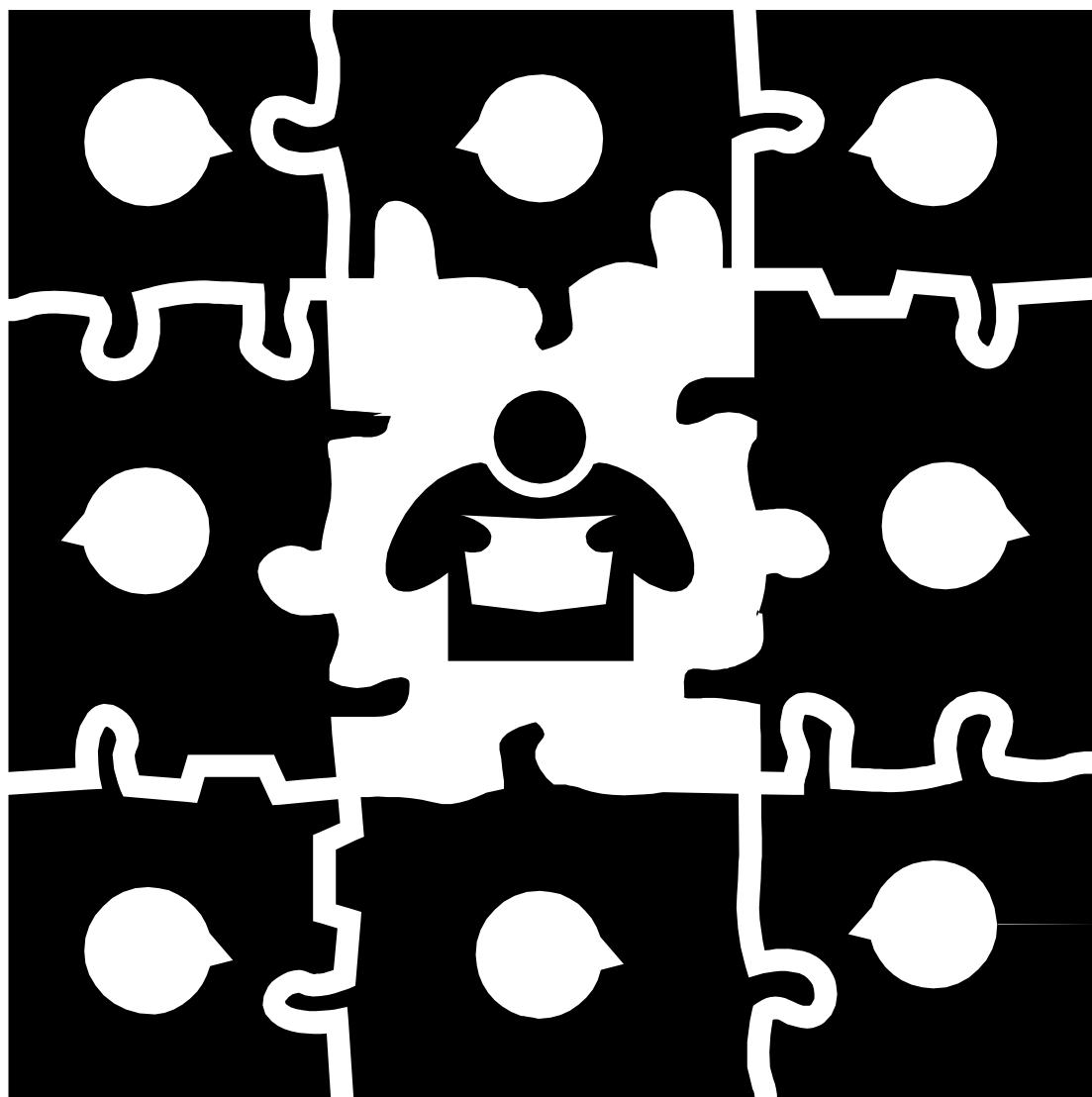


A guide for administrators

Supporting

The Group Supporter

- a guide to the roles





Supporting the Group Supporter – A Guide to the Roles

An Australian Scout Publication

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This booklet is designed as a starting point for those who become involved in a support role of a Scout Group.

It is not designed as a technical guide but to point you in the right direction in the first few weeks and months.

Policy and Rules of Scouts Australia and your state Rules are referred to in this booklet.

It contains the up to date Rules of Scouts Australia.

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Congratulations on becoming involved in the Scout Group. All support roles are extremely important to Scouting and it is hoped that you will enjoy your involvement.

This booklet is designed to help you get started and point you in the right direction in the first few weeks and months.

If you are very new to Scouting you may well find it useful to read the 'jargon buster' ***Understanding Scouting language*** first. You will find it at the end of this booklet.

DUTY STATEMENT OF THE GROUP COMMITTEE

The Group Committee functions in accordance with a set of Rules, which must be adopted at its formation or as soon after as practicable. A model form for such Rules is available from Branch Headquarters and any variation from such model rules shall be operative only after approval of the District Association.

The duties of the Group Committee shall include:

- Recommend the appointment of a Group Leader who shall be the Chief Executive Leader of the Group and carry out the functions identified in the "*Duty Statement for Group Leader*".
- Recruit adequate staff in both quality and quantity to enable the Group Leader to fully staff and maintain fully staffed all the Sections of the Scout Group.
- Carry out enquiries sufficient to satisfy itself that all persons in direct contact with the young people of the Scout Group are fit and proper persons to carry out the role and endorse this finding on the application for all appointments in the Group.
- Inform itself on the performance of the Scout Group in meeting the requirements of the local community for Scouting for its young people by receiving and endorsing the half-yearly Group plan and receiving reports on the Group performance against the plan from the Group Leader and the District Commissioner.

- Establish and maintain good relationships with all levels of the local community.
- Provide adult help for the Group and assist its members to obtain and maintain employment.
- Provide adequate accommodation for the Scout Group to carry out its role.
- Ensure the Scout Group has adequate funding to carry out its role.
- Ensure that all plant and equipment used by the Group is suitable for the purpose for which it is being used and meets the current safety standards of the State in general and the Scout Association in particular.
- Ensure that all records are kept and funds accounted for in accordance with the applicable laws of the State and rules of the Scouts Australia.
- Convene an annual general meeting at which the financial accounts of the Group and the annual report of the Group Leader are presented.

N.B. *This Committee is not concerned or responsible in any way for the actual training of any of the members in the Group.*

Reference has been made that the Group Committee is responsible for Group property and it is most important that where a Group possesses property of any value, including real estate, such property be vested in the name of The Scout Association of Australia in accordance with Branch practice.

The Group Committee must clearly understand that they are appointed to assist the Group Leader and therefore operate to satisfy his/her reasonable requests and those of the Group Council.

SUPPORTING THE SCOUT GROUP

There are a wide variety of roles which need to be undertaken in any Scout Group. Some are as part of the Group Committee structure and others involve much more practical tasks.

All of these tasks are required to ensure that the Group can provide Scouting for the young people in membership, both now and in the future.

How did you become involved in the Scout Group?

You may be in a role because you were invited to volunteer by the Group Leader or the Group Committee.

You may be in a role which required you to be nominated and seconded before being elected by the Group Committee.

No doubt before this there was some discussion with you and even some mild persuasion. You may even be reading this booklet because you have nearly been persuaded and want to find out a little more. Further details about the Scout Movement are available in *Introducing Scouting* or from the website www.scouts.com.au

What are you involved in?

You are almost certainly a member of the Group Committee.

Membership of the Group Committee consists of the Group Executive (Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer), the Group Leader and parents of the young people in the Group. It is also open to past members of the Movement and members of the community interested in supporting the Group. Leaders of the Sections or the young people of the Group do not attend these meetings.

How does the Scout Group work?

The Group Leader leads the Scout Group and has a team of key people to help.

The Section Leaders each lead their team of assistants, helpers and the young people in their Section. Together they are responsible for the delivery of the program for the young people who are members. Their work is coordinated through the Group Council meeting which includes all Section and Assistant Leaders. The Group Leader chairs this meeting.

The Group Chairman works closely with the Group Leader and leads all of those who provide help and support to the Group in other ways. This is an important job which clearly

involves more than just chairing a few meetings.

The Group Committee exists to support Scouting locally. The Group Committee usually meets monthly, with an Annual General Meeting being held as soon as practical after the end of the Scouting year, which finishes on the 31st March. The Annual General Meeting receives annual reports and sets up the Group Executive Committee.

Why do we need a Group Executive Committee?

The Group Executive Committee exists to manage the Scout Group. It supports the Group Leader and is responsible for:

- the maintenance of Group property
- the raising of funds and the administration of the Group finance
- Group public occasions
- assisting in the recruitment of Leaders and other adult support
- appointing any Sub-Committees that may be required
- appointing Group Administrators and advisers other than those who are elected.

Who are members of the Group Committee?

The Group Committee includes ex officio members, nominated members, elected members and co-opted members. This sounds rather complicated but the list looks like this:

Ex officio members:

- The Group Leader
- The Group Chairman
- The Assistant Group Leader
- The Group Secretary
- The Group Treasurer
- The Sponsoring Authority or nominee (Sponsored Groups only).
(The District Commissioner and District Chairman have the right of attendance.)

Nominated Members

- Members of the Group Committee nominated by the Group Leader.

(Usually parents, so that a parent of a young person from each Section is involved.)

Elected Members

- Members elected by the Group Committee.

Co-opted Members

- Members co-opted by the Executive Committee. (Other people who the Group Executive believe are important to the Committee's work.)

EXPECTATIONS OF GROUP COMMITTEE MEMBERS

It is expected that members of the Group Committee will:

1. Attend meetings regularly and when this is impossible, send an apology and strive to catch up on what I have missed.
2. Seek to understand the job assignment of the Committee, interpret it to others, and work to complete it in the allotted time, and to the best of my ability.
3. Participate in the deliberations with preparedness, objectivity and humility. Allow other members to make their point, not talk over or across and avoid private discussions.
4. Share the time of discussion with other members and stick to the topic.
5. Assume responsibility for some of the work assignments of the Committee.
6. Listen and seek to understand and utilize the ideas of others.
7. Help in the making of Committee decisions and support those made by the Group.
8. Evaluate my contribution to the Committee and encourage the Committee as a whole to evaluate its own work.

Next time you say it was a poor Committee meeting, perhaps you should ask "What could I do to try to make it better?"

THE GROUP COMMITTEE CHECKLIST

This checklist is designed to assist the Group Committee to evaluate its job, and help to build a strong, prosperous Scout Group. How does your current Group Committee rate?

- Has the Committee a copy of Policy and Rules and the relevant Branch Group Committee Rules or By-Laws?
- Are they aware that the important job of the Committee is to assist the Group Leader?
- Has the Group Committee contributed its part to the current Group Plan?
- Has the Group Committee set its own performance targets for the current year?
- Does the Committee send a letter of welcome to the parents of new members?
- Is the letter of welcome followed up with a personal visit or induction session?
- Has the Committee prepared a budget for anticipated expenditure based on Group Council priorities?
- Has the Treasurer been authorized to make prompt payment of regular expenses?
- Has the Group a development program to ensure growth or maintenance of members?
- Has all the necessary training equipment been provided?
- Has the Group Committee a Quartermaster?

- Have all Group/Section accounts two signatories and are they in the name of Scouts Australia?
- Does the Committee take a full and active part in Group activities?
- Is the Group HQ and other property in the name of Scouts Australia?
- Is the Group HQ and equipment insurance realistic, considering present day values?
- Is the Group's HQ in good condition, well maintained, clean and tidy inside and out?
- Are neighbours, Council and local community generally proud to have the Group in their midst?
- Do we have adequate Group social activities?
- Are our public relations such that the community is aware of the Group, and does it enable the Group to take a leading part in the community?
- Has the Group a Public Relations Officer?
- Do we help in finding Leaders?
- Do we make enough use of Sub-Committees?
- Does the Group Committee prevent internal upsets by promoting good relationships within the Group?
- Has the Committee (with Section Leader approval) visited a Section?
- Can the Committee give the lead with enthusiasm and optimism?

THE KEY PLAYERS IN THE TEAM

Working relationships

It goes without saying that if you are to do your job well you will need to work as a team member with those around you. A very good understanding between you all is essential.

Everyone needs to understand:

- their own role responsibilities and those of their colleagues
- who they are responsible to.

This may be the Group Leader, the Group Chairman, Secretary or Treasurer. It is important to be sure who you are responsible to in your role. These people will be responsible for providing you with support and guidance.

You should understand:

- about the Scout Group
- the Group Leader's and the Group Chairman's priorities
- the Group Leader's and Group Chairman's preferred methods of working.

As a supporter you need to understand:

- your need for information
- your ideas about how you intend to do the job
- how they can support you.

Remember - good relationships do not just happen, they need to be formed.

A meeting soon after you become involved with a new team, or whenever there is a change to the team, is a sound start. It will give you all the opportunity to:

- be clear about each others role
- decide how you can best work together.

Remember that by working together and combining your strengths you will each receive support and be able to do a better job.

The Group Leader

The Group Leader (GL) is nominated by the District Commissioner (DC) to lead the Scout Group.

In practice the GL works through the Section Leaders and closely with the Group's Executive Committee.

The Group Chairman

The Group Chairman is nominated to:

- work closely with and support the Group Leader
- lead the team of non-Leaders who provide sound administrative and financial support to the Group
- maintain and develop the Group as part of the community
- keep in touch with the Chairman of the Scout District.

The Group Secretary

The Group Secretary is elected to act as Secretary of the Group Committee and the Group Executive Committee to:

- provide sound administrative support to the Group.
- make information received available to members of the Group
- keep in contact with the District Secretary
- keep records that the Group Leader and Group Chairman require.

The Group Treasurer

The Group Treasurer is elected to advise the Group Committee on financial control and expenditure and to coordinate the Group's budget. The key tasks are to:

- comply with the rules of Scouts Australia and the laws of the land relating to finance
- produce an annual budget following consultation with the Group Council and the Group Committee

- monitor the Group's income and expenditure against the approved budget
- receive and account for all monies in the Group (including Sections)
- pay out only as authorized by the Group Committee
- ensure that 'cash floats' held by others are properly accounted for
- ensure that accumulated funds are invested wisely
- ensure that proper inventories and insurance of Group property and equipment are maintained.
- keep in touch with the District Treasurer.

WHO CAN HELP YOU GET STARTED?

A great deal depends on the role you have agreed to fulfil. Clearly the person who you are responsible to has a major role to play, as do your immediate colleagues.

You may wish to think about other sources of help:

Your predecessor

Hopefully your predecessor, if there was one, is available so that they can hand over the reins. Whether they did the job for a long or short time, they still have the experience of their time in the role. It would be silly to waste it.

Arrange to meet with your predecessor so that the hand over can be smooth both for you and all the other people involved. There may be some things that you will need to collect, in particular any records, equipment or just a list of the key sources of help to them.

Your predecessor may well be the best person to introduce you to your immediate colleagues.

You may well have your own ideas. It is hoped that you have seriously considered how you wish to fulfil your role. Remember that change can be unsettling for people. It is important to have a good understanding of the current situation even if your way of proceeding is likely to be very different to that of your predecessor.

The Scout District

One of the main responsibilities of the District is to support Groups. If there is someone in the District specializing in your role, no doubt they will be interested in assisting you.

What is more important is that once you have established a link with them, you will have an ongoing source of help and advice.

District personnel will also be in a position to introduce you to other people in Groups doing the same job.

An experienced 'you' from another, nearby, Group

Having someone to talk to who:

- understands your situation
- has experience of similar situations
- is not directly involved
- is frequently helpful.

If such a person is nearby, either physically or on the phone, and you can easily relate to them, then you have a wonderful source of support.

Someone doing the same job in another, nearby, Group also fits the bill. You may need to be selective as you need someone who is on your wavelength, not just in close proximity to you. They will have been new to the role at some time and so will have an understanding of your needs. You have something to offer to them in the freshness that you bring by being new to the role.

KEY ELEMENTS OF THE ROLE

This will depend very much on 'your role'. The following are a selection of some of the many jobs that need to be carried out in Scout Groups.

Committee member

Being a Committee member involves more than just attending and sitting in a meeting. It involves making a contribution to the ongoing and regular work of the Committee.

You can do this by being well prepared. There are three key stages:

- before the meeting
- during the meeting
- after and in between meetings.

Things to do before a meeting:

- keep the date free in your diary
- look out for the agenda
- read the agenda and any supporting papers, thinking about the issues to be discussed
- prepare any part which you have agreed to undertake
- tell the Secretary if you are unable to attend.

Things to do during the meeting:

- arrive on time
- listen
- speak when you have a contribution to make
- take notes about anything you agree to do
- help to keep everyone involved.

Things to do after and in between meetings:

- do what you said you would do
- read the minutes when they arrive
- keep the Chairman advised of progress, asking for help if you need it.

Remember that it is not the talk at the Committee meeting which achieves things, it is the action between meetings and people working together that makes for progress.

Sub-Committee Chairman

The Group Committee may decide to set up one or more Sub-Committees or working Groups to manage the work. Each of these will require a Chairman.

The Group Leader and Group Chairman are ex-officio members of any Sub-Committee set up in this way.

It is normal for the Chairman of a Sub-Committee to be drawn from members of the

Group Committee. If this was not the case there would be no clear line of reporting.

A typical Sub-Committee might be a:

- Fundraising Sub-Committee
- Social Sub-Committee
- Other Sub-Committee to do a specific short term task.

Chairing a Sub-Committee is no different to any other meeting. There are three stages:

- preparing for meetings
- at the meeting
- after and in between meetings.

The booklet in this series written for the Group Chairman has a good many helpful hints. The key messages are that you need to be well prepared, involve those who are part of your team and ensure that the tasks progress.

Remember that people will lose interest if they are not involved or if they don't believe that they are contributing to making progress.

Quartermaster

Scout Groups need equipment to operate an exciting program of activities for its young people.. Equipment is not cheap and each item will represent a good deal of hard work in fundraising. It follows, therefore that everybody in the Group needs to look after the equipment.

The care and control of the equipment is the responsibility of the Quartermaster who will be responsible to the Group Leader and the Group Treasurer. This may seem a little strange but it is the Group Treasurer who is responsible for the inventory and insurance of the equipment. In reality the Quartermaster will need to have a practical working relationship with the Section Leaders who will be the chief users.

The key elements of the role are likely to be:

- operate the booking arrangements for equipment
- control the issue and return of equipment
- check the condition of equipment
- maintain the equipment

- give advice about the needs for refurbishment or replacement of equipment
- advise the Group Treasurer and Group Leader of the need to modify the inventory.

It is a role that requires a good deal of patience and flexibility. Remember that the equipment is there to be used, even if that does make the store look less tidy from time to time.

Public Relations Officer

It is important to keep the community informed about Scouting and the contribution being made by Scouting locally. A Public Relations Officer can maintain contact with local newspapers and other media so that the news about your activities is heard.

This is a role which requires active contact throughout the Group so that the Public Relations Officer knows what is going on. Too often those who are busy doing do not realize what is newsworthy. The Public Relations Officer must look for these opportunities. This position would be responsible to the Group Leader.

Local newspapers are always on the look out for well-written articles, especially ones with accompanying photographs.

Don't expect the media to come out to you, especially at weekends. They are busy people. Supplying your own article and photographs will frequently ensure that you get into print.

Group Newsletter Editor

No matter how large or small your Group is, there will be a need to keep people up to date with events. A regularly produced Group newsletter can play a major part.

A Group newsletter needs an active Editor who 'chases a story'. The Editor would be responsible to the Group Leader and will need to establish working relationships throughout the Group.

The Editor does not need to write the whole newsletter. Everyone in the Group with something to say will need to do their share.

The Editor will need to be able to bring it all together in an interesting way and encourage, or cajole, contributions.

Remember contributions can come from the youth members themselves. After all they are taking part in the activities.

Den/Hall Manager

A Scout Den/Hall owned by the Group is a major asset. Any major asset and facility that is well used will quickly deteriorate if it is not managed well.

The Group may decide to create a Den/Hall Sub-Committee of the Group Executive Committee. It may then be the Sub-Committee Chairman and Sub-Committee who fulfil this role.

The Den/Hall Manager should be responsible to the Group Leader and will need to form good relationships with all those who use the facility.

The key tasks are likely to be:

- manage the booking arrangements
- ensure that the building is kept clean
- control the arrangements for opening and locking up the premises
- monitor the use of electricity, gas, water and other consumables
- inspect the building and identify where repairs are needed
- make arrangements for repairs and pest control to be carried out
- identify long term needs for the building
- liaise with the Quartermaster
- liaise with any outside users (outside users can be a useful source of income).

Remember that there is an important balance between operating a set of basic 'house rules' which ensure that everyone can use the facility, and rules which constrain use.

Transport Manager

If the Group has a mini bus or other vehicle, it is a good idea to appoint a Transport Manager. This position should have responsibility for maintenance of and arranging usage of the vehicle as agreed by the Group Leader.

The Transport Manager should be responsible to the Group Treasurer, who is concerned with insurance, taxation, and running costs.

OTHER TOPICS

Policy and Rules and your Branch Rules

These documents contain the rules of Scouts Australia and the specific rules particular to your Branch. They are designed with the benefit of a great deal of experience to ensure that Scouting remains on a sound footing.

The rules are, in places, complex and you should not be afraid to ask for interpretation. Do not, however, think that you know better and 'do your own thing'.

Policy and Rules (P&R) and your Branch Rules include details of the requirements placed on Scout Groups to ensure that they stay within the law, and specific information about facets of Scouting where there are particular requirements. These include: Activity rules, Accounting and Auditing requirements and the enquiries to be made before adults may become involved with Scouting.

It is essential to ensure that you are using a current copy. Amendments are published periodically. P&R can be accessed via the website www.scouts.com.au

The Group Leader will be able to help you obtain a copy of these.

MEMBERSHIP OF SCOUTS AUSTRALIA

Members

Members are those who are invested as Scouts, accept the commitment of the Scout Promise and are current members of a Branch according to Branch Rules.

- *Youth Members:* Young people for whom the youth program is provided (boys and girls, young men and young women) within the age ranges defined for each Section.
- *Adult Members:* Persons appointed to a special leadership or non-uniformed role in the education of young people or in the management of the Association at Group, District, Branch or National level.

- *Life Members/Honorary Members:* Adults appointed in accordance with the rules and procedures of the Association and its Branches in recognition of long and distinguished service to Scouting.
- *Scout Fellowship Members:* Adults affiliated with a Fellowship attached to a formation of the Association.

Associate members

Those persons who support the Aim and Principles of the Association but have not made the commitment of the Scout Promise. These may include:

- Parents.
- Supporters who give material, fundraising and other support.
- Distinguished citizens whose patronage, encouragement and support are welcomed.
- Sponsors of Scout Groups.
- Associate Venturer Scouts.
- Participants in school or community based Scout programs.

The Annual General Meeting (AGM)

A Scout Group is required to hold an Annual General Meeting as soon as possible after the 31st March each year.

The meeting is held to:

- adopt the Annual Reports of the Group Leader and the Group Committee
- adopt audited accounts
- elect office bearers for the ensuing year.

The AGM also provides an opportunity to promote what the Group has achieved in the past year and its plans for the future, to the parents and the local community. There is a need for the Group Chairman to work closely with the Group Leader if the AGM is going to achieve all that it could.

The biggest challenge is often to get people to turn up. They won't if it has a history of being a long drawn out meeting. There is, however, a need to conduct the formal part of the meeting in a proper fashion.

The main thing that you need to do, as someone very clearly part of the Group, is to turn up. Hopefully you will be able to encourage some others to come as well. It is an opportunity to involve others and to spread the workload wider.

Please remember that if your role is an elected one, and if you are to continue in the role, the meeting will have to re-elect you.

Group Bank Accounts

The Group will have a bank account, as it is not appropriate for Group money to be held in the private bank accounts of individuals. In practice, a Group is likely to have a current account and some form of interest earning or investment account for money not immediately required.

The Group bank account/s must be operated by the Group Treasurer and other persons authorized by the Group Executive Committee, and is based on TWO signatures.

It is usual that the other people authorized by the Group Executive Committee to operate the bank account/s include the Group Chairman and Secretary and the Group Leader.

The requirement for two signatures on each cheque exists to safeguard both Scouting and you, the individual. This requirement is in your governing document, Policy and Rules (P&R). Members of the Group Executive who fail to operate the system correctly may find themselves personally liable for any losses. One of the commonest causes of misappropriation of Scout Group funds is failure to use the two signatures system sensibly or honestly.

Fundraising

One of the main responsibilities of the Group Executive Committee is the raising of funds.

It must go without saying that fundraising must remain within the law. There are laws which govern:

- house and street collections
- lotteries and gaming
- the use of children and young people

- the sale of alcohol.

Policy and Rules and your Branch Rules provide a good deal of information. Besides the law of the land it is also important to stay within Scouting's Rules.

Scouting's Rules exist for two reasons. Firstly, to protect Scouts Australia and its image. Secondly, to ensure that fundraising is coordinated and that Scouting does not compete with itself for funds.

Fundraising activities could include:

- Scout Job Week
- School Fetes
- Garage Sales
- Bring and Buy Sales
- Sales from Fundraising catalogues
- Special sales opportunities offered to Scout Groups
- Sponsored events:
 - walks
 - swims
 - silences
- Quiz nights or games nights
- Social events:
 - Dances
 - Dinners
 - Bar-B-Ques

and many more from your imagination.

OTHER SOURCES OF HELP

People

We have already listed several people who can give you help. These were chiefly those in your own Group and District.

Similar structures exist for the Area or Region of which your District is part. There is also Scouts Australia's Branch Headquarters, where a wide range of specialists are there to help.

You may also find that there are other local organizations, also working with young people, who have particular expertise. It is worth remembering that we can work with and not compete against these other organisations.

Publications

Scouting has a wide range of books, booklets, and information sheets available for your use. Many of these can be accessed via the website www.scouts.com.au

UNDERSTANDING SCOUTING LANGUAGE

Abbreviations, terms and jargon

To the newcomer, Scouting can seem to have a language all of its own and far too many people talk in abbreviations, which can be a barrier to newcomers. This 'jargon buster' is designed to give you, the newcomer, a basic understanding of the terms used.

- Group** The local unit of Scouting that will consist of one or more Sections and be led by a **Group Leader**
- Mob** A Joey Scout Section
- Pack** A Cub Scout Section that will be divided into Groups called **Sixes**, each led by a **Sixer** and **Second**
- Troop** A Scout Section which will be made up of a number of Patrols, each led by a **Patrol Leader** and **Assistant Patrol Leader**
- Unit** A Venturer Scout Section which will be managed by a **Unit Executive Committee**
- Crew** A Rover Section which is led by a **Crew Leader**

Each Section will have its own Leaders, usually a Section Leader supported by Assistant Section Leaders together with Appointed Helpers.

- JSL** Joey Scout Leader
- AJSL** Assistant Joey Scout Leader
- CSL** Cub Scout Leader
- ACSL** Assistant Cub Scout Leader
- SL** Scout Leader

ASL	Assistant Scout Leader
Youth Helper	A young person over 15 years of age helping in the Joey Scout, Cub Scout or Scout Section
VSL	Venturer Scout Leader
AVSL	Assistant Venturer Scout Leader
RA	Rover Adviser

The terms **Leader** and **Scouter** are both used to describe adults who are fully trained.

Some adults working on Committees may wish to become adult members of the Movement. This option can be offered and the usual sign up process must occur. These members may choose to wear uniform. They must have a duty statement.

Besides the Leaders, the Group will have a team of other adults who provide support chiefly with administration and fundraising. These will be led by a **Group Chairman**. The Group Chairman is strictly speaking the Chairman of the Group Committee which meets monthly and holds an Annual General

Meeting and includes all those, especially the parents, who are connected with the Group.

The Group Executive is made up of the Group Chairman, Group Secretary and the Group Treasurer. Some Groups are 'sponsored' by, for instance, a Church, and they are the Sponsoring Authority.

Your Group will be part of a **District**, which exists to provide support and promote cooperation between Groups. The District will be led by a **District Commissioner (DC)**. The District Commissioner is likely to be supported by a team of **Assistant District Commissioner (ADC)** and **District Advisers (DA)**. These will each have specific responsibilities. The District looks for support from an Area or Region, which will be led by an **Area Commissioner (AC)** or **Regional Commissioner (RC)**. Similarly to the District there will be a team of **Assistant Area Commissioners (AAC)** or **Assistant Regional Commissioners (ARC)**.

Both Districts and Areas/Regions have Executive Committees in line with the arrangements within the Scout Groups.

The Scout Group Structure

