

Reporting on the implementation of
Royal Commission recommendations by
major institutions



Submission of
Scouts Australia (NSW Branch)
to the National Office for Child Safety

December 2018

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Submission: Scouts Australia NSW to the National Office of Child Safety, December 2018

Preface

Scouts Australia NSW (**Scouts NSW**) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the National Office of Child Safety and to provide an update on Scouts NSW's commitment to implementing the Royal Commission's recommendations.

Scouts NSW appeared before the Royal Commission and gave evidence in relation to:

1. Case Study 1 (2013): Steven Larkins. This hearing considered the response of multiple organisations, including Scouts Australia, Hunter Aboriginal Services and the former Department of Community Services, towards Steven Larkins. Larkins was the former CEO of Hunter Aboriginal Children's Services and a former Scout Leader.
2. Case Study 48 (2016): This hearing examined the current policies and procedures of Scouts Australia NSW regarding child protection and child safe standards.

Scouts NSW recognises its errors from the past and is committed to safeguarding children and youth from all forms of abuse.

In September 2016 Scouts NSW notified the Royal Commission that it had formally established an organisation wide project to actively manage child protection initiatives. Of particular note are the following initiatives:

- On 19-20 November 2016 the national **Scouts Australia Child Protection Policy and Prescribed Procedures** were approved at the National Executive Council of Scouts Australia.
- On 12 December 2016, Scouts NSW revised its **Child Protection Policy and Child Protection Procedure**.
- On 15 December 2016, senior staff and volunteers of Scouts NSW attended **Trauma Informed Redress: Direct Personal Response**, facilitated by the Blue Knot Foundation.
- On 19 January 2017, the **Australian Childhood Foundation**, at the request of Scouts NSW launched an independent audit of Scouts NSW child protection processes and practices.
- From October 2016 **enhanced child protection reporting** has been provided to the Scouts NSW Board of Directors to facilitate analysis of child protection related incidents and issues.
- In November 2016 the Board formally endorsed the Royal Commission's document **Creating Child Safe Institutions**.

- On 1 February 2017 Scouts NSW initiated a large-scale child protection project the **National Child Protection Policy and Prescribed Procedures Implementation Plan (PIP)**. This includes design and implementation of a Scouts NSW Child Safe Framework, the development of educational materials, a new youth centric Code of Conduct and incorporates the recommendations of the ACF audit referred to above.
- From 15 February 2017 all new **position descriptions** for senior Scouts NSW volunteer roles now cite as a selection criteria, support for the strategic plan - which includes the primary goal of establishing a child safe environment.
- From 16 February 2017 child protection **screening enhancements** to the Scouts NSW online membership system were completed. Alerts are now automatically shared with a national alert database to enable cross checking of new membership applications from a national perspective.
- In April 2017 the Board approved the **Scouts NSW Guiding Principles for Responding to Claims of Child Sexual Abuse**. Adherence to these principles ensures that we act with care, compassion and in a timely manner in order to reduce the trauma to survivors, provide consistency and avoid unnecessary cost and delay.
- In terms of survivor specific support, Scouts NSW has also actioned the following:
 - Launch of a **Survivor Support website page¹** to provide accessible materials, support, information regarding the National Redress scheme and contact details.
 - A copy of the **Guiding Principles has been sent to known survivors** (via their legal representatives or police where their identification details could not be established).
 - Since June 2016 a **Restorative Engagement Program**, guided by the recommendations of the Royal Commission, has offered to survivors a personal or written apology as well as access to counselling. Letters offering a restorative engagement have been provided to known survivors.
 - Scouts NSW wrote to known survivors notifying them of the **Scouts Australia Apology to Survivors²** and the **National Apology to Survivors³** by the Prime Minister.
 - A number of **restorative engagements have taken place** which include face to face meetings with the Chief Commissioner and/or the CEO and include either a verbal and/or written apology.
 - Scouts NSW have proactively sought early **settlement of claims** including extensive liaison with our insurers to oblige them to act promptly.
 - Following our longstanding public support of the National Redress Scheme, Scouts Australia and Scouts NSW **formally opted in** and were declared by the Minister to be one of the first institutions to be operational from 1 July 2018.
- In April 2017 Scouts NSW entered into a partnership with the **Office of the Children's Guardian** to launch online E Learning. This training is now being used to appoint a network of **Scouts NSW Youth Safe Advocates** who will be available to all members (youth and adult) to hear concerns and facilitate reporting at all Scouting events and activities.

¹ <https://www.nsw.scouts.com.au/about/survivor-support/>

² <https://scouts.com.au/blog/2018/10/04/scouts-australia-apology/>

³ <https://www.nationalapologyconsultation.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx>

- A national **Scouts Australia Child Safe Implementation Network** was established to facilitate regular interaction between Child Safe practitioners from each State or Territory.
- A Scouts Australia **Child Safe Conference**, hosted by Scouts NSW, took place on 9 September 2017 during National Child Protection Week.
- The Child Protection Team initiated a **digitisation project** including introduction of a solely electronic system for recording and filing child protection related incidents. Implementation of a risk management tool is also being pursued to facilitate efficient incident recording and analysis.
- The Scouts NSW Youth Commissioner undertook a project to allow all youth members in NSW to understand that **“I have the right to feel safe”** and has initiated a campaign to spread this message to all Scouts NSW members. A special Safety Chief Chat (message from the Chief Commissioner) was released to the membership, launching this campaign and other safety related initiatives.

This submission will now go on to outline in detail the steps taken by Scouts NSW to create a child safe environment.

The submission is structured in accordance with the sections, themes and measures outlined in the draft template for institutional reporting provided by the National Office of Child Safety.

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Recommendation 14.1

Section 1: Identifying the institution

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Background information

Scouts is an international organisation with over 30 million members worldwide. In Australia it is a family based organisation that provides approximately 66,000 Youth Members aged six to 25 with fun and challenging opportunities to grow and develop.

Scouts is a part of every community. Our members come from a wide variety of cultural and religious backgrounds, across the socio-economic spectrum and include individuals with intellectual or physical disabilities.

Scouting in Australia operates through a federal model. In each State and Territory, Scouting is organised through a separate body; in most cases incorporated by statute.

For the purposes of the Royal Commission into Institutional Child Sexual Abuse, Scouts Australia (Scouts Australia) and Scouts Australia NSW (Scouts NSW) are classified as sports and recreational institutions.

Scouts NSW is one of the largest and most successful youth organisations in the state. The organisation comprises approximately 17,000 youth and adult members from various cultural and religious backgrounds. Scouts NSW is built on the concept of a youth led, adult supported approach, which ensures that all youth members remain at the forefront of all of our programs. Youth members are given the opportunity to engage in society as constructive and responsible citizens at a local, national and international level.

Scouts NSW has a dedicated Child Protection Team, comprising senior employed and volunteer staff (including the Child Protection Officer, CEO, Chief Commissioner and Youth Commissioner). The purpose of the Child Protection Team is to focus on the creation of a child safe environment within Scouting in NSW and to appropriately action any concerns or issues raised by the membership, including incident reports.

A Scouts NSW child safe environment is an environment within which youth members who participate in Scouting in NSW feel safe and where members of Scouts NSW (adults and children alike) understand how to report issues or concerns (including child protection/abuse related matters).

All adults and youth members in Scouting (including parents and members of the community) are encouraged to report concerns directly to the Child Protection Team via the online reporting function on the website. This reporting function is regularly highlighted to the membership via communications and marketing vehicles including the newsletter, emails, website and social media.

Scouts NSW recognises that a key finding of the Royal Commission was that the most common barrier to disclosure was shame or embarrassment. Scouts NSW is committed to providing appropriate and accessible reporting mechanisms which will enable a supportive environment where disclosures are encouraged.

The role of the Child Protection Team is to review, triage and appropriately action all reports received in line with the behavioural management process. All matters which require the involvement of the NSW police or FACS are immediately directed to the relevant authority.

The Child Protection Team is supported by the Board of Directors of Scouts NSW. Monthly Child Protection reports are provided to the Board to appraise them of ongoing issues, including a monthly report which deals specifically with historic matters. Child Protection remains a standing agenda item at all Board Meetings.

Section 2: General reporting against recommendations relevant to all institutions

THEME 1: Making institutions child safe

Measure 1.1: New or revised Code of Conduct, policies and procedures for child safe institutions

Scouts NSW requires all Adult Members to review, sign up to and comply with a Scouting Code of Conduct and Ethics⁴. This document clearly sets out Scouts NSW expectations regarding appropriate behaviour.

Any breaches of the Scouts NSW Code of Ethics and Conduct or relevant policies are reported directly to the Child Protection Team and are dealt with in accordance with the Scouts NSW behavioural management process.

All youth members are also expected to adhere to the Scouts Promise and Law⁵ and are subject to regular peer review of behavioural standards via sectional Youth Councils.

On behalf of all Branches in each State and Territory, the national body Scouts Australia developed the Scouts Australia Child Protection Policy and Prescribed Procedures, which were approved at the National Executive Council of Scouts Australia on 19-20 November 2016. These national documents explain reporting requirements and processes regarding handling complaints of child sexual abuse. They have recently been modified to include specific and explicit reference to the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, which are soon to be endorsed by COAG.

In support of the national policy (and to allow for variation in approach as a result of State based legislation and mandatory checking programmes such as WWCC) in December 2016 Scouts NSW reviewed and updated its own Scouts NSW Child Protection Policy and Child Protection Procedure.

These documents outline NSW specific mandatory screening checks (including WWCC and police checks) undertaken by the organisation in order to screen adults entering the organisation.

The procedure also outlines that all reports of abuse will be reported to relevant authorities (i.e. the NSW police or FACS), in accordance with Recommendation 7.8.

Scouts NSW Policies and Procedures ensure that the best interests of the child are maintained at all times, consistent with Recommendation 6.4 and Article 3 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Scouts NSW is fully committed to ensuring its youth members remain at the forefront of everything that we do and that the needs of the child are always the primary concern. Scouts NSW is clear that privacy and reputational issues are not a factor when reporting abuse matters to the relevant authorities.

⁴ https://www.nsw.scouts.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/ScoutsNSW_CodesofEthicsandConduct_December2017.pdf

⁵ <https://www.nsw.scouts.com.au/about/about-us/promise-a-law/>

Scouts NSW has a clear Alcohol Policy and Social Media Guidelines⁶, both of which are communicated to the membership regularly via Scouts NSW communications vehicles including newsletters, emails, the website and social media. These policies help to define and identify behaviours which the organisation considers to be inappropriate to enable the membership to understand boundaries of appropriate behaviour and where a breach occurs, appropriate action to be taken.

In response to the Royal Commission key finding that institutional cultures of physical abuse and bullying contributed to abuse, Scouts NSW has a zero tolerance policy towards abuse. Scouts Australia has also launched a website called Breaking the Cycle⁷ which is aimed at providing the membership with information and reporting mechanisms to address all forms of bullying behaviours. This website has a different area for each section (age range) in scouting and addresses ways that individuals can deal with or report bullying behaviours.

The principle of two deep leadership applies to all interactions between adults and youth members in scouting. This principle states that no adult in scouting should place themselves in a position where they are alone with a youth member. This principle applies equally to messaging via email, text or social media (where the analogy is given that this is akin to going into a room with the youth member alone and closing the door) and is referred to within the Scouts NSW Social Media Guidelines⁸.

The Scouts NSW Child Protection Procedure also gives practical guidance to adults supervising youth members whilst at events and activities. This includes use of bathrooms and washing facilities and transporting youth members.

The Scouts NSW Child Protection Policy and Procedure are designed to enable each adult in Scouting to take community ownership of the requirement for the creation of a child safe environment and to be risk aware when facilitating activities and events.

In order to further enhance and build upon the membership's understanding, in 2017, Scouts NSW initiated a large-scale child protection project, the *National Child Protection Policy and Prescribed Procedures Implementation Plan (PIP)*. The PIP project includes recommendations arising from an audit by the Australian Childhood Foundation and will include the design of child protection specific education and training materials and a comprehensive state wide training programme.

As part of PIP, Scouts NSW will continually undertake a comprehensive review of current child protection related policies and procedures, particularly in light of Recommendation 6.5 and 6.6, the Child Safe Standards. The Board of Directors has approved funding for the review, which is expected to commence in early 2019. This will ensure that revised policies, procedures and accessible educational materials are communicated to and understood by the membership.

⁶ https://www.nsw.scouts.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/Social_Media_Guidelines.pdf

⁷ <http://breakingthecycle.scouts.com.au/>

⁸ https://www.nsw.scouts.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/Social_Media_Guidelines.pdf

Measure 1.2: Improvements to institutional responding and reporting

Scouts NSW has a comprehensive behavioural management process which clearly sets out how Scouts NSW deals with matters which require referral to the NSW police or FACS, including all forms of abuse.

All Adults, Youth Members, families and members of the public are encouraged to lodge a complaint via the Scouts NSW online reporting tool at any time. The tool generates a report that is sent to the Child Protection Team for triaging and assessment. Where matters are raised with a leader on the ground at an event, leaders are required to lodge an incident report via the website to ensure appropriate follow up by the Child Protection Team.

In 2018, a Scouts NSW Youth Safe Advocates scheme was launched. The scheme is designed to create an environment for all Members, especially Youth Members, to speak openly about issues and concerns.

A Scouts NSW Youth Safe Advocate is an individual who receives training from the Office of the Children's Guardian regarding risk mitigation and situational risk prevention. The role of a Youth Safe Advocate is to listen to concerns and provide support for our Youth Members who are concerned about their own safety, or the safety of another Member. Scouts NSW Youth Safe Advocates are also trained and encouraged to facilitate incident reporting via the Scouts NSW online reporting tool on the website.

Where a complaint is filed/incident report lodged, Scouts NSW's behavioural management process, sets out how each complaint is triaged and handled. Scouts NSW have also developed internal protocols relating to the way the organisation facilitates both contemporaneous and historical complaints (including abuse).

Scouts NSW has developed a protocol which specifically refers to handling complaints about historical sexual abuse and aligns with the Scouts NSW Guiding Principles for Responding to Claims of Child Sexual Abuse. These Guidelines are available on the Scouts NSW website page relating to Survivor Support⁹.

In accordance with Recommendation 7.7, the Guidelines outline how Scouts NSW will respond and investigate a complaint of historical sexual abuse and emphasises the importance of providing support and assistance to survivors and their families. In response to the Royal Commission key finding that in some organisations, complaints were not adequately investigated or responded to sensitively, Scouts NSW has identified specific resources and engaged specialist legal support to appropriately, sensitively and diligently record and respond to all complaints lodged with us.

When a serious complaint is received it is immediately risk assessed by the Child Protection Team and steps are taken to address any risks arising. Where a complaint is raised about a current leader, swift action is taken to immediately suspend the person about whom the complaint is made. As outlined in Recommendation 7.8, where the matter is referred to external authorities (such as the NSW Police or FACS), Scouts NSW places its internal process on hold to avoid compromising the

⁹ <https://www.nsw.scouts.com.au/about/survivor-support/>

integrity of any subsequent authority investigation. The Child Protection Team then closely liaises with the NSW Police and FACS to mitigate any ongoing risk to youth members.

The PIP project includes a specific initiative to review, develop and disseminate education and training materials relating to child protection and incident reporting (including a new youth centric Code of Conduct) to all Members, including Leaders, Youth Members and families. The Board of Directors has approved funding for this initiative, and consultations are underway to engage external communications agencies to assist with this project.

Measure 1.3: Improvements to recordkeeping and information sharing

Current records relating to all incidents lodged with the Child Protection Team are electronically filed and kept at State Office. The Child Protection Team has initiated a state-wide digitisation project including introduction of a solely electronic system for recording and filing child protection related incidents.

Implementation of a risk management tool is also being pursued to facilitate efficient incident reporting and recording. This tool will allow for in-depth analysis of incidents across the organisation.

Scouts NSW acknowledges the minimum retention period for records relating to child sexual abuse as 45 years. In accordance with Recommendation 8.1, the organisation is currently reviewing the Scouts NSW policy regarding data retention to ensure compliance in accordance with Recommendation 8.4. The new Scouts NSW strategic plan provides a funded initiative to migrate all relevant child protection related records from scout groups to a centralised data point.

In accordance with Recommendation 8.4, each Region Commissioner and Scouts NSW Youth Safe Advocate will also receive training on how to maintain filenotes and records to ensure transparency, accountability, and accurate recordkeeping across the organisation.

THEME 2: Children's Voices

Measure 2.1: Children participate in decisions that affect them

Scouts NSW is a youth led, adult supported organisation. Our youth members are at the forefront of everything that we do and the new Youth Program in particular provides many varied opportunities for youth members to participate in decisions that affect them.

The Chief Commissioner of Scouts NSW is committed to giving our Youth Members a strong platform where they can openly share their views and concerns, particularly about decisions that directly impact them. Based on this commitment, the Chief Commissioner appointed a dedicated Youth Commissioner, who is responsible for engaging with our Youth Members and speaking on their behalf to ensure their rights and views are heard. This Youth Commissioner has also been appointed as part of the Child Protection Team.

As part of his strategic objectives, the Youth Commissioner has actively sought out the opinions and concerns of youth members via many consultations at numerous Scouting events and activities. It is clear that Youth Members have distinct views on what makes them feel safe and have a desire to express their thoughts in a constructive manner. These views have been shared with the Child

Protection Team and has been closely considered when designing and implementing initiatives such as the Scouts NSW Youth Safe Advocates scheme, and the “*I have the right to feel safe*” campaign.

The “*I have the right to feel safe*” campaign focuses on empowering our Youth Members to know their rights and to speak openly and freely about anything that does not align with their safety and wellbeing. This concept enforces Article 12 of the UN’s Convention on the Rights of the Child and accords with Recommendation 6.4. The campaign will be further developed and promulgated in 2019.

The intention of Scouts NSW is that in future the Scouts NSW Youth Safe Advocates scheme will also be extended to youth members. This youth version of the Advocates scheme will have a youth centric, rights-based focus which will align with the Child Safe Standards and Recommendation 14.1. The training will be based upon the principles outlined in the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* and will centre on allowing youth members to understand their rights and enforce appropriate boundaries. This aspect of the scheme will be developed in conjunction with the Australian Human Right’s Commission, with whom the Child Protection Team already have an existing working relationship and have already made contact to discuss this project.

Section 3: Reporting against institution specific recommendations

Scouts NSW was deemed by the Royal Commission to fall within the scope of sport and recreation sector.

Recommendation 14.1: All sport and recreation institutions, including arts, culture, community and hobby groups, that engage with or provide services to children should implement the Child Safe Standards identified by the Royal Commission.

Child Safe Standards:

Standard 1: Child Safety is embedded in institutional leadership, governance and culture. Involves the entire institution, from staff to volunteers, understanding obligations and complying with codes of conduct.

Measures implemented prior to December 2018:

- Scouts NSW has employed a fulltime Child Protection Officer (CPO) who forms part of a dedicated Child Protection Team, which includes the CEO, Chief Commissioner and Youth Commissioner.
- Child Protection is a standing item on the Board of Directors agenda and a monthly Child Protection report is provided to the Board.
- The Scouts NSW Code of Conduct and Ethics is publicly available via the website, together with the Scouts NSW Child Protection Policy and Procedures and an online reporting tool to allow complaints/incidents to be lodged.
- This information is regularly and widely disseminated throughout the organisation via a number of communications vehicles including newsletters, emails, the website and social media channels.
- The Behavioural Management process located with the Organisation and Information Manual reinforces the Code of Conduct and Ethics and sets out Scouts NSW’s complaint handling process.

- All members of Scouts NSW are required to sign the Code of Conduct upon joining the organisation.
- Emphasis is provided upon a zero-tolerance policy for all abuse matters.
- The website also includes a specific Child Safe page which provides updates and information on new child-focused initiatives.
- All members are encouraged to report concerns or incidents via the online reporting tool.

Prospective work that will be undertaken post-2018 to implement this measure:

- As part of the PIP project, Scouts NSW will develop a new youth centric Code of Conduct and Safeguarding Commitment Statement, which will focus on allowing members to identify a list of acceptable and unacceptable behaviours.
- The PIP project also provides scope for a comprehensive programme to further educate the membership in having the right to feel safe. This project will disseminate training and education materials relating to child protection to all Adults and Youth Members in Scouting and will provide targeted educational awareness at a grass roots level.

Standard 2: Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously. Emphasis must be placed on children's ability to express their views and participate in decisions that impact their lives. Children also need to be able to access sexual abuse prevention programs and information.

Measures implemented prior to December 2018:

- The Scouting ethos of "youth-led, adult supported" has underpinned Scouts NSW's commitment to Standard 2.
- The organisation has appointed a Youth Commissioner who will lead the new campaign "*I have the right to feel safe*" which aims to empower our youth with knowledge about their rights and how to establish boundaries.
- The Youth Commissioner regularly engages with our Youth Members to understand their views and concerns. This information is shared with the Child Protection Team and is used to inform ongoing initiatives to ensure our Youth Members have a voice in everything that we do.
- Scouts NSW understands that youth members need some level of power and control in the way in which the organisation responds to their concerns and seeks to include their voice at all stages of development of new educational materials.
- Scouts NSW Youth Safe Advocates have been appointed to ensure that the voices of our youth members are heard and that youth members have access to support services and know who to go to for help to support their friends when they are distressed.

Prospective work that will be undertaken post-2018 to implement this measure:

- The Child Protection Team will continue to liaise with the Australian Human Rights Commission regarding the production of materials that focus on youth rights and establishing boundaries in accordance with the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*.
- The PIP project includes the development of a youth member centric code of conduct to ensure all youth members understand the role of adults and their rights and responsibilities.

- The project will also focus on child safety key messages and youth focused child safety documentation. The project will develop age appropriate mechanisms whereby children, young people and families can provide input and feedback to key personnel within Scouts NSW.
- It will also develop materials aimed at educating children, young people and their families about their rights to feel safe and be safe. This addresses findings from the Royal Commission which found that children must *feel* safe in order to disclose abuse; and this includes knowing the rights and processes available to them.

Standard 3: Families and communities are informed and involved. Institutions must engage in two-way communication with families about child safety approaches, and families need to have a say in the institution's policies and practices.

Measures implemented prior to December 2018:

- In September 2016, Scouts NSW notified the Royal Commission that it had formally established an organisation-wide project to actively manage child protection initiatives, and to address concerns which had arisen from the Royal Commission. One of the tasks required Scouts NSW to hold consultations with other organisations to identify best practice to measure two-way communication. These consultations are currently being arranged by the Marketing and Communications team, and findings from these discussions will be used to inform best practice.
- All family and community members are encouraged to take responsibility for child protection and awareness and to lodge a report via the website should they have concerns.

Prospective work that will be undertaken post-2018 to implement this measure:

- The PIP project outlined the development of a communications strategy relating to Scouts NSW commitment to safeguarding children and young people in NSW. This strategy explicitly includes two-way consultation with personnel, children and families. The Child Protection Team is currently considering additional consultation groups to further engage and communicate with parents and guardians about child safe approaches.

Standard 4: Equity is upheld and diverse needs are taken into account. Institutions must pay close attention to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with disability and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Measures implemented prior to December 2018:

- Scouts NSW recognises the importance of catering for the diverse needs of all youth members. In particular, Scouts NSW has a specific focus on engaging with youth members with special needs. This is reinforced by the appointment of a specific State Commissioner for Special Needs, who oversees all activities and initiatives for members with special needs, including Agoonoree at the Farm (the Scouts NSW annual Special Needs conference).
- Since inviting females into scouting, Scouts NSW has extensively increased its focus on female inclusion across all levels of the organisation.
- Scouts NSW has also developed a strong focus on engaging with the LGBTIQI community ensuring that all members feel welcome to join and actively participate in scouting. Scouts

NSW members were proud to enter a float into the Sydney Mardi Gras parade to promote inclusivity in Scouting.

- Scouts NSW works closely with various cultural and religious groups including establishing groups that specifically cater to youth members who speak particular languages or follow certain faiths.
- Relevantly, Scouts NSW has made their website available in multiple languages, which ensures that all members are able to engage with the child safety material online in the language of their choice.

Prospective work that will be undertaken post-2018 to implement this measure:

- Detailed factsheets are intended to be created regarding specific subject areas including autism, LGBTQI, transgender, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, appropriate cultural interaction and diversity.
- Consideration will be given to wider pilot schemes to promote diversity and inclusion in line with WOSM's guidelines: See World of Scouting Movement (2017) *Diversity and Inclusion in Scouting: WOSM's Position Paper*¹⁰.
- The proposed Scouts NSW strategic plan (currently in draft format) contains a funded initiative to initiate changes to our Scoutlink membership system to identify relevant demographical and cultural membership statistics.

Standard 5: People working with children are suitable and supported. Institutions must incorporate child safety in recruitment processes and involve Working With Children Checks across the organisation.

Measures implemented prior to December 2018:

- Scouts NSW is committed to implementing stringent screening mechanisms. Prior to joining the movement, all applicants must undergo WWCC, police background checks and reference checks. They must also complete a series of training modules before progressing to the next stages of their Scouting career.
- As outlined in the Child Protection Procedure, policies must be adhered to at all times to ensure the safety of youth members. This includes two-deep leadership (where at least two adults must be present with youth members at all times) and an increased focus on incident reporting.
- In response to the key finding by the Royal Commission that overnight camps were overwhelmingly the most common place of abuse, Scouts NSW now requires all Adult Members, including parents, who attend overnight camps, to hold valid WWCCs.
- The Child Protection Team is responsible for oversight and enforcement of these screening mechanisms and to responding to notifications of bars and interim bars of WWCC from the OCG. Where an interim or full bar is received, the Adult is immediately suspended until a valid, verified WWCC can be provided.

¹⁰https://www.scout.org/sites/default/files/library_files/PP%20Diversity%20%26%20Inclusion%20Scouting_EN_0.pdf

Prospective work that will be undertaken post-2018 to implement this measure:

- As part of the PIP project, Scouts NSW will develop a revised and accessible WWCC policy and will also seek to clearly promote the policy via our communications vehicles.
- The Scouts Australia National Child Protection Policy requires national police checks to be undertaken in relation to all prospective adult members. Scouts NSW is not currently compliant with this requirement but has initiated a specific project to upgrade the existing NSW screening mechanism of a WWCC and NSW state wide police check, to a WWCC combined with a national police check.
- The PIP project also contains a specific task which focuses on strong governance and accountability between the Branch, Regions, Districts and Groups within Scouts NSW. To facilitate more efficiency in this regard, a review will be undertaken by the CEO and a list of action points provided to the Board. This review is planned for early to mid 2019.

Standard 6: Processes to respond to complaints of a child sexual abuse are child focused. The institution must have a child-focused complaint handling system that is understood by children, staff, volunteers and families.

Measures implemented prior to December 2018

- Scouts NSW recognises the importance of a robust complaints system which allows all members to freely share their concerns. The online incident reporting system via the website has enabled individuals from both Scouts and the wider public to easily raise their concerns with us at any time. The website tool generates a report for the Child Protection team, and is a simple, user-friendly form that ensures Youth Members can access the mechanism.
- The Scouts NSW Youth Safe Advocates scheme also offers children with the opportunity to disclose concerns to a trained Adult Member. Research indicates that the first disclosure of abuse is a significant conversation as it will impact whether the child feels safe enough to continue speaking out and receiving necessary support. Accordingly, Scouts NSW is committed to ensuring that all Youth Safe Advocates are well-equipped to receive and support any youth member who wishes to talk about their concerns.
- In addition, Scouts NSW recognises that disclosures by young males can be particularly difficult and that they need to be supported to ensure that they do not feel shame or embarrassment in disclosing and that there is no stigma attached to doing so. This is addressed within the Youth Safe Advocates training and a wide range of Youth Safe Advocates from all ages and genders have been appointed, to ensure that young males will be able to easily identify a person with whom they feel comfortable and who they know is there to listen to them in a safe and supportive environment.

Prospective work that will be undertaken post-2018 to implement this measure:

- The PIP project incorporates the introduction of an automatic incident reporting system. This will include both Child Protection and WHS matters and will assist in facilitating time-effective responses to incident reports. The reporting system will also provide in-depth analysis of trends and patterns in order to allow for effective risk mitigation.

- The PIP project will also focus on providing educational awareness materials to children, staff, volunteers and families (particularly parents and guardians) regarding the Scouts NSW complaint handling process and how to lodge a complaint via our online reporting tool.

Standard 7: Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training. All staff and volunteers receive training of child safe practices and child protection. Relevant staff receive training in protecting children and responding to disclosures.

Measures implemented prior to December 2018:

- Every Adult Member of Scouts NSW is required to complete online training regarding Child Protection. This training provides all Adults with a fundamental level of risk mitigation knowledge and awareness.
- The Child Protection Team regularly liaises with all major event coordinators to ensure that they are equipped with the child-safety skills and awareness necessary for their event. This has included extensive training for the NSW Contingent Leaders for the upcoming Australian Jamboree 2019.
- Furthermore, the Child Protection Team has established the Scouts NSW Youth Safe Advocates scheme which trains adult members in safeguarding methodologies and how to effectively respond to disclosures. This scheme is based upon online e learning provided by the Office of the Children’s Guardian.

Prospective work that will be undertaken post-2018 to implement this measure:

- As part of the PIP project, a specific task is focused on developing material that will educate children, young people and their families about their rights to feel safe and be safe. This addresses some significant findings from the Royal Commission, that is, children must feel safe in order to disclose abuse; and this includes knowing the rights and processes available to them.
- The Child Protection Team is also focused on ensuring that all Scouts NSW members who are in positions of leadership and governance are aware of current child protection requirements. As part of long-term planning initiatives, the Child Protection Team is committed to continuing to work alongside the CEO, Chief Commissioner and the Board to implement a “top-down” approach - disseminating child protection knowledge, skills and training.

Standard 8: Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur. Risks in the online and physical environments are identified and mitigated without compromising a child’s right to privacy and healthy development.

Measures implemented prior to December 2018:

- Scouts NSW recognises that abuse can occur in a myriad of environments, including in physical and online spaces.

- These concerns, particularly in relation to the potential of abuse in the online environment, are addressed by Scouts NSW's Social Media Policy, which is available on the website, flagged on the Child Safe Page of the website and highlighted via targeted communications (such as Facebook, Chief Chat messages from the Chief Commissioner, etc).
- The Child Protection Team continuously monitors how Adults in Scouting conduct themselves in real and virtual contexts and is committed to adopting a strong stance against any sort of abuse or misconduct.
- The Scouts NSW Youth Safe Advocates Scheme utilises specific methodologies prepared by the University of Sydney in conjunction with the Office of the Children's Guardian relating to opportunity minimisation.

Prospective work that will be undertaken post-2018 to implement this measure:

- The Child Protection Team recognises that technological advancements, and the constant danger present in certain physical environments, elevates the risk of harm facing young people. Scouts NSW has heard from the E Safety Commissioner and intends to focus more closely on this area of online vulnerability in future. PIP project materials will specifically address risks posed by youth members inappropriately interacting online and/or being subject to inappropriate targeted communications or grooming strategies by adults.
- The Child Protection Team is committed to addressing all risks and implementing appropriate risk mitigation strategies to reduce danger to our Youth Members.
- A key focus in 2019 for the Child Protection Team is to continue studying opportunity minimisation, which will include a risk assessment of the child and adult safety-related risks posed to our members within the current environment. This will build on information obtained via the gap analysis, which is a key component of the PIP Project.

Standard 9: Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved. The institution regularly reviews and improves child safe practices and analyses complaints to identify causes and systemic failures to inform continuous improvement.

Measures implemented prior to December 2018:

- Scouts NSW recognises the significance and importance of the Child Safe Standards, and remains committed to incorporating the Standards throughout the organisation.
- The National Child Protection Policy has now been amended to explicitly reflect the Standards.
- Scouts NSW was also asked by the Australian Human Rights Commission to take part in their filming initiatives regarding training relating to the Child Safe Standards and did so very actively, including an interview with the Scouts NSW Youth Commissioner.
- Significantly, the Child Safe Standards were used as a benchmark by the Australian Childhood Foundation's Scouts NSW Audit. The subsequent findings and recommendations from the audit report led to the key tasks outlined in the PIP

project. As a sign of recognition about the importance of these Standards, the Board of Directors approved funding for Phase 1 of this project in 2018.

Prospective work that will be undertaken post-2018 to implement this measure:

- As part of the PIP project, the Child Protection Team has secured funding from the Board to undertake a review of all policies and procedures. Within this review, the Child Protection Team will be ensuring that the Standards have been appropriately implemented to reflect latest developments in child protection best practice.
- The Child Protection Team will continue to undertake periodic reviews of all Scouts NSW policies and procedures to ensure they meet contemporary compliance obligations.

Standard 10: Policies and procedures document how the institution is child safe. Policies and procedures address all Child Safe Standards.

Measures implemented prior to December 2018:

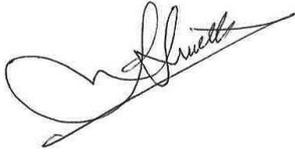
- Scouts NSW Child Protection Policy and Procedures are currently available on the Scouts NSW website, and communications have been circulated to the membership to ensure maximum awareness.
- As part of the Child Protection Project (CPP), Scouts NSW completed a requirement for all policy documents to be stored securely in a single location. This led to the Scouts NSW Controlled Documents policy, which outlines a standardised approach.
- Additional tasks within the CPP initiative included a review of all methods that communicate policies and procedures to Scouts NSW members, and a task aimed at discovering how policies are understood and implemented, and the effectiveness of this process.
- The lessons learned from these tasks will help inform how Scouts NSW can disseminate future policies and procedures involving the Child Safe Standards to all relevant stakeholders.

Prospective work that will be undertaken post-2018 to implement this measure:

- As part of the PIP project, a specific task has been designed to develop materials which educate children, young people and their families about their rights to feel safe and be safe. This addresses some significant findings from the Royal Commission, that is, children must feel safe in order to disclose abuse; and this includes knowing their rights and the processes available to them.
- The Board of Scouts NSW recognises the importance of ensuring our youth feel safe and have approved funding to ensure such educational material can be produced and disseminated widely.

Should you require any further information regarding any of the matters outlined above, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Smith', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Andrew Smith AM

Chief Executive Officer
Scouts Australia NSW

10 December 2018

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Tomkins', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Neville Tomkins OAM JP

Chief Commissioner
Scouts Australia NSW

10 December 2018