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Everyone belongs

Dear Scouts, Leaders and Supporters,

We have been celebrating Harmony Week, a time when we recognise our vibrant, multicultural State.

Scouts come from hundreds of different backgrounds and cultures and it's this diversity that makes us special. Our inclusiveness is something about which we should be very proud. As Harmony Week reminds us, everyone belongs.



Our inclusiveness also helps us cope when times are tough. Today, we are seeing many selfless acts of kindness for those who are struggling. Whether people have been impacted by the devastating floods in northern NSW, affected by what is happening in Ukraine, or finding it difficult to cope with the enduring global pandemic, there are always those who step up, look out for them and remind us of the indomitable spirit of goodness that exists in humankind.

As Scouts we're committed to peace, international friendship, and respect for all.

We extend our support for those with family or friends with links in Ukraine. We'll continue to work with WOSM, the World Organisation of the Scout Movement, and Scouts Australia to provide as much support as we can to our fellow Scouts in Ukraine.

We also recognise that as the crisis escalates, so do people's anxieties about the situation. We encourage you to think about how you can help others, especially young people, to understand what is happening there. Experts tell us that ignoring or avoiding the topic of war can lead to some children feeling scared or alone, so we are all encouraged to have open and honest conversations to help others process what is happening. You can find some valuable advice about how to do this from Save the Children here: [5 ways to talk to children about conflict](#)

At this difficult time, we have also launched our **Flood Emergency Appeal**, to help support those Scouts who have been impacted by the flooding. We've asked those affected how we can best help, and they've asked for donations to the Emergency Relief Fund, which can then be used to pay for replacement uniforms, badges, and camping equipment, as well as membership fees, and other Scout-related costs. This is exactly what we did during the bushfire emergency in 2019, and we were able to support a large number of Scouting families thanks to your generosity.

I sincerely thank those who have already donated so generously to the flood appeal. If you'd like to make a donation, please [click here](#).

I'd also like to encourage Groups and formations to run their own fundraising event, and to donate to this important cause. Every dollar raised will go to the flood impacted Scout families.

Returning to Harmony Week, at Scouting, our door stands open to anyone who wishes to live by our Promise and Law. We know every one of our youth members is different. We also know every one of them matters.

Scouting is an inclusive, values based organisation. We want to be accessible and welcoming to everyone, and in turn, better reflect the composition of our communities. We have made great progress to ensure we are welcoming to people of all gender identities, cultural beliefs and international backgrounds.

We have worked hard to provide access to Scouts with physical or mental disabilities, by making reasonable adjustments to our activities and ensure that all our youth members can participate in a personal progression suitable for their age group, interests and personal abilities.

Earlier this month, we proudly participated in the Sydney Mardi Gras, embracing the 2022 theme of "United we shine". It was a wonderful way to remind us that when we rise as a collective, our message of inclusion is amplified, and we become a more equitable society, where everyone feels confident to be themselves.

March is also the month when we celebrate International Women's Day, and I was particularly delighted to read [this inspiring message](#) from our new CEO, Carolyn Campbell. I encourage you to read it.

Thank you for your support,

Yours in Scouting

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

Youth Safety in Scouting

Scouts Australia NSW is committed to operating as a youth safe organisation and implementing youth 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, CEO, State Commissioner (Youth Protection & Issues Management) or the Manager of Safeguarding Youth, Issues Management and Research at the NSW State Service Centre. To make a report you may use the [online youth protection form](#), call 9735 9000 or email YouthProtectionTeam@nsw.scouts.com.au.

Imminent Danger

If someone is in danger NOW, the matter should be reported directly to NSW Police on 000. Where a report is made to the Police, you must also subsequently notify Scouts NSW State Office.

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