

INDUSTRY NEWS

Life Insurance Code of Practice and Genomic Testing headline at ANZIIF Life Insurance Breakfast

On 26 October 2016, a full to capacity audience heard Sydney University academic and Director, Master of Genetic Counselling, Professor Kristine Barlow-Stewart explain the latest technical developments in genomic testing and its application in the life insurance industry and the wider community.

Professor Barlow-Stewart, a leading expert in public policy and genetics, explained the wealth of information potentially available to insurers through this medium but explained how fear of adverse insurance implications influenced consumer behaviour.

She explained the FSC Genetic Testing Policy had served the industry well in allaying public concerns. However, she argued further refinements that would dispense with the duty to disclose the results of genetic tests obtained in the course of bona fide scientific studies would be beneficial to the cause of medical research in Australia.

ANZIIF was also very grateful to TAL CEO and Managing Director Brett Clarke for taking time out of his busy schedule to begin to get the industry thinking about the issues it needs take on board as it becomes compliant with the new Life Insurance Code of Practice which went live on the FSC website in October 2016.

Brett is Chair of the FSC Life Insurance Board and led the FSC working group through the extensive public consultation with industry stakeholders, consumer groups and regulators that eventually produced the Code.

As Brett explained to interviewer (and TurksLegal Partner) John Myatt, the Life Insurance Code of Practice is the beginning of a new opportunity for the industry

to engage with its customers. The Code does this by addressing some of the most difficult issues the industry is currently facing and ensuring there is an acceptable minimum standard of behaviour put in place around them. Many companies will choose to excel even further.

Brett took the opportunity to correct some misinformation that has already appeared in the media about the code, and confirmed for example that it most definitely applies to group insurance policies, though member communication will continue to be the domain of trustees.

Getting an understanding of the requirements of the Code and how it will be implemented in FSC member organisations is a major strategic step for Human Resources and training specialists and Brett's insights provided a helpful "heads up" to get that process started across the industry.

To assist our clients to apply the Code, later this week we will release the first of our Life Insurance Code of Practice publications; What the Life Insurance Code of Practice means for Claims. This publication extracts the parts of the Code that are relevant to the claims function and presents the Code in a way that allows claims managers and claims consultants to see how the Code will apply to what they do on a day to day basis. Keep an eye out for this useful document which will be emailed to you.