



CHAMPIONS CHANGE 4

A national program for people with acute rheumatic fever and rheumatic heart disease, working to embed lived experience and culture at the centre of care.



Supported by

**Heart
Foundation**

About the program

Acute rheumatic fever (ARF) and rheumatic heart disease (RHD) are conditions that we can prevent. Yet Australia has one of the highest rates of RHD in the world, seen almost only in First Nations people.

The Heart Foundation delivers Champions4Change – a culturally safe prevention and support program for First Nations people living with ARF and RHD. The program is designed and led by 'Champions' – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with lived experience. Champions use their cultural knowledge and voices to help others understand what it means to live with these conditions.

The Heart Foundation, together with the Champions' support, can help end RHD in this country through advocacy, education and program delivery.





The program's core values



Courage

Showing courage when facing tough times and helping our communities, whether you are standing up for what's right or helping others in need.



Respect

Being kind to others, appreciating our differences and caring about our families, kinship, culture and the community we live in.



Collaboration

Working with others to learn and share information and to achieve positive outcomes for family and community.



Leadership

Being leaders in our communities by contributing lasting and positive change.

About the Champions

The Heart Foundation works with Champions to plan and deliver key activities like:

- visiting schools and other groups to talk about living with ARF and RHD
- helping families find their way through the health system
- designing and delivering education and awareness programs for communities
- speaking out to end RHD.

Champions play a key role in growing the Champions4Change program. Doing so enables the Heart Foundation to:

- reach communities in need
- implement localised health promotion activities
- create culturally appropriate health resources for First Nations communities.

We value and appreciate our Champions' time and expertise in supporting the Champions4Change program and support Champions to contribute.



Interested in becoming a Champion?

A Champion can be:

- a First Nations person with lived experience of ARF or RHD
- a First Nations person with lived experience of caring for someone (for example, a family member) who has ARF or RHD
- members of a community with a high prevalence of ARF or RHD, a healthcare worker who supports people with ARF or RHD and/or professional allies (friends) of the program who want to contribute to making a lasting and positive change towards ending RHD.

We welcome interest from members of all countries and parts within Australia.

You can leave your details via our online Champions4Change program expression of interest form, and the First Nations Heart Health team will reach out to you. Access the form here: heartfoundation.org.au/first-nations-heart-health/champions4change

For more information or to get involved with the program contact us at: firstnations@heartfoundation.org.au or **0455 408 330**.

The First Nations team will yarn with you all about the program, get to know your interests in the space of ARF and RHD and explore how we can best support you in a Champion role.



Acknowledgements

Acknowledgement of Country

The Heart Foundation respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters, and community. We also acknowledge and respect their right to speak and care for their country in accordance with their lore, customs, and traditions. We pay respect to them and their cultures, and Elders past, present and emerging.

We acknowledge people with lived experience of acute rheumatic fever and rheumatic heart disease, as well as their carers and communities. This recognition is central to the work of the Heart Foundation's vision of ending rheumatic heart disease. Lived experience expertise are critical to informing the development of effective strategies, programs, and resources.



Program acknowledgements

The program began under the Menzies School of Health Research and is now run by the Heart Foundation's First Nations Heart Health team to bring the program goals and vision to life.

The Champions4Change program is proudly supported by the Snow Foundation, a family philanthropic organisation, creating opportunities and strengthening resilience for a more caring and inclusive community.

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