

Welcome to Scouting

A Guide for Parents
and Caregivers



Scouts
VICTORIA





Scouts
VICTORIA



Welcome!

Congratulations on joining your local Scout Group!

Your child is now part of a global organisation which today has more than 57 million members. Over the past 110 years more than two billion young people have benefited from the Scouting program.

In Victoria there are Scout Groups like yours in 400 local communities. Our Scout Groups are run by local families who help make Scouting the best possible experience for their children.

In this Guide you'll find some details about how Scouting works. In particular, there are some suggestions on how parents and caregivers can help their children get the most from their time in Scouting.

Welcome to Scouting! We wish your family lots of fun, friendship, adventure, and safe times ahead.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rod Byrne". The signature is stylized with a large, looping 'R' and 'B'.

Rod Byrne
Chief Commissioner
Scouts Victoria

In the spirit of reconciliation Scouts Victoria acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country throughout our state and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to their Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our community.

The benefits of Scouting

There are many lifelong advantages that young people get from their years enjoying Scouting with friends and family. Here are some of the opportunities your child will get:

Resilience

In 2018 the Resilient Youth Australia survey of our youth members highlighted some of the benefits of Scouting. These are included in the centre pages of this Parent Guide. The main benefit is above-average Resilience – the strength to deal with the challenges of modern life.

Mental health

The 2016 UK Childhood Study found that former Scouts are 18% less likely to suffer mood or anxiety disorders than non-Scouts, even decades later, as adults. The study said programs like Scouting that support resilience, social mobility, 'soft' non-cognitive skills, self-reliance, collaboration, and activities in natural environments may help protect mental health in adulthood.

Leadership

Unlike school or sport, in Scouting every young person gets a chance at developing their skills in leadership. Scouting is literally developing Victoria's leaders of the future.

Academic outcomes

Scouting is linked with better school results, especially at upper secondary levels. The meta-research of Prof. John Hattie, of the University of Melbourne, shows that secondary students do better when they do an extra-curricular activity which is organised and structured, with regular programs, increasingly complex skill building, leadership by one or more competent adults, a social network, leadership opportunities, and age-appropriate goals and expectations. This sounds exactly like Scouting!



What is Scouting?

Scouting is a non-formal type of education. Young people learn new skills and responsible independence through the Scout Method. Although our programs are continually updated to remain contemporary, the Scout Method has stood the test of time.

Elements of the Scout Method include:

Learning by Doing

- Young people learn best through practical experiences, not theory.

Patrol System

- Leadership and social skills are developed through teamwork and a sense of belonging.

Nature and the Outdoors

- The outdoors is our main location for learning. This encourages a two-way relationship between the individual and the natural world.

Community Involvement

- Scouts of all ages actively explore and learn about their responsibility to their community and the wider world.

Personal Progression

- The learning journey focuses on challenging each individual to do their best through a range of experiences.

The Australian Scout Promise and Law

- These are a simple set of common values that underpin all Scouting activities and interactions.

Youth Leading, Adults Supporting

- As they progress through the Sections of Scouting, young people are increasingly self-managing. With help from their volunteer adult Leaders.



What is the program?

Every Scout has the opportunity to achieve with our program. Our framework One Journey, One Program, features a continuous and progressive series of personal achievements.

The program aims to deliver a consistent developmental structure from Section to Section, providing young people the opportunity to develop their own Scouting Journey. The Achievement Pathways aims to deliver life skills, leadership, and teamwork opportunities, through participation in activities that are adventurous, fun, challenging and inclusive.

The Achievement Pathways consists of Program Essentials that will introduce a young person to Scouting and their new Section, as well as Outdoor Adventure Skills (OAS) and Special Interest Areas (SIA). Each Section also has a Peak Award. All of this is detailed on our website, or please ask your child's Leader for more information.



What is the uniform?

The basic uniform is a shirt and scarf (which is usually held together by a woggle, often a piece of leather). The shirt is available from The Scout Shop (scoutshop.com.au) for \$36.95 for Joeys to \$51.95 for Rovers.

Your Group may be able to help you with a secondhand uniform. The scarf is usually supplied by your Group. (Every Scout Group is proud of its own colours.) Check with your Leader if you also need to order a woggle (\$3.95) and belt (\$16.95).

All prices are subject to change.



What is the cost?

The costs of Scouting varies between Groups and depends on the activities that you do.

If your Scout journey takes you skiing, flying, and travelling overseas, then you'll probably pay a bit more than Scouts who focus on camping, hiking, and theatre productions closer to home.

You'll generally pay an annual State fee which covers insurance and goes towards Scouts Victoria running costs. Plus, there'll be a Group cost which is calculated and managed by your Group. Sometimes the Group cost is a weekly 'subs' charge and sometimes it's an annual fee.

Annual fees in Victoria range from \$300 to \$500+. This varies from Group to Group depending on local factors such as how much fundraising the Group does, and other financial pressures (e.g., hall maintenance).

There is also the cost of activities such as camps. These are kept as low as possible because we usually use our own campsites and Leaders are unpaid volunteers. Major events held every few years (like Cuboree and Jamboree) cost more because of the scale of the program and entertainment, but most Groups work together to lower the individual cost, through fundraising.

Financial issues should not be a barrier to any child being a Scout. If you have any concerns, please speak with your Group Leader to discuss payment options.

Scout Values

Scouting is a values-based organisation.

The Australian Scout Promise and the Australian Scout Law underpin this. Every member of Scouting in the world makes the Scout Promise when they first join Scouting, and at major milestones in their Scouting journey. This includes an undertaking to live by the Scout Law.

The Australian Scout Law is a simple code for living. The Australian Scout Promise comes in two forms, and members choose which version they wish to make. That is, the version which best aligns with their beliefs. Both versions include a pledge to 'help other people', as helping others is a fundamental value of Scouting.



The Australian Scout Promise

On my honour, I promise to do my best,
To be true to my spiritual beliefs,
To contribute to my community and our world,
To help other people,
And to live by the Scout Law.

or

On my honour, I promise that I will do my best,
To do my duty to my God, and
To the King of Australia,
To help other people,
And to live by the Scout Law.

Australian Scout Law

Be Respectful

Be friendly and considerate
Care for others and the environment

Do What is Right

Be trustworthy, honest, and fair
Use resources wisely

Believe in Myself

Learn from my experiences
Face challenges with courage

How we treat each other in Scouting

All uniformed members make the Australian Scout Promise and strive to live up to the Australian Scout Law.

It's a code for life, and each of us tries to do our best. But it also applies to how we treat each other. That's the same for all of us - Joeys, Cubs, Scouts, Venturers and Rovers; Leaders and Adult Supporters, Contributors, Fellowship, and parents.

We all have rights, and we all have responsibilities. These include:

To be respected

We listen to each other, speak calmly, and consider all views.

To be trusted

We are honest in our relationships and discussions.

To learn

We understand that mistakes are part of learning. We celebrate each other's achievement.

To be supported

Everyone helps each other in Scouting. We are all responsible for ensuring that others are OK.

To have fun

We have fun in Scouting but that must not impact negatively on others.

To be safe

We don't harass others, physically or verbally or online. Or let others do this.

We're playing on the same team

Scouting is a friendly and welcoming activity. All youth are welcome to join. Participation is not restricted to those with existing skills and ability.

All get a turn at leadership and the chance to develop their skills. All can earn our Peak Awards like the Joey Scout Challenge Award, Grey Wolf Award, and others.

Parents are also very welcome to participate. In fact, they are integral to the success of the local Scout Group and your child's Scouting experience. Parents and Leaders, and others who lead the local Scout Group, are on the same team.

Many parents are Leaders, Adult Supporters and Contributors, most Leaders are parents. Parents can even be "out on the field" playing beside their kids - attending Cuboree, Unit camps etc

But, while tempers might get heated on the sidelines of sport, this is never OK in Scouting. It is never okay for adults or children to raise their voices at others in Scouting.

No matter what the issues, we sort them out as friends, with respect and honesty. Sometimes we need to get assistance when there's a problem. We also want our interactions to set a good example for young people.

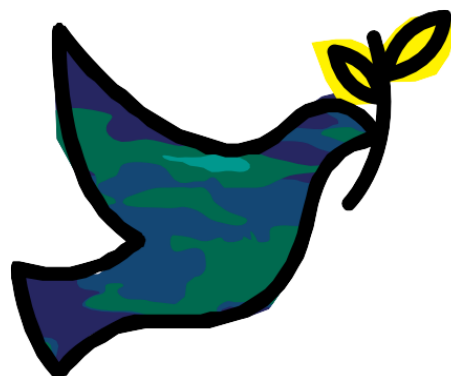


The Scouting Effect

Scouts Australia partnered with Resilient Youth Australia to conduct the Scouts Australia Resilience Survey to investigate the impact of Scouting on the resilience of its youth members.

A sample of current youth members aged 8-18 years old across all States and Territories took part in the survey. Their results were benchmarked against the Australian norm dataset of 48,671 young people aged 8-18 years

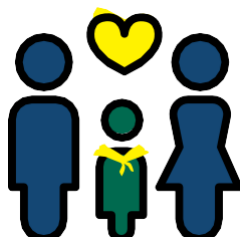
Through this survey, we have found that Scouts have an overall better life satisfaction than their non-Scouting peers, and that the longer they stay in Scouts, the more resilient they are likely to become.



Scouts are 9.4% more likely than non-Scouts to hold more hope for a positive future



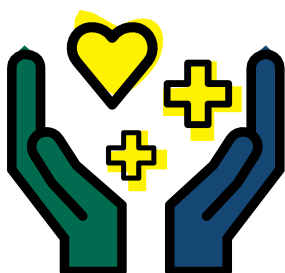
Scouts are 6.3% more likely than non-Scouts to forgive others who are mean to them.



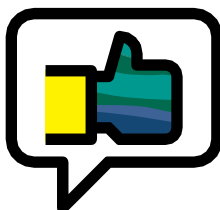
Scouts are 6.8% more likely than non-Scouts to report they have adults who set good examples for them.



Scouts are 13% more likely than non-Scouts to trust others.



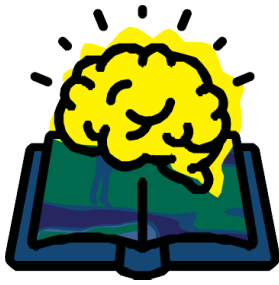
Scouts are 15.4% more likely than non-Scouts to feel they make a positive contribution to their community.



Scouts report to have an overall better life satisfaction than their peers by 5.2%



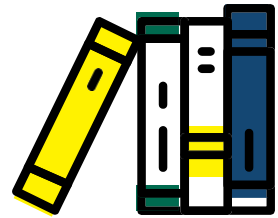
Scouts report to have better social skills than non-Scouts by 5.6%



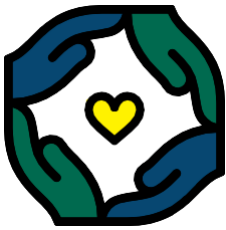
Scouts are 8.1% more likely to know they can solve a problem, rather than quit.



Scouts are 6.2% more likely to enjoy school.



Scouts are 14.1% more likely than non-Scouts to read for fun.



Scouts are 5.2% more likely than non-Scouts to get along with people who are different to them.



Scouts are 6.5% more likely than non-Scouts to feel they can talk about things that are upsetting them.



Scouts report to have a healthier mental state than non-Scouts by 13%.



Scouts report they have a healthy body 11.6% more than non-Scouts.



Scouts are 8.1% more likely than non-Scouts to give time to help others.



Scouts are 12.1% more likely to be selected to help with tasks at school.



Scouts are 1.8% more likely to feel good about themselves.

Our commitment to child safety

Scouts Victoria is a Child Safe organisation. We take a zero-tolerance approach to any form of abuse or neglect.

We also celebrate and value diversity amongst our members, regardless of their gender, sexuality, race, religion, or ability. Scouts Victoria is dedicated to ensuring that we develop the appropriate culture and supportive environment to make Scouting a safe place for young people.

Here are some of the things that we do to make our organisation safe for children:

Every adult member (anyone registered as a member and over the age of 18) is required to hold a Victorian Working with Children Check (WWCC). This includes our volunteer Leaders, Adult Supporters, Contributors, Rover Scouts, and staff. Key Adult Supporter roles with access to information are also required to hold a National Police Check.

In addition, all Leaders and Adult Supporters are required to undergo a National Police Records Check every five years, and, when applying for membership, must provide two referees, even if they are already a member of Scouting.

Referees are asked about the applicant's suitability for the role.

Our adult members must also uphold our Code of Ethics, Code of Conduct, and our Child Safe Scouting Commitment. Any breach of these codes can result in a termination of membership. Our adult members must review and reaffirm their commitment to these codes every 12 months.

All adult members are required to undertake training, including training in Child Safe practices, so they know what to do if a young person discloses abuse, harm, or neglect, and how to adequately support the child or young person. Child Safe training must be renewed every two years.



Other aspects of Child Safe Scouting include: 'Two Adults Present requirements' – At least two adults should be present when working with youth. In some cases, more are required.

- 'Within sight, out of hearing' – Adults are expected to avoid any situation where they are alone with a child, except where strictly necessary.
- When a one-on-one conversation is necessary this should be in sight, but out of hearing.

We empower our young people through Youth Leading, Adults Supporting. Youth members are active participants in decision-making in Scouting. This encourages them to have confidence that they will be heard.

Any reports of child abuse, harm or neglect are taken seriously and dealt with promptly, reported to relevant authorities, and corrective action undertaken.

Everyone has a role to play.

How to report

Anyone can report any incident of unacceptable behaviour to our Child Safety Team immediately on:

1800 870 772
(24 hours a day, 7 days a week).

Or email us at:
childsafes@scoutsvictoria.com.au

It's all of our responsibility.

To find out more about how we create a Child Safe organisation, visit the Child Safe Scouting page on our website

www.scoutsvictoria.com.au



Unacceptable behaviours

It is important that the young people in our care are safe, and that they feel safe.

It is also important that adults are safe.

The following behaviours are examples of unacceptable behaviour by Adults in Scouting

- Any form of physical, emotional, psychological, sexual, cultural, racial, or religious abuse.
- Entering an area where children are changing or showering, or entering youth members' tents or sleeping areas on camp when young people are in bed (without a valid reason, such as an emergency).
- Transporting an individual youth member alone (unless their own child, or in an emergency).
- Communicating one-on-one with youth members outside of Scouts through text messaging or via social media.
- Developing special relationships, including one-on-one catch up sessions for missed Scouting activities.
- Distributing inappropriate materials via any channel.
- Engaging in discussions with young people that are not age appropriate.
- Encouraging the use or consumption of alcohol, smoking, or use of illicit substances by youth members.
- Being under the influence of alcohol or illicit substances while undertaking duties as an Adult in Scouting.
- Behaving towards a youth member in a manner that makes them uncomfortable.
- Breaching the Scouts Australia Code of Conduct. Adults in Scouting also commit to our Code of Ethics.

Anyone can report any incident of unacceptable behaviour to our Child Safety Team immediately on **1800 870 772** (24 hours a day, 7 days a week). Via our reporting forms on our website, Or email us at childsafe@scoutsvictoria.com.au.





Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct is a personal commitment. Its purpose is to protect all members of Scouting.

It applies to all members over the age of 18, regardless of location and role, when engaging with young people and adults in any form.

This includes face to face contact and using technology such as online formats.

Parents and guardians who wish to actively participate in Scouting activities must also follow this Code.

I will set an example that I would wish others to follow. Therefore, I will:

- Respect the dignity of myself and others.
- Demonstrate a high degree of individual responsibility.
- Recognise at all times that my words and actions are an example to other members of the Movement.
- Act at all times in accordance with the Promise and Law, Code of Ethics and this Code of Conduct, thereby setting a suitable example for all.
- Not use the Movement to promote my own beliefs, behaviours, and practices where these are not compatible with Scouting Principles.
- Adhere to the Scouts Australia Child Protection Policy and provide a safe environment for youth members participating in the Scout Program, their parents or guardians and visitors.
- Report any conduct seen or heard that does not comply with this Code of Conduct to the appropriate Scouting person.



Help your children get the most from Scouting

There are many ways parents can help their children get the most from Scouting.

These include:

- Read through the Age Section part of our website to better understand what each Section does.
- Act as a supervisor for badgework tasks that your child has to do at home.
- Encourage your child to participate in activities like camps, adventurous activities, District activities, State and National events, which form a significant component of the Award Scheme.
- Help out with transport. Driving a carload of kids to or from a camp can be an entertaining insight!
- Helping with fundraising to keep the cost of Scouting down.

Your Scout Group is like the local franchise of the worldwide Scout organisation.

Scouts Victoria provides:

- Basic program - badgework
- Major events like Kangaree, Cuboree, Jamboree
- Adventurous activities (abseiling, canoeing, sailing, and many more)
- Program resources (publications, apps)
- Campsites (including ski lodges)
- Leader training (for adults)
- Insurance
- Marketing
- Fundraising support
- Communications
- Legal support



Your local Scout Group provides:

- Adult Leaders (volunteers who are screened, police-cleared, trained).
- The local program.
- Support like the Hall, gear, finance.

Who is responsible for the local Scout Group?

We all are. Members, Leaders, supporters, families, and the local community.

Now that your child has joined Scouting, you are a part of the broader Scouting family. Welcome! We encourage you to become involved in activities and programs. There are very few organisations where parents are able to participate fully in activities alongside their children, Scouting is one of them.

Parents and guardians sometimes wish to attend ongoing activity evenings (more than the occasional visit every couple of months) or an overnight activity. Just like our volunteer Leaders, to help us ensure young people's safety, all adults need to get a Working With Children Check, with Scouts Victoria listed as the organisation you are working with.

Other ways that parents help their local Scout Group include:

- Volunteering as Leaders.
- Volunteering as Adult Helpers (screened, less training, not uniformed).
- Enjoying helping out on weekend activities.
- Volunteering on the Group Support Committee (usually meets monthly).
- Helping with occasional fundraising, maintenance etc.

When parents help their Scout Group, the Leaders are free to focus on delivering great program to the Joeys, Cubs, Scouts, Venturers and Rovers.

If you want Scouting to be a great experience for your children, please help your Group be a great Group.

It is important, for Leaders and Adult Supporters to give the best care for your child, that you inform them of any additional need; such as medical, disability or other support.

If your child is on medication please also ensure that this is recorded in Operoo and is sent with your child to Scouts.





How to talk with the Leaders



Sometimes parents and caregivers have questions or concerns.

The first point of contact is the Leader of your child's Section - the Joey Scout Leader, Cub Scout Leader, Scout Leader, or Venturer Leader.

Our volunteer Leaders are committed - like you - to your child enjoying and benefiting from their time in Scouting.

Please be aware that meeting nights are busy - sometimes it is difficult to have a detailed conversation during or immediately after the meeting. You may like to give them a call or even offer to catch up for a coffee!

Of course, if there is a safety issue, you should get the attention of your child's Leader immediately and let them know.

If you still need information or your child's Section Leader is unable to help, the next contact is the Group Leader of your Scout Group.

Your Group Leader is the most senior local Scouting volunteer, responsible for all the youth members and Leaders in all Sections of your Group.

If that doesn't work out - or the Group Leader is unavailable - you are welcome to contact our State Office on 8543 9800 and we can put you in touch with your local District Commissioner, the senior Scouting volunteer who coordinates all the Scout Groups in your local area.

This process doesn't apply if you believe there is a breach of Child Safety. Anyone can report any incident of unacceptable behaviour to our Child Safety Team immediately on **1800 870 772** (24 hours a day, 7 days a week),
Via our reporting forms on our website,

Or email us at childsafes@scoutsvictoria.com.au

How we communicate with you

Each Scout Group will have a method of communication. To keep up with news from Scouts Victoria, follow us on:

-  Facebook - [scoutsvictoria](https://www.facebook.com/scoutsvictoria)
-  Instagram - [scoutsvictoria](https://www.instagram.com/scoutsvictoria)
-  LinkedIn - [scouts-victoria](https://www.linkedin.com/company/scouts-victoria)
-  X - [scoutsvic](https://twitter.com/scoutsvic)
-  Tik Tok - [scoutsvictoria](https://www.tiktok.com/@scoutsvictoria)

Scout Talk

Scouting has its own language!
Here are some terms you may hear:

Joey Scouts

Our youngest Scouts are youth aged 5-8. They meet each week as a **Joey Scout Unit**. Every two years they have a Statewide weekend camp called a **Kangaree**.

Joeys can earn a major award called the **Joey Scout Challenge Award**.

Cub Scouts

Cubs are youth aged 8-11. They meet as a **Cub Scout Unit**, where they operate in small teams called **Patrols**. Each Patrol is led by an older Cub called a **Patrol Leader**. Patrol Leaders, Assistant Patrol Leaders and their Section Leaders meet to plan their program. This group is called the **Unit Council**. Every three years more than 3,600 Victorian Cubs enjoy a huge week-long camp called a Cuboree.

Cubs can earn a major award called the **Grey Wolf Award**.

Scouts

Scouts, aged 11-15, are the original **Section** of Scouting. Scouts began at a trial camp in England in August 1907. Scouts meet as a **Scout Unit**, which is comprised of small teams called **Patrols**, led by an elected **Patrol Leader**. Patrol Leaders and Assistant Patrol Leaders meet with their Section Leaders as the **Unit Council**, to plan their program and other aspects of the Unit. By now, youth members are increasingly taking over the running of their Section - planning their program, managing finance, and even dealing with any behaviour problems. Every three years Scouts from around Australia and beyond gather for a two week camp called a **Jamboree**.

Scouts can earn a major award called the **Australian Scout Award**.

Venturer Scouts

Venturers, aged 14-18 have a much larger say in their own activities. Venturers meet as a **Venturer Unit**. Members of the Unit elect the **Unit Chair, Secretary, Treasurer**, and other office bearers, who meet as the **Unit Council**, to plan their program and other aspects of the Unit.

Scouts have Jamborees; Venturers have a national event called a **Venture** every three years. Many also go to the New Zealand Venture.

Venturers and older Scouts also attend **World Jamborees** where tens of thousands of Scouts from around the world gather.

Venturers can earn a major award called the **King's Scout Award**.

Rover Scouts

Rovers are young people, aged 18-26, who run their own program, finances, property, major events and much more. They have a strong annual program including motor sport and social events. Their major events are called **Moots**. The peak award in this Section is the **Baden-Powell Scout Award**.

Leaders

Leaders are the adult volunteers who put many hours into Scouting each week - and in return get great satisfaction, friendships, skills, and experiences. Most Leaders are parents. All Leaders go through several stages of screening (which are renewed regularly), and do training programs, which must also be kept up to date. Youth Program Leaders work directly with Joeys, Cubs, Scouts, Venturers and Rovers, while Program Support Leaders provide support at the Group, District, Region, and State levels.

Adult Supporter

An Adult Supporter is usually a parent, helps out from time to time, at occasional meetings, weekends away or major Scouting events. Adult Supporters do basic online training and need to have a WWCC, Police Check and reference check. Adult Supporters don't wear Scout uniform.

Contributor

Contributors can spend up to 4 nights per year in Sections. Contributors are screened before being allowed to work with young people and do basic online training. Contributors don't wear a Scout uniform.

Scout Group

The Scout Group is made up of all the Sections in the local Group. A Group may have all five Sections (Joeys, Cubs, Scouts, Venturers and Rovers) or just a Cub Scout Unit and a Scout Unit, or some other combination. Some Groups have multiple Joey Units or Cub Units.



Group Leader

This is the volunteer manager of the Scout Group.

Group Support Committee

The Committee is generally comprised of parents who might meet monthly, while their children are at Cubs or Scouts. They support the Group and the Leaders by taking care of the Hall, the **Q-store** and all the camping gear it stores, the finances, and many other important jobs to keep the Group running smoothly. These meetings can be quite social.

District

A Scout District is a set of Scout Groups, usually as prescribed by the local council boundaries, or Local Government Area. Each District is managed by a volunteer **District Commissioner**.

Region

A Scout Region is a group of Scout Districts. In Victoria there are five metro Regions (Bays, Lerderderg, Melbourne, Mount Dandenong, and Plenty Valley) and five rural Regions (Geelong, Gippsland, Loddon Mallee, Northern and Western). Each Region is managed by a volunteer **Region Commissioner**.

State team

Scouts Victoria is led by the Chief Commissioner, Deputy Chief Commissioner, and the rest of the State Leadership Team (the Assistant Chief Commissioners).

There are also many senior volunteers with expertise in Adventurous Activities, Major Events, Risk and Safety, and many other aspects of Scouting.

Victorian Scout Centre

The Victorian Scout Centre at Mount Waverley is home to the professional staff and State Leadership Team of Scouts Victoria. Our support staff assist with key functions including membership management, information technology, marketing, communications, child safety management, community development, training, and facilities management. For more about our State organisation, see the back cover.

Gilwell Park, Clifford Park, Treetops, Eumeralla, Mafeking Park

Gilwell Park near Gembrook, Clifford Park near Wonga Park, Treetops near Macedon, Eumeralla near Anglesea, and Mafeking Park near Yea are just five of more than 80 Scout-owned campsites across Victoria. Your child may visit many of them for a weekend adventure.

Operoo

Operoo is the electronic system used by Scouts Victoria for parents/carers/individuals to share member health records, permission forms and contact details. Your child's school may also use this system. It is increasingly being used by Groups for internal communication with members, particularly for events and activities.



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Get in touch!

www.scoutsvictoria.com.au

The Victorian Scout Centre
Wurundjeri Country
152 Forster Road, Mount Waverley

**1800 SCOUTS or
(03) 8543 9800**

Emergencies: (03) 8543 9877
(only for emergencies)

Child Safety: 1800 870 772
(to report any concerns 24/7)

Our Parent Guide is updated from
time to time.

New versions will be on our website at
www.scoutsvictoria.com.au/parent-guide

