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20 July 2022

Rebounding

Dear Leaders and Supporters,

Last weekend, we held the Scouts NSW Annual General Meeting. It's an event run by our Board of Directors, and to which members of our Branch Council are invited. They review the previous year's financial and operational outcomes, and agree any constitutional matters, including membership of the Board. These decisions will be shared publicly in the coming days.

We provided a live stream of the AGM for any member who wished to observe proceedings, and we published the [Annual Report](#) and [Financial Statements](#) on our website [here](#).



This year's Annual Report was built around the theme of **rebounding!**

Over the past few months, we've seen a gradual rise in youth membership thanks to the sterling efforts from all of our volunteers to get young people meeting and enjoying safe programmes face-to-face again. In particular, we're seeing a rebound in Joey Scout numbers, which provides an early indicator of further positive trends for our other sections.

As you'll be aware, the last couple of year's challenging circumstances resulted in some young people and adult leaders deciding to step back from Scouts. Our youth membership figures dipped to just under 14,000 young people taking part and our adult members fell to around 3,100.

However, our amazing volunteers worked hard to rebuild including holding an incredible number of big events across the State, which we know leave lasting impressions on our young people, and I'm certain these are playing an important part in encouraging more interest in returning to Scouts.

As we see the signs of a rebound in our youth numbers, we're keen to encourage more adult leaders to come and try us out. After all, Scouts isn't only about the benefits to young people. Through volunteering with an active, outdoors organisation, we enable adults to try something different, make new friends, keep their bodies and brains active and do something good for their communities.

Recent [research by McCrindle](#) has shed some valuable light into the perceptions of the general public about volunteering and the impact of the pandemic.

With about 30% of the total NSW population involved in volunteering, it's interesting to see that the research shows about 44% of volunteers regularly gave their time every month, compared with 17% who volunteered once a year.

Importantly, the positive public perception of charities and not-for-profits has been strengthened over the past year among Australians. In keeping with the community mindedness and spirit of mateship that the pandemic fostered, the vast majority of those who volunteer or donate are proud of how charitable organisations rallied to help those in need across the country. The pandemic also shone a light on needs within the community, with more people becoming aware of the value of contributing to help others.

The data collected in 2021 showed there is an opportunity for organisations such as Scouts to take advantage of this latent interest as we rebound from the pandemic. Rather than play it safe with our legacy volunteers and donors, there are opportunities to find new people to join us, by being more flexible about the ways they can participate and the time they can realistically give. In particular, younger adults are looking to make a difference and are willing to back charities to make a positive impact. Now is the time for all of us to not simply rebuild but to be courageous about going beyond our traditional ways of finding volunteers and encouraging younger adults to participate and enjoy the huge benefits that come with helping out.

We're feeling more positive about the road ahead and our journey to recover our membership numbers from the effect of the pandemic. There's still a long way to go to help make sure we're offering all young people who want to join Scouts the fun, adventure and skills they need for later in life.

As always none of this would be possible without the efforts of our dedicated volunteers – thank you for all you continue to do.

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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