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9 September 2022

Dear Leaders and Supporters,

Like so many of you, I awoke today to the sad news of the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Head of State of the Commonwealth of Australia, and the Royal Patron of Scouts Australia. On behalf of Scouts NSW, I have this morning signed the condolences book at Government House, Canberra.

We mourn her loss and commemorate the legacy of her service, particularly her encouragement and kindness to so many young people in supporting them to gain skills for life. As well as being the world's longest serving Monarch, Queen Elizabeth II was a cherished Sovereign. She showed resilience in the toughest times and was the finest example of selfless service and dedication to others.

Out of deep respect for our Royal Patron, over the next ten-day period of mourning, wherever the Australian flag is on display at Scouting venues, that flag will be flown at half-mast until the day of the funeral.

Our Royal Patron would not have wanted young people to miss out on skills for life, though. So, where it feels appropriate, it is encouraged that planned experiences for young people continue, adding moments of reflection to activities so they can be delivered in a respectful way, with special consideration given to demonstrating this on the day of the funeral.

We also appreciate your patience with regards to the Venturer Scout Peak Awards and associated ceremonies. Those awards that are already recorded as approved by Unit Council will retain the name of *Queen's Scout Award*, irrespective of whether they have been presented to the recipient yet. However, the processing of all new *Queen's Scout Award* applications is now paused. The renaming of the Award will be confirmed upon confirmation of the next Royal Patron of Scouts Australia.

I had the privilege just last Saturday (3rd September) of attending the presentation ceremony for both our peak awards, the *Queen's Scout Award* and *Baden-Powell Scout Award* at Government House, Sydney. It reinforced just how our young people are the beating heart of the Scout Movement, participating in programs and activities to develop teamwork, leadership and resilience skills. Through this personal development, they are then in turn able to make a positive impact on the world to help other people.

Congratulations go to all those Scouts who rose to the challenge and earned the top-level awards in their Section this year, including twenty Venturer Scouts who received the *Queen's Scout Award* and three who received the *Baden-Powell Scout Award*. The recipients have made us particularly proud through their community service initiatives to help others, including mentoring the next generation of Scouts.

Each Scout embarks on their own unique journey when they join our Movement, and there is wide range of activities available to chart their own individual course towards a pinnacle such as the *Queen's Scout Award* and the *Baden-Powell Scout Award*. Those who do reach that height will not only be rewarded with the satisfaction of their achievement, but they will also find high regard and recognition of their efforts by others. This will be not only by individual members of the community and future employers, but also by organisations such as universities, who value both the personal self-development and the wider contribution to the community that achieving a *Queen's Scout Award* demonstrates.

Completion of this Award is a major milestone in a Venturer Scout and Rover Scouts journey and carries an outstanding reputation within Scouting and the wider community. On behalf of Scouts NSW, I congratulate our *Queen's Scout and Baden-Powell Scout Award* recipients and look forward to them returning to their local Scout Groups and Units to inspire our younger Scouts.

I am sure that Her Majesty, with her own personal traits of fortitude, service to others and striving to leave the world a better place, would be proud of them all too.

May Her Majesty rest in eternal peace.

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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