



# FACT SHEET

## CHOICE AWARDS

### Background

The inaugural CHOICE Awards will take place in Sydney on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2010 as part of CHOICE's 50 year anniversary celebrations and the 2010 National Consumer Congress.

The six award categories span a wide range of products and services, each measured against stringent selection criteria.

The CHOICE Awards combine 50 years of expertise with consumer insight and expert knowledge, including a popularly-voted People's CHOICE Award and the CHOICE Heritage Award.

### Award categories

- People's CHOICE Award - Best Retailer
- Best Baby Brand
- Best Technology Innovator
- Best Food Endorsement Program
- Best Low-Fee Bank Account
- The CHOICE Heritage Award

### Nomination process and judging panel

The organisations short listed in each category have been selected from hundreds of product tests and research projects undertaken by CHOICE during 2008-2010. The CHOICE Heritage Award nominees will be taken from over 50 years of product testing.

The winner in each award category is determined by a panel of CHOICE experts in each field (with the exception of the People's CHOICE Award, determined by popular vote).

The People's CHOICE Award for Best Retailer is determined via a voting process, which has been opened up to CHOICE's 200,000 members.

### Selection criteria

Each award has separate selection criteria.

#### 1) People's CHOICE Award - Best Retailer

- Consistently provides best customer service
- Consistently provides best value for money
- Consistently provides best product knowledge
- Consistently provides best after-sales support (including refund policy)

#### 2) Best Baby Brand

- Brand had to have consistently met CHOICE safety tests in 2008-2009
- Had to have made "Recommended" or "Worth Considering" categories in every test they were featured in
- Had to offer a range of products

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- Had to be widely available
  - Had to have had no consumer recalls during that period

### 3) Best Technology Innovator

- Innovation
- Value
- Transparency
- Social benefits
- Competition
- Reliability

### 4) Best Food Endorsement Program

- Label verification
- Transparency
- Consumer friendliness
- Free from conflict of interest
- Stakeholder engagement
- Equitable participation

### 5) Best Low-Fee Bank Account

- Account with full functionality - EFTPOS, Bpay, ATM Access, debit card that can be used at home and overseas, cheque, internet and phone banking.
- No monthly account fee
- No penalty fees for overdrawn accounts and dishonoured transactions
- Fee-free for most everyday transactions
- No requirement to bundle with another product of the financial institution, e.g. home loan or savings account
- No requirement for a minimum monthly balance or minimum monthly lodgment to qualify for low fees

### 6) CHOICE Heritage Award

- CHOICE has been serving Australian consumers for 50 years and in that time we have uncovered many good products that we were confident in recommending to our members through “Best Buys”, “What to Buy” or “Recommended” lists
- The shortlisted companies have consistently delivered in terms of quality, performance and ease of use across a range of household and entertainment products.

#### **About CHOICE:**

In 1959 fifty people met in the Sydney Town Hall to launch the Australian Consumers' Association in response to a deeply felt need for the establishment of a powerful consumer voice in the post-war marketplace. A decision to publish a magazine - CHOICE - was made just the next year, at a time when the membership of the Association had only reached 500.

The financial structure of this organisation has relied on subscriptions for almost 50 years, which affords CHOICE the freedom to act in a truly independent and credible manner, calling governments and industries to account on behalf of all Australian consumers. CHOICE still receives no government funding and takes no advertising across any of its magazines, website or products. We derive all our income from our 200,000 members. Because of our unique funding base we are one of the few Australian organisations that can truly call ourselves independent. We speak on behalf of consumers without fear or favour.