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Thank you

Dear Leaders and Supporters,

Next Monday 16 May marks the start of **National Volunteer Week**, when we celebrate and thank all the extraordinary Australians who deliver such vital work for our local communities.

It's an opportunity to recognise the contribution by the 3 in 10 Australians who help change lives, and change communities for the better.

Volunteers have played a vital role in the past couple of challenging years for NSW and Australia. They have been crucial resources to the many organisations that have responded to the pandemic, the bushfires and the floods, contributing to skills and employment, protecting our precious environment, supporting mental health, improving the lives of people with disability, and providing quality care to older and younger Australians.

This year's Volunteer Week theme is **Better Together**, which feels relevant for us with our Scouts NSW mission being to build a better world where young people are self-fulfilled as individuals and play a constructive role in society.

Our adult Leaders work hard to encourage all our youth members to assist, participate and lead, supported by the adults who volunteer together with us.

Of course the majority of young people at Scouts don't get a say on the big decisions made by our politicians – and Scouts Australia doesn't take sides in politics – but we encourage our youth members to actively explore how they can help their communities and the wider world.

Young people are growing up with a much greater understanding of the world than the generations before them. They are connected to every corner of the globe through social media and the internet.

Interestingly, the Australian Electoral Commission found that more than half of the 700,000 new enrolments to vote in the forthcoming Federal Election were from 18-24 year olds. Young people are politically engaged, with climate change and improvements to mental health awareness at the top of their lists for action.

We know that when they're given the opportunity for active citizenship, youth members jump at the chance. We see young people looking after their local environments, creating and signing online petitions and finding ways to get their voices heard.

And it's these young adults who can help Scouts rebuild and refresh so that we remain attractive to the next generation of young people. You may be aware that volunteering has been badly impacted by COVID-19, with a study from the Australian National University Centre for Social Research and Methods finding that only slightly more than half (56.4 per cent) of those who stopped volunteering in 2020 resumed in the subsequent year.

Now we have seen the easing of lockdowns and social distancing restrictions, it's a good opportunity to find more younger adults who may be interested in volunteering with us.

If you're looking to say thank you to the volunteers with whom you work at Scouts, there are a couple of opportunities for you to consider.

First, we have a wonderful **BRAVO page** with useful templates you can use to create your own personal thanks.

Second, you may wish to nominate a member for the 2022 NSW Volunteer of the Year awards. You can find the details online at the **Centre for Volunteering**. Nominations close at 5pm on Friday 18 June. If there is a volunteer who you believe is worthy of recognition outside our own community, please consider also nominating them through the Centre for Volunteering.

Thank you for your contribution. Whether you are a youth member, an adult Leader, or a Supporter, your support of Scouts is truly valued.

Together we are creating a movement that will thrive and grow and change more young people's lives for the better.

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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