



# Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan

August 2022 – August 2023

**CHOICE**



## ABOUT THE ARTWORK

Rheanna Lotter (Ngandabaa) is a contemporary Aboriginal artist and proud Yuin woman. Painting since she was a young child, Rheanna says she uses her art as an outlet to connect to her own identity and culture.

“I believe art brings us together just like most forms of entertainment, from films, to dancing, to sports. These are things that allow us to feel connected and feel a part of something bigger.”

Connection and strength are the focus of this artwork Rheanna has created for CHOICE. The middle circle is CHOICE, and our values of Truth, Help and Impact flow in lines from the circle. These lines move up and down, representing our journey, with room to grow. The lines never break, as the values hold us true to who we are and what we do.

CHOICE acknowledges and always respects that we learn, work and play on Aboriginal land. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and nations of Australia are represented by brown for inland plains, green for the mountains and blue for the saltwater people. The small dots that run between CHOICE and our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nations are a representation of all people involved in the organisation, from staff to members.



**Rheanna Lotter**



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We at CHOICE acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we work, and pay our respects to the First Nations peoples of this country. CHOICE supports the Uluru Statement from the Heart.



## MESSAGE FROM RECONCILIATION AUSTRALIA

Reconciliation Australia welcomes the Australian Consumers' Association (CHOICE) to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

CHOICE joins a network of more than 2200 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have made a formal commitment to reconciliation through the RAP program.

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national reconciliation movement. The program's potential for impact is greater than ever, with close to three million people now working or studying in an organisation with a RAP.

The four RAP types — Reflect, Innovate, Stretch and Elevate — allow RAP partners to continuously develop and strengthen reconciliation commitments in new ways. This Reflect RAP will lay the foundations, priming the workplace for future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives.

The RAP program's strength is its framework of relationships, respect, and opportunities, allowing an organisation to strategically set its reconciliation commitments in line with its own business objectives, for the most effective outcomes.

These outcomes contribute towards the five dimensions of reconciliation: race relations; equality and equity; institutional integrity; unity; and historical acceptance.

It is critical to not only uphold all five dimensions of reconciliation, but also increase awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and leadership across all sectors of Australian society.

This Reflect RAP enables CHOICE to deepen its understanding of its sphere of influence and the unique contribution it can make to lead progress across the five dimensions. Getting these first steps right will ensure the sustainability of future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives, and provide meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey.

Congratulations CHOICE, welcome to the RAP program, and I look forward to following your reconciliation journey in the years to come.



**Karen Mundine**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Reconciliation Australia

## STATEMENT FROM OUR CEO

**Recognising the inequality in bargaining power between consumers and businesses, the overall purpose of the Company is to work for fair, just and safe markets that meet the needs of Australian consumers.**

That's how the CHOICE constitution defines our purpose.

For over 60 years we've pursued that purpose by investigating injustice, testing the marketing claims made by businesses, publishing information to help consumers and campaigning for stronger consumer protections.

Along the way, we have highlighted business practices that have an unfair impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, such as predatory lending, aggressive and misleading sales tactics of private training colleges, and overpricing of essential goods. In doing so, we have often featured the voices of powerful First Nations advocates, especially from the financial counselling movement.

As this RAP is published, we're supporting a coalition of First Nations advocates to highlight the harm caused by predatory funeral insurance businesses and advocate for compensation for people who lost money.

Despite this work, we've never taken a step back and thought about how we, as a large, national organisation, can work more deliberately to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers to enjoy their legal rights. In adopting this Reconciliation Action Plan, we recognise that to deliver on our purpose, we need to do just that.

That will require us to think about how we can do more to highlight examples of harm to Aboriginal and Torres Strait consumers and advocate for governments to address the systemic problems that allow this to happen. It will also require us to think about how we use our profile as a national organisation to advance the broader cause of reconciliation.

Most importantly, this will require us to listen carefully to First Nations communities and think deeply about the implications for how we go about every area of our work. If we do this well, we'll not only do a better job of delivering on our purpose, we'll also make Australia a fairer place for all consumers.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alan'.

**Alan Kirkland**  
CEO

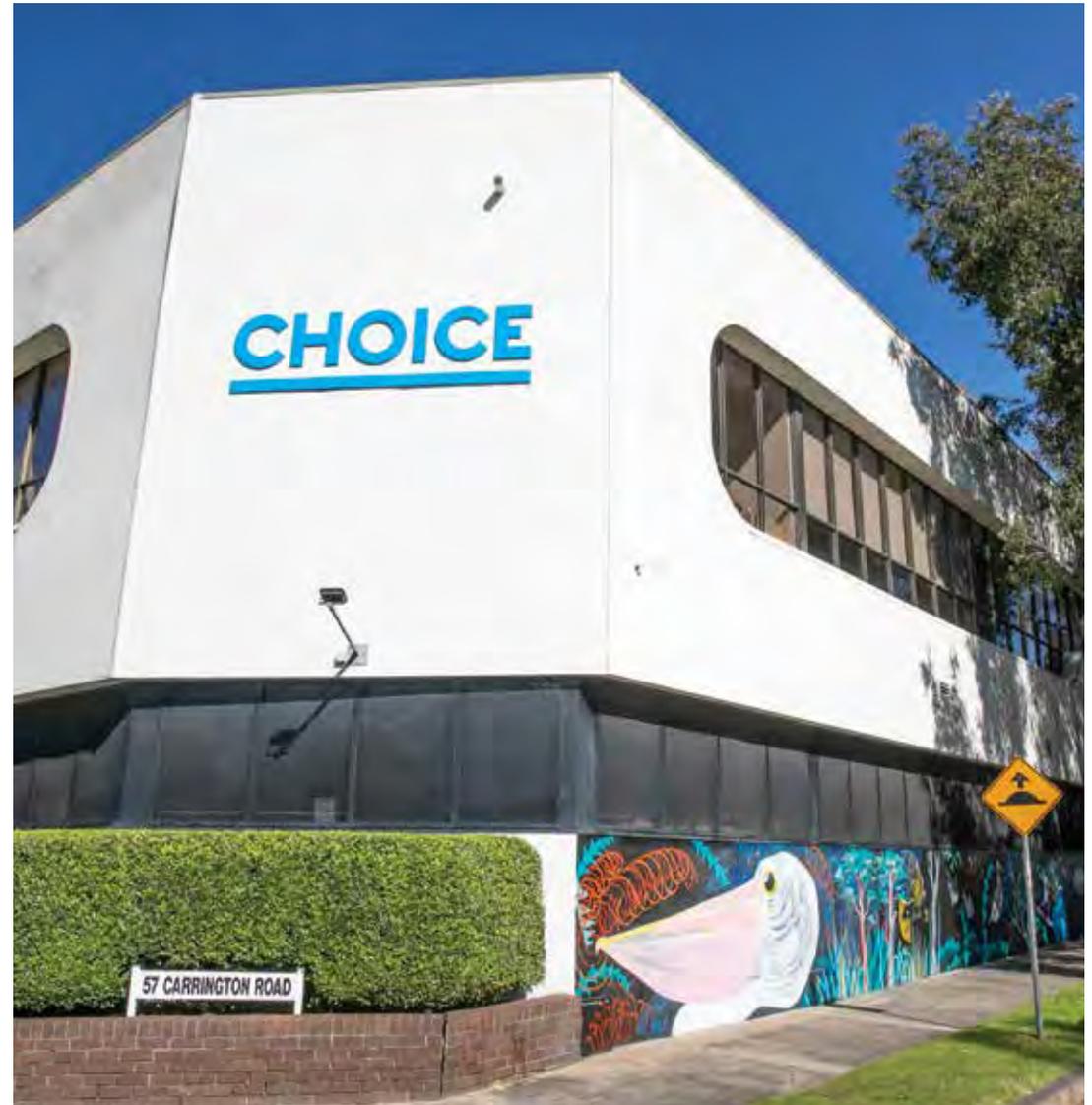
## OUR ORGANISATION

CHOICE is a not-for-profit consumer advocacy and advice organisation. Our purpose is to fight for fair, just and safe markets that meet the needs of Australian consumers. We've helped Australian consumers since 1959, by campaigning for consumer rights, investigating unfair practices, bringing corporate wrongdoing to light, testing products and providing unbiased, fact-based advice. Many of our investigations, campaign actions and policy initiatives have led to legislative change in the interest of Australian consumers at the state and federal levels – a result we consider the ultimate measure of positive impact.

Our offices and fully accredited product-testing labs are based in Marrickville, NSW. We have a strong connection to the local area through our involvement with community organisations, and many of our employees live locally. We have over 150 employees across a variety of cultural backgrounds, including one Aboriginal employee as at the date of publication of this plan. Our flexible working policy facilitates remote work, with some of our people based interstate.

We're governed by a diverse Board elected by our members, including some directors with deep experience working alongside First Nations advocates.

CHOICE has a national and in some cases an international reach, primarily via our website and print magazine, but also through social and broadcast media channels. We're also a member of Consumers International, which brings together a network of consumer groups to advocate for consumer rights across the world.



## OUR RAP

As a national consumer organisation, CHOICE aims to have an impact on behalf of all Australian consumers. That requires us to listen to the needs of all consumers. CHOICE's RAP Champion, Chief Executive Officer Alan Kirkland, will drive internal engagement and awareness of our RAP.

At a local and national level, a RAP will lay the groundwork for us to work with First Nations organisations to hear and understand the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers. Where appropriate, we can then use our reach and reputation to shine a light on issues that need to be brought to the attention of national decision-makers.

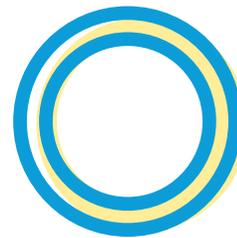
We will work with people externally and at all levels of our organisation, from staff to our Board, to implement our RAP. We have formed a RAP Working Group with people from across the organisation and we engaged Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-owned consultancy Two Point Co to work with our Executive Team and our RAP Working Group to develop CHOICE's vision for reconciliation, focusing on why we want to contribute to reconciliation and what we may be able to achieve. With this relationship now established, we will continue to work with these and other groups as we implement our RAP.

We will aim to align our RAP with our core organisational values:

- We are fearless in finding TRUTH.
- We all work together to HELP.
- We drive positive change and IMPACT.

CHOICE has started the journey towards reconciliation but we know there's more to do. Our staff have access to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural learning programs and we've worked with both the Indigenous Community Assistance Network (ICAN) and National Indigenous Television (NITV) in recent years. We've benefited greatly from the insights and understandings gained from that work, and we look forward to continuing to work with both of these as well as other like-minded organisations in the years to come.

Truth



Help



Impact





## OUR PARTNERSHIPS & CURRENT ACTIVITIES

While CHOICE has worked alongside First Nations organisations from time to time over many years, the current leadership of CHOICE began our reconciliation journey in 2017. D'harawal Saltwater Knowledge Keeper Shannon Foster shared stories with us about the local D'harawal community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and cultures in the Sydney region, and managers across the organisation participated in a tailored learning program. In the same year we established a relationship with NITV, working on a formal, and later an informal basis, to shine a light on particular issues faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers.

In early 2019 we introduced Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness training for all staff through Evolve Communities. CHOICE staff have ongoing access to the Evolve Communities training to achieve a baseline of cultural literacy, and further training will be made available throughout the implementation of our RAP.

The CHOICE Campaigns and Communications Team has at times worked in partnership with the Indigenous Consumer Assistance Network (ICAN) and Financial Counselling Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander forums. In the last year we have produced a joint submission on the high price of groceries in remote communities, partnered with ICAN to find examples of price gouging, and advocated for national action on the issue.

CHOICE has been working with First Nations organisations and advocates calling for urgent compensation for people caught up in the collapse of Youpla (Aboriginal Community Benefit Fund). CHOICE has assisted by raising the voices of First Nations advocates via helping with campaign planning, media resourcing, funding for design, assistance with political engagement, and launching an open letter with over 130 organisations.

We also work with organisations that have programs of work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities including Legal Aid NSW, Consumer Credit Legal Service (WA), Financial Rights Legal Centre and Consumer Action Legal Centre. These organisations provide information about issues they see in their casework to help us shape our policies.

Our procurement process encourages staff to consider using Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-owned and operated businesses, for example, through Supply Nation.

Finally, our internal people policies are reviewed annually to ensure the language used is considerate of people of all backgrounds, and we are working towards best practice and proactive policies that will support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

## RELATIONSHIPS

We don't yet have a strong sense of what Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities want from CHOICE. We need to build this understanding through meaningful partnerships that genuinely benefit organisations and communities we seek to partner with. We will prepare for and build strong, enduring partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations for the benefit of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers. In the next year, we will start by identifying partnership opportunities in our communications, investigations and advocacy work as high priority areas.



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area and sphere of influence who see value in a collaborative relationship with CHOICE.	November 2022	RAP Campaigns and Media Lead
	Research and establish best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	November 2022	RAP Campaigns and Media Lead
2. Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	May 2023	RAP Project Manager
	Support RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May to 3 June 2023	RAP Project Manager
	Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May to 3 June 2023	RAP Project Manager
3. Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff through implementation of this plan and regular updates about the work.	November 2022	RAP Project Manager
	Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	November 2022	RAP Campaigns and Media Lead
	Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	November 2022	RAP Campaigns and Media Lead
	Use our reach and reputation to promote the concept of reconciliation, starting with acknowledgement on our external communications about CHOICE's commitment to reconciliation and links to our RAP.	November 2022	RAP Project Manager
4. Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	April 2023	RAP People and Culture Lead
	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions and future needs.	April 2023	RAP People and Culture Lead
	Ensure CHOICE's content and style guides align with best practice guides for using language to promote reconciliation and positive race relations.	May 2023	RAP Project Manager

## RESPECT

Our people have a strong desire to contribute to reconciliation but we all have room to learn and better understand the cultures, histories, knowledge and rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and how we can learn from this land's deep history.



In the next year we will increase our knowledge through formal training and we will formalise how CHOICE shows respect to and acknowledgement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
5. Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	Articulate CHOICE's reason for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation. Communicate this widely to staff, members and the wider community.	November 2022	RAP People and Culture Lead
	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation with a view to develop a cultural awareness program that includes local community perspectives and deeper learning for staff working on issues that impact Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.	May 2023	RAP People and Culture Adviser
	Embed learning about reconciliation in our induction program for new staff, so they can learn about our commitment to reconciliation, the RAP and the ways they can engage.	May 2023	RAP People and Culture Lead
	Encourage CHOICE Board members to participate in cultural learning and reflection, including at Board meetings.	November 2022	RAP Executive Representative
6. Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters and their cultural traditions and languages, locally and across Australia.	August 2023	RAP Project Manager
	Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols, and when and in what context they should be observed.	November 2022	RAP Project Manager
7. Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	July 2023	RAP People and Culture Lead
	Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	June 2023	RAP People and Culture Lead
	RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week in July 2023	RAP Project Manager

## OPPORTUNITIES

While we have a strong desire as an organisation to support and contribute towards reconciliation, we don't yet have resources dedicated to this work.

We know that meaningful commitments will require resources. We will make space for this work.

We will begin by developing a business case for increased Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment opportunities within our organisation and increase procurement with Aboriginal- and Torres Strait Islander-led organisations. We will explore how CHOICE can actively work for fair, safe and just markets for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers across Australia through content for these communities and relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media outlets.



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
8. Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.	August 2023	RAP People and Culture Lead
	Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	August 2023	RAP People and Culture Lead
	Develop a cultural safety program to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff are culturally respected.	April 2023	RAP People and Culture Lead
9. Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal- and Torres Strait Islander-owned businesses.	August 2023	RAP Business Analyst
	Investigate Supply Nation membership.	August 2023	RAP Business Analyst
10. Begin work within our sphere of influence and with partner organisations to make markets fairer, safer and more just for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.	Work with our partner organisations to identify issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers. Where our partnership allows, campaign alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations for change or investigate issues with them.	August 2023	RAP Campaigns and Media Lead
	Explore options to collaborate with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community media outlets to help messages about consumer rights reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander audiences.	August 2023	RAP Campaigns and Media Lead
	Begin discussions with partners about the role CHOICE could play in creating content for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander audiences.	August 2023	RAP Campaigns and Media Lead

## GOVERNANCE

Our commitment to reconciliation will be driven at all levels, from our Board, from our executive and from staff. To undertake our work, we will establish a governance framework to fulfil our RAP commitments through transparent, practical and decisive actions, and report openly on our result.



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
11. Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	Maintain a RWG with internal Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation and an executive sponsor to govern RAP implementation.	November 2022	RAP Project Manager
	Draft Terms of Reference for the RWG.	November 2022	RAP Project Manager
	Establish external Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	November 2022	RAP Project Manager
12. Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	November 2022	RAP Reporting Officer
	Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	November 2022	RAP Reporting Officer
	Appoint a senior leader to champion our RAP internally.	September 2022	RAP Champion
	Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	November 2022	RAP Insights Lead
13. Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	Contact Reconciliation Australia to verify that our primary and secondary contact details are up to date to ensure we do not miss out on important RAP correspondence.	June annually	RAP Reporting Officer
	Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link to access the online RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire.	1 August 2022 and 2023	RAP Reporting Officer
	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September 2022	RAP Reporting Officer
	Agree on ways to measure the impact of our RAP and begin tracking our impact.	November 2022	RAP Insights Lead
14. Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	May 2023	RAP Reporting Officer



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