



Draft Minutes for adoption at the next AGM

Minutes of the 60th Annual General Meeting of the Australian Consumers' Association

**Thursday 29 November 2018 at 6pm
Crown Room, Rydges Sydney Central
28 Albion Street, Surry Hills NSW 2210**

Present:

Board members

Sandra Davey (Chair), Bill Davidson (Deputy Chair), Fiona Guthrie, Alexandra Kelly, Ben Naparstek, Ben Slade, Robert Southerton, Anita Tang, Helen Wiseman, Jennifer Zanich

Voting members (excluding Board members)

See Attachment 1.

Staff

Alan Kirkland (CEO), Jessica Hill (Company Secretary), Alana O'Sullivan (EA and Minute-taker), Tristan Ye (Director, Commercial & Finance), Matt Steen (Director, Reviews & Testing), Erin Turner (Director, Campaign and Communications), Will Walker (Chief Data & Technology Officer), Viveka Weiley (Head of New Things)

Audit Partners

Melissa Alexander, Pitcher Partners

1. Welcome to members

The Chair, Sandra Davey, opened the meeting at 6pm with an acknowledgment of country. She welcomed CHOICE members, Board directors, CHOICE staff and guests and noted that the meeting included members from around the country participating via a live webcast, who were able to observe the meeting proceedings and ask questions via a moderator.

2. Apologies

The Chair advised that 95 apologies had been received (see *Attachment 2* for details).

3. Proxies

The Chair advised that 14 proxies were held; all being directed to the Chair. See *Attachment 3* for full details.

4. Minutes of the 59th AGM

Resolution 1: *That the minutes of the 2017 Annual General Meeting be accepted as a true and accurate record of that meeting.*

Moved and carried

5. Chair's Report

The Chair delivered her report to the meeting (*see Attachment 4*).

6. CEO Report

The Chair invited CHOICE CEO, Alan Kirkland, to give his report (*see Attachment 5*).

Sandra then invited questions on the Chair's and CEO's reports.

A member asked Alan to expand on the difference between CHOICE members and campaign supporters, asking how many were there of each. Alan confirmed that CHOICE has just under 180,000 members and 190,000 supporters. Supporters are people who have said that they want to hear from CHOICE on campaign issues and they are willing to take actions, like calling a MP, sending an email or signing a petition. CHOICE is investing in data to better understand who is in each group and how to encourage more members to become supporters and vice versa.

A member asked how similar organisations in different countries are dealing with the challenge of the digital revolution. Alan responded that CHOICE has always had a close relationship with other organisations, in particular with the British Consumers' Association, Which?. Alan explained that he sits on the board of Consumers International, which represents consumer organisations around the world, which provides regular opportunities for exchanging ideas. CHOICE is ahead of the other organisations in some ways, especially the development of digital products and membership options but has also been able to adapt ideas that have proven successful overseas.

A member asked whether there was any capacity for someone from CHOICE to speak to a group in South Australia. Alan confirmed that CHOICE holds member forums in other state and territory capitals from time to time and is always happy to discuss speaking at other events.

A member asked whether supporters pay to be supporters. Alan confirmed that supporters do not pay, as the intention is to grow a powerful movement that demonstrates to politicians that when CHOICE calls for a change in the law there is group of consumers who care about it as well. Some supporters have however contributed to CHOICE's work through donations.

A member asked whether CHOICE has considered having CHOICE Board Directors or executives run for a seat (or seats) in federal parliament. Alan noted that CHOICE is very conscious of its non-partisan status, which has been core to CHOICE for many years. If CHOICE was to participate directly in the political process as candidates it would make it a lot harder for the organisation to influence politicians because they would see CHOICE as a party, rather than an independent body that is seeking to influence their thinking.

A member asked whether CHOICE has considered pursuing some advocacy at the international level, working with other organisations. Alan said that the organisation tries to collaborate with other organisations as much as possible. One recent example was around the VW emissions scandal. It is logistically challenging at times to coordinate across time zones and different ways of communicating but wherever possible, particularly on those big global issues, CHOICE works at the international level.

7. Annual Financial Report

Helen Wiseman, Chair of the Finance, Risk and Audit Committee referred members to the circulated Annual Financial Report.

Helen noted the organisation's strong balance sheet, with assets including cash, term deposits and the CHOICE building in Marrickville. CHOICE had built up significant cash reserves through a number of years of surplus budgets and the Board had decided last year that some of these should be used to make some strategic investments in the organisation. This involved several years of budgeted deficits, through investing in the staff and technology required to build the sorts of digital tools and services that will be important to future revenue growth. In 2017-18 the deficit was \$1.99M, of which \$0.66M was from activities funded by a grant received in a previous year and \$1.33M was from operating activities.

Helen noted that revenue was continuing to grow year-on-year and that the Board was carefully monitoring the impact of its investments in the organisation and adapting the financial strategy as required to ensure that the organisation remains in good financial health. As at 30 June, CHOICE had a total of \$10.24M in cash and term deposits, which was a healthy balance for the organisation of its size.

Helen then invited questions on the report.

A member asked whether Helen was happy with the revenue trends, considering the major investments over the last few years. Helen responded that she was, noting that there had been year-on-year revenue growth. She confirmed that as revenue growth is a key part of CHOICE'S new strategy, this is something that is being tracked very closely. Revenue growth will require strong digital offerings, which is why this is an area of investment.

A member asked whether a greater culture of growth meant fewer products being tested. Alan explained that this is not the intention of that area of the strategy. By focusing on a culture of growth the organisation is trying to encourage a culture where staff are even more curious and hungry to try new ways of doing things and willing to test new ways of helping consumers, some of which will generate revenue.

A member asked whether there were any early indications of success in generating memberships from younger members of the community. Alan said that a large proportion of the visitors to choice.com.au are younger adults and the organisation has been working to provide information and services that are relevant to them. The work on health insurance has been important to this. While the organisation doesn't always know the age of new members, he expects that a lot of the new people coming in are younger people who are hitting the point when they are first thinking about health insurance.

A member noted that many young people are not thinking about health insurance and asked if CHOICE was thinking about topics such as mobile phone plans and car insurance. Alan said that CHOICE was considering opportunities in these areas, as well as expanding into comparison of broadband services. CHOICE had also moved into the area of renters' rights, noting the big demographic shift towards higher rates of renting. CHOICE's research on the experience of renters is a good way for younger people to get to know CHOICE and what it stands for.

A member asked about the degree of confidence in growing revenue to cover the increase in operating costs how much longer the deficits will be required. Helen noted that the organisation needs the human resources in order to be able to invest in the future and that CHOICE is monitoring budget against performance on a monthly basis.

Alan added he was confident that CHOICE could grow revenue to cover the increase in operating costs and that that if the organisation doesn't see the growth that it is looking for there are other levers that can be pulled to make sure that the organisation is not put at financial risk. A lot of the organisation's investment in technology is to allow it to experiment with new revenue models at lower cost in the future.

A member asked whether the organisation had considered comparing the comparison sites in response to the increased competition from them. Alan reported that the organisation has done a bit of work on this issue in a humorous as well as serious way, to demonstrate that commercial comparison sites may claim to recommend the best deal but don't.

A member asked whether Board members are remunerated. Sandra confirmed that directors were not paid. This is not allowed under the CHOICE constitution. The Board has discussed this issue, given the significant time commitments and the obligations on directors both fiduciary and legally. At this stage, most not-for-profits of CHOICE's size do not provide remuneration for directors.

A member asked whether there was an Australian consumer advocacy market and if so, what was CHOICE's market share. Alan said that it was difficult to define a single market for CHOICE's work. CHOICE does

benchmark its website traffic against competitors in product comparison. In the advocacy area CHOICE tends to see itself as a partner to other organisations rather than a competitor.

A member asked how the new technology helps rural and regional customers and how testing of services such as broadband includes regional areas. Sandra responded that the investment in digital tools is critical to connect with those consumers. The broadband measurement program includes devices in rural and regional areas but it is not always possible to report on all service providers as there is a base methodology that requires a good sample size.

A member asked whether CHOICE considered video demonstrations in product reviews. Alan advised that CHOICE has done some work in this area and would like to do more. The organisation is capturing more footage of testing as a way of demonstrating its work as well as how products compare.

A member asked whether CHOICE has considered running a series of how-to's to attract younger customers - clear concise guides from buying a house to a washing machine. Alan acknowledged that such a concept was something that the organisation needed to do more of, that it already has buying guides available in relation to products and that this concept could be extended into services categories.

8. Election of Directors

The Chair called on the Company Secretary and Returning Officer, Jessica Hill, to announce the results of the Board elections.

Jessica Hill reported that under the CHOICE constitution, three directors must retire at each AGM. This year they were Ben Slade, Fiona Guthrie and Jennifer Zanich. Ben Slade chose not to re-stand. Five nominations in total were received and two were subsequently withdrawn leaving nominations from Fiona Guthrie, Jennifer Zanich and Ben Heuston. As these were only three nominations received for the three vacant positions, they were elected unopposed. Their new terms as Directors commence at the end of this AGM.

9. Official business completed

There being no other matters of official business, the Chair closed the meeting and opened the floor for questions.

A member proposed a vote of thanks for all the hard work of the directors, which received applause.

The meeting concluded at 7.07pm.

Attachment 1.

Voting Members Attendance (in person):

Phil Anderson
John Armstrong
Richard Banner
Gail Batman
George Bennett
Herma Buttner
Henry Corcoran
Paul Dunford
Peter Edwards
John Elwell
Ian Grady
Peter Gregory
Tariq Hassanen
Ben Heuston
Mark Hummerston
Tim Jeffries

Alanah Jeffries
Warwick Lloyd
Robyn Lloyd
Rodrigo Lucero
Tim McDonald
Raymond McIntosh
Chris Mooney
James Payne
Paulo Penteado
Robin Percy
Simon Pomery
Nick Quinsey
Clive Ross
Philip Sacks
Charles Samra
Robert Schaverien

Christian Schoener
Ben Selinger
Maire Sheehan
David Sketch
Sam Skontos
Isabella Smith
Owen Sperling
Elizabeth Stock
Darron Swan
Stephen Towers
Anthony Trantino
Anne-Marie Whelan
Peter Youll
John Zerafa

Attachment 2.

Member Apologies Received:

Alan Arab	Peter Judd	John Whiting
Philip Argy	Peter Kaye	Linda Wilson
Richard Armour	Shaun Keating	Jill Withers
Wayne Arney	Dr Janusz Kedzior	Jason Young
R Atkinson	Natalie King	
Robert Becker	Robert Klaver	
Rosemary Bierton	Lester Leslie	
Frances Birrell	Rod Lindroth	
Paul Bodie	Charles Linsell	
Gerard Brody	Anne Lockyer	
Dave Bruce	Alex Marinis	
Linda Buckingham	Mark Masini	
Ross Campbell	Tanya Matthey	
David Chapman	Paul William Melbourne	
John Chirakis	Julie Metzloff	
Roger J Cogswell	John Mills	
Stephen Cohen	Rudi Niemoeller	
Darren Condon	Marianne North	
Jo-Anne Cooper	Catriona Ooi	
Teresa Corbin	Phillip Osborne	
Michele Creecy	Alison Posney	
Nathalie Davis	Heather Powell	
Gisela Deasey	Robert Rahaley	
Steve Dillon	Alan Reid	
Neil Duggan	Vicky Riddett	
Bryan Edwards	Sandy Robinson	
Mark Ferguson	Danny Ronis	
Mary Fletcher	Ann Schavemaker	
Nancy Freethy	Craig Schramm	
Stephen Richard Fuller	Colin Schunker	
Erik Furlan	David Slade	
Warwick Gardiner	Darren Smethurst	
Frazer Gill	Hal Snodgrass	
Errol Goodenough	Rudolf Steinlein	
Ian Gordon	Pam Strange	
Paul Hancock	Anne Swan	
Stephen Harrop	Michael Szabo	
J D Hathaway	John Szybowski	
Robert Head	Peter Terry	
Bob Heggie	Diane Thompson	
Dianne Hill	Merlyne Thompson	
Barbara Horton	David Thrift	
Bob Howie	Geoff Turner	
Ruth Hymers	Pauline Verwaal Whitford	
Ian Jarratt	Pam Webster	
Stephen Jarvis	Bronwyn White	

Attachment 3.

Proxies Received:		
	Member	Proxy
1	Robert Bensley (email)	Chair
2	Oliver Meehan (email)	Chair
3	Diana Wright (email)	Chair
4	Philip Argy (email)	Chair
5	Rudi Niemoeller (email)	Chair
6	Gerard Brody (email)	Chair
7	Glenda Bannan (email)	Chair
8	Rosemary Britto	Chair
9	Joy Lowen	Chair
10	S Lander	Chair
11	Anne Swan	Chair
12	Gordon Vearing	Chair
13	Joan Hine	Chair
14	Stephen Sant	Chair

Attachment 4.

Chair's Report

I'd now like to deliver my report on behalf of the Directors.

Following that, Alan our CEO will deliver his report, and Chair of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee, Helen Wiseman, will present the financial statements.

As you all know, one of the Board's most important roles is to approve the organisation's strategy and this is a role that we take very seriously.

During 2017-18, we worked together with the management team over many months to craft a new strategy to guide us through the next three years. Alan will talk about the new strategy as part of his report.

I would like to focus on our achievements over the past year.

One of the main reasons CHOICE exists is to drive change for consumers—changes to industry practices and changes to the law – to ensure that we have stronger rights when buying products and services and when something goes wrong.

We do this through traditional policy work - drafting submissions, working with government agencies and meeting with politicians to push for change. But we also increasingly rely on an enthusiastic body of online campaign supporters, who are willing to advocate ... to sign petitions, send emails, phone MPs offices and write letters.

We beefed this area up in 2018 by investing in a specialist team to recruit and mobilise campaign supporters, which recruited an extra 70,000 supporters across the year, taking the total group to over 180,000 supporters. This gives us great influence, because it helps us to demonstrate that our calls for change enjoy broad public support.

One of our major priorities through 2017-18 was to achieve improvements to the Australian Consumer Law, which was under review.

Working closely with regulators and colleagues in the consumer movement, we won support for some important reforms, including:

- improving consumer guarantee rights, to make it clear that you have a right to a refund or replacement for 'lemon' products, that have repeated minor failures; and
- a requirement that all products sold in Australia be safe - interestingly, something that most people assume is the case, but isn't covered in our current laws;
- And stronger penalties for companies that breach the law.

Our work on this issue is not over, as we need to make sure that these commitments make their way into legislation, but we are making good progress, with stronger penalties already legislated and reforms to consumer guarantees likely to be next.

Our other major stream of work was in financial services. CHOICE obtained leave to appear before the Royal Commission, which gave us access to the material lodged by financial institutions and allowed us to make a number of submissions along the way.

One of the key themes that we pushed from our very first submission has been that self-regulation - where governments have stepped back and allowed financial institutions to manage their own behaviour through voluntary arrangements and industry codes - has failed. Fundamentally, thoroughly failed.

Another has been that banks have put profits before their customers, time and time again.

We have been pleased to see these two themes reflected in the Royal Commission hearings and its interim report. We have now commenced lobbying politicians about the importance for strong law reform to stop the harms revealed in the Royal Commission from occurring again.

Outside the Royal Commission, we continued to push for other reforms to the financial system. We were particularly pleased to see the creation of the Australian Financial Complaints Authority, which opened its doors at the start of the month. This is a new ombudsman with the power to determine disputes across the financial system. Our CEO, Alan Kirkland was part of the expert panel that recommended the creation of this body, and our Campaigns and Communications Director, Erin Turner, was appointed by the Government to the inaugural Board.

Of course, we also continued to work on a range of other issues, including better food labelling, fairer pricing in the electricity market, the recall of Takata airbags, the chunky fine to the super naughty Thermomix, and reforms to ticketing and gift card laws.

DIGITAL TOOLS

Besides campaigning for change, the other key way that we help consumers is by producing information in a range of forms to help them choose products and services.

We launched improvements to two health insurance tools developed in the previous year - a free Do I Need Health Insurance Tool and a health insurance policy selector tool for CHOICE Online members.

These are important signals of how CHOICE needs to help consumers in the future. We do need to offer some free tools, as a way to introduce newer, younger consumers to CHOICE. The Do I Need Health Insurance tool is a good example of this approach, because it provides valuable assistance to people who are starting to ask this question as they reach the age or income where penalties for not having insurance kick in.

But we also need to offer more valuable assistance to CHOICE members, beyond our traditional household appliance tests, and that is where the health insurance finder kicks in. It is the interactive digital version of the health insurance reviews we publish in CHOICE magazine, comparing thousands of policies to make a recommendation based on your individual needs.

This tool is only available to CHOICE Online members, helping us to attract new members to CHOICE and providing a new reason for members to stay with us.

These tools have also integrated with our campaign for a major review of the health insurance market, given the strong consumer concern about rising costs and declining value for money.

The other market where we have invested significantly is the electricity market, developing a new service called Transformer, which scans consumers bills to identify whether they can save by switching to a better deal. This is an audacious intervention in a complex market, and many of you Voting Members who receive our regular Board updates will know I've mentioned this product and its sizeable investment, and we are still working to refine the model, but I am pleased that by the end of October, we had scanned over 12,000 bills and had over 2,000 paying customers.

On our digital and tech evolution, I want to reflect for just a minute and think back to when I first joined the Board. CHOICE had two main products, the magazine and a website.

We've now more than a dozen products predominantly across web and mobile. The transition from thinking of ourselves as publishing a magazine to us being a modern 21st century digital products and services company, has been an enormous transformation.

For those of you who work in tech like me, or can feel and see the pace of change, we know this won't stop.

Gone are the days when we would build a "thing" with mass upfront cost and then leave it to return on our investment. We are in a cycle of constant change and continuous improvement.

So the work we've done with the organisation, its structures, systems, and processes, the work with our people, building on their capabilities and recruiting in the new skills we need, this is the new normal.

While I'm on people, let me acknowledge the enormous contribution of the CHOICE staff, who constantly demonstrate their attachment to the purpose of the organisation, and an incredible willingness to adapt, improve and try new ways of doing things, in pursuit of that purpose.

The evolution of our culture from don't do anything unless it's 110% ready to one of continuous experimentation (within boundaries), continuous learning and continuous improvement in order to get new products and services out there that cater to an ever changing and evolving range of communities.

These approaches form our bedrock, enabling us to continue to compete in an ever-changing highly disruptive global marketplace. This is the world we now live in; a world we need and will continue to invest in.

FINANCES

While Helen will speak in more detail about the financial results, I would like to acknowledge them briefly.

2017-18 was another year of deep investment for CHOICE, as part of a program we expect to extend over the new few years.

Before I get into the detail, we are very conscious of the work done by previous Board members and management to secure the financial health of the organisation by growing cash reserves to such a confident state that we have been able to invest so significantly over the last couple of years.

So we have continued to invest heavily in teams within CHOICE that build the sort of digital tools and services that I have just described.

This is important—because most consumers now choose to engage with us online and they have high expectations about the quality of digital tools. Our main competitors are for-profit comparison sites with big budgets, especially for marketing campaigns, and our future depends on our ability to provide campaigns and services that consumers value more.

This requires constant investment in upgrading our core technology—such as the databases and services that power choice.com.au—as well as specialist tools to help consumers in markets like health insurance and energy.

Acknowledging on the one hand the scale of investment required and on the other hand the organisation's financial health, the Board approved budget deficits in 2017-18 and for 2018-19.

The organisation can sustain these over several years, as long as they result in improvements that will improve our future sustainability. This is something we are monitoring very carefully and is one of the key areas that keeps us awake at night.

GOVERNANCE

In terms of governance, we have maintained a healthy level of turnover in Board membership, which has allowed us to ensure the mix of skills on the Board evolves to meet the organisation's needs.

Our former Chair, Nicole Rich, retired from the Board at last year's AGM and Alexandra Kelly joined us. Alex is Principal Solicitor at the Financial Rights Legal Centre and we are really pleased to have her expertise at a time when financial services are in the spotlight.

Through the year we enjoyed the contributions of David O'Connor, who has been an observer on the Board as part of a partnership with UTS Business School. The term 'observer' vastly understates David's contribution, because he put many hours into helping the management team with technology strategy, as well as contributing to a broad range of Board discussions.

We have recently been joined by Ben Naparstek, who was co-opted onto the Board in October. Ben brings excellent editorial experience from his time as Editor in Chief of Good Weekend and The Monthly, so we are looking forward to his contribution.

And at this meeting we bid farewell to another Ben. Ben Slade has been on the Board since November 2013. He brought with him lengthy experience in consumer advocacy in community legal centres, legal aid and most recently Maurice Blackburn. As well as being one of Australia's leading consumer lawyers, he has had a way of thinking the Board has really valued, and he's funny. We will really miss having him around the Board table.

CLOSING

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the privilege that it is to Chair the Board of this wonderful organisation.

We were reminded of this recently when long-term member and former Board member Ben Selinger let us know about the passing of Liesel Scholem, who besides being a vigorous anti-smoking campaigner—and indeed, the first person in the world to get a court judgement for health damage caused by passive smoking in the workplace—was active in CHOICE and a member of the Council as it was then known.

We are all conscious of the legacy of the many great activists who have come before us and know that we bear a great responsibility to protect and grow the organisation, because whilst markets may have changed, consumers need us more than ever.

I will now ask Alan Kirkland to give the CEO's report, after which we will both take questions.

Ends

Attachment 5. CEO's Report

Sandra has spoken about our performance over the past year. I'd like to now speak about our plans for the next three years.

As Sandra mentioned, developing a new strategy to guide our work over the past three years was an important priority for the Board and management in 2017-18.

This is important because it's what we'll be held accountable against - so we take it very seriously.

The Board and management worked together over some six months, considering analysis of key trends in our external environment, our financial performance, our experience of testing new ways of helping consumers and our campaign efforts.

In our environment, one of the most important trends that we observed was the growth of Facebook, Google, Amazon and Apple—an issue that is occupying the minds of consumer organisation around the world. In particular, these tech giants have enormous control over how people find information and news, which has huge implications for CHOICE.

We have traditionally relied on the evening news or the major newspapers to reach people but people are leaving these news sources in droves, instead receiving news through Facebook, Twitter, Apple News.

Most of the people who come to us online do so via Google - but that means we are incredibly exposed to any changes to Google's algorithms or practices that mean we get less web traffic or have to pay Google more.

Another key external trend was the decline in trust in major institutions. While it is not surprising that people have lost trust in financial institutions, this trend extends across society, including non-government organisations. This presents a clear threat to CHOICE, but it also presents an opportunity to distinguish ourselves as an organisation that deserves consumers' trust.

Another critical trend was the rapid growth of some for-profit comparison businesses. New businesses Finder are competing aggressively for web traffic, while established businesses are moving further into our traditional areas like appliance reviews.

These competitors often have got big budgets, so we've got to respond in smart, technologically savvy ways.

We also identified some important strengths and opportunities.

Over the past three years, we have won some important fights on behalf of consumers, backed by our growing community of online campaign supporters.

We have made good inroads into service categories like health insurance and energy, helping us to help existing members and attract new ones. We have also expanded into new areas of product testing like solar.

We have built the capability to improve choice.com.au and build new digital tools in-house - without taking on the risk and cost of depending on external consultants.

And we managed to achieve growth in CHOICE memberships over the life of the previous strategy, as well as growing our other key revenue source - the CHOICE Recommended scheme.

Our new strategy—which is shown on the screen—comes down to maximising those strengths and opportunities in response to the threats we have recognised.

There are three major priorities in the new strategy:

Firstly, we need to engage more people. We need direct access to a large community of consumers through choice.com.au, CHOICE.Community and our campaigns, so we can reduce our reliance on Google and Facebook as ways for us to reach consumers, and for consumers to find us.

Our key target here is to grow the number of repeat visitors - the number of people who visit us more than once in a month - because that will indicate that when people come to us they find something that they value, that makes them want to come back.

This requires strong and constant investment in digital tools, so that we provide excellent experience to people who visit us online--especially the growing number of people who visit us using mobile devices.

Secondly, we need to increase the power of consumers, by focussing our resources on the issues where we can be most effective for consumers.

We don't think we can really help consumers or compete with for-profit businesses with deep pockets by covering lots of issues in a superficial way. We want to pick issues where we have a unique CHOICE perspective that reinforces our difference. This means doing less things but doing them better than anybody else.

Our work on Transformer--mentioned in Sandra's speech--demonstrates what we are trying to achieve. When launched it was a unique service, first of its kind in the Australian market, and quickly able to demonstrate value to consumers--so much so that it seems to have inspired a similar intervention by the NSW government. And if we can be driving governments to find better ways of helping consumers, that's a great outcome.

We will measure our progress in this area of the strategy by the number of people who use our digital tools to make purchasing decisions - like our comparison tools for health insurance and household appliances - because by giving people tools, we are giving them power in markets. But most importantly, we'll also measure it by the number of wins that we help to achieve for consumers.

Finally, we need to grow our revenue. To campaign against well-resourced industry bodies and build the sorts of digital tools consumers expect takes money, so we need a strong revenue base. But there is a timing issue here - we need to invest before we can grow--because most of the business models that can give us growth are digital and they take time and resources to develop--especially in complex markets like health insurance and energy. We will need to experiment, and that means that not everything we try will be successful.

We expect to be continue budgeting for a deficit for several years, because in the early years of this strategy our costs will grow faster than our revenue--but we will be managing this carefully, to ensure that we return the organisation's annual budget to surplus, and ensure that our cash reserves remain at a healthy level through this period.

There are then some foundational things we also need to do. We need to build a culture that is growth-oriented, to ensure that CHOICE continues to evolve. We need modern, open, flexible technology. And we need good data, to guide decisions and help us to measure the impact of what we are doing.

These objectives also require investment, but they should reduce our costs in time - by making us more nimble and efficient.

Ultimately, the whole strategy comes down to improving our impact and sustainability because these are the most important responsibilities of management and the Board - to ensure that we are making a difference to the lives of Australian consumers, and that we are creating an organisation that is able to do this long into the future.

Ends