

Current Affairs Noticeboard

Appointment of Richard Humphry

Australia is set to continue its role at the decision-making table of the international accounting standard setter's board of trustees following the appointment of Richard Humphry, the outgoing chief executive of the Australian Stock Exchange, to that board.

Humphry's appointment to the position was announced over the past week and it is understood he was one of several names being considered to fill the vacancy that was left on the board when Ken Spencer, the former chairman of the Australian Accounting Standards Board, passed away earlier this year following a battle with lung cancer.

The delay in announcing Humphry's appointment – about which some accounting industry leaders were already speculating – only came about because the formal votes from the other board members were still being collected.

Humphry's appointment precedes his exit from the top job at the Australian Stock Exchange and it comes after his ardent, vociferous lobbying for more than a decade for the Australia's accounting framework to move to that of international standards.

Over the past two years that enthusiasm manifested itself in close backroom deals with Senator Ian Campbell, the former parliamentary secretary to the Federal Treasurer, to force the Financial Reporting Council to set a deadline for adoption of international standards.

There was an agreement that funding from the Financial Industry Development Account be released for the purposes of adoption of IFRS to the FRC only if the council chose to adopt the standards by January 2005.

FRC insiders have previously told Chartac that Humphry had indicated that one way to secure funding would be to set a deadline. It is understood most members of the FRC were unaware of the conditional nature of the release of funding, but they decided to impose the deadline.

That January 2005 deadline was imposed within three months of the Australian Accounting Standards Board's publication of an agreeing convergence program.

Senator Ian Campbell admitted during a parliamentary estimates hearing last year that he was responsible – along with Humphry – for linking the funding with the adoption of a deadline.

Humphry's appointment to the board of trustees was welcomed by Paul Volcker, the chairman of the board of trustees of the independent international standard setter, in part because of his advocacy of the appropriateness of adopting international standards.

'We are delighted to welcome Richard Humphry to the Trustees of the IASC Foundation. The Trustees will benefit greatly from his knowledge of the world's capital markets and his tireless commitment to the cause of international accounting standards,' says Volcker, a former chairman of the US Federal Reserve.