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The Whole Wide World of Scouting Friends

Dear Scouting friends,

A friend is one of the nicest things you can have, and one of the best things you can be.

And at Scouts, we have millions of them in more than 160 countries around the world.

Scouts NSW is part of a huge, international community bonded by a clear purpose, shared values and a rich history. With over 50 million members, including 7 million adult supporters, we're the largest non-formal youth education movement on earth.

Through our Scouting framework, the 'youth leading, adult supporting' approach, and our method of 'learning by doing', we give young people a sense of freedom and independence to satisfy their insatiable sense of curiosity and their instinct for adventure. We help build resilience, self-confidence and valuable life skills, such as the ability to analyse risks and make considered decisions.

And these are the skills that everyone across Australia, and around the world, needs at a time when panic and irrationality can overshadow calm, measured thinking.

For adults, it's often the friendships we make, and the support we give and receive, that help us to flourish personally and professionally. Scouting friendships are the bonus we can all enjoy.

For many of us, it's the magical moments that are the reason we volunteer for Scouts. It could be the moment when a young person shows maturity or generosity beyond their years that takes us by surprise. Or the moment when a youth member demonstrates perseverance or motivation to complete a task that creates a sense of pride. Every one of us has a story to tell about what we saw or how we played a part.

Early this year, we had the privilege of hearing from 12-year old Ollie Parrett, a Scout from England. Ollie had been watching the headline news stories about the bushfires and drought in Australia, and he really wanted to help. He set up a fund-raising page, and he managed to raise over A\$1000 for the Scouts NSW Emergency Relief Fund.

This is what he said, "I hope my good news helps cheer you all up at this difficult time and helps to mark a change in fortune for everyone on the road to recovery. We are all thinking of you and hope this money will go a long way towards helping buy some good things for you all."

"My next task is to make contact with Stuart in 1st Cobargo. My Scout Leader is also called Stuart so we all thought this was funny and a good omen."



It's Scouts like Ollie that make what we do feel so valuable and so satisfying.

It's also good to know that our Scouting friends around the world care about us.

I was delighted to be able to share Ollie's story at a special event we held last month, to help raise funds for the NSW Emergency Relief Fund. My sincere thanks to everyone who participated, donated items, or helped out at the gala dinner. We raised A\$52,000, which will be directly used to support our Scouting families who have suffered from the drought or the bushfires. This donation into the Emergency Relief Fund is a remarkable achievement.

There have been so many other acts of kindness and generosity from across NSW, and from around the world to support our bushfire and drought appeal. They include:

- The 1st Hornsby Heights Scout Group raised A\$550 from a Bunnings BBQ.
- The 2nd Whitchurch Scout Group in England raised £246 for our Relief Fund.
- The Association de Scouts de Mexico purchased 6,500 bushfire badges.
- The 1st Balgowlah Scout Group ran a Bunnings BBQ and raised A\$1000.
- The Scouts de España (Spain) donated A\$9,200 through badge sales.
- Three Canadian Scout districts collected more than A\$15,000 and their National Commissioner has authorised them to wear the special bushfire badges on their scarves for a year.



What fantastic support for our friends in Scouting! We're working closely with our Regional teams to ensure the money reaches the 9 Scouting families who lost their homes, our Scout Groups and Camps whose premises and equipment were destroyed, and the 100 Scouting families who were directly impacted by the unprecedented bushfires. We are also looking to undertake projects to assist with the recovery of the impacted communities.

It's good to know we're part of a Scouting family of people who care, who share our values, and who will help out when they can. At a time when loud voices on social media, on TV and on the radio seem intent on highlighting everybody's differences, Scouting can be a place where we can find a sense of belonging, shared purpose and happiness.

Let's be thankful for the whole wide world of Scouting friends.

After all, as author John Katz says, "If I've learned anything about friendship, it's to hang in, stay connected, fight for them, and let them fight for you. Don't walk away, don't be distracted, don't be too busy or tired, don't take them for granted. Friends are part of the glue that holds life and faith together."

Yours in Scouting.

Neville Tomkins OAM JP
Chief Commissioner
Scouts Australia (NSW Branch)

To contact the Chief Commissioner, please email chief.commissioner@nsw.scouts.com.au.

Child Safety in Scouting

Scouts Australia NSW is committed to operating as a child safe organisation and implementing child safe policies and practices in accordance with the elements of a child safe institution outlined by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse report entitled Creating Child Safe Institutions.

Remember

All suspicions, concerns or allegations about criminal matters or child protection matters should be reported directly to the Chief Commissioner, the Deputy Chief Commissioner (Youth Safety, Compliance and Support), the CEO or the Child Protection Officer at the NSW State Office.

To make a report use the online [child protection form](#), call 02 9735 9000 or email childprotection@nsw.scouts.com.au.

Imminent Danger

If a young person is in imminent danger, the matter should be reported directly and immediately to NSW Police on 131 444.

Where a report is made to the police, you should also subsequently notify the NSW State Office.

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