



Felling Trees



With immediate effect Scouts NSW is prohibiting the felling of trees by members, supporters and employees.

On 07 December 2022 a scout camp volunteer team was endeavouring to cut down a tree when mid-way through the cut the trunk split, injuring two members of the team. Both were taken to hospital, one sustaining broken ribs, shoulder and a punctured lung, while the other required stitches to the face. The member with the broken ribs subsequently remained in hospital for two weeks. Post incident SafeWork attended the scene and served an Improvement Notice on the site.

Despite primarily being a volunteer organisation Scouts NSW is subject to the requirements of Work, Health and Safety legislation. We have a Duty of Care to our members, supporters, employees and members of the public who partake in Scouting activities or use our facilities. To satisfy this duty Scouts NSW must at all times operate in a safe way, meaning we need to understand the risks to

which we are exposed, be competent to undertake the task at hand, have the necessary safety measures in place and operate in accordance with the requirements of our systems and procedures. Where any of this cannot be assured we must not undertake the task.

That which may have been considered acceptable in times past is not necessarily acceptable today. Indeed, activities which we may be happy to do within the confines of our own home and the equipment we use in relation to these activities does not provide authority for such activities to be conducted within Scouts NSW. To ensure that incidents such as the one that happened on 07 December 2022 do not occur again, we must review and determine what is acceptable for Scouts NSW moving forward.

Where there is a requirement to remove trees from Scouts NSW premises the

services of an arborist/tree removal company professionally qualified in the removal of trees must be used. In the situation that a tree falls down and needs to be removed for safety/operational reasons this may be undertaken by a competent (see below) and suitably equipped member of Scouts NSW. In such situations prior to removal, a risk assessment must be undertaken and a safe system of work put in place.



To demonstrate competence Scouts NSW requires members to have attained the following units of competence or their equivalent as defined at <https://training.gov.au/Home/Tga> :

- FWPCOT2256 Trim and Cut Felled trees
- FWPCOT2254 Maintain Chainsaws

For members who have attained these units of competence email a copy of your Vocational Education and Training (VET) transcript to Training Services (training@nsw.scouts.com.au).