

Audit board chief role up for grabs

The Federal Government has in the past fortnight advertised for expressions of interest in the chairmanship of the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board (AuASB).

Advertising the chairmanship is a part of the process of bringing the standard setting body, which started as a board of the accounting profession, under the oversight of the Financial Reporting Council (FRC).

It is one of several changes to the regulation of auditors that are being introduced as a part of the ninth installment of the Corporate Law Economic Reform Program (CLERP 9) and the first time the chairmanship of the board has been the subject of appointment by an individual outside the province of the profession.

The chairmanship of the board — currently in the hands of PricewaterhouseCoopers partner Bill Edge — has usually been determined by CPA Australia and the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia as the board was run as part of the joint venture known as the Australian Accounting Research Foundation.

Federal Treasury's advertisement says the AuASB has a critical role in implementing the recommendations of the CLERP 9 Bill, which includes the review of the auditing standards in order to determine whether they are in a suitable form to be legislated in the same manner as accounting standards.

"To qualify for the position of Chairman a person must possess relevant knowledge of, or experience in, business, accounting and auditing, law or government," the ad says.

"The successful candidate will have strong managerial and leadership capabilities as the Chairman will be required to lead the organisation and ensure its continued operation as an effective national standard setter. He or she will chair a board of up to ten members and lead technical and support staff in the delivery of key objectives."

An ability to build relationships at "senior levels" of the accounting profession, regulators and international standard setters is something a successful candidate would possess.

How long would the appointment be for? Federal Treasury says the position will be part-time for a term that lasts between three to five years.

The ad for this position is different to the one the Treasury posted in April 2003 for the chairmanship of the Australian Accounting Standards Board. While the AuASB position is automatically being touted as being part-time, the AASB post was slated as full-time unless a candidate actively working in business was considered outstanding enough for the position to be scaled down to a part-time role.

"This is a challenging senior opportunity and rewards reflect its importance," the AASB advertisement published last year states.

This article was supplied by Tom Ravlic. Tom Ravlic is a financial journalist who has spent the past seven years covering the accounting profession, accounting and audit standard setting and corporate governance. His work has appeared in various publications including *Business Review Weekly*, *Personal Investment* (now *Personal Investor*), *The Age*, *CFO Magazine*, the *Australian CPA*, the *Company Director Journal* and the newsletters of the internationally renowned Lafferty Group. In addition to his freelance commitment to a wide range of publications, Tom has recently accepted an appointment to be editor of *Chartac Accountancy News*, published by Melbourne-based publisher Crown Content.