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To: All Adults in Scouting
CC: Board Members, State Commissioners, Region Commissioners, District Commissioners, State Service Centre and Region Office Staff.

31 August 2021

Dear Scouting friends,

Our thoughts are with all our Scout Members, their families, and the broader community across NSW as we continue to deal with the restrictions imposed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

At Scouts, we support our young people to be resilient, courageous, active, and adaptable. Every day we witness the positive benefits of the work we do.

Within our organisation, we also recognise the importance of these attributes in our adult membership.

Earlier this year, we openly shared with you how we've been addressing some long-standing issues and finally making some changes to help ensure that Scouting continues long into the future in NSW.

To some extent, the challenging environment we've experienced across the country, and around the world, has created conditions to help us look differently at the way we operate. Previously unthinkable changes now feel less difficult for many of us. These challenges have helped us realise what really matters and helped us worry less about things we can't change and focus more on what we can.

We've kept you informed about the work we're doing to address some of the financial challenges we're facing, and we've provided regular updates about our 'Sustainable Scouting' strategy, which is described in full on our Scouts NSW website. Click [here](#) to find out more.

A reminder of our three financial objectives:

- To be financially viable so we can fulfil our mission
- To deliver efficiencies that meet member and community expectations, and satisfy our legislative requirements
- To stay responsive to the external environment by managing any emerging risks, capitalising on new opportunities; and having a sufficient buffer to meet external shocks.

Our progress so far

Over the past few months, we've:

- Successfully reduced costs from the Scouts NSW State budget by 15 per cent.
- Announced a new State structure and the majority of the State team is now in place. This team is made up of volunteers who have precisely the skills and the positive attitude we need. The team is focused on fostering a modern and fit-for-purpose volunteering culture, attracting adult role models to help deliver, with our youth, an outstanding Youth Program. The team's role is to lead major pieces of work and to set up an exciting program and create and help provide a positive member experience for all members. They have the authority to work directly with Groups, Districts, Activity Centres and Regions to achieve their goals of supporting the frontline of Scouting.
- The Direct Invoicing project is complete, and all members have been centrally invoiced for the first time for their State membership fee for the July to September term. This activity has streamlined how membership fees are billed and paid, making it easier for families, Groups and Leaders. Recognising the impact of COVID, the payment deadline has been extended to 15th September, noting those seeking financial assistance can apply to the Family Support Fund.
- We have successfully sold six surplus or underutilised Scout properties to date. These properties had been vacant for a long time and were expensive to maintain. Further properties, surplus to requirements and suitable for sale, have been identified and are being discussed with teams in Regions. In addition:
 - We have partnered with Macquarie University to develop a framework for measuring and evaluating our property portfolio.
 - A large number of our properties have successfully applied for the Crown Reserve Improvement Fund package and received much needed funds to complete renovations or upgrades.
- We have also successfully applied for a significant number of grants to support some of our regional activities, and we've identified partnership opportunities with local community groups to generate income for our Groups.
 - We have recently secured \$8.5million through the Crown Lands COVID-19 Recovery Support Program for 74 projects across Regions and the State Activity Centres. This supplements the \$1.1million we secured last year under the State Government's Economic Stimulus Package for repairs and maintenance to our Crown land properties.
 - We are continuing to run Webinars on grant opportunities and, in response to requests, will shortly be running workshops on grant writing.
 - In the North West Region and South Coast and Tablelands Region, partnerships with local Men's Shed groups, play groups, and local schools have enabled the Scout halls to become more of a community asset.
 - The Golden West Region has secured \$450,000 in grants for Camp Minnamurra, to enable upgrade works on the site.
- We are now undertaking a Review of our Regions. Our current structure has served us for decades, but our membership and our local communities have changed significantly over that period. We need to ask ourselves whether that model is still the best to support our youth, our Groups, and our Members, especially our frontline Members, in both metropolitan and country areas. We also need to ask ourselves how we best position ourselves today to support front line Scouting into the future.
 - We acknowledge some Members are concerned about changes to our Region structure. That is understandable. However, we commit to engagement with representative Reference Groups, including all Region Commissioners, and consultation with our broader Membership.
 - No decisions on a future structure have been made. The Board will carefully consider the options put to it as well as the results of consultation with our Membership.
 - We'll share more information over the next few months. As we progress this initiative, you are welcome to send feedback, suggestions and questions by email to the Region Review Working Group: region.review@nsw.scouts.com.au.

For more information

Don't forget, you can find out all about our progress on the website [here](#).

If you have any great ideas or constructive suggestions for Sustainable Scouting, please touch base by completing this form.

Alternatively, you can email sustainablecouting@nsw.scouts.com.au.

Yours in Scouting,

Neville Tomkins OAM JP
Chief Commissioner

Kerry McGoldrick
Chair of the Board of
Directors

Bob Mulcahy
Interim CEO

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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