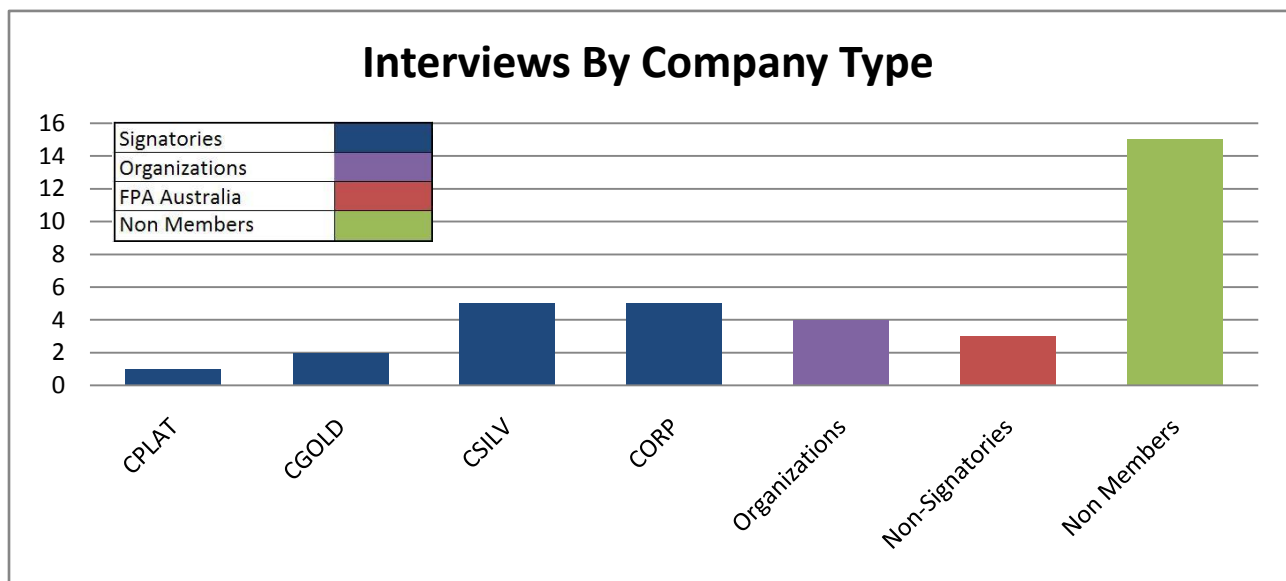


Figure 4-1: Interviews by Company Type

data, as well as charts showing the distribution of membership types in the membership as a whole, can be seen in Appendix D.

4.1.1 Signatories

The signatory member interviews were used to determine their current knowledge level pertaining to the COP, and how they viewed the credibility of the COP in the eyes of both the industry and their clients. This gives an insider’s prospective on the effectiveness of the COP in its current form. The interviews also would determine if the signatories felt that implementing a self-assessment would improve the COP in these areas. In order to ensure valid results, the sample was spread across the entire distribution of industries that FPA Australia members represent. This distribution can be seen in figure 4-2, and the industry type distribution of the membership as a whole can be seen in Appendix D. Many of the signatories were active in multiple industries, and this is represented in the graph.

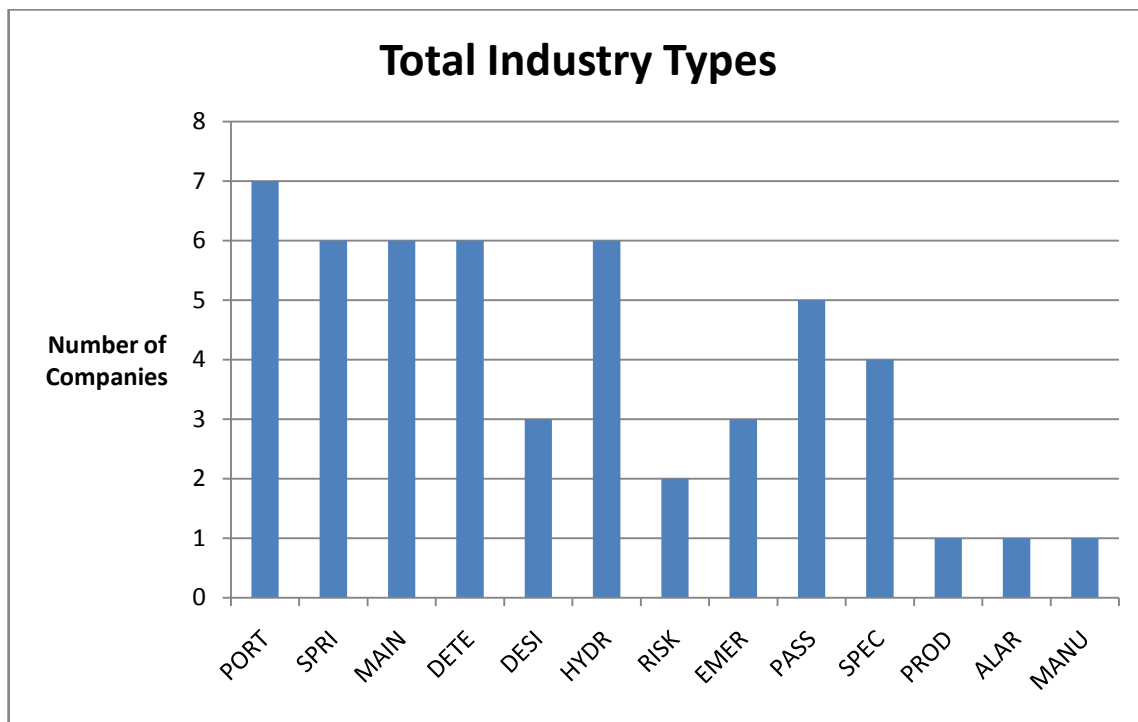


Figure 4-2: Total Industry Types

All of the signatories were asked the questions found in Appendix A.1, and detailed interview minutes can be seen in Appendix B.2. The results were as follows:

4.1.1.1 Are you Aware that you are a Signatory to the COP

Due to the current structure of the application process, companies may not actually be aware that they are signatories to the COP. If the applying company simply signs all the forms in the membership package without carefully reading the documents, they could inadvertently become a signatory to the COP while having no idea what this status actually means. This data is shown in Figure 4-3.

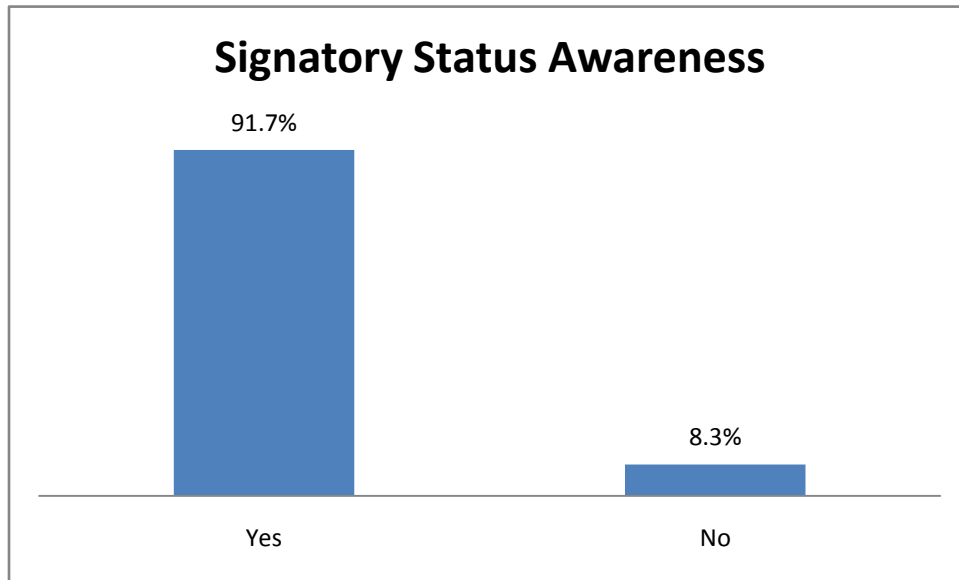


Figure 4-3: Signatory Status Awareness

Because the majority of responses indicated knowledge of signatory status, it can be inferred that companies are generally paying attention to the application process and reading everything carefully before signing. It also implies that the majority of signatories can be assumed to have a reasonable level of knowledge of what the COP is.

4.1.1.2 Why Did You Become a Signatory?

This question allowed us to determine the reasons signatory members initially became signatories. With that information, we hoped to more successfully market the self-assessment towards new members, as we could highlight the areas that attracted old members to signatory status and then emphasize how the self-assessment improves them.

The answers we received to the question were varied, but tended to fall into four main categories; a perceived increase in credibility, keeping up to date with industry information, granting marketing advantages, and forcing compliance with a code of ethics for the industry. Answers which were counted in the marketing advantages category were those which mentioned specifically that they became a signatory so they could use the COP compliant logo in their marketing materials. This was kept separate from the perceived increase in credibility response, which while it was generally indirectly used as marketing advantage, wasn't explicitly related to the COP code compliant logo. Some companies' answers fit into multiple categories, so their responses were counted in each section that they fell into. The results can be seen in figure 4-4.

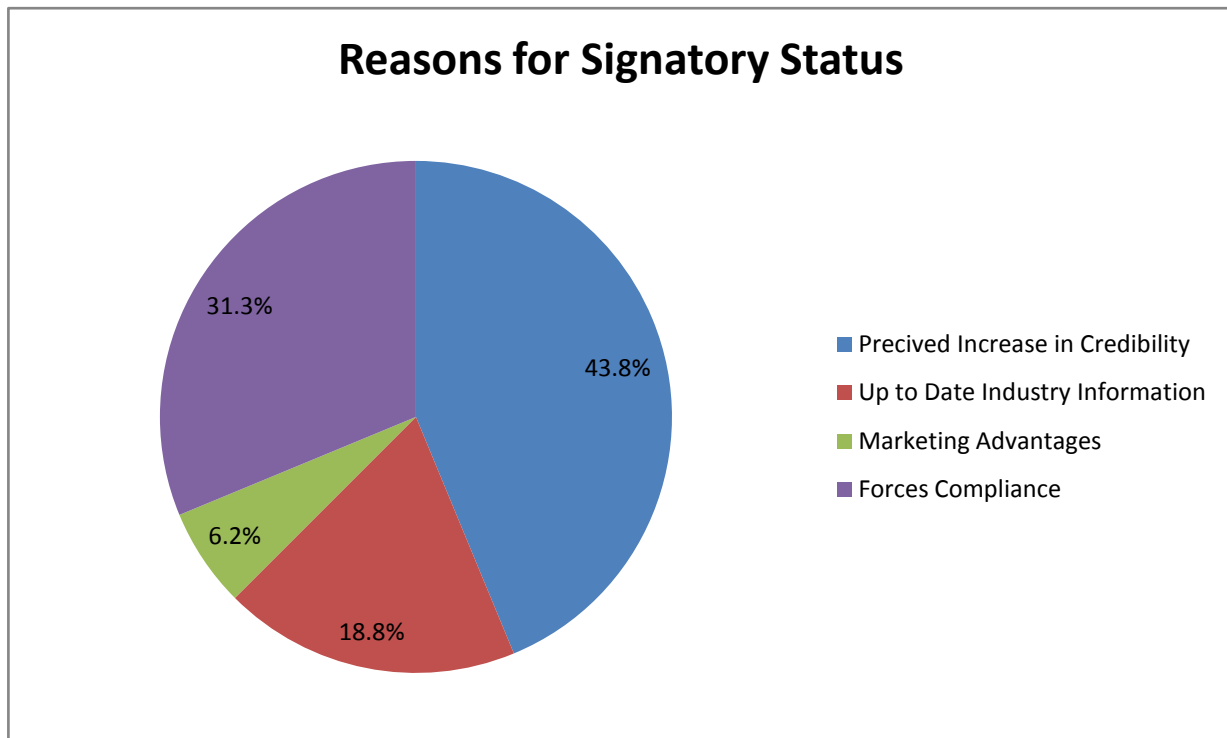


Figure 4-4: Reasons for Signatory Status

The fact that compliance wasn't the main reason for becoming a signatory member was not surprising. Ensuring compliance to a standard can be very labor intensive and expensive. Increasing credibility, on the other hand, attracts more clients, which increases income. This data confirmed what we had suspected going into the interviews; when marketing the self-assessment, we should focus on how it will improve the credibility of the COP and its signatories in the eyes of the industry and its clients, which can in turn increase their business.

4.1.1.3 What Percentage of your Clients are Aware of the COP?

For companies to have a reason to maintain their signatory status, their clients need to be aware what the COP is and what it entails. If their clients are not aware of why they should do business with COP compliant companies, then there is no marketing advantage to being compliant, as it will not increase the credibility of the company at all. Therefore, the signatories were asked what percentage of their clients they believed were aware of the COP. The results can be seen in figure 4-5.

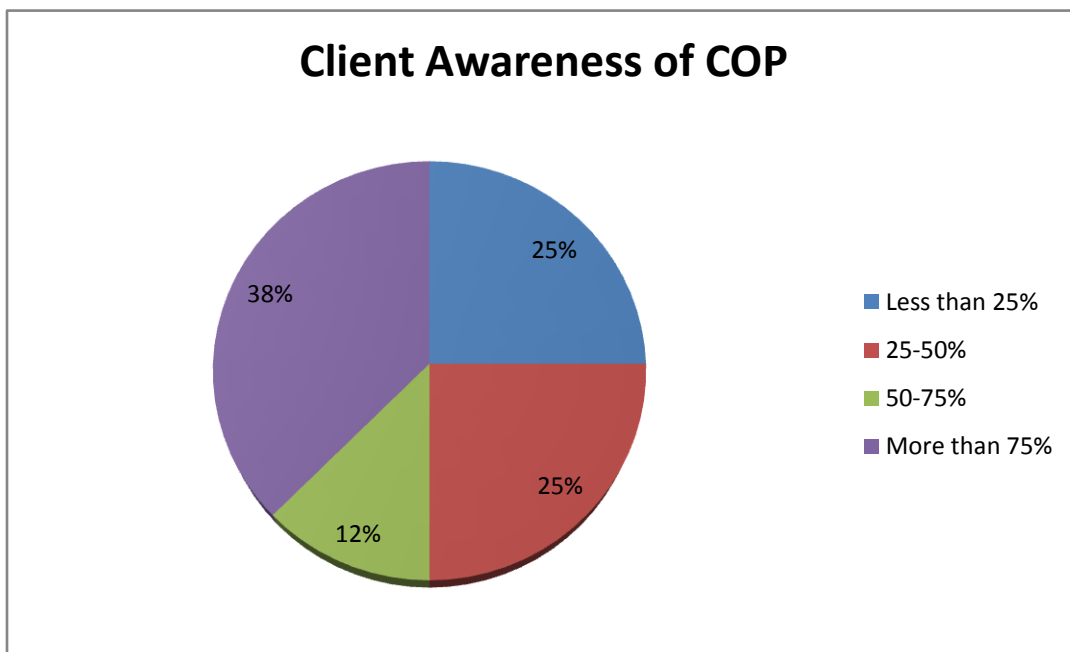


Figure 4-5: Client Awareness of COP

The results from this question were surprising; there was a significant lack of client knowledge in what the COP stood for, and why they should look for COP compliant status when looking for a company to do business with. Less than half of the signatories believed that more than 50% of their clients knew what the COP was. In addition, the companies, which claimed more than 75% client awareness, were primarily very large companies that dealt largely with other fire protection service providers. Without client awareness of the COP, even if the self-assessment system were to be implemented its full potential to increase credibility and

marketability would not be realized; most clients wouldn't be aware of the change or why it would matter.

4.1.1.4 What is your Reason for Continued Signatory Status?

This question was asked to determine what reasons member companies had for continuing their signatory status. From this, we hoped to gain information on what was working well with the COP, and what areas might need improvement that may or may not be helped by a self-assessment. Responses fit into three categories: Marketing value, encouraging good business ethics, and the belief that COP signatory status would eventually become a requirement in order to remain competitive in the fire protection industry. The results of this question can be seen in figure 4-6.

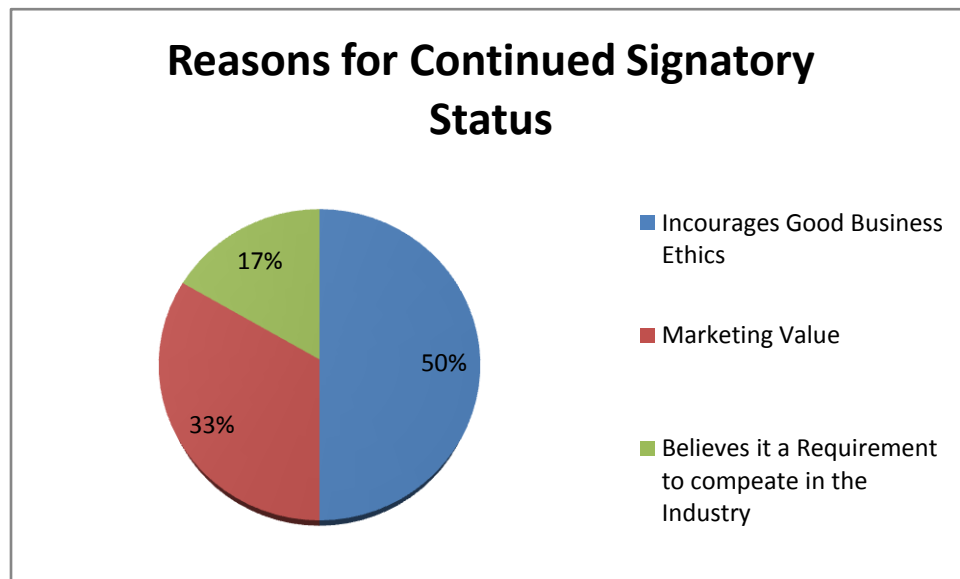


Figure 4-6: Reasons for Continued Signatory Status

These answers were similar to the reasons given for becoming signatories. It is unsurprising as the COP aims to accomplish a number of specific goals in the industry, and both of these are to become and continue to be a signatory. Not only were the similar reasons given, but they were also given in similar proportions. Although this doesn't tie directly into the structure of the self-assessment system, it is useful data for FPA Australia when it comes to marketing and other informational literature, since they will know what aspects of the COP companies find appealing.

4.1.1.5 Would a Self-Assessment System be Beneficial?

We asked this question of the signatory members in order to determine what the reception would be if a self-assessment system were to be implemented. The results can be seen in figure 4-7.

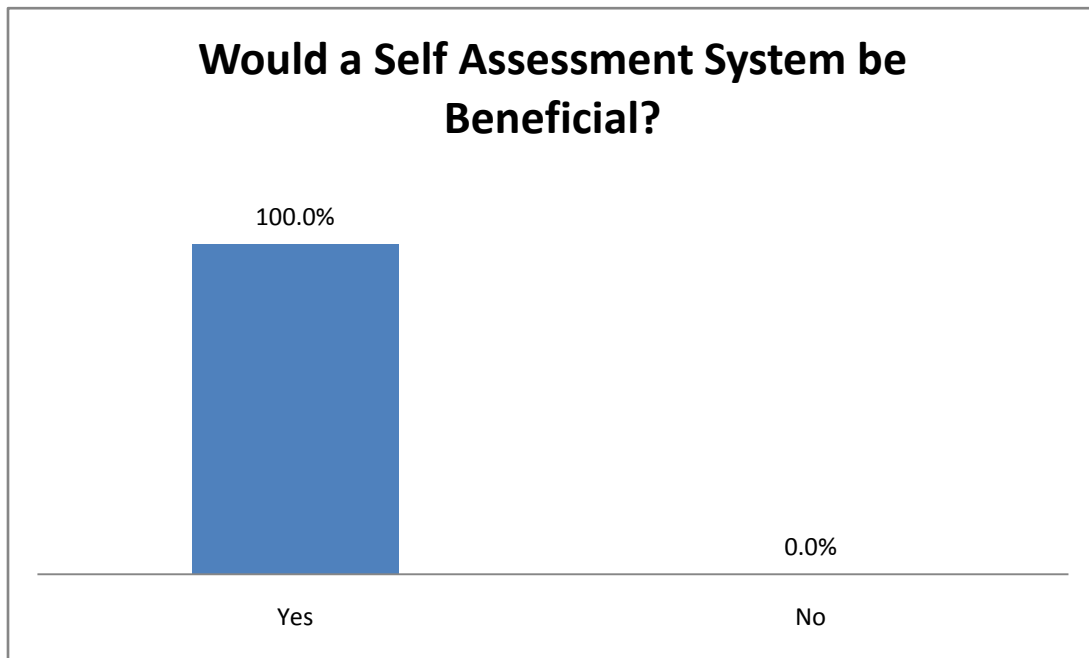


Figure 4-7: Would a Self-Assessment System be Beneficial

The signatory members were in unanimous consent, saying that they would be in favor of a self-assessment system if it were to be implemented. They all agreed that it would help increase compliance with the COP, and to increase the sense of responsibility that signatory members should feel for following the COP's guidelines. They also believed that it would increase client confidence in the COP, subject to the limitations discussed in section 4.1.1.3. With this information, we were confident that once the self-assessment system was implemented, it would quickly be accepted by the signatory membership and would not add any unwanted cumbersomeness or inconvenience to the membership that wasn't outweighed by the benefits it would produce.

4.1.1.6 Do you use the COP Compliant Logo on your Marketing Materials?

This question was asked to determine if the signatory members were using the COP Compliant Logo to promote their signatory status. The results can be seen in figure 4-8.

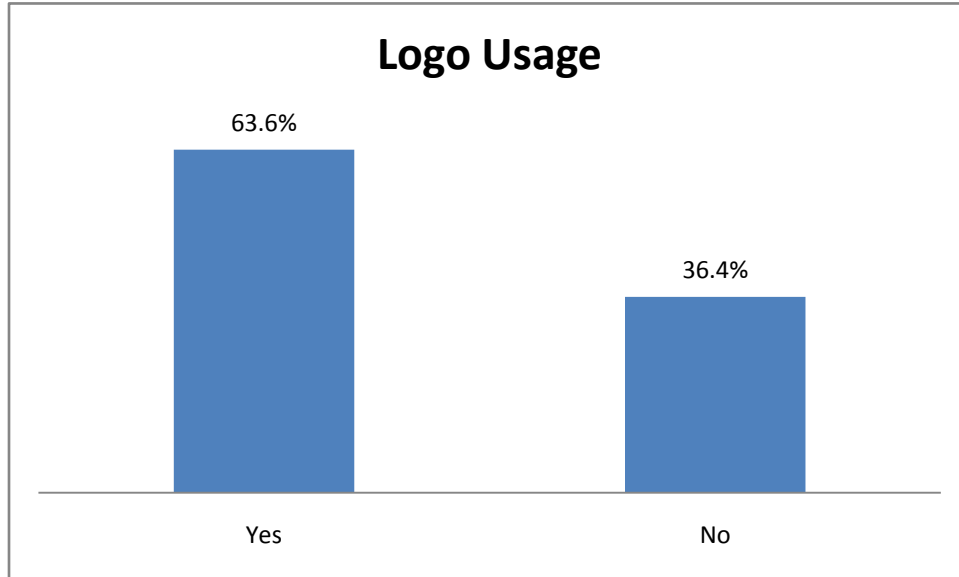


Figure 4-8: Logo Use

From the results of this question, it was clear that the COP Signatory Status logo was not being as widely used as FPA Australia had hoped. While the majority of signatory members did use the logo, more than a third did not. The reason for them not using the logo was generally that the company did not believe that it would have a very large impact due to lack of client awareness of what the COP was, and so didn't feel the need to change their letterheads, business cards etc. Even those signatories which did use the logo for their marketing materials believed that many of their clients did not have enough knowledge about what the COP Compliant Status meant, and any marketing advantages from using it simply came from the fact that it looked official and showed to clients that the signatory member was compliant with something, even if they didn't know what that something was.

This information further confirmed the belief that FPA Australia should increase client side marketing as well as service provider side marketing of the COP in addition to implementing the self-assessment if it were to realize the maximum potential of the COP.

4.1.2 Non-Signatories

The topics discussed with non-signatories focused on their current status in relation to the COP and as well as to gauge their interest in the self-assessment system and determine any features that would make the system as successful as possible. Non-signatory interview questions can be found in Appendix A.2, and detailed minutes can be found in Appendix B.3

However, from the interviews conducted with these members, it became very apparent that their primary reason for being non-signatories was ignorance as to what the COP stood for or even to its existence. A number of companies also had fallen into non-signatory status simply because they had not re-signed the forms and submitted them to FPA Australia as they had not been informed their signatory status was going to expire. Because of this, they provided no useful information relative to the COP itself. However, it was made clear that FPA Australia needed to increase its education about the COP within its own membership, as well as with the clients of its members, if it was to see the maximum potential of the COP realized.

4.1.3 Organizations

We interviewed organizations in order to gain a client's perspective on the COP and its implementation, and to determine if a self-assessment system would increase their confidence in it. We also wanted to know if they felt that COP Compliant status was effective at attracting them to companies to do business with, so that we could determine if the COP was functioning as an effective marketing tool. All organizations were asked the questions found in Appendix A.3, and detailed interview minutes can be found in Appendix B.4. The results of the interviews were as follows:

4.1.3.1 Why is your Organization a Member?

This question was asked to give context to the organization interviews. It also determined if there was anything that was attracting organizations to become members that could possibly be used in the promoting of the self-assessment. There were three typical responses; that they joined for an increase in credibility, they joined to keep up to date with fire protection industry information, or they joined because FPA Australia has a history of putting fire protection first. The results can be seen in figure 4-9.

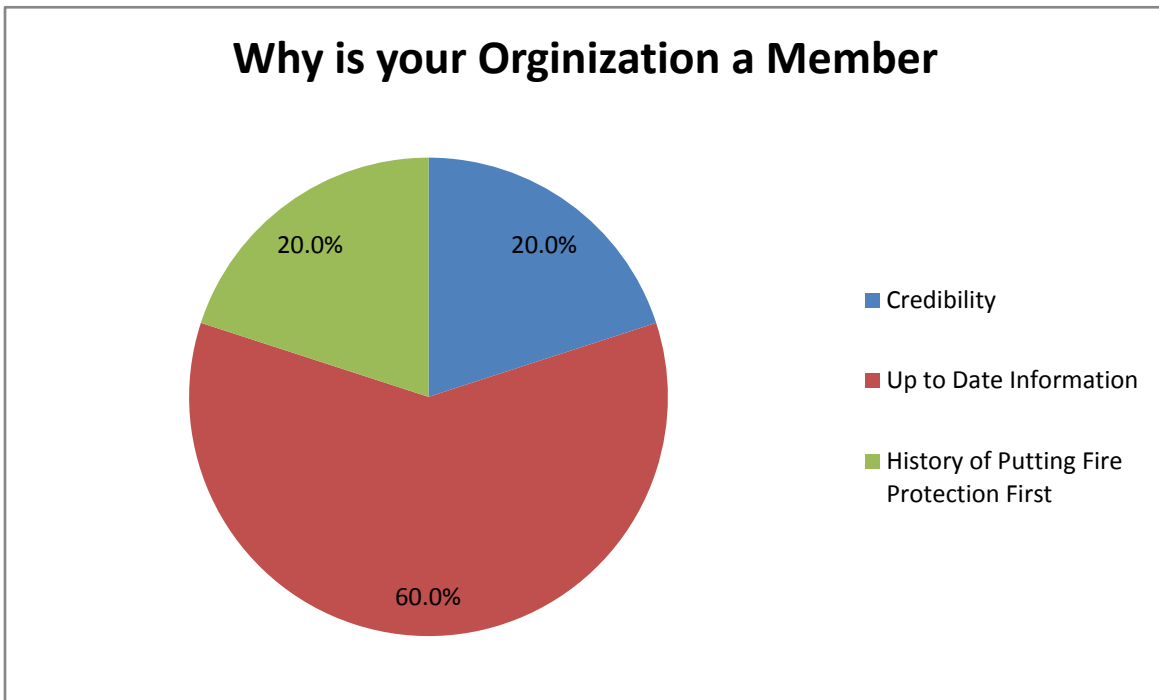


Figure 4-9: Why is your Organization a Member?

This information showed that organizations primarily become members to keep up to date with what’s going on in the fire protection industry so that they can ensure that they make informed decisions about what fire protection services and service providers they should use. This information confirmed that word could be spread among the clients of the industry about the self-assessment and how it would improve compliance with the COP.

4.1.3.2 Are you Confidant in COP Compliance in Signatories?

This question was asked to determine if the clients of the fire protection industry were confident that the signatory members were in fact complying with the COP as they had pledged to. The results can be seen in figure 4-10.

The organizations interviewed were unanimous in their lack of faith in the compliance with the COP. They felt that because there was currently no system in place to enforce or even check compliance with the COP other than for a client to file a complaint, they could not feel confident that the signatory members were following the guidelines they had pledged to. Even if

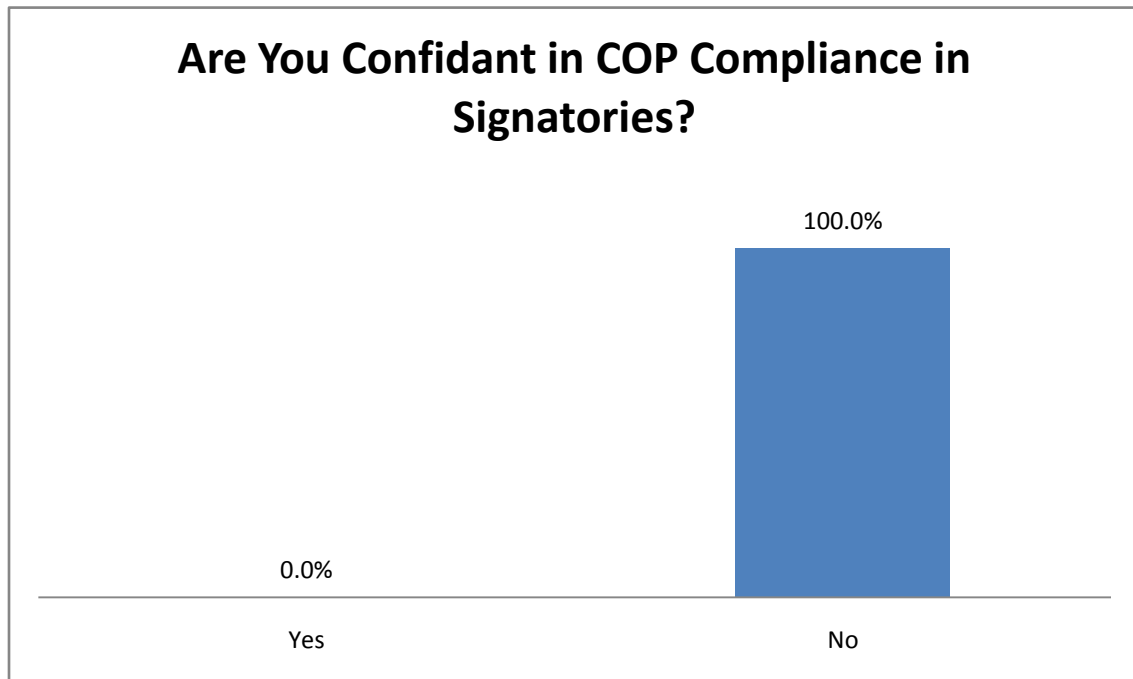


Figure 4-10: Are You Confidant in COP Compliance in Signatories?

the majority of signatories were indeed in full compliance, without some kind of transparent way of determining this, they could not fully believe in the credibility of the COP.

This information was the most telling of the interview questions asked to organizations, as it confirmed the concern that even clients that were aware of what the COP was did not have faith in its credibility unless there was some kind of compliance enforcement system put into place. This was supported by the fact that all of the organizations interviewed said that they would be in favor of a self-assessment system, and that they felt it would address many of their concerns about the credibility of the COP.

4.1.3.3 Are FPA Australia Signatory Members Preferred as Service Providers?

We asked this question to determine if clients were using COP compliant status as a criterion for deciding what fire protection service provider to use. The results can be seen in figure 4-11.

According to the organization members interviewed, the majority did not give any special preference to signatory members when choosing fire protection service providers. This data backed up the results from 4.3.1.2; that client confidence in the COP is not high enough to make it something they actively search for.

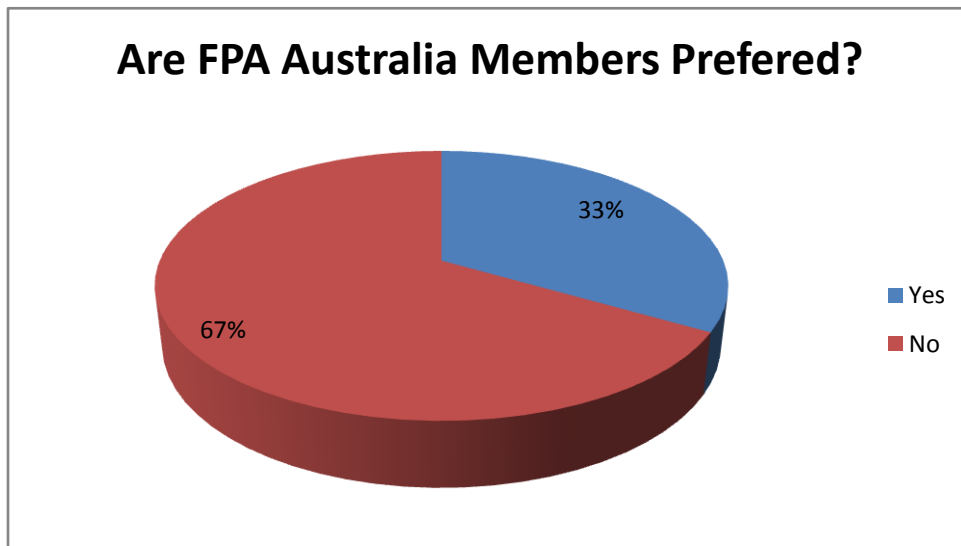


Figure 4-11: Are FPA Australia Members Preferred?

4.1.3 Non Members

Interviews of non-members were performed to determine if, and why or why not, companies were interested in becoming members of FPA Australia. This information was used to determine what the fire protection industry that was not already affiliated with FPA Australia thought of the COP.

4.1.4.1 Would you be interested in Becoming a Member of FPA Australia?

Of companies interviewed, more than half indicated they would be interested in becoming members, as seen in Figure 4-12.

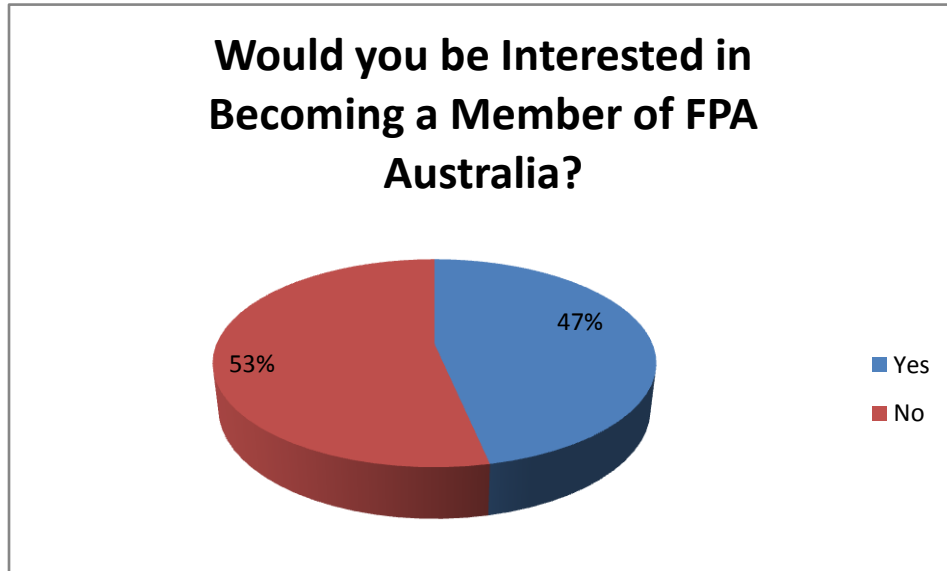


Figure 4-12: Would you be Interested in Becoming a Member of FPA Australia?

4.1.4.2 Why Would you Like to Become a Member of FPA Australia?

The results to this question can be seen in figure 4-13. The answers were fairly consistent with the answers of signatory members in section 4.1.1.2. This information was not immediately useful for designing the self-assessment, but could be used for future marketing purposes as discussed in Chapter 7.

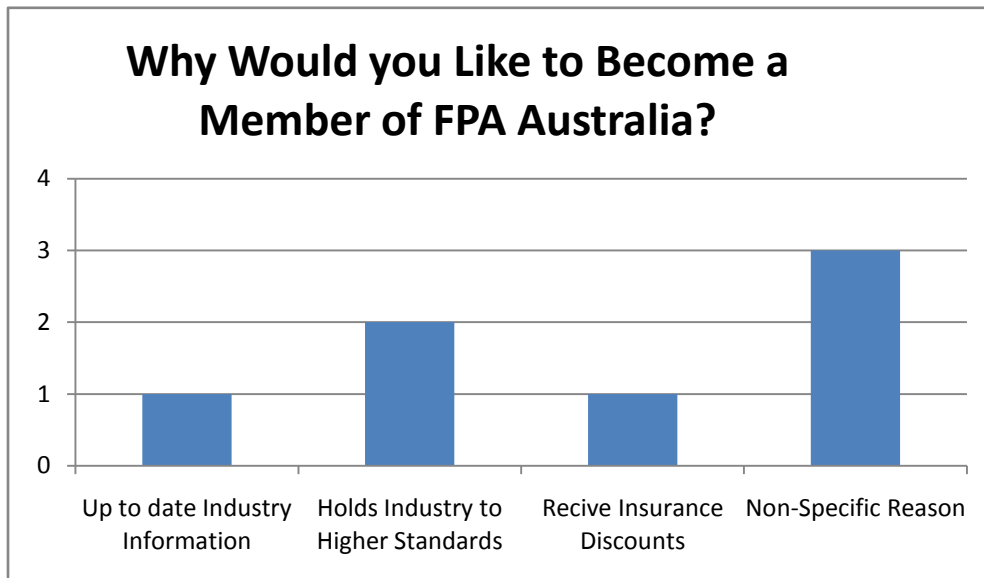


Figure 4-13: Why Would you Like to Become a Member of FPA Australia?

4.1.4.3 Why is Your Company Not Interested in Becoming a Member of FPA Australia?

The non-member's answers to this question fit into three categories; membership was too expensive, the non-member believed membership to be unnecessary, or they were unaware of what benefits membership would bring to them, and so weren't interested in membership until they had looked into it further. The results of this question can be seen in figure 4-14. Using this information, the marketing of the COP can be targeted more specifically to address the issues that the non-members perceived as preventing them from becoming members.

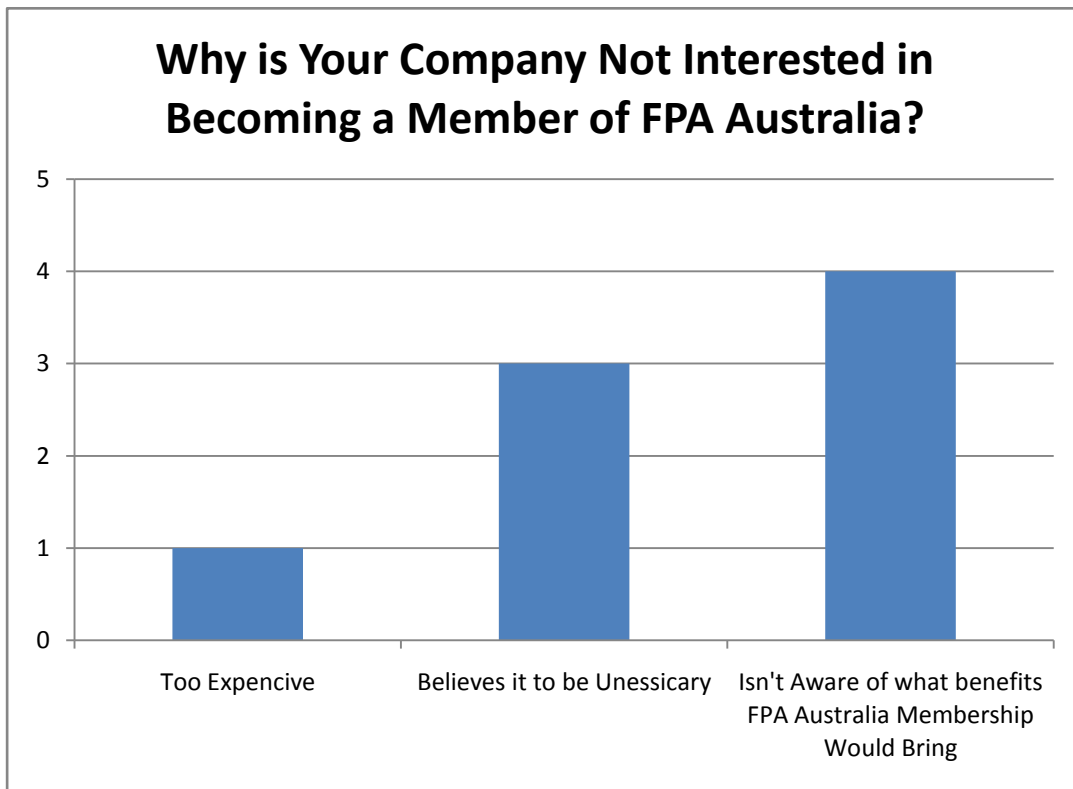


Figure 4-14: Why is Your Company Not Interested in Becoming a Member of FPA Australia?

Chapter 5: Design a Self-Assessment Package

The effective formatting and content of the self-assessment package were essential considerations for its design. The following sections analyze the research and findings from the result of the interviews that went into developing the package.

5.1 Researched Self-Assessment and Auditing Systems

Researching self-assessment and auditing systems was important in learning to compile and produce a self-assessment system. From the research done, we determined that ISO 9000, factory emissions assessments, and FPA Australia's BPAD-A were valuable sources and relevant to what we needed.

From the research, it was found that the ISO 9000 application system was divided into two parts. The first is a continuous internal assessment and the second is the official audit performed by the ISO organization to ensure good business practice and quality. We determined that it was more important for the design of the self-assessment to focus on the second aspect.

The current version of the ISO 9000 internal auditing system encourages members to not just comply with the ISO documentation but to comply in a way that will help the company achieve their specific goals and stated objectives. This was similar to the structure desired for the self-assessment system, since the objective was not only to have companies act ethically and give them credibility, but to also have them use the application process as an educational and motivational tool.

From the review of the factory emissions self-assessment, we identified several good techniques to ensure compliance. The two parts that were important to focus upon were consequences and legal action against non-compliance, and defining methods to prevent unethical conduct.

Due to the fact that this was dealing with emissions into the environment, there was government backing and enforcement. FPA Australia's COP does not directly have government support; however, some similar techniques can be used. Depending on the situation and degree of non-compliance in occurrence, actions can be taken against the company performing the

infraction. With legal action not necessarily being possible since the COP is not government enforced, actions such as fines, or membership detention could be acceptable consequence for breaches of conduct.

Ethical conduct plays directly into the consequences of non-compliance. Although companies should be motivated to perform their business ethically out of proper social and professional values, the extra encouragement of being a signatory and dealing with the consequences of breaching the COP should provide extra motivation to act ethically.

Finally FPA Australia's BPAD-A document was useful because it was clear how it educated the company using it. Not only did the document contain the certification sections, it also contained information on the purposes and process for applying for certification. This was important since it showed the applicant exactly what they were doing, what they would gain from doing it, and what to expect after the application was submitted. Along with the actual application, this made up the structure of the BPAD-A document, which was an appropriate structure for our self-assessment system.

5.2 Structure

From the research that was gathered on self-assessment systems and some input from the interviews, a general structure as to how the self-assessment would be conducted was developed, which is displayed below in the flow chart in figure 5.1. This structure was based on several factors, which incorporated FPA Australia's needs, goals and economic status.

The structure of the system is based on the fact that FPA Australia wants to be able to enforce the COP (proactive) and prevent issues from happening before they occur instead of sitting back and waiting for issues to arise (reactive). The proactive process will begin by submitting all application documentation. The Self-Assessment material will then be reviewed by FPA Australia officials. If it is determined that all self-assessment requirements have been met, signatory status will be granted. If there is some question as to the completeness of the self-assessment, then FPA Australia will contact the applying company to attempt to resolve the issues.

Signatory Application Process

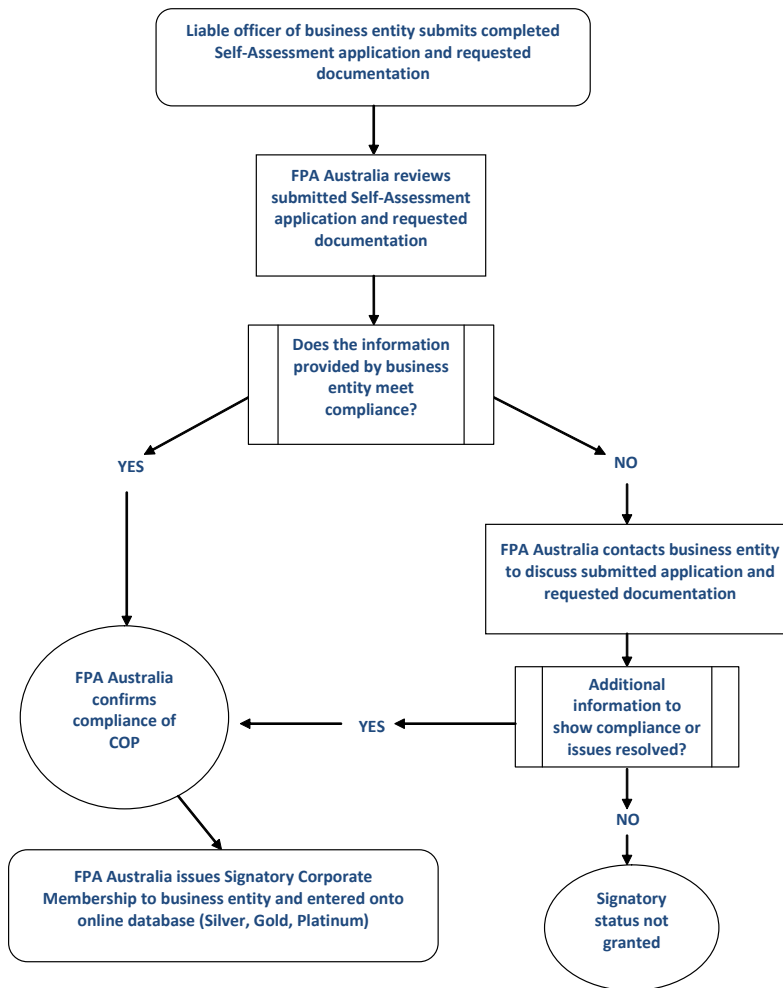


Figure 5-1: Signatory Application Process

5.3 “Benefits of Self-Assessment” Document

From the interview data, research done on self-assessment, and review of the COP, a compilation of data forming the benefits paper was developed. As the interviews indicated, there was wide spread concern with the lack of compliance for the COP. With the self-assessment system being the potential solution to this, there was a need for a document that could at a glance describe the features of the self-assessment system and how the signatory application process would work. This paper was developed in a style similar to the design used in the *Benefits of the Code of Practice* document currently used by FPA Australia, and can be found in Appendix F.

The document was designed so that it would fit into a single page with two columns. This size was chosen specifically to ensure that the document would be clear and concise, and so that its intent would be clear simply by looking at the document. Four main sections were included, each giving highlights of a certain feature of the self-assessment:

- **What is the Code of Practice Self-Assessment?:** This section summarized the overarching goals of the self-assessment; to increase and verify COP compliance, to improve the credibility of the COP, to enhance the marketability of COP Compliant Status, etc.
- **What is Covered by the Code of Practice Self-Assessment?:** This section briefly explained some of the areas of the COP that were covered by the self-assessment.
- **What is the Procedure for Conducting the Code of Practice Self-Assessment?:** This section highlighted the process for applying to become a signatory for new members and re-applying for existing ones.
- **What Actions may be Taken Against Non-Compliant Signatories?:** This section described the various actions which could be taken against signatory members found to be in non-compliance with the code, from simple reprimands to membership expulsion and reports to the Australian Regulatory Authorities.

5.4 Self-Assessment Package for FPA Australia

Every document discussed so far has had some influence on the development of the self-assessment system. This was the result of background research, interviews and analysis of the COP and other FPA Australia documents. For the full text of the self-assessment, please see Appendix E.

With the 2008 revision of the COP, the format for the self-assessment system was very straightforward to produce. The COP is divided into sections focusing on various specific aspects of business practices and ethics. The self-assessment was designed so that each section would be covered separately, with questions designed specifically to test compliance with that section.

The way these questions were asked was of great importance since the wording of the question would determine the type of answer received. There were two types of questions considered, 'declarative' and 'comparative'. Declarative questions are generally yes or no questions, where elaboration is not technically required to answer. An example of this would be 'Do you educate your employees on the contents of the Code of Practice?' A perfectly valid answer to that question would be simply 'yes', and in answering the question in this manner, the company might not provide any methods or proof of how the employees are educated.

In contrast, comparative questions are open ended questions. They are designed to extract a significant amount of data from the source, which can then be compared to a given standard (in this case the COP) to determine if compliance is in effect. An example of a comparative question would be "How do you educate your employees on the contents of the Code of Practice?" With this form of question, a simple 'yes' is no longer a valid answer; the wording of the question forces the person responding to it to elaborate further.

The current system of application is a declarative format, where the company is simply asked if they will comply with the COP and if so, to sign the document saying they will comply. Through the use of interviews, this has been determined to be inadequate. Therefore a comparative style of question was determined to be the most effective format for the self-assessment system.

Similar to the structure of FPA Australia's BPAD-A document, information was included wherever possible to give the applicant as much information as possible as to why the structure of the document was the way it was, and also why each topic was being covered. This resulted in small introductory sections to each of the question headings, along with the entire introduction at the start of the document detailing the purposes and procedures of the self-assessment system. Finally, a flow chart (see figure 5.1) was added which visually demonstrated how the signatory application process would proceed.

When designing the self-assessment system, the most important feedback obtained from the interviews was in relation to what features the companies would like to see in the system. Most of these related to how the self-assessment would be submitted and how the application would actually be processed. It was requested by multiple interviewees that the self-assessment system be made available online. An online submission would also help expedite the results of the application since it could be processed immediately and broken down into various sections for multiple people to review. It would be much less time consuming than if done with a paper application. Following submittal, a timely response should be expected for signatory status, such as within 10 business days after submission. Companies also requested a description of where the cut-off for compliance would be for applicants. Applicants should know ahead of time what level of detail of compliance with the COP is required to obtain signatory status. Further discussion of an online implementation of the self-assessment can be found in section 6.1.1.1.

5.5 Validation Testing

To confirm if the self-assessment system met the criteria for a satisfactory assessment system, the self-assessment system was checked against the five aspects of a successful self-assessment system previously discussed in section 2.4.2.

- **Complete Leadership Support-** FPA Australia is dedicated to increasing the compliance and credibility of the COP. They have pledged to stand behind the self-assessment and to continue its development after the project (Ross Hodge, 2008).
- **Implementation Plan-** The long term implementation plans of the self-assessment system focus on aspects such as formatting of a web application system and rapid

processing. A comprehensive long-term implementation plan has been laid out in section 6.1.1.

- **Timeframe-** Based on interview data, deadlines that will create prompt and effective responses were determined. These deadlines apply to both FPA Australia and the applicants. They are further discussed in section 6.1.1.
- **Assessment Tools-** The questions in the self-assessment have been formatted to educate the applicant as well as extract necessary information for FPA Australia. This was previously discussed in section 5.4. For the final self-assessment package, see Appendix E.
- **Monitoring and Redesign-** Feedback on the self-assessment system is important to FPA Australia since changes may need to be made to increase its effectiveness. Feedback forms and a data mining system are two ways this can be accomplished. These are further discussed in section 6.1.1.

To further test the self-assessment system before the final version was provided to FPA Australia, the self-assessment underwent a review process. However, due to the limited timeframe for the project only a single iteration could be performed. The company chosen was a single employee firm who also worked for FPA Australia directly as a consultant. This ensured that they would be able to provide feedback based on an intimate knowledge of both their own company, and the workings of FPA Australia. It also allowed us to test if the self-assessment successfully scaled to smaller companies, which had been a concern raised during the interviews.

The feedback from this review stated that the current format of the system and questions themselves were effective in attaining the desired information. However, the questions assumed the applicant was affected by all sections of the COP. This is not always the case, especially with smaller companies. The self-assessment did not give adequate provision of what to do if the question did not apply. With this problem identified, changes were made to the self-assessment system to allow companies an option to not answer certain questions if they did not apply to the company's practices, provided they show ample justification. The version of the self-assessment

produced based on the results of the iteration was used as the final version for this project.
Further recommendations for areas to improve the self-assessment can be found in section 6.1.1.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations

This project developed a self-assessment system for FPA Australia that would allow its member companies to increase compliance with their Code of Practice. The project produced two tangible documents to attain their objectives that they can use to increase compliance with the COP. These were the self-assessment benefits paper and the self-assessment application. This material should also help FPA Australia promote the Code of Practice and increase confidence and credibility of the Code.

The self-assessment system will provide FPA Australia with the information they have requested for determining which companies applying for signatory status are in compliance with the COP. Although this will not be all that is necessary to achieve FPA Australia's visions for the COP, it is a major stepping-stone as they progress towards further industry involvement with the COP.

Just as important as feedback from FPA Australia were the opinions of the member and non-member companies on the self-assessment system. The interviews performed revealed an anticipated support of the self-assessment system from all parties questioned. This was the encouragement FPA Australia was looking for in deciding whether the self-assessment system would be well received and effectively used.

With new innovations appearing in the fire protection industry all the time, it is important that all opportunities for change be taken seriously. The Self-Assessment system, although not normally used in the fire protection industry, is one such innovative document that could improve the industry though improving the credibility of the Code of Practice. In the long term, the implementation of the documents produced by the project, as well as consideration of its recommendations, will help to further FPA Australia's mission to 'promote the protection of life, assets and the environment from fire and other emergencies'.

6.1 Recommendations

In order to insure the long-term success of the self-assessment system, FPA Australia should take steps to ensure its continued growth and optimization. This section discusses creating a form for member feedback and continuing to modify the self-assessment based on it, moving the self-assessment online, ensuring the rapid and accurate processing of the self-assessment, and creating a data mining system to gather useful information from the responses to the self-assessment.

6.1.1 Post-Project Implementation of the Self-Assessment

In order to insure the long term success of the self-assessment system, FPA Australia must take steps to ensure the continued growth and optimization of the package from its original version. This section covers these recommendations, which include; creating a form for member feedback and continuing to modify the self-assessment based on it, moving the self-assessment online, and creating a data mining system to gather useful information from the responses to the self-assessment.

- **Move the Self-Assessment Online**

Our first recommendation for the post-project implementation of the self-assessment system is that it should eventually be moved online. This idea was supported by a large number of the member companies interviewed, who stated that online would be their preferred method of submission.

Moving the self-assessment online offers many advantages over a paper-based system. It allows instant updating of the questions and content of the self-assessment, and ensures that these updates are available to the membership. With a paper-based system, there could be outdated versions of the system still in circulation which might be completed by a member, and then FPA Australia and the member company would have to go through the trouble of figuring out what has changed between the current version and the outdated version and having the member company re-do any altered sections.

Moving the system online also simplifies the process of submitting and compiling the various documentation. All of the information can be attached in PDF or Word/Excel format, easing storage and review. This system simplifies things for both FPA Australia and the company performing the self-assessment. The answers to the questions themselves are also easier to manage this way, as they don't need to take up sheets of paper and risk loss or miss-filing, and there is far less risk of legibility problems due to poor handwriting.

Another advantage of an online system is for ease of access for members. Having the assessment online allows the membership to access it at anytime, anywhere. They also don't have to worry about misplacing forms or keeping large amounts of documentation together while they're compiling it for submission.

- **Create Form for Member Feedback**

Our next recommendation is for FPA Australia to develop a standardized system to receive member feedback. As addressed in section 2.4.2, one of the key features of any successful self-assessment system is its ability to be open to feedback from the companies performing it, and modification based on this feedback. This serves the dual purpose of allowing the companies performing the self-assessment to feel that they have some aspect of control and involvement with it, and also helps the assessor (FPA Australia) to optimize the self-assessment based on the feedback of what's working and what isn't. In addition, several of the member companies interviewed expressed a desire to be able to give their feedback to FPA Australia.

Ideally, this system should be web-based or have an option to be completed online, as this is the method that the member companies that expressed interest in giving feedback wanted to use. Making the system web-based would also potentially reduce the time needed to go through the data, as an automated database could be set up which stored responses based on categories of feedback or by response content. Categories could include feedback on a specific question, on the system as a whole, on items which should be added/removed, etc. Using this system, FPA Australia could rapidly and

accurately modify the self-assessment as needed to ensure that it best fits the needs of its membership as well as FPA Australia's own needs.

- **Rapid and Accurate Processing of Completed Self-Assessments**

One concern that interviewed members had was that if FPA Australia took too long to review and accept/deny their application for signatory status, then the self-assessment would not be as useful. This concern was strengthened during meetings with FPA Australia staff, who stated that they were afraid that they might become overwhelmed with trying to process a large number of self-assessments without having to hire additional staff, something which they expressly do not want to do.

As a method to alleviate this concern, we recommend that a predefined system of 'cutoffs' be developed for each question. These cutoffs would be shorthand responses or criterion that the person reviewing the responses to a self-assessment can compare them to in order to quickly and easily determine if the response is sufficient to receive a pass. These cutoffs could be in the form of a bulleted list of criteria, example responses, or other information FPA Australia deems important to be included in an adequate response to a question.

- **Create a Data Mining System**

We also recommend that FPA Australia creates a data-mining system. The questions in the Self-Assessment are worded such that it encourages companies to answer them with long, content rich responses. From them, it may be possible to extract data which could be used to spot current trends in the membership. With this knowledge, FPA Australia could determine areas where the membership is having problems due to a lack of education, and could target future courses and seminars to address it. For example, if FPA Australia receives a number of self-assessments which all have problems addressing section 8: Licensing and Accreditation (see Appendix E), then FPA Australia could conduct an educational seminar that teaches participants methods to use to insure they

keep up with licensing and ensuring that all its employees are considered ‘competent persons’.

This system could be either human or automated or both. Most likely the easiest way to implement the system would be to have a human go through the responses and, based on some pre-defined categories (perhaps based on the cutoffs described in section 7.1.3) created by FPA Australia, classify the responses. An automated system would then track the number of responses in each category and would alert FPA Australia to any trends that emerge. The creation and implementation of the data mining system could be the potential focus of a future IQP.

6.1.2 Increase Marketing of the COP

During the course of our interviews, it became apparent that one of the biggest hindrances to the success of the COP was the general lack of knowledge in the industry about what the COP was and what it stood for. This was especially true with the smaller and medium sized companies, whose clients often didn’t have any idea what the COP was or why they should work with companies that were compliant with it, and with non-member companies. Therefore, our group developed several recommendations as to what could be done to increase the industry awareness of the COP.

- **Client-Side Marketing Strategies**

In order for a certification such as COP signatory status to have value, the clients who purchase from the certified companies have to perceive that the certification is meaningful, and they will receive something better than or unavailable at companies without the certification. This can sometimes be derived simply from the name of the certification; clients seeing “XX car manufacturer certified mechanic” perceive that XX car maker trusts in the competence of the mechanic to work on their cars, and so the client should as well.

However, this is not the case with the “Code of Practice Compliant Company” logo. A client reading this without prior knowledge of what the COP was will be unlikely to perceive anything that would draw them to do business with this company

over any other based simply on the name of the certification. This is a problem; based on the interview data in sections 4.1.1.2 and 4.1.3.3, on average less than 50% of the clients doing business with signatories are aware of what the COP is, and even of those that do, less than half give special preference to signatories.

Therefore, we recommend that FPA Australia increases marketing of the COP aimed specifically towards clients of their member companies. There are a number of ways that FPA Australia could accomplish this. One method would be to hold educational seminars that were directed to clients rather than members, during which they explained the COP and its benefits.

Another method would be to take out new or increase the number of print ads in trade magazines and other relevant publications. These ads would possibly contain highlights from the benefits of the COP pamphlet, and would explain to clients that they should look for companies displaying the COP compliant logo to ensure that they were doing business with a company that holds itself to a high standard of business ethics. Another method would be to put ads in the phone book in relevant locations which would be a simplified version of the print ads. They would again encourage clients to look for the COP compliant logo when searching for companies to ensure high business ethics. Both of these methods put the COP and what it stands for directly in the path of clients that may be actively searching for companies to do business with, and subtlety may push them towards a signatory member (Ross Hodge, 2008).

A final method could be a change to the COP compliant logo itself to include text to the effect of “look for this logo to ensure your fire protection service provider holds themselves to the highest standard of business ethics.” This last method would allow clients to, simply by looking at the logo, perceive at least a small amount of what the COP stands for and why they should do business with companies that comply with it without them ever having seen any of the print ads or other marketing methods.

Any of these methods or preferably all of them if implemented will increase client knowledge of the COP and why they should look for COP compliant companies

to do business with. This will in turn increase the business of the signatory members, which will increase the value of the COP certification in the eyes of industry members. Increased value in the certification will potentially attract more new members to FPA Australia, both increasing their business and helping to achieve the goal of the COP, which is to hold the entire fire protection industry to a high standard of business ethics.

- **Corporate-Side Marketing Strategies**

Finally, we recommend that FPA Australia also increase their corporate-side marketing. During the interviews, it was determined that among the FPA Australia membership, in both signatories and non-signatories, there was a lack of knowledge of the full benefits that are provided by being a signatory. This lack of knowledge could be created due to the current method used for recruiting new members.

In the current system, potential new members are sent a package of information which includes a general overview of FPA Australia, and then a membership application and declaration of signatory status. The COP itself is not included, and so the potential new member does not have any real way of knowing what they are agreeing to be signatories of without doing research on their own, and even then they may not find all of the benefits of being a signatory or understand how they can apply them to their own business. Therefore, we recommend that the benefits of the COP pamphlet, as well as a copy of the new version of the COP, be included with the membership packet. This would allow the potential new member to quickly see all of the advantages of becoming a signatory and how it will help their business, which may encourage them to become members of FPA Australia.

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Appendix A: Interview Forms

These interviews will be semi-structured. This will ensure that pertinent issues are addressed, while also providing the freedom to ask for more in-depth discussion on interesting topics or ideas. For more information about the interviews and how they will be performed, see Section 3.2. The interview questions are loosely based off of the interviews conducted by the 2007 IQP (Balesano et al. 2007)

These forms are to serve as guidelines for the interview, and are not read by the member company being interviewed. They are written in the following format:

1. QUESTION TO BE ASKED DIRECTLY TO MEMBER COMPANY
 - a. POSSIBLE FOLLOWUP QUESTIONS BASED ON ANSWER TO ABOVE

A.1 Signatory Provider Interview

Company:

Interviewee:

Member Type:

Date Joined FPA Australia:

Interview Date & Time:

Interviewer:

Scribe:

Summary

Background

1. Role In Company

Questions

Knowledge of FPAA

2. How long has your company been a member of FPA Australia
3. Are you aware that you are a signatory of the FPA Australia Code of Practice?
 - a. Why did you become a signatory?
 - b. What do you see as the advantages of being a signatory?

- c. Are there any disadvantages?
- d. What are the important aspects of the COP in relation to your businesses practices
- e. What aspects of the COP were most appealing when deciding to become a signatory
- f. Do you use the COP logo in advertising and other company information?
 - i. If so, what percentage of the companies you work with do you believe are aware of what your COP signatory status means?
 - ii. If no, have you seen the benefits of the COP pamphlet?
- g. What is its primary motivation for continued signatory status?

Self-assessment

- 4. What are your views on the application process for becoming a signatory
- 5. Is there anything that you feel could be done to increase the credibility of the COP in the eyes of your clients?
 - a. If yes and related to self-assessment, propose self –assessment system and gain feedback
 - i. Are there any specific features you would like to see?
 - b. If yes and not related to self-assessment, note companies’ idea and then propose self-assessment and gauge companies’ interest.
 - i. What do you think of this idea in comparison to the previous one?
 - ii. Are there any specific features you would like to see?
 - c. If no, propose self-assessment system and gain feedback.
 - i. What are your opinions on being required to use the self-assessment system?
 - ii. If implemented, what features would make this system appealing to you?

A.2 Non-Signatory Provider Interview

Company:

Interviewee:

Member Type:

Date Joined FPA Australia:

Interview Date & Time:

Interviewer:

Scribe:

Summary

Background

1. Role in Company

Questions

Knowledge of FPAA

- 2.** Why does your company remain a member of FPA Australia?
- 3.** Are you aware that you are not a signatory of the Code of Practice?
 - a. What are your reasons for not being a signatory?
 - b. If you decide to become a signatory, are you familiar with the process involved?
 - c. Is there anything FPA Australia could change to make you want to become a signatory?
 - d. Do you find any of the aspects of the code beneficial to aiding your company?
 - e. Do you think the COP could help you promote your services to your clients?

Self-assessment

- 4.** Is there anything you can think of that would improve the application process?
 - a. If yes and related to self-assessment, propose self –assessment system
 - i. Are there any specific features you would like to see?

- b. If yes and not related to self-assessment, note companies' idea and then propose self-assessment and gauge companies' interest
 - i. What do you think of this idea in comparison to the previous one?
 - ii. If implemented, what features would make this system appealing to you?
 - c. If no, propose self-assessment system and gain feedback
 - i. What are your opinions on being required to use a self-assessment system?
 - ii. If implemented, what features would make this system appealing to you?
5. Would your companies' greater involvement in the application process be considered a positive or a negative?

A.3 Organizations

Company:

Interviewee:

Member Type:

Date Joined FPA Australia:

Interview Date & Time:

Interviewer:

Scribe:

Summary

Background

6. Role in Company

Questions

Knowledge of FPAA

- 7. Why does your company remain a member of FPA Australia?
- 8. Are you familiar with the process involved for corporations applying for signatory status?
 - a. Do you feel the current application process is sufficient in assuring that signatories are code compliant?

- b. Do you find any of the aspects of the code beneficial to aiding your company?
- c. Of the companies you work with, what percentage are signatories?
 - i. Do you prefer working with signatories over non-signatories?

Self-assessment

- 9. Are there any changes to the COP or its application process you can think of that would increase the confidence you have in signatories?
 - a. If yes and related to self-assessment, propose self –assessment system
 - i. Are there any specific features you would like to see?
 - b. If yes and not related to self-assessment, note companies’ idea and then propose self-assessment and gauge companies’ interest
 - i. What do you think of this idea in comparison to the previous one?
 - ii. If implemented, what features would make this system appealing to you?
 - c. If no, propose self-assessment system and gain feedback
 - i. What are your opinions on being required to use a self-assessment system?
 - ii. If implemented, what features would make this system appealing to you?

Appendix B: Interview Minutes

This Appendix contains all interview results relevant to the project.

B.1 Interview with Ross Hodge, FPA Australia Liaison

Introductions

Progress made so far (review of previous IQP's)

Questions:

Liaisons role in the company

Executive director, reports directly to board

Origins of project (if not already clear from previous IQP's)

Need a way to add credibility to the COP as well as increase member enrolment

What will our working environment be (in the office, from home, out interviewing)

Based in the office, will have contact with some members, do lots of outside investigating. ICCC endorses and supports industry COP's, general Australian watch dog.

Who else should we talk to (noted rival codes and companies not already stated in previous IQP)

Project work:

Liaisons expectations for the project

Have not changed since project description, intent is still the same. Should have final COP. Wants to make the COP more user friendly ("shaper, snappier"). Focuses on companies

that provide FPE services. COP was introduced because ICCI identified practices that were less than scrupulous in the Fire Protection Industry. The project should be focused on self-assessment. The system would work so that the member companies fill out the audit form and then send it back to FPA-A for approval. Also can serve as an educational tool, pointing out to companies how they may improve business operations while they do the audit. The FPA badge is meant to act similar to the ISO9001 certification; IE if the member company is certified, they are a reputable company worth dealing with that can deliver a solid product/service in a fair manner.

Focusing the scope of project (project description lays out a picture of a very extensive project, what are we really looking to accomplish)

Main objective is to provide a framework for developing the self-assessment for the member companies. Should work to uncover as much information as possible about existing self-assessment and full auditing process in the industry and related.

Questions from liaison about us or our work?

Not at the moment. Maybe a couple of contacts inside the company that dealt with the re-write of the COP. Should attempt to form some questions for interview with member companies. Should focus on member companies understanding of compliance with the code and how an auditing system might help in that respect.

Closing remarks (thank you for your time ect.)

B.2 Signatory Provider Interviews

Company:

Interviewee:

Member Type: Signatory

Date Joined FPA Australia:

Interview Date & Time:

Interviewer: Chris Putnam

Scribe: Matt Clark

Summary

Background

6. Role In Company: Director

Questions

Knowledge of FPAA

7. How long has your company been a member of FPA Australia

Been a member since 1994

8. Are you aware that you are a signatory of the FPA Australia Code of Practice?

Yes

a. Why did you become a signatory?

It strengthens credibility and standings in areas such as the building industry. Also shows that we are prepared to stand behind our services and tend to put an honest on ourselves to carry out our services in a professional manner.

b. What do you see as the advantages of being a signatory?

Gives company credibility. Also projects us to other industries and the public

c. Are there any disadvantages?

None that he has encountered

d. What are the important aspects of the COP in relation to your businesses practices

- No, it doesn't impact on his business or change his direction. Has accepted it long ago and must comply and will happily comply with.
- e. What aspects of the COP were most appealing when deciding to become a signatory
The fact that it was a signatory process and that we all were putting our signature to it to strongly agreeing to the abiding instead of it being a published document that you may comply with. Making it an optional agreement. The signature doesn't allow you to back out.
 - f. Do you use the COP logo in advertising and other company information?
Yes he does use the logo for advertisement and states that he is code compliance
 - i. If so, what percentage of the companies you work with do you believe are aware of what your COP signatory status means?
About 25%
 - ii. If no, have you seen the benefits of the COP pamphlet?
 - g. What is its primary motivation for continued signatory status?
It hopefully keeps everyone at the same level of detail of compliance and professionalism that is a must.

Self-assessment

- 9. What are your views on the application process for becoming a signatory
No I don't think so, thought it was an easy application process
- 10. Is there anything that you feel could be done to increase the credibility of the COP in the eyes of your clients?
No the COP right now is adequate.
 - a. If yes and related to self-assessment, propose self –assessment system and gain feedback
 - i. Are there any specific features you would like to see?
 - b. If yes and not related to self-assessment, note companies' idea and then propose self-assessment and gauge companies' interest.
 - i. What do you think of this idea in comparison to the previous one?
 - ii. Are there any specific features you would like to see?

- c. If no, propose self-assessment system and gain feedback.
 - i. What are your opinions on being required to use the self-assessment system?
He is ok with it and would not have any objection with it. He would encourage the self-assessment system because it would increase compliance.
 - ii. If implemented, what features would make this system appealing to you?
Feels that compatibility needs to be done for small and large companies.

Comments:

The problem is that most people don't know much about COP. FPAA should take any opportunity they have to drive home the COP and wave it in people's faces to it gets out there. Articles in the FPAA magazine could publicize the COP. Is happy that FPAA is taking strides towards being better.

Company:

Interviewee:

Member Type: Signatory (corporate)

Date Joined FPA Australia:

Interview Date & Time:

Interviewer: Chris Putnam

Scribe: Matt Clark

Summary

Background

11. Role In Company: Owner

Questions

Knowledge of FPAA

12. How long has your company been a member of FPA Australia

1 year

13. Are you aware that you are a signatory of the FPA Australia Code of Practice?

No

a. Why did you become a signatory?

That was a good idea

b. What do you see as the advantages of being a signatory?

Credibility

c. Are there any disadvantages?

No

d. What are the important aspects of the COP in relation to your businesses practices

e. What aspects of the COP were most appealing when deciding to become a signatory

f. Do you use the COP logo in advertising and other company information?

No but would like to

- i. If so, what percentage of the companies you work with do you believe are aware of what your COP signatory status means?
1%
- ii. If no, have you seen the benefits of the COP pamphlet?

Self-assessment

14. What are your views on the application process for becoming a signatory

No views

15. Is there anything that you feel could be done to increase the credibility of the COP in the eyes of your clients?

- a. If yes and related to self-assessment, propose self –assessment system and gain feedback
 - i. Are there any specific features you would like to see?
No
- b. If yes and not related to self-assessment, note companies' idea and then propose self-assessment and gauge companies' interest.
 - i. What do you think of this idea in comparison to the previous one?
 - ii. Are there any specific features you would like to see?
- c. If no, propose self-assessment system and gain feedback.
 - i. What are your opinions on being required to use the self-assessment system?
 - ii. If implemented, what features would make this system appealing to you?

Comments: Would be in support of a self-assessment, would like to start using COP logo and using FPA Australia to promote his business

Company:

Interviewee:

Member Type: Signatory

Date Joined FPA Australia:

Interview Date & Time:

Interviewer: Chris Putnam

Scribe: Matt Clark

Background

16. Role In Company: Manager

Questions

Knowledge of FPAA

17. How long has your company been a member of FPA Australia

Been a member before it was FPA Australia (about 25 yrs)

18. Are you aware that you are a signatory of the FPA Australia Code of Practice?

Yes

a. Why did you become a signatory?

Put responsibility back into the industry

b. What do you see as the advantages of being a signatory?

No real advantage because he is a one man company, but just for input and knowledge of the fire protection industry

c. Are there any disadvantages?

None

d. What are the important aspects of the COP in relation to your businesses practices?

He uses it to hold him to a standard

e. What aspects of the COP were most appealing when deciding to become a signatory?

Been a part of it for so long so not really applicable

f. Do you use the COP logo in advertising and other company information?

No not at the moment

- i. If so, what percentage of the companies you work with do you believe are aware of what your COP signatory status means?

75%

- ii. If no, have you seen the benefits of the COP pamphlet?
- g. What is its primary motivation for continued signatory status?
Been a member for so long and wanted to keep himself to a standard

Self-assessment

19. What are your views on the application process for becoming a signatory

Wasn't familiar with it at all

20. Is there anything that you feel could be done to increase the credibility of the COP in the eyes of your clients?

Feels that something could be done but didn't know exactly what

- a. If yes and related to self-assessment, propose self –assessment system and gain feedback
 - i. Are there any specific features you would like to see?
Had no ideas
- b. If yes and not related to self-assessment, note companies' idea and then propose self-assessment and gauge companies' interest.
 - i. What do you think of this idea in comparison to the previous one?
 - ii. Are there any specific features you would like to see?
- c. If no, propose self-assessment system and gain feedback.
 - i. What are your opinions on being required to use the self-assessment system?
 - ii. If implemented, what features would make this system appealing to you?

Comments: Felt that the self-assessment was a good idea and would support it

Company:

Interviewee:

Member Type: Signatory

Date Joined FPA Australia:

Interview Date & Time:

Interviewer: Chris Putnam

Scribe: Matt Clark

Summary

Background

21. Role In Company: Director

Questions

Knowledge of FPAA

22. How long has your company been a member of FPA Australia

4 years

23. Are you aware that you are a signatory of the FPA Australia Code of Practice?

Yes

a. Why did you become a signatory?

Ethical situation and credibility with the national body

b. What do you see as the advantages of being a signatory?

Get recognition as for the fact that you're a member of national organization and get representation on standards bodies as well

c. Are there any disadvantages?

No

d. What are the important aspects of the COP in relation to your businesses practices

Are code compliant and comply with all standards and makes sure that we do everything in their power to operate and maintain standards. And maintain an ethical contact with clients

- e. What aspects of the COP were most appealing when deciding to become a signatory
Same as above (ethics and doing the right thing for the clients)
- f. Do you use the COP logo in advertising and other company information?
FPA logo not COP logo
 - i. If so, what percentage of the companies you work with do you believe are aware of what your COP signatory status means?
5%.... uses cop for as a leverage with the companies that don't know about it.
 - ii. If no, have you seen the benefits of the COP pamphlet?
- g. What is its primary motivation for continued signatory status?
Same as above

Self-assessment

24. What are your views on the application process for becoming a signatory

The process is a little too lenient and hard to lose membership if they do something wrong

25. Is there anything that you feel could be done to increase the credibility of the COP in the eyes of your clients?

Above answer and would be in favor of self-assessment system

- a. If yes and related to self-assessment, propose self –assessment system and gain feedback
 - i. Are there any specific features you would like to see?
Doesn't have any ideas at the moment but would feel it would give more credibility
- b. If yes and not related to self-assessment, note companies' idea and then propose self-assessment and gauge companies' interest.
 - i. What do you think of this idea in comparison to the previous one?
 - ii. Are there any specific features you would like to see
- c. If no, propose self-assessment system and gain feedback.
 - i. What are your opinions on being required to use the self-assessment system?
 - ii. If implemented, what features would make this system appealing to you?

Comments: biggest issue is that no one has a clue what FPA is, comes back to gov't to saying who will govern the FP industry or make an entirely new body that will do so because the fire brigade doesn't do it. Wants FPA to become the governing (legal) body and wants it taken away from the fire brigade because it is competing with a private enterprise so it should be treated like a private enterprise.

Company:

Interviewee:

Member Type: Signatory

Date Joined FPA Australia:

Interview Date & Time:

Interviewer: Chris Putnam

Scribe: Matt Clark

Summary

Background

26. Role In Company: Director

Questions

Knowledge of FPAA

27. How long has your company been a member of FPA Australia

Been a member since 1984

28. Are you aware that you are a signatory of the FPA Australia Code of Practice?

Yes

a. Why did you become a signatory?

Because he is in the business

b. What do you see as the advantages of being a signatory?

Besides from using the logo on letter head it gives clients reassurance that they know what we are doing

c. Are there any disadvantages?

In VIC there are a bit less because there are registrations and other stuff that govern

d. What are the important aspects of the COP in relation to your businesses practices

Sticking to the COP

e. What aspects of the COP were most appealing when deciding to become a signatory

f. Do you use the COP logo in advertising and other company information?

On the website and letter head and business cards

- i. If so, what percentage of the companies you work with do you believe are aware of what your COP signatory status means?
Awareness is improving but day to day clients (installers and building owners) use to virtually ignore but lately logos have been used more. Its not everyone but it's getting close to a better percentage.
- ii. If no, have you seen the benefits of the COP pamphlet?
- g. What is its primary motivation for continued signatory status?

Self-assessment

29. What are your views on the application process for becoming a signatory

Works reasonably well, and pretty simple. Wouldn't know what would happen if a company sent in an application with a bad reputation. He sees a lot of companies using the logo but aren't actually complying

30. Is there anything that you feel could be done to increase the credibility of the COP in the eyes of your clients?

Feels that there needs to be more than just a signature because the average small and medium companies don't know how to gauge themselves. So a stack of questions would be enlightening to them and FPA as to what they are doing.

- a. If yes and related to self-assessment, propose self –assessment system and gain feedback
 - i. Are there any specific features you would like to see?
Nothing that sort of stands out.
- b. If yes and not related to self-assessment, note companies' idea and then propose self-assessment and gauge companies' interest.
 - i. What do you think of this idea in comparison to the previous one?
 - ii. Are there any specific features you would like to see?
- c. If no, propose self-assessment system and gain feedback.
 - i. What are your opinions on being required to use the self-assessment system?
 - ii. If implemented, what features would make this system appealing to you?

Company:

Interviewee:

Member Type: Signatory

Date Joined FPA Australia:

Interview Date & Time:

Interviewer: Chris Putnam

Scribe: Matt Clark

Summary

Background

31. Role In Company: Director

Questions

Knowledge of FPAA

32. How long has your company been a member of FPA Australia

Member for 4 years

33. Are you aware that you are a signatory of the FPA Australia Code of Practice?

Yes

a. Why did you become a signatory?

Need a set of guidelines to work by. Especially when doing installations of sprinklers and electrical work.

b. What do you see as the advantages of being a signatory?

Gives his workers credibility so that clients will have confidence in the independent work being done

c. Are there any disadvantages?

None that he has encountered

d. What are the important aspects of the COP in relation to your businesses practices

e. What aspects of the COP were most appealing when deciding to become a signatory

f. Do you use the COP logo in advertising and other company information?

yes

- i. If so, what percentage of the companies you work with do you believe are aware of what your COP signatory status means?
70%, mostly due to the fact that the clients are government buildings
- ii. If no, have you seen the benefits of the COP pamphlet?
- g. What is its primary motivation for continued signatory status?
Same as previous answers relating to why being a member

Self-assessment

34. What are your views on the application process for becoming a signatory

Could use more structure and strictness. If clients are going to have faith in the COP, there should be measures in place to make sure that the clients do not need to worry about if signatories are in fact compliant.

35. Is there anything that you feel could be done to increase the credibility of the COP in the eyes of your clients?

Prevent companies that are not compliant from joining

- a. If yes and related to self-assessment, propose self –assessment system and gain feedback
 - i. Are there any specific features you would like to see?
- b. If yes and not related to self-assessment, note companies' idea and then propose self-assessment and gauge companies' interest.
 - i. What do you think of this idea in comparison to the previous one?
 - ii. Are there any specific features you would like to see?
- c. If no, propose self-assessment system and gain feedback.
 - i. What are your opinions on being required to use the self-assessment system?
 - ii. If implemented, what features would make this system appealing to you?

Company:

Interviewee:

Member Type: Signatory

Date Joined FPA Australia:

Interview Date & Time:

Interviewer: Chris Putnam

Scribe: Matt Clark

Summary

Background

36. Role In Company: Operations Manager

Questions

Knowledge of FPAA

37. How long has your company been a member of FPA Australia

5 years in companies current form.

38. Are you aware that you are a signatory of the FPA Australia Code of Practice?

yes

a. Why did you become a signatory?

To be code compliant

b. What do you see as the advantages of being a signatory?

Statue of declaration. Do all work per the code

c. Are there any disadvantages?

no

d. What are the important aspects of the COP in relation to your businesses practices

Important to the customers.

e. What aspects of the COP were most appealing when deciding to become a signatory

Gives them more credibility and accreditation. Important in advertising.

f. Does you use the COP logo in advertising and other company information?

yes

- i. If so, what percentage of the companies you work with do you believe are aware of what your COP signatory status means?

30 to 40%

- g. What is its primary motivation for continued signatory status?

Because it will probably become essentially mandatory someday.

Self-assessment

39. What are your views on the application process for becoming a signatory

No answer, interviewee was not the one to actually fill out the forms originally.

40. Is there anything that you feel could be done to increase the credibility of the COP in the eyes of your clients?

- a. If yes and related to self-assessment, propose self –assessment system and gain feedback

- i. Are there any specific features you would like to see?

Australian standard for service equipment, better breakdown of specific fire codes. He wants COP to break down the Australian standards and show how companies

Company:

Interviewee:

Member Type: Signatory (Silver)

Date Joined FPA Australia:

Interview Date & Time:

Interviewer: Chris Putnam

Scribe: Matt Clark

Summary

Background

41. Role In Company: Manager director

Questions

Knowledge of FPAA

42. How long has your company been a member of FPA Australia

21 years

43. Are you aware that you are a signatory of the FPA Australia Code of Practice?

No

- a. Why did you become a signatory?
- b. What do you see as the advantages of being a signatory?
- c. Are there any disadvantages?
- d. What are the important aspects of the COP in relation to your businesses practices
- e. What aspects of the COP were most appealing when deciding to become a signatory
- f. Do you use the COP logo in advertising and other company information?

Does use it

- i. If so, what percentage of the companies you work with do you believe are aware of what your COP signatory status means?

None, doesn't push it because he is part of other bodies that are more important than FPA Australia

- ii. If no, have you seen the benefits of the COP pamphlet?
- g. What is its primary motivation for continued signatory status?

Self-assessment

44. What are your views on the application process for becoming a signatory

Has no clue

45. Is there anything that you feel could be done to increase the credibility of the COP in the eyes of your clients?

- a. If yes and related to self-assessment, propose self –assessment system and gain feedback
 - i. Are there any specific features you would like to see?
None
- b. If yes and not related to self-assessment, note companies' idea and then propose self-assessment and gauge companies' interest.
 - i. What do you think of this idea in comparison to the previous one?
 - ii. Are there any specific features you would like to see?
- c. If no, propose self-assessment system and gain feedback.
 - i. What are your opinions on being required to use the self-assessment system?
 - ii. If implemented, what features would make this system appealing to you?

Comments: would be in support of the Self-assessment

Company:

Interviewee:

Member Type: Signatory

Date Joined FPA Australia:

Interview Date & Time:

Interviewer: Chris Putnam

Scribe: Matt Clark

Summary

Background

46. Role In Company: Director

Questions

Knowledge of FPAA

47. How long has your company been a member of FPA Australia

12 Months

48. Are you aware that you are a signatory of the FPA Australia Code of Practice?

Yes

a. Why did you become a signatory?

Company creditability and to keep up with current regs and knowledge. Also wants to keep up with new technology and regs and licensing

b. What do you see as the advantages of being a signatory?

Same as above

c. Are there any disadvantages?

None at all

d. What are the important aspects of the COP in relation to your businesses practices

Being part of the industry and keeping up with

e. What aspects of the COP were most appealing when deciding to become a signatory

Same as above

- f. Do you use the COP logo in advertising and other company information?
 Mostly.. yes
- i. If so, what percentage of the companies you work with do you believe are aware of what your COP signatory status means?
 No idea
 - ii. If no, have you seen the benefits of the COP pamphlet?
- g. What is its primary motivation for continued signatory status?
 Show client and ourselves that we must comply by the “book”

Self-assessment

49. What are your views on the application process for becoming a signatory

Pretty easy, needs to be more involved

50. Is there anything that you feel could be done to increase the credibility of the COP in the eyes of your clients?

Probably more advertising and awareness

- a. If yes and related to self-assessment, propose self –assessment system and gain feedback
 - i. Are there any specific features you would like to see?
 On site testing, and making sure that the employees doing the work are actually certified (licensing) and also that the work done is by regulation.
 Easy form of client feedback to be able to report them.
- b. If yes and not related to self-assessment, note companies’ idea and then propose self-assessment and gauge companies’ interest.
 - i. What do you think of this idea in comparison to the previous one?
 - ii. Are there any specific features you would like to see?
- c. If no, propose self-assessment system and gain feedback.
 - i. What are your opinions on being required to use the self-assessment system?
 - ii. If implemented, what features would make this system appealing to you?

Comments: The work being done was by some FPA Australia members are doing unsatisfactory work and somehow are being passed. Unsatisfactory work is more than not, also hiring people to do the work that are not actually certified and they aren't actually checking the work that was done.

Company:

Interviewee:

Member Type:

Date Joined FPA Australia:

Interview Date & Time:

Interviewer: Chris Putnam

Scribe: Matt Clark

Summary

Background

51. Role In Company: Director

Questions

Knowledge of FPAA

52. How long has your company been a member of FPA Australia

7 years

53. Are you aware that you are a signatory of the FPA Australia Code of Practice?

yes

a. Why did you become a signatory?

To support of the COP, since there is a need for it in the industry

b. What do you see as the advantages of being a signatory?

Not yet, not enough awareness in the industry

c. Are there any disadvantages?

no

d. What are the important aspects of the COP in relation to your businesses practices

Use it as a benchmark for ethical conduct.

e. What aspects of the COP were most appealing when deciding to become a signatory

It's a black and white statement about what you are trying to achieve in the business

f. Does you use the COP logo in advertising and other company information?

No, but we probably should start

- i. If so, what percentage of the companies you work with do you believe are aware of what your COP signatory status means?

None

- g. What is its primary motivation for continued signatory status?

Raising awareness of the COP and educate people and customers about the needs of fire safety and testing

Self-assessment

- 54.** What are your views on the application process for becoming a signatory

There is no policing involved as to who becomes a signatory

- 55.** Is there anything that you feel could be done to increase the credibility of the COP in the eyes of your clients?

There should be some kind of audit process involved when applying to the COP

- a. If yes and related to self-assessment, propose self –assessment system and gain feedback
 - i. Are there any specific features you would like to see?

Perform the self-assessment over the Internet. Electronic submission would be the easiest for both clients and FPA Australia

Company:

Interviewee:

Member Type: Signatory (gold)

Date Joined FPA Australia:

Interview Date & Time:

Interviewer: Chris Putnam

Scribe: Matt Clark

Summary

Background

56. Role In Company: Directors

Questions

Knowledge of FPAA

57. How long has your company been a member of FPA Australia

14 years

58. Are you aware that you are a signatory of the FPA Australia Code of Practice?

Yes

a. Why did you become a signatory?

COP compliments the fact that our companies activities have international accreditations. Fits in with the way we deal with business and clients

b. What do you see as the advantages of being a signatory?

It has some recognition and market penetration with delivering fire protection maintance and it's a good code

c. Are there any disadvantages?

No

d. What are the important aspects of the COP in relation to your businesses practices

e. What aspects of the COP were most appealing when deciding to become a signatory

f. Do you use the COP logo in advertising and other company information?

Yes... uses it to promote services

- i. If so, what percentage of the companies you work with do you believe are aware of what your COP signatory status means?

The large blue chip corporate would recognize it. Doesn't have much market penetration in the smaller medium business and clients

- ii. If no, have you seen the benefits of the COP pamphlet?

Self-assessment

59. What are your views on the application process for becoming a signatory?

Feels more rigor needs be done to make sure that companies are code compliant. Feels the application process is to simple at moment

60. Is there anything that you feel could be done to increase the credibility of the COP in the eyes of your clients?

- a. If yes and related to self-assessment, propose self –assessment system and gain feedback

- i. Are there any specific features you would like to see?

Enforces all the companies to take some time to fill out and provide evidence. Would like to see it done electronically, also effective acknowledgement of submittal and let companies know if the evidence is adequate within a set time period. Would like to see this being within a timeline of 10 business days. Inappropriate if FPA would take 3 months to do this process, would like maybe a template used to validate evidence and a cut off of compliancy. Also a time period for companies to resubmit and if they don't show compliance they don't get membership. If companies do fail have a set minimum time period for companies to reapply (3 months) so that the company can effectively put in new systems.

- ii. What do you think of this idea in comparison to the previous one?
- iii. Are there any specific features you would like to see?

- b. If no, propose self-assessment system and gain feedback.

- i. What are your opinions on being required to use the self-assessment system?

ii. If implemented, what features would make this system appealing to you?

Comments: would be for the self-assessment. Is happy that this is happening and that FPA Australia are taking these steps

Company:

Interviewee:

Member Type: Signatory (Gold)

Date Joined FPA Australia:

Interview Date & Time:

Interviewer: Chris Putnam

Scribe: Matt Clark

Summary

Background

61. Role In Company: MB

Questions

Knowledge of FPAA

62. How long has your company been a member of FPA Australia

5 years

63. Are you aware that you are a signatory of the FPA Australia Code of Practice?

Yes

a. Why did you become a signatory?

No idea... wanted membership with FPA Australia

b. What do you see as the advantages of being a signatory?

c. Are there any disadvantages?

d. What are the important aspects of the COP in relation to your businesses practices?

e. What aspects of the COP were most appealing when deciding to become a signatory?

f. Do you use the COP logo in advertising and other company information?

No not at all

i. If so, what percentage of the companies you work with do you believe are aware of what your COP signatory status means?

ii. If no, have you seen the benefits of the COP pamphlet?

- g. What is its primary motivation for continued signatory status?

Self-assessment

- 64.** What are your views on the application process for becoming a signatory

Doesn't know the process

- 65.** Is there anything that you feel could be done to increase the credibility of the COP in the eyes of your clients?

None because he doesn't know what the COP is

- a. If yes and related to self-assessment, propose self –assessment system and gain feedback
 - i. Are there any specific features you would like to see?
No
- b. If yes and not related to self-assessment, note companies' idea and then propose self-assessment and gauge companies' interest.
 - i. What do you think of this idea in comparison to the previous one?
 - ii. Are there any specific features you would like to see?
- c. If no, propose self-assessment system and gain feedback.
 - i. What are your opinions on being required to use the self-assessment system?
 - ii. If implemented, what features would make this system appealing to you?

Comments: would be in support of Self-assessment

Company:

Interviewee:

Member Type: Signatory

Date Joined FPA Australia:

Interview Date & Time:

Interviewer: Chris Putnam

Scribe: Matt Clark

Summary

Background

66. Role In Company: Operations manager

Questions

Knowledge of FPAA

67. How long has your company been a member of FPA Australia

2 years

68. Are you aware that you are a signatory of the FPA Australia Code of Practice?

Yes

a. Why did you become a signatory?

Believes in code of practice and every company should be abide by it

b. What do you see as the advantages of being a signatory?

If he was a client would want to see the company being part of some type of COP.

(Client confidence)

c. Are there any disadvantages?

None

d. What are the important aspects of the COP in relation to your businesses practices

Would have a slightly more stringent type of COP but still uses the COP

e. What aspects of the COP were most appealing when deciding to become a signatory

f. Does you use the COP logo in advertising and other company information?

Yes on letter heads

- i. If so, what percentage of the companies you work with do you believe are aware of what your COP signatory status means?
100 % because they make sure they are aware of it
- ii. If no, have you seen the benefits of the COP pamphlet?
- g. What is its primary motivation for continued signatory status?
Improvement and accountability of the industry

Self-assessment

69. What are your views on the application process for becoming a signatory

Happy the way it is implemented

70. Is there anything that you feel could be done to increase the credibility of the COP in the eyes of your clients?

Benefit if FPA would issue a questionnaire to members and copied to existing clients and that FPA is chasing up and making sure they are enforcing the COP

- a. If yes and related to self-assessment, propose self –assessment system and gain feedback
 - i. Are there any specific features you would like to see?
None at the moment
- b. If yes and not related to self-assessment, note companies' idea and then propose self-assessment and gauge companies' interest.
 - i. What do you think of this idea in comparison to the previous one?
 - ii. Are there any specific features you would like to see?
- c. If no, propose self-assessment system and gain feedback.
 - i. What are your opinions on being required to use the self-assessment system?
 - ii. If implemented, what features would make this system appealing to you?

Comments: would like to see this in place

B.3 Non-Signatory Provider Interviews

Company:

Interviewee:

Member Type: Non-signatory

Date Joined FPA Australia:

Interview Date & Time:

Interviewer: Chris Putnam

Scribe: Matt Clark

Summary

Background

10. Role in Company: General Manager

Questions

Knowledge of FPAA

11. Why does your company remain a member of FPA Australia?

To keep up to date with regulation changes and information about the industry

12. Are you aware that you are not a signatory of the Code of Practice?

No

a. What are your reasons for not being a signatory?

Wasn't aware to begin with

b. If you decide to become a signatory, are you familiar with the process involved?

No

c. Is there anything FPA Australia could change to make you want to become a signatory?

Provide the information and requirements

d. Do you find any of the aspects of the code beneficial to aiding your company?

e. Do you think the COP could help you promote your services to your clients?

Self-assessment

13. Is there anything you can think of that would improve the application process?

Would like to see FPA Australia more involved and do a check every now and then

- a. If yes and related to self-assessment, propose self –assessment system
 - i. Are there any specific features you would like to see?

Wouldn't think so because they are a minority.
- b. If yes and not related to self-assessment, note companies' idea and then propose self-assessment and gauge companies' interest
 - i. What do you think of this idea in comparison to the previous one?
 - ii. If implemented, what features would make this system appealing to you?
- c. If no, propose self-assessment system and gain feedback
 - i. What are your opinions on being required to use a self-assessment system?
 - ii. If implemented, what features would make this system appealing to you?

14. Would your companies' greater involvement in the application process be considered a positive or a negative?

Would perform self-assessments.

Company:

Interviewee:

Member Type: Signatory

Date Joined FPA Australia:

Interview Date & Time:

Interviewer: Chris Putnam

Scribe: Matt Clark

Summary

Background

71. Role In Company: Sole trader that works with large companies

Questions

Knowledge of FPAA

72. How long has your company been a member of FPA Australia?

Member since 2006

73. Are you aware that you are a signatory of the FPA Australia Code of Practice?

Yes

a. Why did you become a signatory?

Wanted to be involved with it

b. What do you see as the advantages of being a signatory?

Provides confidence to clients and that you know what is going on in the industry

c. Are there any disadvantages?

None

d. What are the important aspects of the COP in relation to your businesses practices

Everything applies to his company because if something goes wrong he is responsible. Wants to do a full detail service and report on the pumps within 24 hours instead of what most people do which is just sign the book

e. What aspects of the COP were most appealing when deciding to become a signatory

- Just felt that if he was going to be in the industry that he should be a part of it
- f. Does you use the COP logo in advertising and other company information?
Yes he does
- i. If so, what percentage of the companies you work with do you believe are aware of what your COP signatory status means?
100%. Might be more aware than him because he hasn't read it in a long time.
 - ii. If no, have you seen the benefits of the COP pamphlet?
- g. What is its primary motivation for continued signatory status?
Wanted to be a part of the industry so continued membership

Self-assessment

74. What are your views on the application process for becoming a signatory

Didn't ask this question?

75. Is there anything that you feel could be done to increase the credibility of the COP in the eyes of your clients?

- a. If yes and related to self-assessment, propose self –assessment system and gain feedback
 - i. Are there any specific features you would like to see?
- b. If yes and not related to self-assessment, note companies' idea and then propose self-assessment and gauge companies' interest.
 - i. What do you think of this idea in comparison to the previous one?
 - ii. Are there any specific features you would like to see?
- c. If no, propose self-assessment system and gain feedback.
 - i. What are your opinions on being required to use the self-assessment system?
Wouldn't phase him.
 - ii. If implemented, what features would make this system appealing to you?

Comments: Takes his company further than most would and does the best he can do

Company:

Interviewee:

Member Type: Non-Sig

Date Joined FPA Australia:

Interview Date & Time:

Interviewer: Chris Putnam

Scribe: Matt Clark

Summary

Background

15. Role in Company:

Questions

Knowledge of FPAA

16. Why does your company remain a member of FPA Australia?

Fire safety upgrade - wants the information and keep updated with changes in the industry

17. Are you aware that you are not a signatory of the Code of Practice?

No

a. What are your reasons for not being a signatory?

Didn't know how

b. If you decide to become a signatory, are you familiar with the process involved?

No idea what he process was

c. Is there anything FPA Australia could change to make you want to become a signatory?

d. Do you find any of the aspects of the code beneficial to aiding your company?

e. Do you think the COP could help you promote your services to your clients?

Self-assessment

- 18.** Is there anything you can think of that would improve the application process?
- a. If yes and related to self-assessment, propose self –assessment system
 - i. Are there any specific features you would like to see?
 - b. If yes and not related to self-assessment, note companies’ idea and then propose self-assessment and gauge companies’ interest
 - i. What do you think of this idea in comparison to the previous one?
 - ii. If implemented, what features would make this system appealing to you?
 - c. If no, propose self-assessment system and gain feedback
 - i. What are your opinions on being required to use a self-assessment system?
 - ii. If implemented, what features would make this system appealing to you?
- 19.** Would your companies’ greater involvement in the application process be considered a positive or a negative?

Comments: he had no idea what we were asking, would sign forms but maybe a mix up with sending them to the company or wasn’t aware what it was.

B.4 Organization Interviews

Company:

Interviewee:

Member Type: Organization

Date Joined FPA Australia:

Interview Date & Time:

Interviewer: Chris Putnam

Scribe: Matt Clark

Summary

Background

20. Role in Company

Questions

Knowledge of FPAA

21. Why does your company remain a member of FPA Australia?

Creditability within the industry and the ability to use FPA for information and back up

22. Are you familiar with the process involved for corporations applying for signatory status?

Yes

- a. Do you feel the current application process is sufficient in assuring that signatories are code compliant?

No not really, a bit skeptical. Would like to see some formal criteria being met. Feel that the companies need to qualify in some way.

- b. Do you find any of the aspects of the code beneficial to aiding your company?

No because, Align closely to the ethics of their company

- c. Of the companies you work with, what percentage are signatories?

66%

- i. Do you prefer working with signatories over non-signatories?

Overall there are some sharks in the industry so he doesn't see FPA membership a highlight. Because he has seen some FPA members do shady stuff.

Self-assessment

23. Are there any changes to the COP or its application process you can think of that would increase the confidence you have in signatories? Would like to see companies apply for membership instead of simply signing the document

a. If yes and related to self-assessment, propose self-assessment system

i. Are there any specific features you would like to see?

Prove that the documents they have in place are actually carried out. Also if FPA became more exclusive and more expensive he would be for it.

Comments: has a high opinion of FPA. Uses FPA membership as a lever to obtain business. Would like FPA lift their game and police the industry for sharks.

Company:

Interviewee:

Member Type: Organization

Date Joined FPA Australia:

Interview Date & Time:

Interviewer: Chris Putnam

Scribe: Matt Clark

Summary

Background

24. Role in Company: an engineer

Questions

Knowledge of FPAA

25. Why does your company remain a member of FPA Australia?

Not a member because of great benefits but because of the history of fire protection being a priority

26. Are you familiar with the process involved for corporations applying for signatory status?

Yes and once actually was a signatory but not anymore because they don't provide fire protection services.

a. Do you feel the current application process is sufficient in assuring that signatories are code compliant?

Not really sure because he doesn't know if FPA actually carries out audits after signing. So he feels that a type of audit should be in place so that the problems occurring in the industry are actually dealt with.

b. Do you find any of the aspects of the code beneficial to aiding your company?

No, because they use it only for when obtaining a company to do work

c. Of the companies you work with, what percentage are signatories?

Mandatory that they are a member of FPA because if they are a member in the industry they abiding by the COP

i. Do you prefer working with signatories over non-signatories?

Yes

Self-assessment

27. Are there any changes to the COP or its application process you can think of that would increase the confidence you have in signatories?

Feel that an audit would be a good idea

a. If yes and related to self-assessment, propose self –assessment system

i. Are there any specific features you would like to see?

It would but its not a big thing since they only employ 1 or 2 fire protection companies working for them but anything to improve anyone working under FPA would just reduce the risk.

b. If yes and not related to self-assessment, note companies' idea and then propose self-assessment and gauge companies' interest

i. What do you think of this idea in comparison to the previous one?

ii. If implemented, what features would make this system appealing to you?

c. If no, propose self-assessment system and gain feedback

i. What are your opinions on being required to use a self-assessment system?

ii. If implemented, what features would make this system appealing to you?

Comments: likes the idea of the self-assessment system because it's more than just a sign up process and taking money. Feels that companies need to demonstrate compliance before coming a member.

Company:

Interviewee:

Member Type: Organization

Date Joined FPA Australia:

Interview Date & Time:

Interviewer: Chris Putnam

Scribe: Matt Clark

Summary

Background

28. Role in Company

Questions

Knowledge of FPAA

29. Why does your company remain a member of FPA Australia?

30. Are you familiar with the process involved for corporations applying for signatory status?

- a. Do you feel the current application process is sufficient in assuring that signatories are code compliant?
- b. Do you find any of the aspects of the code beneficial to aiding your company?
- c. Of the companies you work with, what percentage are signatories?
 - i. Do you prefer working with signatories over non-signatories?

Self-assessment

31. Are there any changes to the COP or its application process you can think of that would increase the confidence you have in signatories?

- a. If yes and related to self-assessment, propose self –assessment system
 - i. Are there any specific features you would like to see?
- b. If yes and not related to self-assessment, note companies’ idea and then propose self-assessment and gauge companies’ interest

- i. What do you think of this idea in comparison to the previous one?
 - ii. If implemented, what features would make this system appealing to you?
- c. If no, propose self-assessment system and gain feedback
 - i. What are your opinions on being required to use a self-assessment system?
 - ii. If implemented, what features would make this system appealing to you?

Company:

Interviewee:

Member Type: Organization

Date Joined FPA Australia:

Interview Date & Time:

Interviewer: Chris Putnam

Scribe: Matt Clark

Summary

Background

32. Role in Company: Management role of fire protection and emergency response

Questions

Knowledge of FPAA

33. Why does your company remain a member of FPA Australia?

Value not only for networking but also reading the report about particular reasons. For resource and information.

34. Are you familiar with the process involved for corporations applying for signatory status?

No

a. Do you feel the current application process is sufficient in assuring that signatories are code compliant? Not sure since its been a while since he signed it. Does agree there is a deficiency there

b. Do you find any of the aspects of the code beneficial to aiding your company?

c. Of the companies you work with, what percentage are signatories?

Does work with a Signatory but doesn't really know who would be a signatory so isn't really aware of this.

i. Do you prefer working with signatories over non-signatories?

Self-assessment

- 35.** Are there any changes to the COP or its application process you can think of that would increase the confidence you have in signatories?
- a. If yes and related to self-assessment, propose self –assessment system
 - i. Are there any specific features you would like to see?
 - b. If yes and not related to self-assessment, note companies’ idea and then propose self-assessment and gauge companies’ interest
 - i. What do you think of this idea in comparison to the previous one?
 - ii. If implemented, what features would make this system appealing to you?
 - c. If no, propose self-assessment system and gain feedback
 - i. What are your opinions on being required to use a self-assessment system?
 - ii. If implemented, what features would make this system appealing to you?

Comments: What relevant bodies is the company associated with, looks for iso standards qs 9000 4000 standards

Appendix C: Additional Research

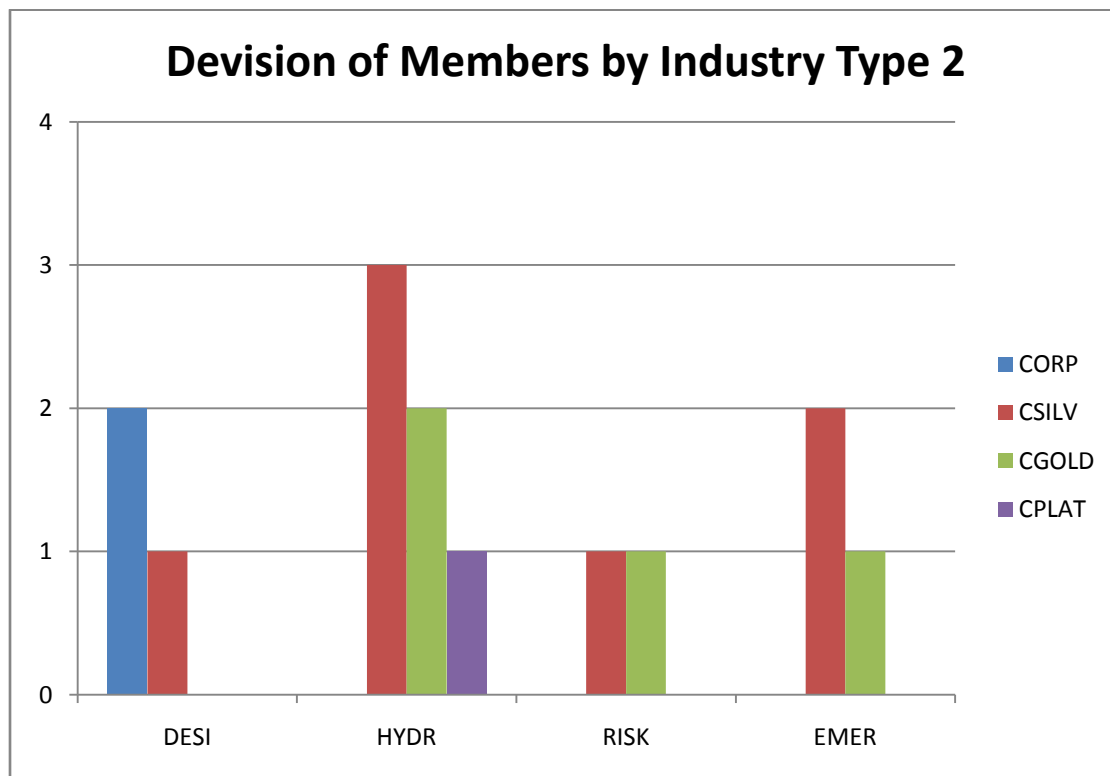
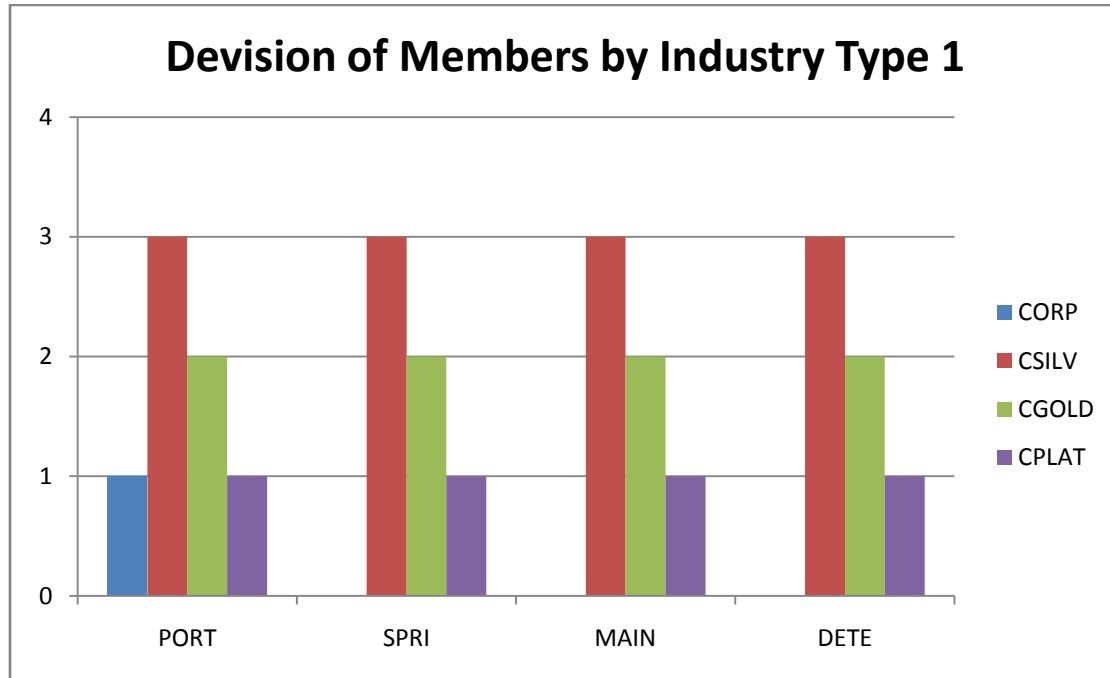
This Appendix contains any background research that may be interesting, but that is not immediately relevant to the report.

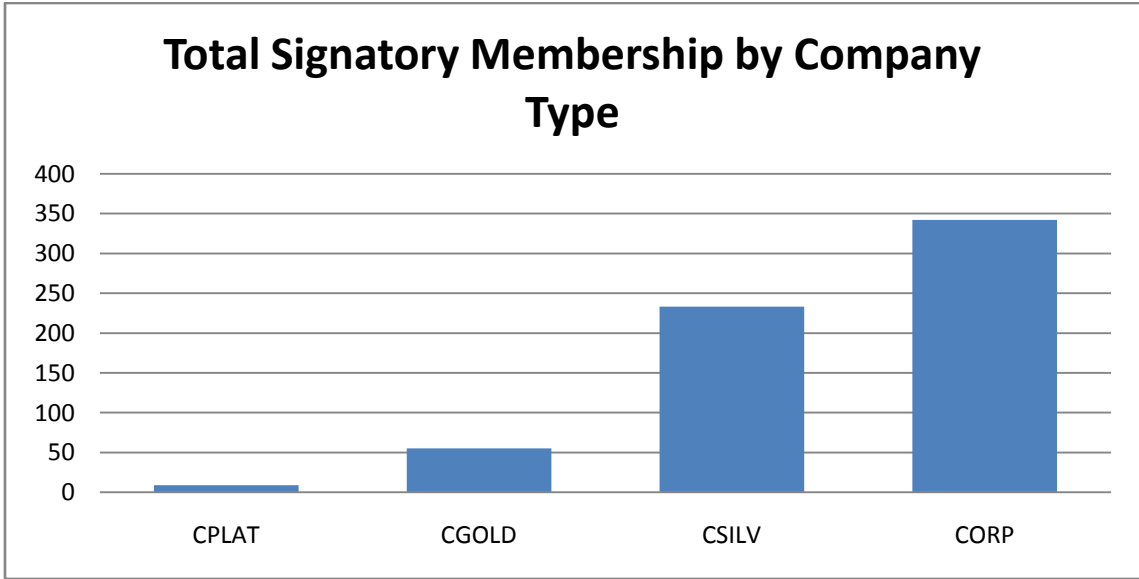
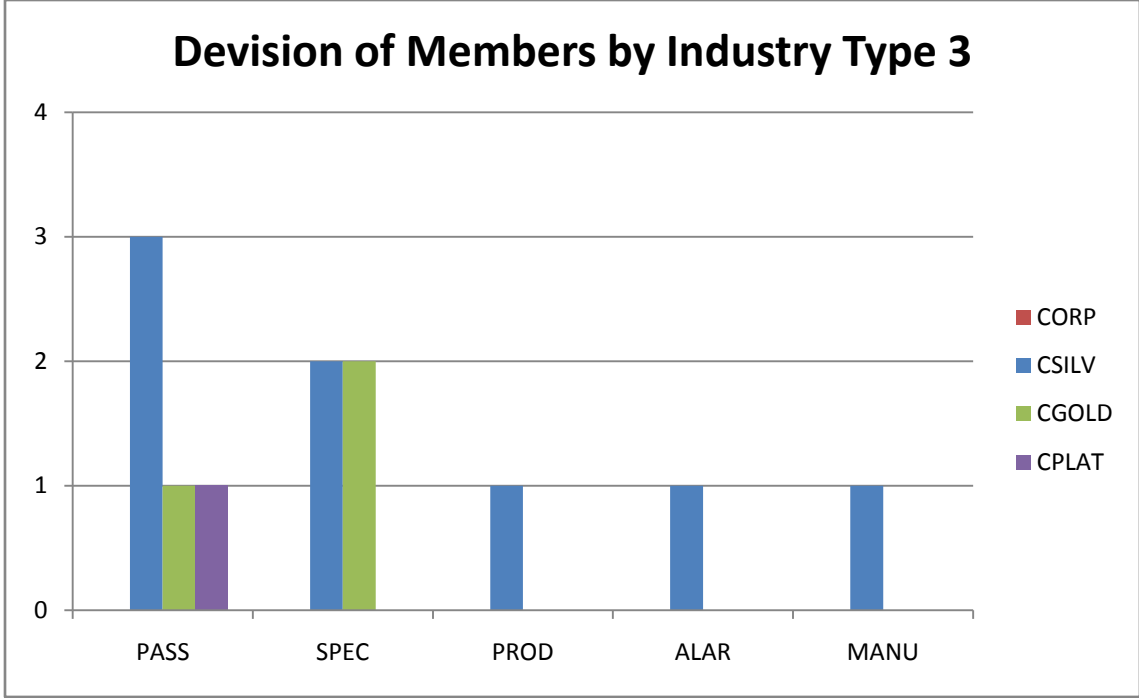
C.1 Performance Based Regulations

One way to write performance based fire protection regulations is by using what are called “Risk Conversion Factors: (RCF’s). RCF’s are a quantitative way of expressing perceived risk factors to fire safety. These factors could include volition (if the risk is a voluntary one or not), and control, (if the risk is controllable or not). From these risk factors, a table is constructed which has opposite ends of the spectrum for each risk (for controlled this would be ‘uncontrolled’ or ‘controlled’) given a mathematical value. From this table, the RCF value is determined as a way to describe the delta between the two ends of the spectrum. If ‘uncontrolled’ had a risk factor of 100, and ‘controlled’ a risk factor of 5, then the RCF value would be 20, as ‘uncontrolled’ is 20 times more risky than controlled’. An example of a RCF derived performance based fire protection regulation is the ‘Australia Fire Engineering Guidelines’. These regulations are based on an ‘Estimated Risk of Life’ (ERL), which is a numerical risk value defined for various types of structures such as single family dwellings or high rise apartments. Generally speaking, the larger the number of people residing in a structure, the lower the ERL number. This is due to the perception that a fire in a high occupancy building that kills 10 people all at once is more catastrophic than 10 individual fires in single person homes that kill one person each. Designers and builders must create structures that have calculated ERL numbers lower than the required ERL number for their type of structure in the code, and the calculated ERL number is generated using RCF values and the structure’s design specifications, such as the inclusion of sprinkler systems, additional exits, fire alarms, etc (Wolski, A., Dembsey, N. A., & Meacham, B. J., 2000).

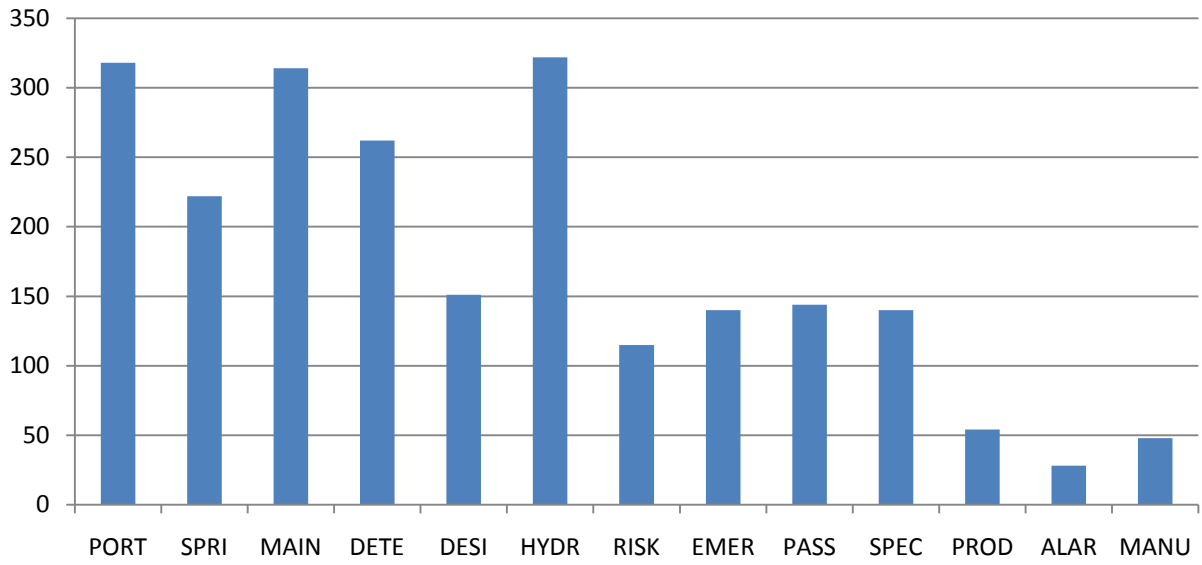
Appendix D: Interview Distribution Data

Further graphs depicting the spread of member types and industry classifications can be found in this section.





Total Industry Types



Appendix E: Self-Assessment System

FPA Australia Code of Practice Self-Assessment

4/9/2008
FPA Australia



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Completing this Assessment Form

A responsible officer of the business entity with authority to bind the business to the Fire Protection Association Australia Code of Practice is required to complete the application form and to include all necessary information.

All documentation relating to this application process can be found at www.fpaa.com.au/Members

Signatory Application Process

New members will have up to three months to complete and submit the self-assessment application for signatory status. Upon submittal of all application documentation, the Self-Assessment material will be reviewed by FPA Australia officials. If it is determined that all Self-Assessment requirements have been met, signatory status will be granted. If there is some question as to the completeness of the Self-Assessment, then FPA Australia will contact the applying company to attempt to resolve the issues. If issues are not resolved, the business entity will have up to 28 days to correct the problematic area(s) and resubmit to demonstrate compliance. A flowchart detailing the full application process can be found on page three of this Self-Assessment package.

The Goal of the FPA Australia Code of Practice Self-Assessment

The FPA Australia Code of Practice Self-Assessment's primary goal is twofold; to encourage and increase compliance with the COP, and to educate member companies on possible ways to conduct business in a manner that is in accordance with the goals of the COP. It is expected that an FPA Australia Corporate Member will operate with integrity, competent, efficient, and competitive such that:

- Promotes the highest standards of service delivery through compliance with full spirit of and intent of all laws, regulations, standards and codes that pertain to the fire protection industry;
- Promotes goodwill, client relations and responsible corporate behavior through the observance of statutory requirements and contractual agreements and through the application of integrity in all designs with clients, competitors and the community;
- Promotes environmental responsibility and sustainable use of resources;

- Promotes the employment and development of competent and skilled persons who hold the appropriate qualifications and accreditation when required.

Further Information

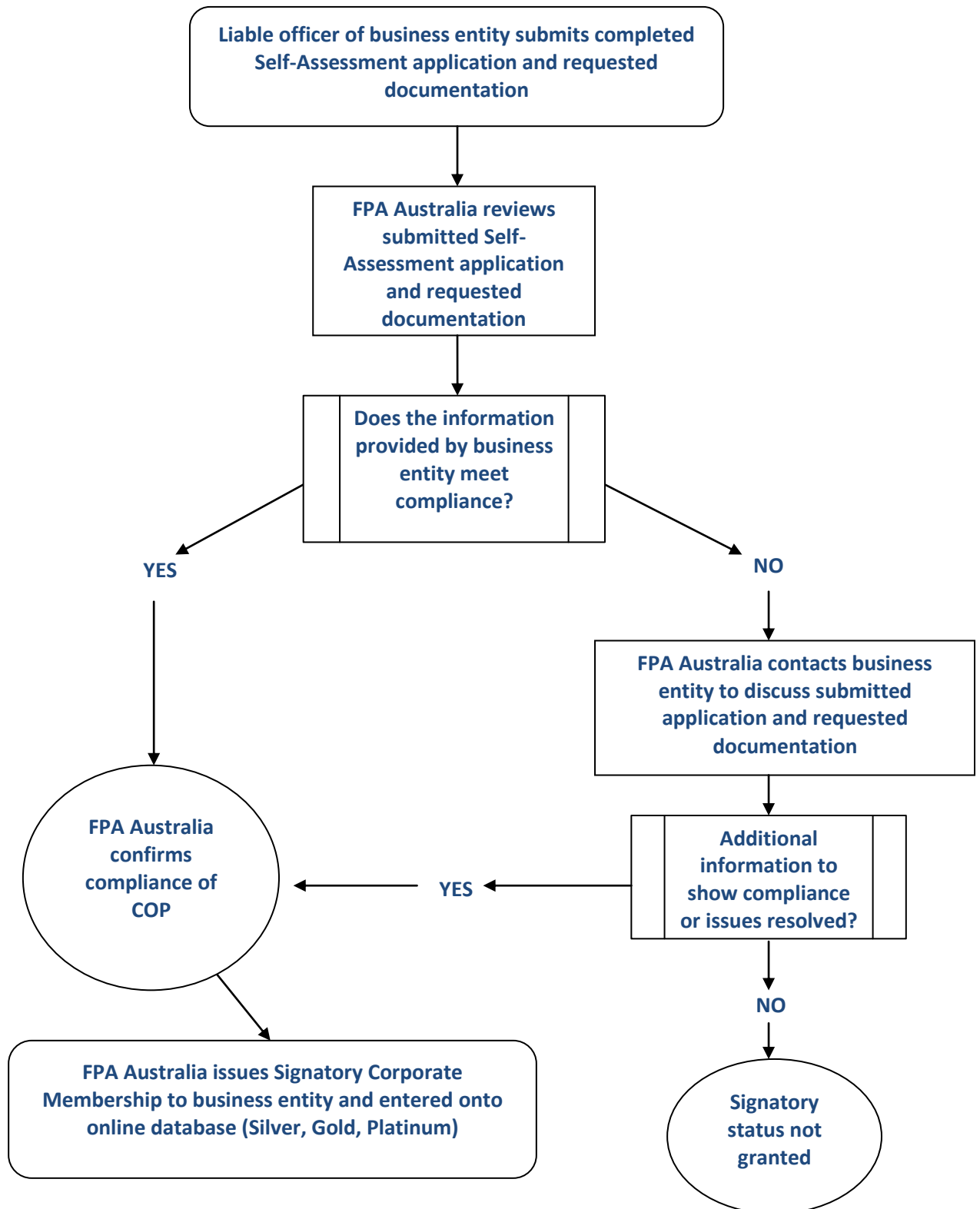
For further information about the FPA Australia Code of Practice Self-Assessment, contact FPA Australia:

Phone: 1300 731 922 or 03 9890 1544

Email: something@fpaa.com.au

Fax: 03 9890 1577

Signatory Application Process



Company Information

Mr/Ms/Other	First Name	Last Name
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Signature	Position	
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	
Date		
<input type="text"/>		
Primary Company Covered		
Company Name		
<input type="text"/>		
Mailing Address		
<input type="text"/>		
Suburb	State	Post Code
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Telephone	Mobile	Email Address
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Website		
<input type="text"/>		

FPA Australia Code of Practice Self-Assessment Form

To complete the Self-Assessment, the following questions must be answered to the fullest knowledge of the responsible officer of the company filing for signatory status. The questions are divided into sections that correspond with sections in the Code of Practice document. For easy reference, these are included in parentheses next to the section title. Please provide as much detail as possible. Where documentation is requested, please provide it through either electronic means (PDF, Word Document), or via paper hard copy. If a specific question or section is not relevant or applicable to your company's practices, please describe why it cannot be answered.

1 General Requirements (COP Sections 2.0-2.3)

Code Compliant Companies shall ensure their employees are aware of the provisions of this Code and ensure that all the work they are responsible for does not breach this Code.

1. How do you educate your employees on the Code of Practice? If your company does not have employees, how do you keep yourself and/or co-workers educated on the Code of Practice?
2. After becoming a signatory, what measures will be taken to ensure compliance?

2 Contract Administration (COP Sections 3.0-3.2)

All parties involved in the administration of contracts shall uphold all contractual obligations and deliver to the client the agreed products and/or services as stipulated in the contract.

1. Describe your procedures for developing contracts with clients

3 Commitment to Best Practice (COP Sections 4.0-4.1)

Code Compliant Companies shall strive for best practice in relation to compliance with relevant codes, standards, acts and regulations, quality of work, timely completion of projects, occupational health and safety, and environmental management.

1. How do you ensure your business is applying best practice procedures?
2. Is your company certified by any type of quality assurance organization such as ISO 9000?

4 Conditions of Tender (COP Sections 5.1)

This Code supports fair and equitable tender processes and endorses the tendering principles in AS4120: code of Tendering. Tendering should be based upon, and consistent with, the principles outlined in this standard.

1. If your company partake in tendering, demonstrate how your company prepares tenders in accordance with the principles of Australian Standard AS4120: Code of Tendering

5 Conflicts of Interest (COP Sections 5.2)

Where there is a conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest, whether it be financial or non financial, it shall be declared, assessed and resolved in favor of the public interest. Where there is any doubt concerning a conflict, the party with the potential conflict shall withdraw from any decision making part of the issue.

1. What are your policies regarding how to handle a conflict of interest between your business and a client

6 Delivery of Services & Products (COP Sections 7.0-7.4)

Work undertaken by FPA Australia Members encompasses the delivery of a broad range of services and products and this Code will apply to all fields of work undertaken by Code Compliant Companies.

6.1 Design, Manufacture, Installation and Commissioning Fire Systems & Equipment

1. Where there is legislative to do so, provide documentation of any deviation from applicable Australian Standards, and the reasoning behind the deviation
2. If there are situations where an applicable Australian Standard does not exist for a product or service which your company produces, describe how your company upholds the ideals of best business practice and the goals set forth by the COP
3. If acceptance of equipment or systems requires approval by a Regulatory Authority, Authority Having Jurisdiction, or Insurer, provide documentation of its acceptance

6.2 Maintenance of Fire Systems & Equipment

1. Provide examples of how your company conforms to the relevant Local Jurisdiction 'essential service' requirements

6.3 Other Services

1. Provide examples of compliance with specific Australian standards that your business's practices might fall under for services provided by your company other than those covered in sections 6.1 and 6.2.

6.4 Compliance with the Building Code of Australia

1. State how your company complies with BCA standards for performance based designs

7 Commitment to Environmental and Sustainable Practices (COP Sections 8.0-8.2)

Code Compliant Companies shall apply and promote practices that reduce environmental impacts, contribute to the sustainable use of resources and energy

1. Demonstrate how your company attempts to comply with any applicable legislative requirements to manage the environmental impact of the work done by your company

8 Licensing, Accreditation and Competent Persons (COP Sections 9.0-9.2)

Code Compliant Companies shall support licensing and accreditation of practitioners and professionals working in their disciplines. Where licensing and accreditation does not currently apply, Code Compliant Companies shall commit to any staff undertaking work to be appropriately qualified.

1. Does your company employ persons who are required to hold a license or some form of accreditation?
 - If so, explain how you ensure their licensing requirements are met and maintained.
2. How does your company ensure its employees that do not require official licensing are trained sufficiently so that they can be considered to be 'competent persons'?

Declaration

I declare that the details provided are true and correct to the best of my knowledge

Name (Print Full Name):

X _____

Signature:

X _____

Date:

Appendix F: Self-Assessment Benefits Paper

Understanding the FPA Australia Code of Practice Self-Assessment

What is the Code of Practice Self-Assessment?

The Code of Practice Self-Assessment is a system created by FPA Australia for corporate members who wish to become or maintain their signatory status with the Code of Practice.

The Self-Assessment provides a means for corporate members to demonstrate their compliance to the Code of Practice to FPA Australia. This verification is an additional reinforcement to the credibility of the Code in both the eyes of consumers and in the industry.

The Code of Practice Self-Assessment aims to:

- Provide verification of Code compliance
- Increase levels of Code compliance among signatory members
- Improve the credibility of signatory status
- Increase industry integrity
- Enhance the marketability of signatory status
- Improve accountability for breaching the Code

What is Covered by the Code of Practice Self-Assessment?

The Self-Assessment covers all of the major sections contained in the Code of Practice, including:

- General Requirements
- Licensing and Accreditation
- Delivery of Services & Products
- Commitment to Best Practice
- Conditions of Tender

Where can I read the Self-Assessment?

Refer to the full Self-Assessment documentation online at: www.fpaa.com.au/SOMETHING

Or if you desire a paper copy contact FPA Australia at: +61 (0)3 9890 1544 or SOMETHING@fpaa.com.au

What is the Procedure for Conducting the Code of Practice Self-Assessment?

The Code of Practice Self-Assessment is intended to be undertaken by both new and current members wishing to obtain or renew their signatory status.

For New Members: New members will have three months from their initial application for membership to decide to become signatory members. At that time, the Code of Practice Self-Assessment must be completed and approved before signatory status will be granted by FPA Australia.

For Current Members: The Code of Practice Self-Assessment will be required to be completed during signatory status renewal by 20% of the membership every year. This means that existing members will have to complete a Self-Assessment once every five years to continue their signatory status, in addition to the normal yearly Declaration of Signatory Status.

For Both Current and New Members: If compliance is not found than the business entity has up to 28 days to correct the problematic area(s) and resubmit to demonstrate compliance.

What Actions may be Taken Against Non-Complaint Signatories?

Should a member company be found to be in breach of the Code of Practice, the Board of Directors may take any of (but are not limited to) the following actions:

- Advise that corrective work is undertaken to meet clients' reasonable expectations
- Send a formal warning that membership may be suspended unless certain actions are taken
- Suspend membership
- Register a formal complaint with the appropriate Regulatory Authority



Appendix G: Timeline

Bellow is the timeline that we followed over the course of the project. It divides the project time into each of the seven weeks that were spent on site, as well as one section for the work done during the preparatory process for the project. Each objective that was completed during the project is placed in its own row, with the time dedicated to completing it shown in yellow.

Timeline For Work								
	PQP	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7
Project Proposal	Yellow							
Review of Previous IQP's	Yellow	Yellow						
Interviews on Member Opinions Regarding the COP		Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow		
Research Self-Assessment Systems	Yellow	Yellow						
Compile Interview and Research Data					Yellow	Yellow		
Formulate Structure					Yellow	Yellow		
Pamphlet on Benefits of Self-Assessment					Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	
Develop Prototype Self-Assessment Package					Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	
Final Presentation							Yellow	Yellow
Final Report				Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow