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22 February 2023

The Spirit of Scouting

Dear Scouts, Leaders and Supporters,

Today, the 22nd of February, is Founder's Day, marking the birthday of Robert Baden-Powell, who founded the Scouts movement 116 years ago.

Our Founder travelled widely in his time and encouraged Scouting in every country he visited. The Scouting movement now extends to over 200 countries and territories, with more than 57 million members currently engaged in activities around the world (including youth, Leaders and Supporters).



You can watch a short video about the life of "B-P" (as he was ubiquitously known) and how he founded the Scouts Movement [here](#).

B-P lived out his later years in Kenya, and if you're fortunate enough to be one of the members of the Australian contingent heading to the first ever Africa Rover Scouts Moot being held there in April 2023, you'll even be able to visit his grave!



B-P's connection with Africa lives on in many ways. Just recently the NSW State MP for Monaro was fascinated to learn that Scouts shake hands with the left hand. This is in homage to a tradition inspired by Ashanti warrior chiefs, who when meeting B-P, offered their left hand, noting that only the bravest of the brave shook hands with the left, because to do so they must drop their shields and therefore their protection. The left is also the hand nearest to your heart, signifying friendship. The Scout salute and handshake endure to this day as signs of respect and courage.



Pictured: Nichole Overall MP at Alpine Activity Centre in the Snowy Mountains meeting members of 1st Kosciuszko Scout Group to announce a Community Building Partnership Grant of nearly \$64,000 (and being initiated into the left-hand shaking tradition)

Past pilgrimages honouring the legacy of B-P have included the first [Scouts Australia Expedition to Baden-Powell Scout Peak](#) (a 5,800m tall mountain in Nepal) five years ago. What a privilege to have a mountain peak named in his honour!

These are just some of the ways we acknowledge and pay respects to our Founder. Many local Scout Groups will also be organising their own unique celebrations today (please send your photos of these events to communications@nsw.scouts.com.au).

I hope you are as proud as I am to be part of the largest youth development Movement in the world! Like you, I feel privileged to play a positive role in the lives of so many children and youth. I sincerely thank you for the commitment you have made, and continue to make, for the young people of NSW.

Today is a special day for all Scouts as we celebrate B-P's achievements and the great legacy he left. Happy Founder's Day to one and all!

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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