

Scouts Australia Youth Program Review



5 August 2015

Fellow Scouting members and friends of Scouting,

The Youth Program Review (YPR) is conducting a wide variety of research to ensure we develop the best possible youth program for our future youth members. This research features a multi-faceted approach using our own teams, external demographers and researchers, exploration of previous research and working with other similar National Scout Organisations.

The following research was completed by a team of volunteers as part of Stage 3 of the YPR, exploring a whole range of information to build some foundations for our future “one program”. The questions for these topics were derived from feedback and related discussion and workshopping of initial YPR research.

“One Program” is the mantra under which this stage of the review has worked, recognising that although we use age sections, these must be strongly linked and united in working progressively towards a common goal, facilitating the development of individual young people.

Stage 3 was all about developing the big-picture concepts of a future youth program for Australian Scouting, concepts that will drive the ideas and detail that will emerge from Stage 4.

All the proposals contained in this report have been supported for further development in Stage 4. No decision has been made to implement these proposals.

Share your considered and constructive thoughts at ypr.scouts.com.au; through discussion great ideas can evolve.

Yours in Scouting,

YPR team

RESEARCH REPORT & DISCUSSION PAPER

Title	<i>Age Sections For Scouts Australia – Findings For Discussion</i>	YPR Paper No.	3-7-2
Stage 3 Topic	3-7 Age Sections	Status	FINAL
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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*Only occasionally in history do massive **demographic shifts** combine with huge **social change**, ongoing **generational transitions**, and rapid **technological trends**, so that within the span of a few decades, **society altogether alters**.*

Today we are living in the midst of one such transformation.

(McCrindle Research, 2014c)

This paper explores options for the arrangement of the program into developmental stages, or 'sections', for a new Scouts Australia youth program.

While researching the possibilities for age sections, these critical considerations came up:

- When designing the age sections, the Purpose (previously known as the Aim) of Scouts Australia should be the strongest influence;
- Poor retention, not recruiting new members, is the burning platform of the Youth Program Review. When making decisions about age section, this focus must also not be forgotten;
- The importance of the adolescent years in a young person's personal development, and what contribution Scouting can make to that growth and development;
- The sections, and the transition between sections, should be based on the developmental needs of the youth member, as part of their personal progression through Scouting;
- A flexible approach to implementing the section age ranges, and transition, is important; and
- The social needs of youth must not be ignored.

Two schools of thought regarding the basis for designing the sections were investigated. The first, the traditional method, is to base the sections on the age of the individual. The second, currently used by SCOUTS New Zealand, is to base the sections on the school year level of the individual.

A number of other issues were identified and investigated in the review:

- The minimum age at which youth can join the program;

- The age at which the youth program ends;
- What happens, legally, when a youth member reaches the age of majority;
- The primary to secondary school transition;
- The significance of Year 9 in a young person's life; and
- The length of sections, including concerns raised about 10 year olds and nearly 15 year olds in the same section.

This paper will put forward two potential models for the future of Australian Scouting, one of which is based on the age of the individual, and one on the school year level of the individual. It is proposed that these models be put to the membership for consideration, along with the existing model. The preference of the Youth Program Review is for the proposed age-based model.

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2 INTRODUCTION

CONTEXT

The essential part of the Scouting experience occurs through the Youth Program. The Youth Program is defined by WOSM as the totality of what young people do in Scouting (the activities), how it is done (the Scout Method) and why it is done (the purpose) (World Organization of the Scout Movement, 2005). The Youth Program occurs through a partnership between youth members and adult leaders, who take into account each young person's interests, needs and abilities. The Youth Program in Scouting offers a progressive process of self-education and personal development for children and young people. Activities are seen as the means rather than a goal that create opportunities for each young person to develop skills and attitudes, and acquire knowledge. Young people are the main players in this non-formal educational process who require adequate support, usually provided by adult volunteers.

The World Organisation of the Scout Movement (WOSM) explains why it is important to develop sections in the youth program, and why they must be regularly reviewed:

Dividing the educational objectives of the Youth Programme according to different age sections is a very important part of the Youth Programme life cycle. When renewing the Programme, it is important to question whether the sectional divisions already existing within your NSO correspond to the different stages of child development, as well as to the age groupings favoured by the school and the social systems in your country. Establishing a well-balanced and coherent system of age sections is a precondition for formulating educational objectives and designing a personal progression scheme.

*NSOs should also constantly review and look at their age sections to ensure that they remain relevant in their societal context.*¹

From the very beginning, the Scout program was developed in a specific way for each age section. The Scout Method was originally intended for young adolescents aged 12 to 16. It was for young people of this age that Baden-Powell chose to organise his first experimental camp on Brownsea Island in 1907. Soon afterwards, a need was felt to extend the Movement to younger boys: to "Cubs", originally aged 8 to 11; then to older boys, "Rovers", aged 17 to 20. Scouting traditionally identifies three main age ranges: childhood (8-11); adolescence (12-16); youth (17-20) (World Organization of the Scout Movement, 2000).

In the 107 year history of Australian Scouting, age sections have evolved in a similar fashion to many other Scouting countries. Starting with a 12-16 aged section, the Cub Scout and Rover Scout sections were soon added. Later, the adolescent years were divided into Scouts and senior Scouts, and eventually into Scouts and Venturers. Finally, the Joey section was added, to cater to the needs of 6 and 7 year olds. Throughout the cycle of section reviews, the age range of the section under review has been looked at and sometimes modified, particularly around concepts to do with linking between sections.

In the last 40 years, there have been a number of age range reviews, trials and taskforces as the Association goes about trying to keep the movement relevant to young people in Australia. The YPR acknowledges and has reviewed material, outcomes and recommendations from:

- Design For Tomorrow (1970)
- WA and NSW Under-8s Trials (1977)
- Pre-Cub Discussion Paper (1979)
- 1980's "Watching Brief" on Under-8's globally (W. Wells)
- National Age Range Review (1988)

¹ World Youth Programme Policy, page 19

- SA and ACT Joey Scout Clubs Trial (1988/89)
- Joey Scout Age Range Review (1999)
- National Age Range Taskforce (2001)
- Victorian 5 Year old Trial (2011 onwards)
- Various relevant Papers tabled at NOC in 2011

YPR STAGE 3 AGE RANGE RESEARCH

WOSM's Renewed Approach to Programme (RAP) toolkit guides the Youth Program Review Team in its approach to the Review. This document states that designing the age sections is required before educational objectives and a personal progression scheme can be developed (World Organization of the Scout Movement, 2000). In addition, from the YPR's perspective, the work to be performed on the detail of the youth program in Stage 4 relies heavily on an agreed system of age sections.

Stage 3 of the YPR was tasked with researching and developing options for a system of age sections. Some difficulties were encountered which slowed progress down. Responsibility for the topic was re-allocated in late 2014, enabling the completion of some initial research into:

- A number of section ages range models for consideration;
- The trials in Victoria extending the age ranges of Joeys to some 5 year olds;
- The extension of the time of transition between sections to a full year, to occur at any time considered suitable by a Group Council between the 7th and 8th, 10th and 11th, and 14th and 15th birthdays but with Rover transition remaining at age 18; and
- Exploring School Year levels, rather than birthdays, as a way of defining sections, using the information from New Zealand and data from Victoria.

The Age Sections Progress Report from this team made the following findings:

1. More time be given to this task once the results and recommendations of the other 7 (Stage 3) teams have been analysed and considered as they are a key input into any needed changes in the section age ranges.
2. Further investigation be undertaken to assess whether School Year levels are a suitable basis for structuring sections by examining New Zealand Scouting's section structure to determine what benefits and challenges have been experienced in the years they have operated the school years model.
3. The Joey Scout section be retained and the starting age be extended to five year olds, or Foundation year of school if school-years are chosen for section age ranges.
4. All transitions be shown as at least a full year to accommodate the earlier and wider spread of the development of youth.
5. The age-range team be formally expanded to continue the review of section age ranges further.
6. Further consultation for the proposal that youth move from Scouts into Venturers no later than the beginning of Year 9 due to the significant change to the school curriculum and its methods which would then give at least three years to participate fully in the more varied activities and the award scheme before experiencing the time pressures of year 12 studies
7. The impact of the earlier maturation of girls be investigated as to their influence on the need for the earlier timing of transition and the nature of the 6-25 year programme and its appeal to boys

8. The optimum length of the sections be investigated as the four year Scout section does not comply with the 2 to three year range recommended in developmental stages research and of the many sports covering the same 10-18 age range, almost all have only a two year range band.

Further work needed to be done to address some outstanding issues, and further refine the best model for Australian Scouting, to meet the needs of young people in 21st Century Australia.

ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED

Considering the findings of the YPR 3-7 Age Ranges Progress Report, key WOSM policy statements, the Australian context, further research, and the experiences with our current model, the YPR Coordinating Team felt that the following issues needed to be considered as part of a review of age sections. There is no order to this list.

1. DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES OF THE CHILD AND YOUTH

The YPR has developed considerable documentation of various different stages of child and youth development. (Teoh, Pearn, Johnson, & Rogers, 2014), (Loveless, 2015).

Which models are the most relevant for the type of adventurous program we wish to offer Australian youth? How much should we develop our age sections based on these models?

- *The Youth Programme should be organised into different age sections based on the development stages of young people².*

2. THE ADOLESCENT YEARS³

Scouting is particularly suited to the adolescent age range – and not primarily for children. To adolescents in particular, the Scout Method provides the opportunity to develop the ability to make their own decisions and reach a higher stage of autonomy – an essential step in their development.⁴

Should Australia be considering the arrangement of the adolescent age sections as its first priority, and then build our other age sections around this?

- Additionally, WOSM tells us: *As an educational movement whose purpose is to help develop young people to take a constructive place in society, Scouting cannot succeed if it does not accompany young people through adolescence to the point of their "graduation" from the Movement ideally at the end of the senior age section.⁵*
- Leadership development is powerful in this age range; how do we create a wider variety of real leadership experiences when planning age sections for adolescents?
- Making sections younger should be avoided.
- Social needs are identified as very important in the adolescent years (BDRC Jones Donald, 2014); Scouting should work with, not against, this need, particularly considering Social Development as one of the Areas of Personal Growth.

² World Scout Youth Programme Policy, page 15

³ Some 'adolescent' definitions: United Nations & World Health Organisation: age 10-19 | TSA UK: age 10-18 | WOSM (RAP): age 11-18 | Many others: From puberty onset to the age of legal adulthood

⁴ The Essential Characteristics of Scouting, page 21

⁵ Ibid.

3. TEN YEARS OLDS AND FIFTEEN YEAR OLDS

Should a 10-year old be in the same section as a nearly 15 year old?

- Feedback from some of the YPR surveys and forums tells us that parents and youth often find it difficult for a 10 ½ year old to be in the same section as a nearly-15 year old. (BDRC Jones Donald, 2014)
- Weeknight section meetings that end at 9:30pm (or later) works well for 13 – 15 year olds; however, it is an often raised concern for 10 and 11 year olds. (BDRC Jones Donald, 2014)

4. SECTION LENGTH

Should all age sections run for the same number of years?

- Section lengths of three, or no more than four years is strongly advised by WOSM. This is because it is difficult to effectively implement the small team system when there is a large difference in age and interests, particularly in the adolescent ages. There can be a tendency to offer activities that suit the younger members, causing the older members to lose interest, unless they are enthusiastic PLs (World Organization of the Scout Movement, 2005).
- Three – four years age difference in a patrol allows the more mature members of the teams to stimulate the less mature to develop. At the same time, the less mature members stimulate the sense of responsibility in the senior members. (World Organization of the Scout Movement, 1998a)
- Will the concepts of One Program, with One Award (or 'Personal Progression') Scheme, work best if sections are of consistent length?
- Currently, the Joey Scout section is two years. Joey Leaders have consistently reported that in reality this becomes 1.5 years, and is not enough.
- Currently, the Rover section is eight years, the Cub Scout & Venturer Scout sections are three years, and the Scout section is four years.

5. FLEXIBLE TRANSITIONS

Should Scouting be more flexible in the timing of youth member transition between sections?

- Current age sections allow for six month transition overlaps between sections.
- Victoria has promoted one year overlaps for some time.
- Current practice is for individuals to "go up" when leaders (as well as parents, and the youth member in some cases) feel they are ready, within the six month overlap based on their age, with or without their social group.
- Anecdotally, there exists an attitude in many areas for leaders to "hold on to good Scouts" for too long, or to "send up difficult kids" too early.
- Could there be a one year overlap between sections, in order to encourage:
 - Youth members transitioning in social groupings
 - Regular, annual, times of the year that all transitions occur (e.g. Term 4, all sections in a Group will transition old enough kids in each section)
 - Youth members to be in two sections at once, for a period, if they desire
 - More flexibility for young people with special needs
- Could there be a two year overlap between Scout and Venturer sections, which would allow for:
 - Youth to be participating in the Venturer section while simultaneously being a "Troop Leader" in the Scout section? i.e. Leadership opportunities for those who desire it;

- Providing additional social flexibility to meet the needs of adolescent individuals, rather than one-size-fits-all.
- Finalising requirements of the Scout section top award, while beginning the Venturer section version of the award scheme.
- Could these ideas be applied to a Venturer/Rover transition where the structure supports and encourages activity participation across the sections, in a way that puts more focus on individual development, rather than simply on Units and Crews? “Project Patrols” that are a blend of Venturers and Rovers, for instance.

6. PROGRAM STARTING AGE

Is the age of 6 the right time for youth to begin their involvement in the Scout Program?

- WOSM has concerns where Scouting’s educational proposal is offered to very young children.
- WOSM suggests that Scout associations that have a good balance among their age sections will have an equal number of under-12 year-olds as over-12 year-olds. If the balance is too far in the favour of under-12 year-olds, the association risks being seen as a children’s organisation rather than a youth development movement (World Organization of the Scout Movement, 2005). Numerically, Scouts Australia is currently in this situation.
- Although WOSM acknowledges that some NSOs have children aged 5 and 6 in their programs (World Organization of the Scout Movement, 2015b), documentation from WOSM has very little support material for the appropriate implementation of a Scout program for sections with children under the age of 8.
- Victoria has been trialling 5 year olds in the Joey Scout section for some time.
- If we agree to accept five year olds, we should first have considered carefully whether adapting the program will meet our Purpose. Are the reasons sound, leading to achieving our Purpose, with the needs of youth at its centre?
- If Scouts was to “lose them” as 5 or 6 year olds, what opportunities are there for us when they are shopping around again as 9 – 14 year olds?
- What could childhood development experts tell us about the appropriateness of five year olds in an organisation with methods and goals like Scouting?
- Could we re-think the purpose of an under-8 section, in terms of an “introduction” to Scouting, rather than an attempt at bringing about a “full Scouting experience” to that age group?

7. PROGRAM ENDING AGE

Is the age of 26 the right place for youth members to end their involvement in the Scout Program?

- Program ending age is important to define, as it influences defining the Program (Educational) Objectives.
- Globally, there is no one accepted definition of the term “youth”. Ages ranges vary considerably.
- There is some debate about whether the Rover Section should remain ending upon the day a youth member turns 26, or should be reduced to a younger age. Some suggest as young as 22.
- The recently completed Rover Review recommended that the Program ending age remains at 26 (Scouts Australia, 2011).

8. AGE OF MAJORITY

Are we locked into a section that must start at 18?

- NOC had initially indicated that it would not support a section that involves youth members aged both under and over 18.
- This is supported by the 2011 Rover Review recommendations (Scouts Australia, 2011).

9. THE SCHOOL YEARS

Rather than being based on the individual age of the youth member, should our age sections be based on school years? Either way, are there key times in a young person's life that are linked to schooling, that need to be considered when determining age sections?

- SCOUTS New Zealand follow the model of sections based on school years, starting at Year 1.⁶
- Will this more naturally allow for different developmental needs of youth?
- Could there be one, or two, defined time of the year when section transitions always occur? (e.g. Beginning of term 2 and term 4)
- Does this make it easier for section leadership teams (adults & youth), knowing that all new members will enter the section at a particular time of the year?
- Primary School ends at Year 6 for all states except South Australia (Year 7). Should a section cross over the Primary/Secondary boundary (as it does today)?
- Year 9 is a significant year because it is a time of change in the secondary school curriculum, where youth start to make some subject choices and move down more personal education paths. These split up the social and friendship groups formed in classes in years 7 & 8. It is also often a time when schools offer a year in an alternative education setting (often setting up competition with the Scout program) (Scouts Australia Youth Program Review, 2015).
- Would these considerations have a positive effect on membership retention as youth members move between sections?

RAP TOOLBOX AGE SECTION CRITERIA:

Criteria for a well-adapted system of age sections (World Organization of the Scout Movement, 2005):

- a. It respects the personal development stages of the child
- b. It takes existing social groupings into account
- c. It respects the necessity to base Scouting on peer group experiences
- d. It maintains a good balance between the various sections
- e. It is flexible
- f. It proposes a reasonable length of Scout experience
- g. It is oriented towards the senior sections
- h. It takes the association's adult resources into consideration

⁶ (SCOUTS New Zealand; <http://www.scouts.org.nz/scout-sections>; downloaded 4/4/15, n.d.)

3 METHODS

Work on Age Sections for Australian Scouting has been completed through consultations, discussions, literature analysis, data analysis, and surveying.

These have all been used in an effort to answer our core research question, *“What is an appropriate age range and sections that meet the needs of our members and ensures progression occurs at the right time?”*

RESEARCH METHODS

Below is a summary of the identified issues and the research methods used with each.

Issue	Informed By
Age Of Majority - Are we locked into a section that must start at 18?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Operations Committee Rover Review Findings 2011 State Governments’ Information Portals and websites
The Adolescent Years - Should Australia be considering the arrangement of the adolescent age sections as its first priority, and then build our other age sections around this?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WOSM documentation Member survey Other NSOs – Ireland, Canada, UK, NZ BDRC Jones Donald Findings McCrinkle Research Findings Kellie Loveless Developmental Stages Summary
Ten Years Olds and Fifteen Year Olds - Should a 10-year old be in the same section as a nearly 15 year old?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WOSM documentation BDRC Jones Donald findings Member survey Other NSOs – Ireland, Canada, UK, NZ
Program Starting Age - Is the age of 6 the right time for youth to begin their involvement in the Scout Program?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WOSM documentation McCrinkle Research findings Member survey BDRC Jones Donald findings Other NSOs – Ireland, Canada, UK, NZ Membership data analysis – Time in Scouting & Age Distribution analyses Past reviews YPR 3-7 Progress Report (R. Taylor) Victorian 5yo Trial WA BYC Paper Section Branch Commissioners’ feedback
Program Ending Age - Is the age of 26 the right place for youth members to end their involvement in the Scout Program?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rover Review findings 2011 Member survey WOSM Documentation YPR 3-7 Progress Report (R. Taylor) Section Branch Commissioners’ feedback
Flexible Transitions - Should Scouting be more flexible in the timing of youth member transition between sections?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Member survey Victorian experience of full year section overlaps National Operations Committee McCrinkle Research findings BDRC Jones Donald findings YPR 3-7 Progress Report (R. Taylor) SCOUTS New Zealand (Noel Walker – NEC & Review Team Member) WOSM Special Needs Guidelines

Issue	Informed By
<p>Developmental Stages of the Child and Youth - The YPR has developed considerable documentation of various different stages of child and youth development. Which models are the most relevant for the type of adventurous program we wish to offer Australian youth? How much should we develop our age sections based on these models?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member survey • Kellie Loveless Developmental Stages summary • WOSM Documentation • BDRC Jones Donald findings • <i>Children, Adolescents and Young Adult's Age Ranges and Developmental Abilities Summary Paper (Hsien-Jin Teoh et al, QLD)</i>
<p>Section Length - Should all age sections run for the same number of years?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member survey • Other NSOs with "one program" model – Ireland, Canada • WOSM documentation • AV2015 Survey • BDRC Jones Donald findings
<p>School Years - Rather than being based on the individual age of the youth member, should our age sections be based on school years? Either way, are there key times in a young person's life that are linked to schooling, that need to be considered when determining age sections?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pathways in Year 9 in Secondary school • Transitioning to Secondary School in Year 6 – 7 (except SA: Year 7-8) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member survey • SCOUTS New Zealand (Noel Walker – NEC & Review Team Member) • Membership spread analysis • McCrindle Research • AV2015 Survey • BDRC Jones Donald • YPR 3-7 Progress Report (R. Taylor) • Section Branch Commissioners' feedback

REVIEW OF YPR MATERIAL TO DATE

YPR Stages 1 and 2 provided significant materials relevant to Age Sections.

In 2014, Scouts Australia commissioned work from two research companies, BDRC Jones Donald and McCrindle Research, to assist in the Review. These reports were thoroughly analysed for relevant detail and information.

- McCrindle Research Phase 1 – Qualitative Insights from Current and Former Scouts and Scouts Parents
- McCrindle Research Phase 2 – Understanding the needs and desires of Australian Families for a National Youth Program
- McCrindle Research Phase 3 – Understanding the Factors Shaping the World of Generation Alpha and Generation Z
- BDRC Jones Donald – Research to support the Strategies for retention of 10 – 15 year olds.

Kellie Loveless was commissioned to complete a review and summary paper of models of childhood and youth development stages. This was used to help with the understanding of how sections could fit into developmentally based sections.

Queensland Branch commissioned a well-respected child psychologist and experienced Scouter, Dr Hsien-Jin Teoh, to lead a team to prepare a paper "Children, Adolescents and Young Adult's Age Ranges and Developmental Abilities", on behalf of the YPR.

Rovering Towards 2020 is the most recent section review conducted for Scouts Australia. It is fresh in the minds of the Rover Scout section and has only recently completed implementation and the phasing across of the award scheme is still underway. The final recommendations were approved in 2011.

CONSULTATIONS

YPR 3-7 PROGRESS REPORT (R. TAYLOR)

In November 2014, Bob Taylor, immediate past Chief Commissioner of Scouts Victoria, was invited to perform some further research into the age sections for the Youth Program Review. His progress report was presented as part of the final outcomes of Stage 3 or the YPR, in February 2015.

The opportunity to consult with members on the question of Joey age range, as well as overall age ranges, occurred in mid-November 2014 and in early January 2015. At the Victorian Joey Leader Conference in mid-November, a brief verbal presentation of the possible age ranges changes was canvassed, and feedback sought.

Bay Jam – a Scout Section event held in January 2015 allowed consultation of a small number of Victorian leaders, some working at the State Team level, as well as grassroots section leaders, to offer some input into the overall age range concepts up for consideration.

NATIONAL OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

In March 2015, some possible models and ideas were shared with the National Operations Committee (NOC). It was important to get the perspective of the Chief Commissioners of each Branch, as these roles are responsible for the operational implementation of sections, amongst other things. Further discussion and suggestions were put to the YPR regarding the age sections at the June 2015 meeting of the NOC.

BRANCH SECTION COMMISSIONERS AND ROVER SECTION REPRESENTATIVES

On the weekend of May 23rd/24th 2015, the Combined Youth Program Meeting was held in Adelaide. This group included the Branch/State Commissioners for each section, along with ten Rovers selected by the National Rover Council (including the Chairman), as well as the National Youth Program Team. The meeting looked at a range of YPR-related topics. The issues under consideration for age sections were presented to the group, and their feedback was recorded. Models for age sections under consideration were presented and discussed.

A record of the feedback was kept for consideration by the age sections review, and appears in Appendix C.

LITERATURE REVIEWS

WORLD ORGANIZATION OF THE SCOUT MOVEMENT (WOSM) DOCUMENTS

The World Scout Bureau have published a number of key documents that guide and influence the thinking and understanding of age sections in World Scouting.

Renewed Approach to Programme (a.k.a. 'RAP') – This publication is presented in a number of different formats through the early 2000s. The two most detailed editions are known as the RAP User's Guide (2000), published by the European Region of WOSM, and the RAP Toolbox Programme Handouts (2005) published by the World Scout Bureau. RAP has evolved from the work of the Inter-American Region's efforts to revitalise Scouting in that Region.

World Scout Youth Programme Policy – updated from the 1990s edition, and adopted at the World Scout Conference in November 2014, and subsequently published in 2015, this document is one of the main institutional documents of the World Organization. In 1990, the 32nd World Scout Conference in Paris adopted the first version of the Policy, based on the idea that the Youth Programme is not something to be defined once and for all, but that it should be adapted to the needs and aspirations of the young people of each generation in each country. This second edition of the Policy aims to find a way in a fast moving world to

unite Scouts all over the world around the main core elements that match the diverse cultures and needs of young people. (World Organization of the Scout Movement, 2015b)

World Scout Youth Involvement Policy – adopted at the World Scout Conference in November 2014 and published in 2015, this policy aims at strengthening and ensuring youth involvement at all levels in the Scout Movement by providing directions for it in the World Organization of the Scout Movement. At the same time it serves as a reference to National Scout Organizations in the development of their national policies, as well as to WOSM Regions for improving their youth involvement practices (World Organization of the Scout Movement, 2015a). Of note, Scouts Australia and our own National Youth Council were consulted in the early development of this policy, and has helped shape the final product.

The Essential Characteristics of Scouting – Within the framework of the work on the “Strategy for Scouting”, the World Scout Committee, through its Strategy Task Force, prepared this paper on “The Essential Characteristics of Scouting”. On the basis of WOSM’s Constitution, the paper provides a compact but comprehensive overview of the key elements which characterise our Movement and its mission (World Organization of the Scout Movement, 1998b).

Scouting, An Educational System – This document is intended to help everyone interested in gaining a greater understanding of how Scouting works as an educational system. It is designed for use by those responsible for ensuring that the Scouting experience offered to young people is the rich and multi-faceted learning experience that it is meant to be. It has been written as a tool for the Youth Programme and Adults In Scouting teams at national level, but it is hoped that it can be of use for all those at other levels who do their best to provide support to Scout leaders (World Organization of the Scout Movement, 1998a).

Growth & Development: The Membership Crisis in Europe – A memo to the World Scout Committee from the European Scout Committee in March 2004, describing the membership losses in European countries. It places a particular emphasis on the loss of adolescents, and why this is a critical issue. (European Scout Committee, March, 2004)

Guidelines for Scouting for People with Disabilities – This document focusses on children and young people who have special needs which arise from a physical or learning difficulty. It supports those who require additional assistance to access, participate and achieve in Scouting. (World Organization of the Scout Movement, 2008)

OVERSEAS NATIONAL SCOUT ORGANISATIONS (NSO)

The World Education Conference, held in Hong Kong in November 2013, was attended by a large delegation from Australia, including the National Commissioner Youth Program. It was an important milestone in the Youth Program Review as it began a relationship network with a number of key NSOs with whom knowledge and experience is being shared.

Scouting Ireland undertook a review of its youth programme six years ago and has now begun implementing “ONE Programme”. An Adult Training review has begun to support the new program. Scouting Ireland followed a review approach inspired by Renewed Approach to Programme (RAP). The YPR has spent time learning from the Irish experience, including understanding their approach to age sections.

Scouts Canada has also undertaken a review similar to Ireland, based on RAP, and incorporating the concept of “one program”. The Canadian Path is three years in the making with much work still to do. As with Ireland, the YPR has spent time learning from the Canadian experience, also learning about their approach to age sections.

Although **The Scout Association** (UK) has evolved its youth programme through an approach somewhat different to Australia, Canada and Ireland, the YPR has nonetheless sought to learn from TSA. Of particular interest is their marketing approach, changes to their Scout Promise, and their age sections.

SCOUTS New Zealand have undergone reviews of their youth program over the past ten years and have put in place changes, particularly to support leaders to implement the program. Of particular interest is the move to base age sections on school years, which has now been in place for over 5 years.

GOVERNMENT INFORMATION

Useful information about the organisation of schools and the legislation regarding child protection in each state has helped to inform the age sections review. Information was sourced from both Federal and State government agencies and web sites.

SURVEYS

Surveying of members has occurred in a number of forums. The biggest being an online national survey covering all identified issues to do with age sections.

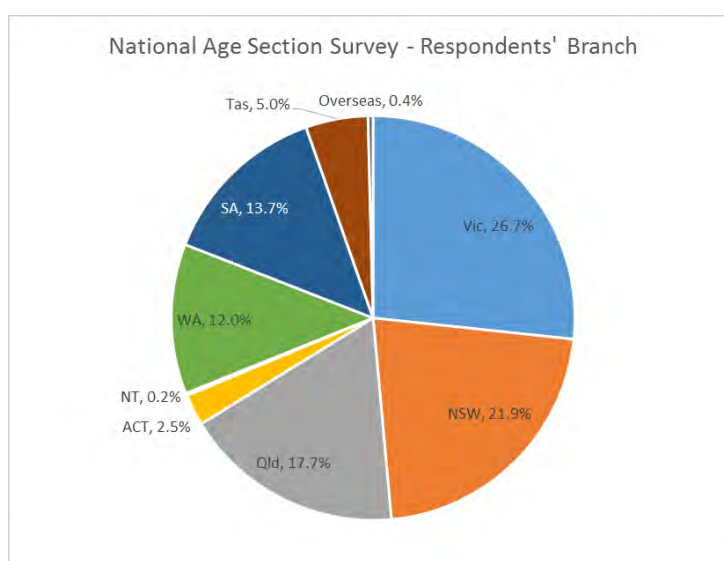
NATIONAL SURVEY

An online survey of members was conducted over a six week period in April/May 2015. Questions were designed to seek the thoughts of members on each of the issues identified above. In most cases, respondents were asked to indicate how much they agree with a variety of statements, and to leave a comment about each one.

The survey was promoted using the YPR email list, on the YPR website, through social media, and Branches were asked to promote it through their regular communications channels, most of whom did so.

The survey asked about the Branch, the role, and the age of the respondent. Multiple roles could be selected and included a broad range of Scouting roles, including non-uniform, youth leadership roles, and parents. Age options were under-12, 12-17, 18-30 and 31 or older. Those who selected under-12 were given less questions, and the questions were re-written to suit a younger audience.

In total, 803 people responded to the survey. 2% were under 12, 9% aged 13-17, 19% aged 18-30 and 70% aged 30+.



Scouting Roles identified by respondents. More than one option could be selected.		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Youth Member	21.4%	172
Scouting Parent	20.2%	162
Joey Leader	17.8%	143
Cub Leader	16.6%	133
Scout Leader	16.1%	129
Group Leader	10.2%	82
Venturer Leader	7.2%	58
District, Region, Branch Leader/Commissioner	7.1%	57
Another Scouting Role	5.9%	47
Group Support Committee Member	5.0%	40
Activity Leader	4.9%	39
Training Team Member	4.4%	35
District or Region, or Branch/State Leader Scouts	3.0%	24
District, Region, or Branch/State Leader Joeys	2.9%	23
District, Region or Branch/State Rover Council Member	2.6%	21
A friend of Scouting	2.0%	16
District or Region, or Branch/State Leader Venturers	1.7%	14
Fellowship Member	1.7%	14
Other Leader of Adults	1.6%	13
National or Branch Youth Council Member	1.6%	13
A National Appointment	1.5%	12
District or Region, or Branch/State Leader Cubs	1.4%	11
Mawson Leadership Course Graduate	1.2%	10
Rover Adviser	0.9%	7
District or Region, or Branch/State Adviser Rovers	0.5%	4

The complete survey is included in Appendix B of this report.

AV2015

At the Australian Venture held in South Australia in January 2015, the National Contingent ran an onsite activity called 'theCrate'. This activity was designed to engage Venturers in providing their input into issues to do with the Venturer sections, as well as broader Scouting issues. Some of the issues put to Venturers included those being discussed by the Youth Program Review.

One method of collecting youth input was through the use of electronic surveys running on Apple iPads, which the team circulated during meal times and in meal queues. One of these surveys asked Venturers about the number of years that the Venturer section should run for.

In addition, some potential ideas for age ranges were prepared for display at theCrate as large infographics printed on corflute material. This board, along with infographic boards about other YPR topics, were also on display at Big Day Scout in Victoria in March 2015, and at the Course for Potential Leader Trainers (a national and international adult training course), at Gilwell Park in Victoria at Easter 2015. Informal discussion, only, occurred around these displays.

WA JOEYS AND JOEY LEADERS

The Western Australian Branch Youth Council surveyed a total of 159 Joey Youth Members aged 6 and 7 years old and 45 Other participants, during "Joey Leap" (a four hour branch Joey section event) on the 28th of March 2015. From this survey, the WA BYC were able to gain an understanding of the perspectives, of both the youth and adult members, in regards to the Joey sections age range and programming (WA Branch Youth Council, March 2015).

The WA BYC presented a report on their findings to the YPR Coordinating Team, and is published on the YPR website in the Research page (<http://ypr.scouts.com.au/our-research.php>).

DATA ANALYSIS

MEMBERSHIP DATA – VICTORIA AND NATIONAL

Some analysis of membership data was undertaken in order to understand some of the issues around recruitment and retention.

From National statistics, a calculation of the number of youth members over the age of 12, and aged 12 or under, was able to be made. Additionally, a picture of the spread of membership across each section nationally, was able to be determined for any year going back to 1999.

National membership statistics are also able to provide details of how many youth members are of each age in the program. The most recent data is from the 2014 census.

Victoria has also provided data that has enabled the YPR to see at what age every Venturer and Rover (active at the time in April 2015) started Scouting, which gives a picture of retention and time in the Scout program for those youth in those sections.

YPR 3-7 PROGRESS REPORT (R. TAYLOR)

As previously described, Bob Taylor (immediate past Chief Commissioner, Scouts Victoria) was invited to perform some further research into the age sections for the YPR. Further membership data analysis was performed to help understand issues to do with 5-year old Joey retention, and the impact of moving to school-based sections. To test the feasibility of an Australian School Year model compared to the current flexible transition age range practices in Victoria, the School Year Levels of current members in Victoria were requested of GLs in mid-November 2014, via data entry in the Victorian online Extranet.

An analysis of Victorian membership data since the trial to introduce 5-year olds into the program was also performed and reported on.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

OVERALL INSIGHTS FROM RESEARCH

COMMISSIONED RESEARCH

The work of McCrindle Research across the three phases provided some quantitative insights into a number of issues to do with age sections.

The risk of children not continuing with Scouts due to taking on other interests and extra-curricular activities is higher at younger ages and declines from age 6 (51%) to age 16 (30%). This may indicate that over time, children would develop a stronger sense of commitment to Scouts as their preferred extra-curricular activity (McCrindle Research, 2014b).

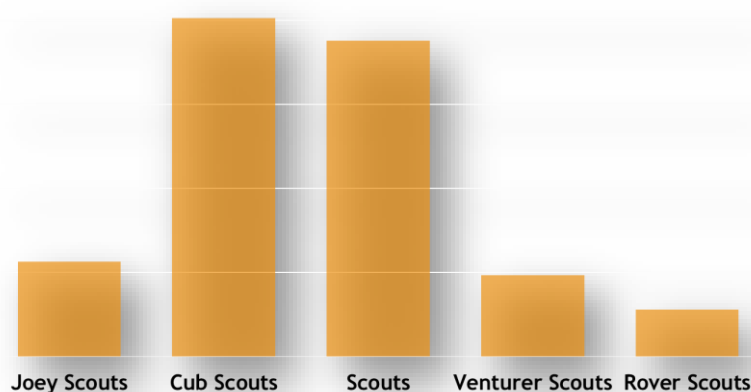
The potential for children's friends leaving Scouting being an inhibiting factor in continuing with Scouts shows little trend across the age brackets. There is a slight peak at age 13 years (33%), while the lowest risk is with the younger ages. The potential for children finding the transition between different Scouting sections difficult being an inhibiting factor in continuing with Scouts is generally low, but has definite peaks and troughs. The most affected age ranges are 8-10 years (24% to 26%), 13-14 years (17%) and 17 years (16%) (McCrindle Research, 2014b).

The alignment of the program with school years, the proximity of the program location to where they live, and the integration of technology throughout the program delivery were three elements that "national" (non-Scouting) parents emphasised much more strongly than Scouting parents (25%, 21%, and 19% point differences, respectively) (McCrindle Research, 2014b).

The potential for children facing a higher academic workload at school being an inhibiting factor in continuing with Scouts increases steadily from the age of 10 (23%) up to the age of 15 (62%). This indicates that Scouts could work with members in the 13-18 age group to assist them in balancing a range of their extra-curricular commitments (McCrindle Research, 2014b).

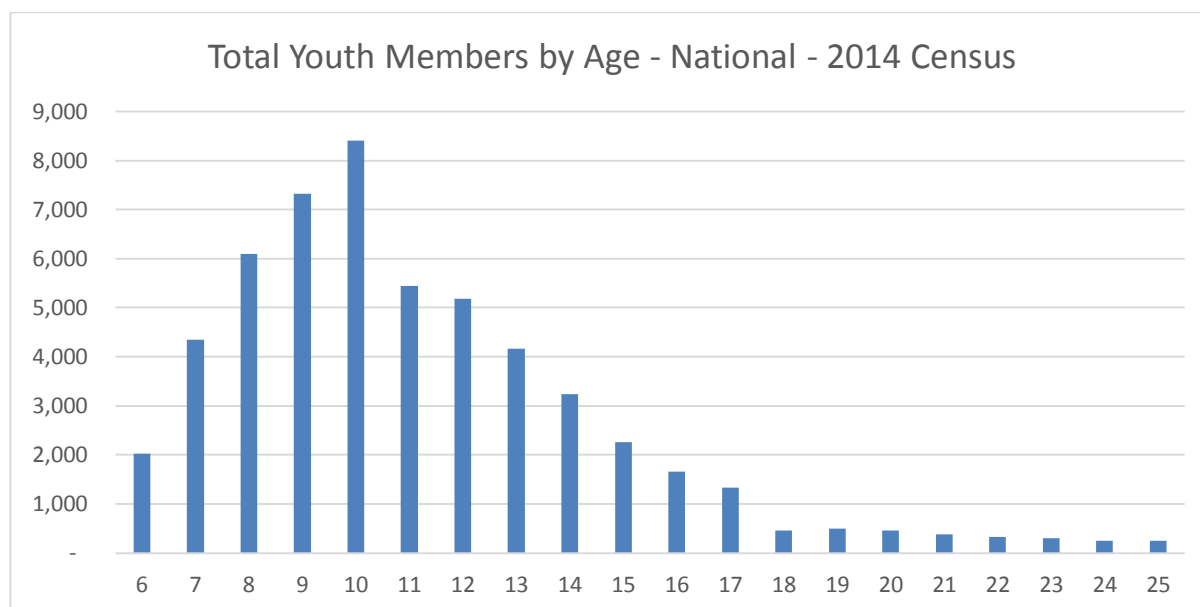
AGE DISTRIBUTION ACROSS SECTIONS

Consideration should be given to current distribution of youth members by age within each section, according to the Renewed Approach to Programme toolkit. It is well known in Australian Scouting that if the number of youth in each section is to be examined, the following graph will be seen (from 2014 national census):



It has been well known for some time that nationally, the largest two sections are the Cub Scout and Scout sections. Some branches demonstrate slight variation to this, with the Scout section even closer, numerically, to the Cub section.

Using the data submitted by each Branch at the time of national census in 2014, the following distribution of ages across the program age range can be seen:

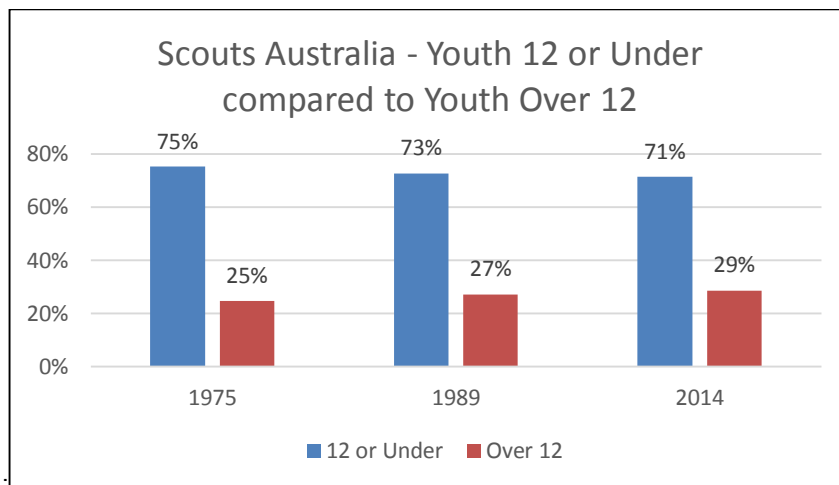


Some initial observations include:

- the fairly consistent increase in membership from 7 to 10
- the fairly consistent reduction in membership from 11 to 17
- A big drop from Cubs to Scouts
- A similar in scale drop from Venturers to Rovers
- The drop from Scouts to Venturers doesn't appear to be as extreme as has anecdotally been suggested

WOSM reminds NSOs that Scout associations that have a good balance among their age sections will have an equal number of under-12 year-olds as over-12 year-olds. If the balance is too far in the favour of under-12 year-olds, the association risks being seen as a children's organisation rather than a youth development movement (World Organization of the Scout Movement, 2000).

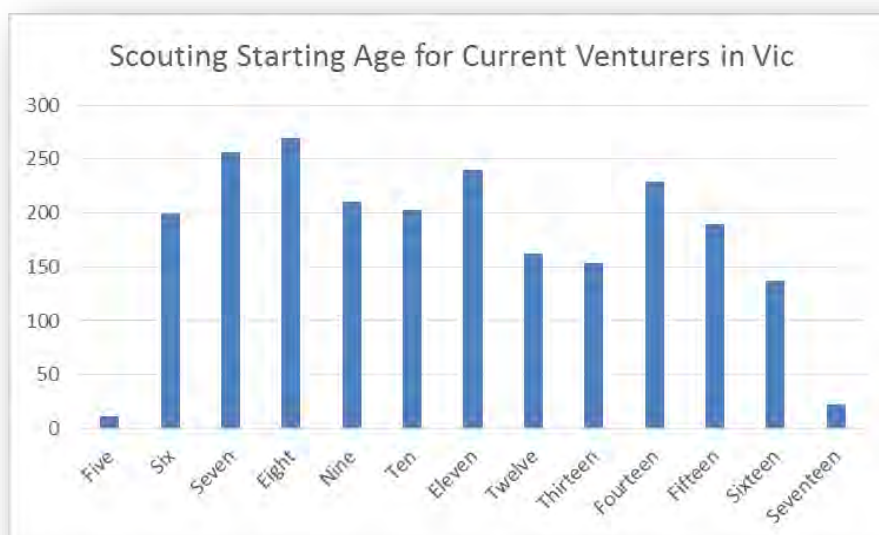
In Australia today, about 71% of youth members are aged 12 or under. It can also be seen that this imbalance has been consistent, with some slight improvement, since at least 1975.

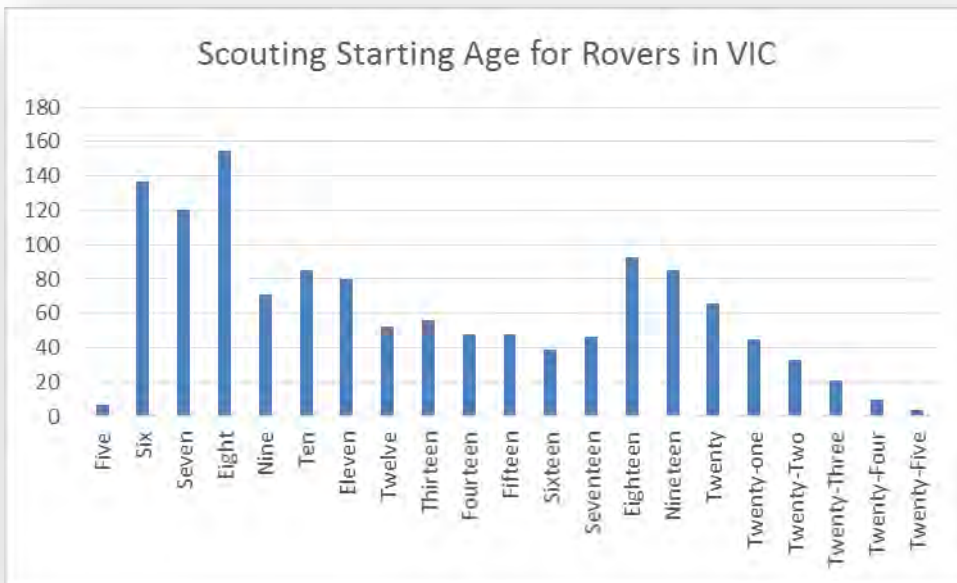
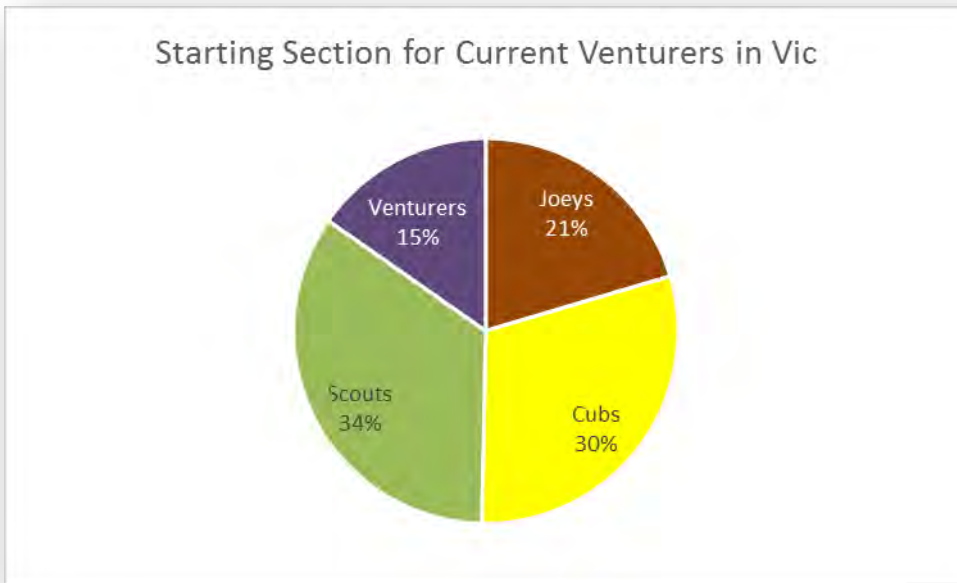


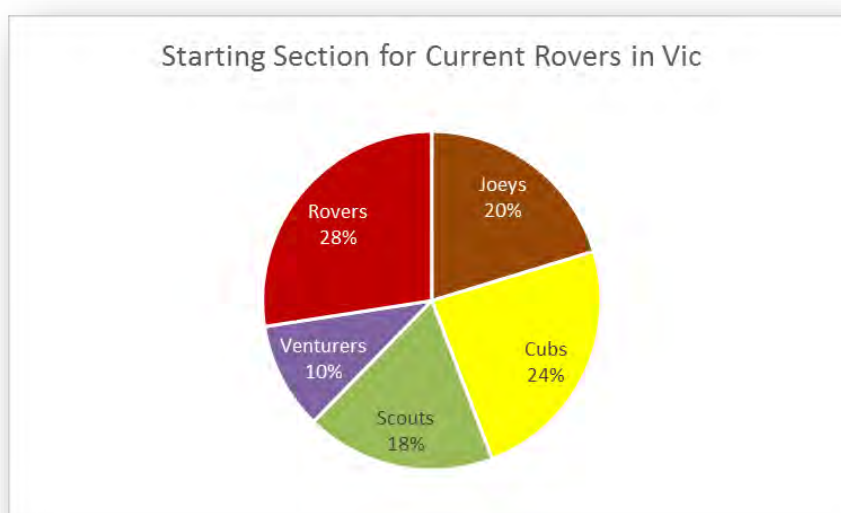
VENTURER AND ROVER RETENTION FROM YOUNGER SECTIONS (VICTORIA)

To get a picture of where Venturers and Rovers have come from in terms of the youth program, live anonymous data was able to be collected from Victoria for current youth members in both of those sections.

April 2015, in Victoria...	Current Venturers	Current Rovers
Total Count	2,285	1,302
Average Starting Age	10.93 years old	13.20 years old
Most Common Starting Age	8 years old	8 years old
Avg time in Scouting	5.24 years	8.13 years







YOUTH MEMBER SCHOOL YEAR VS SECTION

The YPR 3-7 Progress Report collected information through the membership database on the current year level of school that current youth members are in.

Victorian School Year levels and current sections of Victorian youth members, February 2015⁷

Section Year Level	Joey	Cub	Scout	Venturer	Total
Prep	5	0	0	0	5
Year 1	283	4	0	0	287
Year 2	560	175	0	0	735
Year 3	70	1108	1	0	1179
Year 4	10	1430	10	0	1450
Year 5	1	1100	309	0	1410
Year 6	1	129	1232	0	1362
Year 7	0	13	1243	0	1256
Year 8	0	0	829	12	841
Year 9	0	0	539	152	691
Year 10	0	0	47	483	530
Year 11	0	0	8	342	350
Year 12	0	0	0	286	286
TE, App or Work	0	0	0	7	7
Entered	930	3959	4218	1275	10389
Not entered	442	2347	2328	832	5949
Grand total	1372	6306	6546	2107	16338

⁷ It is expected that completion rates (% Entered) will improve as the campaign for GLs to enter data continues, the new year begins in earnest, and youth move up to new sections.

ADDRESSING THE ISSUES

It is critically important to remember that the design of age sections for Scouting should be about getting the best outcomes considering the movement's Purpose (previously known as the Aim in Australia, up until June 2015).

The Purpose of The Scout Association of Australia is to encourage the physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual development of young people so that they take a constructive place in society as responsible citizens, and as members of their local, national and international communities⁸.

Decisions regarding sections should not be made based on recruitment as the most important factor. The burning platform of the Youth Program Review is about retention, not recruitment.

Each of the age-section issues identified earlier is now looked at in light of all the research completed. Recommendations are made for each of the issues.

DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES OF THE CHILD AND YOUTH

The YPR has developed considerable documentation of various models for the stages of child and youth development, through the work of Kellie Loveless and the Queensland Branch. Which models are the most relevant for the type of adventurous program we wish to offer Australian youth? How much should we develop our age sections based on these models?

The World Youth Program Policy states that it is important to question whether the sectional divisions already existing within a National Scout Organisation correspond to the different stages of child development, as well as to the age groupings favoured by the school and the social systems in your country.

The different stages of personal development determine the age sections within Scouting, which may vary according to the cultural differences and contexts in which National Scout Organisations operate (World Organization of the Scout Movement, 2015b).

According to RAP, these stages represent successive steps in the process of integrating the different areas of growth. Although certain constant factors may be observed, development stages are not universal. Sociological and economic factors have an impact on purely physiological and psychological factors, creating different rhythms and steps according to the culture and the era. Moreover, depending on the criteria selected (psychological, social, etc.), the stages of development can be analysed in different ways (McCrindle Research, 2014c).

In the survey of members, 89% of respondents agree or strongly agree that The Youth Program should be organised into different age sections based on the development stages of young people.

An understanding of the generations in which Scouting operates could also be useful when considering age sections and developmental stages. Those who belong to **Generation Z** were born from 1995 to 2009 and are currently aged between 5 and 19 years of age. There are 4.43 million Gen Zeds in Australia, who make up 19% of the national population and whilst they comprise just 6% of the workforce today, they will make up 27% of the workforce by 2025. **Generation Alpha** are the newest and youngest generation in Australia, those born since 2010 and currently aged under 5 (McCrindle Research, 2014c).

Stages of life have changed in 21st Century Australia. Today, children become tweens, then teens, then KIPPERS (kids in parents' pockets eroding retirement savings), then adults, then finally career changers and

⁸ Scout Association of Australia; Policy and Rules 7th Edition, 2014 (publication will be updated since ratifications made at the Scout Association of Australia National Council AGM on 20th June, 2015)

downagers, two stages redefining how we see retirement. These life stages do not correlate with defined ages but are fluid markers that shift and change along with cultural shifts and trends (McCrindle Research, 2014c).

Tweens are those aged 8 to 12, “in-between” childhood and adolescence. They are currently the **children of Generation X** and have emerged as their own demographic now recognised as brand influencers, a consumer segment and a target market (McCrindle Research, 2014c).



It seems that non Scouting parents in Australia are well aware that Scouting is broken into age sections and that a program is offered across a wide age range. They appear to know the most about Cub & Scout age groups. For:

- A program for 6-7 year olds: 53% are aware;
- for 8-10 year olds: 60% are aware;
- for 11-14 year olds: 61% are aware;
- for 15-17 year olds: 49% are aware; and
- for 18-25 year olds: 38% are aware.

Non Scouting parents believe that having such a diverse range of age groups is a good thing with over 80% approval rate for all sections. Current Cub, Scout, and Venturer age groups had the highest approval rate (over 85%).

According to the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), when guiding the development of the Australian Curriculum, the following broad stages are identified (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2013):

- Foundation – Year 2: The Early Years
- Year 3 – 8: Concrete to Abstract Thinking
- Year 9 & 10: Transition to Adulthood
- Year 11 & 12: Choices and Pathways

There are other useful models for the stages of development. In the research paper prepared by Kellie Loveless (Loveless, 2015), following developmental stages are summarised:

- Stages of Cognitive Development (Piaget)
- Speech & Language (Barrington)
- Life Stages
- Social & Emotional (Erikson Psychosocial)
- Peer Interactions
- Age Specific Guidelines & Needs
- Physical Development & Puberty (incl. boys vs girls)

The Queensland Branch-commissioned research paper summarised the overall themes of the developmental models.

A review of a variety of research on the differences in behaviour, cognitive abilities and socialisation of the various age groups reveals that it would be generally possible to broadly to classify young children's age groups into a category which goes until about ages 6-7 years, and then on, broadly classify the

adolescent age group into four broad age categories which may be labelled Young Early Adolescence (8-11 years), Early Adolescence (12-14 years), Middle Adolescence (15-17 years) and Late Adolescence (18-19 years).

Broadly, the children's age group sees lots of changes in basic cognitive abilities ranging from language, attention span, and even the manner in which decisions are made based on the sorts of information the child is exposed to.

When the youth enters adolescence, across the various age groups, the research identifies gradual changes in a variety of abilities, most notably socialisation, awareness of own feelings and emotions, and abilities to think in a more abstract manner, and growing independence.

As with the other sections, it is difficult to pinpoint an exact age where changes occur, and to subsequently predict if a youth would have difficulty adjusting to a skills and activity based program that demands a specific set of cognitive and social abilities.

Broadly speaking, most abilities develop within a year or two either way of the age ranges. Perhaps, what the research does allude to is rather than being pre-occupied with the youth's ability to enter and cope with a scout section program, instead the focus might be on a re-examination of the typical youth's abilities at a particular age group/range and to tailor the weekly sectional program to recognise these abilities (Teoh, Pearn, Johnson, & Rogers, 2014).

It is recommended that:

- 1. The age sections be based on appropriate developmental stages of child and youth development.**
- 2. The most appropriate developmental stages model to base sections on is the broad classifications outline by Teoh et al:**
 - **Childhood (up to 6-7 years)**
 - **Young Early Adolescence (8-11 years)**
 - **Early Adolescence (12-14 years)**
 - **Middle (15-17 years)**
 - **Late Adolescence (18/19 years), into Young Adulthood (20+)**
- 3. Leaders, parents and the youth members are trained to be more flexible in their thinking about entering and transitioning within the youth program, recognising that developmental stages will be met at individual times.**
- 4. Adequate training and resources are developed to help leaders understand the developmental stages and how to identify when they have reached a milestone.**

THE ADOLESCENT YEARS

Should Australia be considering the arrangement of the adolescent age sections as its first priority, and then build our other age sections around this?

Scouting is particularly suited to the adolescent age range – and is not primarily for children. To adolescents in particular, the Scout Method provides the opportunity to develop the ability to make their own decisions and reach a higher stage of autonomy – an essential step in their development⁹.

In the survey of members, there was split feelings about the Scout Method being particularly suited to the adolescent ages. 37% agree or strongly agree, while 41% disagree or strongly disagree.

⁹ The Essential Characteristics of Scouting, page 21

As an educational movement whose purpose is to help develop young people to take a constructive place in society, Scouting cannot succeed if it does not accompany young people through adolescence to the point of their "graduation" from the Movement ideally at the end of the senior age section.¹⁰

In the survey of members, 79% agreed or strongly agreed with this position.

What is an adolescent? These are some definitions:

- United Nations & World Health Organisation: age 10-19 (for statistical and reporting purposes, mainly)
- The Scout Association UK: age 10-18
- WOSM (RAP): age 11-18
- Many other organisations: From puberty onset to the age of legal adulthood

Today, Scouting in Australia is used to the adolescent years being split into two sections. RAP explains that since adolescence has become longer and more diversified, particularly in the industrialised societies, it is more and more difficult for the traditional (11-18) Scout section to meet the needs of younger adolescents as well as those of older adolescents, which is why several associations, including Australia, have set up two sections between 11 and 18 (World Organization of the Scout Movement, 2000).

The adolescent age range also is a time of great social needs. Scouting should not ignore this fact. Research has shown that social opportunities and friendships are very important, and that sometimes these needs are ignored.

Findings include:

- Youth relish the opportunity to socialise but it wasn't always delivered. (BDRC Jones Donald, 2014)
- The social aspects of Scouts is a significant driver of acquisition and retention. (BDRC Jones Donald, 2014)
- A change in friendships and friends moving on was another significant factor in leaving the movement. The friendships that Scouting members made at Scouts were instrumental to their enjoyment of the activities and programs. For many of the members the friendships that they made were more important than the activities themselves (McCrinkle Research, 2014a).
- Fun and social elements are the most important aspects to young people, seeing kids grow and keeping them active is the most important aspect to parents (McCrinkle Research, 2014b)

National Scout Associations that Australia strongly identifies with focus their age sections on the adolescent years with the following section arrangements¹¹:

- **Scouts NZ:** approx. ages 11 – 14 & 14-18 (noting that sections are actually based on school years)
- **Scouts Canada:** 11-14 & 14-17
- **Scouting Ireland:** 12-15 & 15-17
- **The Scouts Association UK:** 10 ½ - 14 & 14-18

In this list, no country has lowered their early adolescent section below Scouts Australia's current lowest age of 10 ½ (actually 10 in some areas). With NZ, Canada and Ireland pushing the section starting age to 11, and even 12, the message is clear that the Scout section should be older, not younger.

¹⁰ The Essential Characteristics of Scouting, page 21

¹¹ Information gathered from relevant NSOs' websites

It is recommended that:

5. The adolescent age range continue to be divided into two sections;
6. The design of the age sections will ensure the best possible program for adolescents such that youth members will be encouraged to benefit from what the Scout Method has to offer in that developmental age.

TEN YEAR OLDS AND FIFTEEN YEAR OLDS

Should a 10-year old be in the same section as a nearly 15 year old?

Feedback from YPR surveys and forums tells us that parents and youth often find it difficult for a 10 ½ year old to be in the same section as a nearly-15 year old. (BDRC Jones Donald, 2014)

Weeknight section meetings that end at 9:30pm (or later) works well for 13 – 15 year olds; however, it is an often raised concern for 10 and 11 year olds. (BDRC Jones Donald, 2014)

These concerns were also raised in the McCrindle research: Parents felt that changing the timing of Scouts would be beneficial both for them and for drawing other families into Scouting.

“It’s pretty hard when you have to pick them up as late as 9:30 at night. Many people pulled out because it was so late.” (McCrindle Research, 2014a)

In the BDRC Jones Donald research, parents expressed frustration with the timing of meetings. The start time was perceived to be too late, which resulted in the child being run down the rest of the week (BDRC Jones Donald, 2014).

And: 10-15 is too much of a range in age with significant differences in development. Both parents and young people believed that 10.5 is too young to move to Scouts (BDRC Jones Donald, 2014).

In addition, there needs to be consideration of the Scout Method. RAP suggests that if there is a large difference in age between the youngest and the oldest member in the patrol, then there can be a tendency to offer activities that suit the younger members, causing the older members to lose interest, unless they are enthusiastic PLs (World Organization of the Scout Movement, 2000).

In the member survey, 79% agreed or strongly agreed that 3-to-4 years’ age difference is when the patrol system is at its most effective. 54% agreed or strongly agreed that having 10 and nearly 15 year olds in the same section doesn’t work (16% were unsure). However, when the survey data was filtered to look at just Scout Leaders, 44% felt that 10 and 15 year olds in the same section doesn’t work.

Other, similar NSOs, have section lengths of 3 – 4 years and don’t mix 10 and nearly 15 year olds, except for UK Scouts:

- **Scouts NZ:** 4 years, approx. ages 11 – 14
- **Scouts Canada:** 4 years, 11-14
- **Scouting Ireland:** 4 years, 12-15
- **The Scouts Association UK:** 4.5 years, 10 ½ - 14

It is recommended that:

7. The younger adolescent section not begin before the age of 11; and
8. The length of the younger adolescent section not be more than 4 years.

SECTION LENGTH

Should all age sections run for the same number of years?

Section lengths of three, or no more than four years is strongly advised by WOSM. This is because it is difficult to effectively implement the small team (Patrol) system when there is a large difference in age and interests, particularly in the adolescent ages. Is it possible to ensure that the activities, and even the Scout Method, offered in a single section will suit a really broad age range?. (World Organization of the Scout Movement, 2005)

Three – four years age difference in a patrol allows the more mature members of the teams to stimulate the less mature to develop. At the same time, the less mature members stimulate the sense of responsibility in the senior members. (World Organization of the Scout Movement, 1998a)

The World Youth Programme Policy also supports this. It suggests that peer grouping and peer tutoring are two essential elements of the team system. Hence, in defining their age sections, NSOs should consider the necessity of maintaining a sufficient gap (not too broad) between the lowest age and the highest age within the age section to enable peer-to-peer tutoring (an ideal age range would be 3 or 4 years) (World Organization of the Scout Movement, 2015b).

Currently, the Joey Scout section is two years. Joey Leaders have consistently reported that in reality this becomes 1.5 years, and is not enough time for children to experience an effective program. The Rover section is eight years, the Cub Scout & Venturer Scout sections are three years, and the Scout section is four years. This inconsistency is seen by some as potentially making it difficult to implement the concept of One Program.

Focus groups of Scouts and parents also supported 3-4 year age sections: Socialising could be further encouraged by changing the age range and transition points. Closing the gap between age groups, for example splitting to 10-12 and 12-15, and making the transition easier could help make interacting with new people less intimidating (BDRC Jones Donald, 2014).

On the idea that all sections should be the same length, our membership felt that it was more important to build the sections around developmental stages, rather than a standardised length of time.

However, 78% agreed or strongly agreed that 3-to-4 years age difference is when the patrol system is at its most effective.

At AV2015, Venturers were asked what they think is the right number of years to be in a section, the majority of responses agreed with the current time spent in sections. However, it is interesting to note that 68% of Venturers believe that 4 years in the Venturer section would be preferred.

From Joey leaders, there is a frustration communicated to the YPR that their section, in reality, barely runs for 1½ years. This isn't enough to make a real impact on the child through the program. One solution offered by the YPR 3-7 Progress Report suggests opening up the section to five year olds. Joey leaders are given the opportunity to implement a full two-year program before discussion of linking to Cubs occurs at Group Council once they pass their 7th birthday (Scouts Australia Youth Program Review, 2015). Another solution would be to extend Joeys up a year, and redevelop the program accordingly.

It is recommended that:

9. Each section run for no more than 4 years, and no less than 2 years, with the flexible consideration of the developmental needs of the individual being the most important factor when determining when a youth member enters and leaves a section.
 - The Rover Scout section may be the only section that exceeds 4 years, if the educational/program objectives support a longer timeframe.

FLEXIBLE TRANSITIONSShould Scouting be more flexible in the timing of youth member transition between sections?

Currently, Scouts Australia's age sections model allow for six month transition overlaps between each section to allow a degree of flexibility in when a youth member transitions between sections. In Victoria, one year transition overlaps have been promoted for some time.

Current practice is for individuals to "go up" when leaders (and parents, and the youth member in some cases) feel they are ready, within the six month overlap based on their age, with or without their social group.

Anecdotally, there exists an attitude in many areas for leaders to "hold on to good Scouts" for too long, or to "send up difficult kids" too early.

Increasing transition flexibility would allow youth members to go up to the next section in social groupings and for the Group Council to be able to meet the personal progression needs of individuals.

Although Scouting membership statistics shows that there is much membership loss between sections, some research suggests that this is not always for friendship reasons: The potential for children's friends leaving Scouting being an inhibiting factor in continuing with Scouts shows little trend across the age brackets. There is a slight peak at age 13 years (33%), while the lowest risk is with the younger ages. The potential for children finding the transition between different Scouting sections difficult being an inhibiting factor in continuing with Scouts is generally low, but has definite peaks and troughs. The most affected age ranges are 8-10 years (24% to 26%), 13-14 years (17%) and 17 years (16%) (McCrindle Research, 2014b).

However, transitioning as social groups is still important. BDRC Jones Donald found that youth relish the opportunity to socialise but it wasn't always delivered, and that the social aspects of Scouts is a significant driver of acquisition and retention. (McCrindle Research, 2014b)

The membership data analysis, shown earlier, also indicates a great concern in the transition from Cub Scouts to Scouts.

Some consideration must also be made to the developmental requirements of Scouts with special needs. In 'Aids To Scoutmastership' (1919), Baden-Powell wrote (in words appropriate for the time):

"Through Scouting there are numbers of crippled, deaf and dumb, and blind boys now **gaining greater health, happiness and hope** than they ever did before."

The Aim, or Purpose, of Scouting applies in a very special way to disabled young people, as the Movement offers them a place where they can experience the satisfaction of being self-fulfilled as individuals and, at the same time, being self-reliant, supportive, responsible and committed persons, who are not a burden but a resource to society (World Organization of the Scout Movement, 2008).

WOSM suggests that the delivery of the youth program should be conducted with appropriate adaption and flexibility thereby providing all youth with a variety of options to cater for different aptitudes, learning needs, and capabilities (World Organization of the Scout Movement, 2008).

Furthermore, Scouting's adult training syllabus, membership requirements, **section advancement**, Award Scheme, etc should be open to all Scouts. (World Organization of the Scout Movement, 2008)

Therefore, Scouts with special needs should be able to transition between sections along with their peers, with the flexibility to adjust their transition as needed.

Young people are empowered to develop their capacities for making decisions that affect their lives (World Organization of the Scout Movement, 2015a). Youth members must always be a part of discussions about when and how they will transition.

Flexible approaches to transition could also allow for:

- Regular, annual, times of the year that all transitions occur (eg. Term 4, all sections in a Group will transition old enough kids in each section)
- Youth members to be in two sections at once, for a period, if they desire, or supports their personal progression needs.
- A two year overlap between Scout and Venturer sections, which would allow for youth to be participating in the Venturer section while simultaneously being a "Troop Leader" in the Scout section, ie. Leadership opportunities for those who desire it
- Venturer-to-Rover transition where the structure supports and encourages activity participation across the sections, in a way that puts more focus on individual development, rather than simply on Units and Crews. "Project Patrols" that are a blend of Venturers and Rovers, for instance.

The idea of a leadership year built into the age sections model, for those that desire it, was not supported by the meeting of Branch Commissioners in May 2015, as it would be seen to be shortening the Venturer section, and potentially undermine the best bits of the patrol system in the Scout section¹². However, building the concept less formally into the Leadership development possibilities of One Program was seen as a better alternative, in a method that is somewhat different to the current "Youth Helper" program.

Flexible transitions are also supported by focus group research and surveys. Parents felt that it was not necessarily a matter of adjusting the years, but providing the flexibility for children to progress to new sections depending on their readiness to progress (McCrinkle Research, 2014a).

The National Operations Committee in March 2015 suggested that flexibility of this nature would be supportive to country groups that need to manage sections in a different way to city groups.

In the YPR Stage 3-7 Progress Report it was recommended that all transitions be shown as at least a full year to accommodate the earlier and wider spread of the development of youth.

Whether an age-based model or a school-year based model is used, the YPR Stage 3-7 Progress Report states that broad flexibility on the timing of transition must be retained, with the optimum time to move up nominated as the beginning of the year. However, the middle of the year must also be considered if there are anticipated difficulties, provided a large enough social group is moved together (Scouts Australia Youth Program Review, 2015).

¹² Combined Youth Program Meeting notes (May 2015). See Appendix C

SCOUTS New Zealand, which has pioneered a school-year based section model, provided the YPR with the following insights: *All transitions are done at the start of the fourth and final term of our school year (October). This avoids youth moving up a section at the start of the year. We found this was a dangerous time for youth loss both because of the long Xmas break and the fact that school changes (primary – intermediate-secondary) were often involved. Now youth have a term to get established in their new section before the Xmas break*¹³.

In the member survey, 63% agree or strongly agree that a longer overlap of sections, say one year, will better allow Groups to meet the social and developmental needs of youth members when planning their transition. Having greater flexibility for youth to transition with their social group will help increase retention. Comments about this question are a strong reminder that transition should be 'when the youth member is ready', and not at some predetermined point.

*There is already some flexibility to allow for the earlier advancement or longer retention of those who are well ahead or well behind their peers in their social and developmental needs. I agree that it could well assist with retention if youth members can transition with their friends in situations when their stage of development was similar*¹⁴.

There was no consistent agreement either for or against this statement in the survey: *To increase the opportunities for youth to take on leadership opportunities, for those that wish to, youth members could be in two sections at once for a short period of time; up to one year, for instance.* However, many expressed concern about youth being out late two times in one week.

Victoria has been allowing up to one year to transition between sections for some time. Survey answers suggest that many people aren't aware that this is not the case nationally. Most feel it is helpful in giving flexibility in choosing appropriate transition times.

An experienced Scout section expert suggested that if the future iteration of the Scout Medallion can be completed in Venturers prior to their 15th birthday, then the Scout could be simultaneously a member of both units, free to move from one to the other and back depending on their role in the Troop and Unit

It is recommended that:

- 10. Flexibility of up to one year be built into the transition times between sections.**
- 11. The decision of when and how to transition between sections must be made with the youth member.**
- 12. Further consideration in YPR Stage 4 be made to developing leadership opportunities for youth members in other sections, not as "youth helpers", but in a defined leadership position. Flexible thinking needs to be encouraged. Some suggestions: as a Troop Leader, as an award scheme mentor, as an activity or project Patrol Leader, etc.**

PROGRAM STARTING AGE

The issue of the age at which the youth program should begin is a contentious one. There is a loud voice amongst the current membership that says that it is time to lower the starting age to 5 (and some are even saying 4). Over the past few years, the Victorian Branch has run some trial Joey Scout Mobs for children starting at age 5. There is also a strong voice that is certain that the age of 6 is still the right age, and some that feel that it should have been left at the age of 8. All of these opinions have been put to the Youth Program Review, at times quite forcefully.

¹³ Noel Walker, Group Leader, Former NEC Member, and Member of Forward Planning Concepts Group, SCOUTS New Zealand; Email to S.Tyas, 28/4/15

¹⁴ Tasmanian Joey Scout Leader

Even in the focus groups conducted with parents and youth members by McCrindle Research, there were mixed messages. Parents in the Older Scouts Parents group were uncertain as to whether the current ages should be adjusted, but some felt that the Joeys were perhaps too young to start many of the outdoor activities characteristic of the Scouting movement.

- *"Perhaps they should they go back to just being two groups – when I was in Scouting there was Cubs and Scouts, no one knew what a Joey was."*
- *"I find a lot of the younger kids, the Joeys that come in, they are too young whereas the Cubs are a bit older."*

Others, however, felt that Joeys should start earlier.

- *"It needs to start at an earlier age – 5 – so you get more kids in. Once the kids are in school they already have a lot of other activities that they are involved in."*

(McCrindle Research, 2014a)

Twenty-five years ago, Scouts Australia lowered the starting age from 8 to 6. Yet, although WOSM acknowledges that there are National Scout Organisations around the world whose program starts as young as age 5 (World Organization of the Scout Movement, 2015b), it provides very little resources for the development of a suitable Scouting program for age groups younger than 8.

In fact, WOSM has historically discouraged a section below the traditional Cub Scout section. For instance, the 1998 publication *Essential Characteristics of Scouting* makes the following claim:

The Scout Method is not at all suited for children who are too young for it to work effectively: too young, for example, to understand the concept of making a personal commitment to a code of conduct through a promise and law, or to exercise a leadership role within a small group [both concepts key to the Scout Method, which the delivery of the educational outcomes (the program's Purpose) is based around].

In addition, if one considers that most young people will only remain in any organization for a certain number of years – a fact which can be statistically demonstrated in many national Scout associations – there is the added problem of retaining into their adolescent years young people who join at too early an age¹⁵.

If the Purpose of Scouting is kept at the centre of the decision about Scouting's age sections, then there is another related perspective. Another WOSM document makes the following point:

Scouting simply seeks to make a contribution to the process of self-education during the years when a person can truly benefit from its structured educational support system. The age range for which Scouting can most benefit young people corresponds approximately to the second decade of life. The minimum level of maturity required for the Scout law and promise (and, indeed, for the entire Method to function as a whole) is an essential point to bear in mind when a Scout association is considering the minimum age at which a young person may join the Movement¹⁶.

In the national survey of members, the idea that the Scout Method is not at all suited to young children was put to members. 64% disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. For those that associated themselves with the Joey Scout program, 67% disagreed or strongly disagreed and 20% agreed or strongly agreed.

¹⁵ The Essential Characteristics of Scouting, page 21

¹⁶ Scouting: An Educational System, page 8

This comment is consistent of those received by the survey in relation to this statement:

Scouting program is progressive and caters for the needs of kids as they grow. Even young kids know what it is to make a promise. Leadership can also be fostered from a young age and also shown by example of leaders¹⁷.

Whether all of this emphasis from WOSM is true for Australian Scouting or not, there is an additional concern about the way in which Scouting is perceived externally, particularly by those who we may wish to engage in the Movement somehow. Government departments, for instance, are interested in the resilience and character building of Australian adolescents¹⁸, things that Scouting can make a positive contribution to. However, if Scouts Australia is seen as an organisation for children, rather than a movement of young people, then opportunities for Government support could well be diminished.

Would an adolescent who may be interested in Scouting be put off if they feel that it is an organisation for children?

Again, WOSM has an opinion on this. It suggests that Scout associations that have a good balance among their age sections will have an equal number of under-12 year-olds as over-12 year-olds. If the balance is too far in the favour of under-12 year-olds, the association risks being seen as a children's organisation rather than a youth development movement (World Organization of the Scout Movement, 2000).

Moreover, adolescents are usually not attracted to any organization that they perceive as being "for children"¹⁹.

In Europe, there has been considerable concern about the lowering of ages in the youth program. Although a member of the Asia Pacific Region of the World Organization, where Scouting is mostly integrated into school systems and run by teachers, Scouts Australia would see itself more closely aligned with the European Region where community-based Scouting is far more common. In a memo to the World Scout Committee, the European Region Scout Committee was very explicit in its concern for how young Scout organisations were accepting youth into the program.

Europe faces a serious strategic problem. Scouting is not just in decline. Scouting is in great danger of becoming an organisation for children rather than adolescents. This has serious implications for both the European Region and for WOSM. If this process continues for much longer Scout associations in Europe will cease to be youth organisations and will become organisations catering mainly for children. Such an eventuality would do serious damage to the image of Scouting. In particular, it could be expected to hasten the exodus of adolescent members thereby accelerating the onset of a condition which could well become terminal before too long. This is the major threat which lies within the experience of the past two decades. A growing perception of Scouting as a movement for children could also be expected to seriously damage our ability to raise funds from governments, NGOs and the private sector. Children's organisations don't have the potential to change the future direction of society like organisations catering for adolescents²⁰.

RAP makes the observation that since the enrolment in the younger age sections is often a decision taken by parents rather than a personal choice, there is generally a loss of membership between the younger and older age sections. Potentially this explains the sudden drop-off in membership after the age of 10 in the Australian

¹⁷ A Joey Leader and parent from NSW

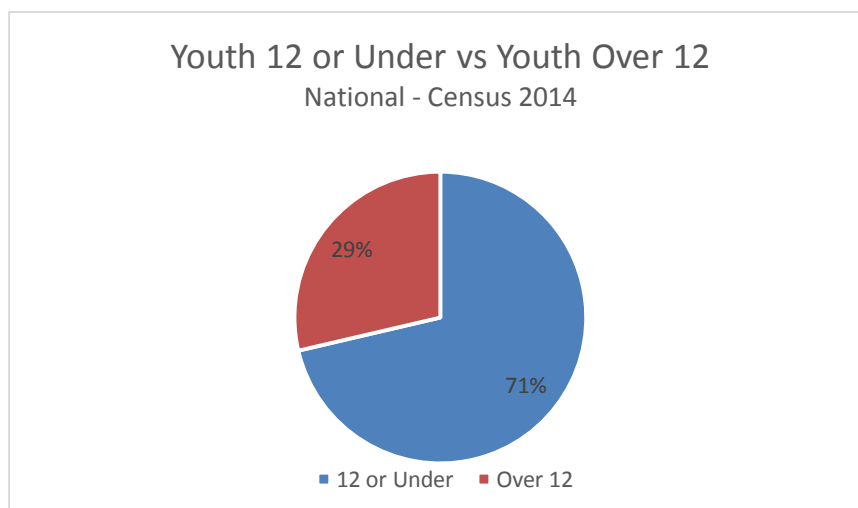
¹⁸ The National Strategy for Young Australians (2010), for example, showcases organisations that support young Australians to develop their full potential, and is aimed at youth aged 12 to 24.

¹⁹ The Essential Characteristics of Scouting, page 21

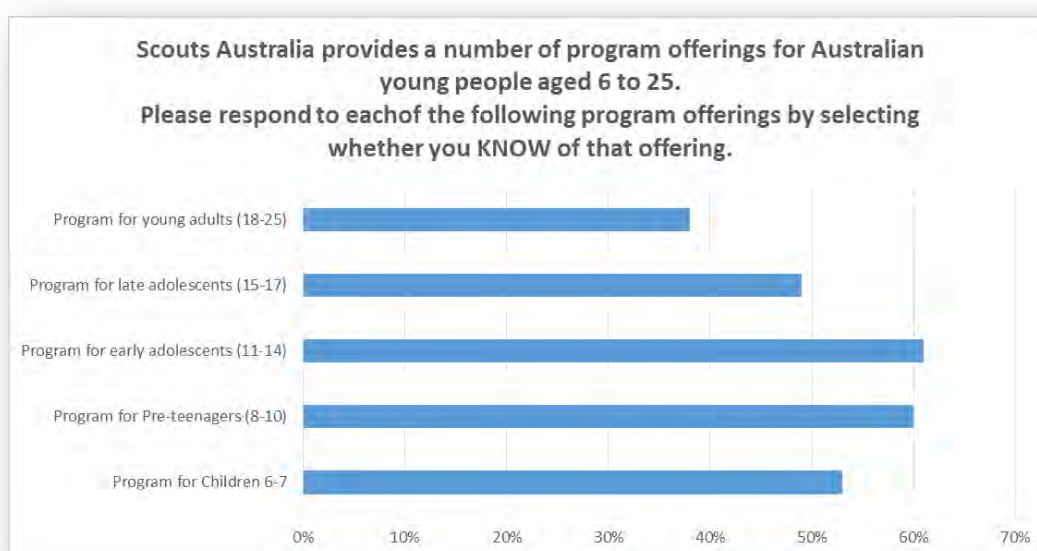
²⁰ (European Scout Committee, March, 2004)

data. Extending the theoretical length of the Scout experience by adding younger age groups can result in a sharp reduction in the proportion of adolescents. In some associations, says RAP, children aged 5 – 10 represent more than 75% of the membership (World Organization of the Scout Movement, 2000). This gives Scouting the image of a children’s organisation, rather than a youth development movement.

The situation in Australia, as at the 2014 census, is that there is significantly more under-12s as 12 or overs in the Movement. In fact, Australia is getting close to the 75% referred to in RAP.



Having raised these concerns, some evidence suggests that, at the moment at least, perceptions by adults hasn’t quite reached the situation where Scouts Australia is seen as a place only for children. The McCrindle Phase 2 survey of parents of non-Scouts showed that most awareness of Scouting is for Cub Scout and Scout sections (about 60% awareness each). The Venturer and Joey sections were each around 50% awareness and the Rover section just under 40% (McCrindle Research, 2014b).



The earlier YPR Stage 3 research on age sections, completed by Bob Taylor, discussed with experienced Joey leaders from Victoria the issue of Joey section starting age. Overall, they believed that any child in the

Foundation year of school would be able to benefit from the Joey Scout program as Kindergarten (pre-school in Victoria) delivers the social skills needed to engage in the Joey programme.

Two of the Victorian Joey Assistant Leader Trainers demonstrated how most elements of the Scout Method, the Areas of Personal Growth, and an experience of Adventure are integral to the Joey Scout program (Scouts Australia Youth Program Review, 2015).

The Leader In Charge of the 2nd Korumburra Joey Scout Mob wrote a detailed account of her experiences of working with 5 year olds in 2011. This mob had two kindergarten-enrolled 5 year olds and two school enrolled 5 year olds in a mob of 14. She found that the kids who had been at school coped well, including at sleepovers and a bike hike. The support of a Youth Helper was invaluable, especially as these children couldn't read or write yet. The recommendation was to start 5 year olds if they had been at school for at least a term.

The Progress Report work also looked at retention of those starting at 5 in the Victorian trial. The data showed that 5 year olds have been retained at least at the same rate as those starting at 6, while those joining at 7 have had the option of going into Cubs directly (Scouts Australia Youth Program Review, 2015).

In the national member survey, respondents were presented with a list of the commonly stated reasons why the age should be lowered to 5, and a list of commonly stated reasons why the age should not be lowered. The survey asked people to indicate which of these reasons were an important consideration when deciding whether or not the age should be lowered. The results are summarised below.

Commonly Stated Reasons For Lowering The Age To 5:

The following are commonly stated reasons for including 5 year olds in the Scout program. Which of these do you believe are important reasons for considering whether the program should be extended to this age group?:	All Responses	Those connected with the Joey Section only
Sometimes, younger siblings of Joeys and Cubs want to start Scouting right away and are distraught if denied this opportunity.	34%	7%
We should be able develop children in the Areas of Personal Growth, no matter the age, so let's accept 5 year olds into the program.	36%	8%
Including 5 year olds will increase the length of the Joey section so kids will benefit from a longer time in the section.	39%	8%
Since other youth development and sports organisations take 5 year olds we should too, or we risk missing out on them altogether.	46%	9%
Including 5 year olds might increase overall membership numbers	29%	6%
Get them while they're young; if we don't, we will lose them forever	21%	4%
Even if they join at five and leave at 8, at least we have had some influence over their development	38%	7%
Get them going with Scouting principles early, during their formative years.	41%	9%
School starts at age 5, so they should be ready for a program like Joeys	52%	10%

Commonly Stated Reasons For Not Lowering The Age To 5:

Which of these do you believe are important reasons for considering whether the program should remain starting at age 6:	All Responses	Those connected with the Joey Section only
If we include 5 year olds now, there will soon be pressure to include 4 year olds, so when do we stop?	24%	5%
Statistics tell us that typically, youth members stay in Scouting for about three years. The Scout Method can make the biggest impact on a young person's life when they are older.	28%	4%
If we increase the number of young children in our organisation, we risk losing our emphasis on the development of young people using the Scout Method. Adolescents don't wish to belong to an organisation dominated by children.	22%	3%
There is significant developmental differences between 5 year olds and 7 year olds, making it difficult to develop a worthwhile program.	42%	10%
It becomes increasingly difficult create an adventurous Scout program as the age group gets younger and younger.	39%	8%
Even if kids don't join Scouting at the age of 5 or 6, and go to another organisation, it is still possible that they will move on from that activity and join Scouting when they are older.	35%	7%
5 year olds in the Joey program will require a larger adult:child ratio, increasing the burden on an already small leader population.	50%	10%
The longer members are in Scouting as children, the sooner they will grow tired of Scouting, and leave before the Scout Method has its greatest impact.	20%	2%

In the comments section of the question, two other recurring themes emerged:

- We might get more leaders if Joeys were with us from age 5, as parents are with us for longer.
- If they are allowed to do the same things at school, and to be friends, why should scouting be closed to the younger one?

The reasons that scored over 40% in each category are examined below.

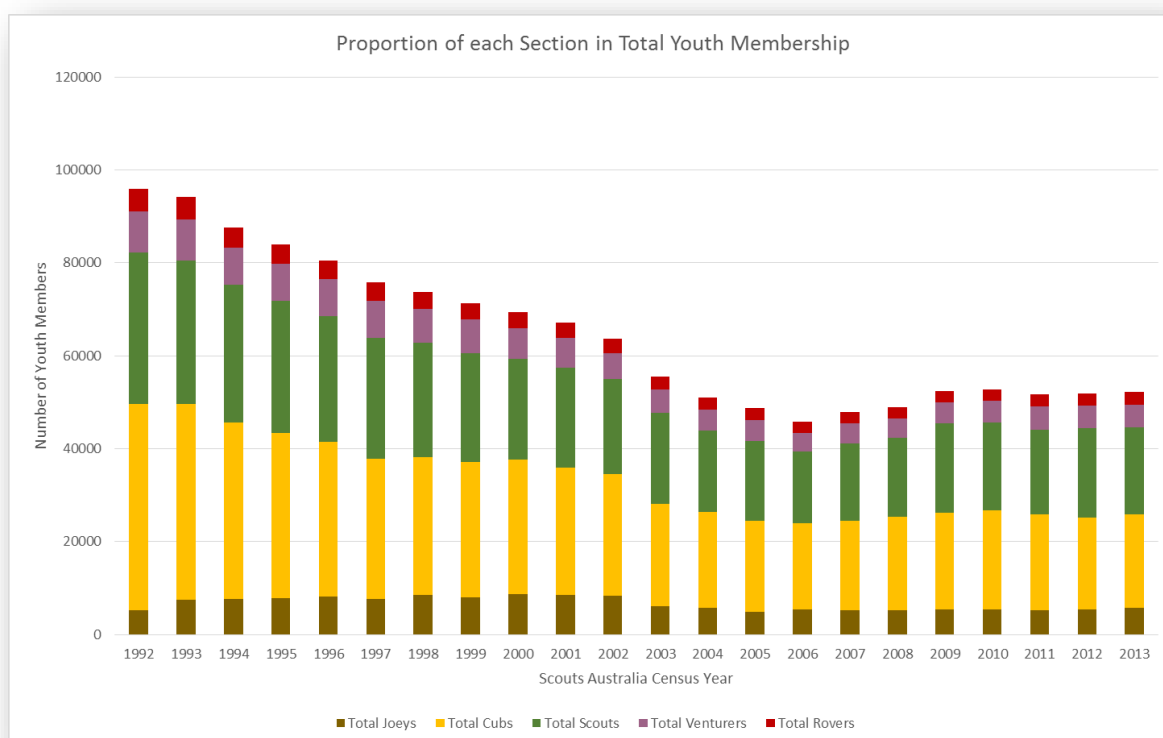
“SINCE OTHER YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND SPORTS ORGANISATIONS TAKE 5 YEAR OLDS WE SHOULD TOO, OR WE RISK MISSING OUT ON THEM ALTOGETHER.”

The McCrindle Research Phase 1 work found that parents recognised that the competitors of Scouting are all organisations that provide activities for young people outside of school hours, with the most significant of these being sports. Scouts was recognised by parents to be less involving than sporting clubs. They appreciated the flexibility Scouting provided and the less intense nature of the Scouting commitment when compared with sports. They expressed that Scouts was a beneficial alternative to sport, and that the physical activities involved in Scouting should be promoted to make parents aware the Scouting helps to physically engage children (McCrindle Research, 2014a).

The YPR Stage 3 Age Ranges Progress Report looked at this issue, also:

Advice from marketing professionals such as Rob Mills²¹, CEO and Director of Gemba Group, a leading market research and marketing consultancy company focussing on the sport and entertainment industries, indicates that our programme should be available to parents when they are selecting extracurricular activities when children start in Foundation, the first year at school. Joey's are an introduction to some of the values and elements of the Scout program which are more fully developed in later sections. The offer of a non-competitive, non-sporting alternative to parents and children complements and extends their child's early experiences of more formal education. (Scouts Australia Youth Program Review, 2015)

The evidence of the past 25 years of Joey Scouts makes it difficult to be convinced that Scouting is missing out altogether by not accepting 5 year olds. Membership data analysis suggests that kids continued to join Scouting when they were 7, 8, 9 or 10 despite not being able to do so when they were 5. Data available up until the 2013 national census demonstrates that there has always been significantly more youth members in Cub Scouts and Scouts, than Joey Scouts. Youth are joining Scouts at an age older than 6 or 7.



It is difficult to know, however, if more had joined would they have stayed longer. The membership data analysis of current youth members now in Venturers and Rovers in Victoria, shows that the average starting age is around 11 to 13, and the most common starting age is 8²². About a fifth of members in both sections started in Jokeys, and a quarter-to-a third started in Cubs. It is interesting to note that the average time in Scouting is 5.24 years for Venturers and 8.13 years for Rovers.

According to further work of McCrindle Research, the risk of children not continuing with Scouts due to taking on other interests and extra-curricular activities is higher at younger ages and declines from age 6 (51%) to

²¹ Rob Mills is also a member of the Victorian Branch Executive Committee

²² Victorian Current Venturer and Rover Membership Data Analysis – see Section 4

age 16 (30%). This may indicate that over time, and as they grow older, children would develop a stronger sense of commitment to Scouts as their preferred extra-curricular activity (McCrindle Research, 2014b).

John Clarke, National Commissioner Youth Program (2010-2015), looked further into the successes of organisations competing for membership with Scouting, such as Milo In2Cricket and AFL AusKick. He provided the following caution in a paper presented to NOC in November 2011:

We need to be careful not to assume all of these programs that are open to five year olds have long-term success. When meeting with Professor John Hattie, (Professor of Education and Director of the Melbourne Education Research Institute at the University of Melbourne) he talked about his personal involvement with Cricket Australia. He discussed how they try to teach skills to 5-6yr olds but it is very difficult due to both the cognitive understanding and the fine and gross motor skills of the age group. He suggests increasing the anticipation to join as a better approach and to keep the current age range. He also voiced a concern that, like Scouts, cricket also has a significant drop of membership in the 15 – 23yr age group. It has made no difference to add 5 year olds into the program.

Perhaps Scouts Australia might see it as okay that youth do experiment with other after school activities and eventually come around to Scouting when they are older. There is also the potential that if allowed to join at age 5, after three or four years youth might believe they have “done Scouts” and move on to other activities. In this case, Scouting has failed to contribute to a young person’s self-education at a time when it is most powerful, “the second decade of their lives” (World Organization of the Scout Movement, 1998a).

Interestingly, an excerpt from the Scouts Australia minutes of the Conference of Chief Commissioners in November 1979, reports that

“The Chief Commissioner of Australia again expressed his concern at the continued loss of members from the Scout Section and suggested that we should never stop trying to find ways and means of arresting this loss. He reported that the Canadian Beaver Scheme had now been running long enough to produce evidence that after entry to Beavers at the age of 5 most boys have grown tired of being in the Movement by the Scout entry age of 12.”

“GET THEM GOING WITH SCOUTING PRINCIPLES EARLY, DURING THEIR FORMATIVE YEARS.”

When “Scouting Principles” are referred to in this context, it is unclear what is actually meant by ‘principles’. By definition, the Principles of Scouting are Duty to God, Duty Others, Duty to Self. However, it may be that people who mention Scouting principles are referring to broader “Scouting ways”, and possibly the values that Scouting instils in young people, such as those within the Scout Promise and Law.

Anecdotal evidence from around the world, with over 100 years of youth program experience, would suggest that children and young people can engage in, and learn to live by, the Scout Promise and Law at any time they join. This reason to start at age 5 wouldn’t, therefore, be a compelling reason to include that age in the youth program.

“SCHOOL STARTS AT AGE 5, SO THEY SHOULD BE READY FOR A PROGRAM LIKE JOEYS”

This belief assumes that school systems are right to start formal education at the age of 5 (and 4 in some cases). There is a global movement pressuring governments to start formal education later in life, particularly in the UK, and is based on the experiences of successful European education systems. One article from Cambridge University’s David Whitebread, is an example of the concerns about children starting formal education at the age of 4 or 5 (Whitebread, 2013). Instead, there is an argument for play-based learning for those under the age of 7. This non-formal (and most likely, informal as well) educational method has strong connections with Scouting’s learning style.

However, this doesn't provide a compelling reason that Scouts should start at age 4 or 5. It does suggest that a program could be created that suits this age group, but it doesn't suggest it needs to be a Scout program. Many Kindergarten or Pre-School programs focus on play-based learning, as do alternative school programs such as Montessori or Reggio Emilia. The Bush Kindergarten is another interesting concept that uses self-directed play as a learning method (Scouts Australia Youth Program Review, 2014).

Further to this, from the age of six, a child is of compulsory school education age in all states and territories in Australia, except Queensland (6 years and 6 months) and Tasmania (5 years). In practice, most children start the preliminary year of primary school at between four-and-a-half and five-and-a-half (Loveless, 2015). So there is a possibility of accepting children aged 4 into Prep.

Further to this again, anecdotally there is a growing trend amongst Australian parents to wait until their child turns 6 to start school. This seems to be particularly true for boys. In one longitudinal study of Australian Children, 14.5% of the 2005 cohort started school later than they were eligible to (particularly strong in Vic and NSW) (Edwards, Taylor, & Fiorini, 2011).

Taking into account the developmental progress of an individual child appears to be a serious consideration for when they should start school. This is related closely to the next commonly given reason for not including 5 year olds:

“THERE IS SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN 5 YEAR OLDS AND 7 YEAR OLDS, MAKING IT DIFFICULT TO DEVELOP A WORTHWHILE PROGRAM.”

Piaget's model of Child Development would support this. Piaget identified two stages that would cross over during a section that covered the age range 5 – 7: Preoperational and Concrete Operational stages.

If forced to sum up the differences between pre-schoolers (preoperational) and grade schoolers (concrete operational) in a single phrase, most child psychologists would probably say that the "older child is just more logical."²³

Practical experience of this from the Victorian trial is mixed. To be eligible for the trial, Joeys had to be at school and have reached their 5th birthday to be registered. Some Joey leaders only took five year olds at the start of term 2 so that they were accustomed to the routine of a daily and weekly school program in Term 1. Other leaders found this approach unnecessary (Scouts Australia Youth Program Review, 2015).

In the member survey, many people, especially those connected to the Joey section, raised concerns about the developmental difference between 5 and 7/8 year olds. This comment is typical of the feedback:

"As a Joey leader and a parent with younger children, 5 is too young. It would be difficult to develop a Program to appeal to such a broad age from 5 up to nearly 8. There are significant development differences between this spectrum of age. I would not have volunteered as a Joey leader to manage kids at such a young age. The skills required to engage and keep 5 to 6 yo focused on activities are high. I am not a trained teacher. Schools train teachers on how to manage that age specifically."

“5 YEAR OLDS IN THE JOEY PROGRAM WILL REQUIRE A SMALLER ADULT:CHILD RATIO, INCREASING THE BURDEN ON AN ALREADY SMALL LEADER POPULATION.”

It is difficult to determine the impact on adult:child ratios if the starting age of the program was lowered to 5. Today, most Branches require a ratio of 1 adult to 5 Joey Scouts for in-hall activities. These adults need to be some combination of trained leaders and other adults (parents). The National Quality Framework (Australian

²³ (Teoh, Pearn, Johnson, & Rogers, 2014) Appendix B

Children's Education & Care Quality Authority), which applies to child-care rather than recreational or educational organisations like Scouts, requires a ratio of 1:11 for pre-school children (Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority, 2014).

As there are no other mandated requirements for child ratios for recreational organisations, the Association will need to turn to the risk management processes (including child safe practices) of Scouting activities as well as what's required to deliver a quality program to all sections.

At the 2013 census, the ratio of Leaders to Joey Scouts was 1:4, nationally. Tasmania had the smallest ratio at nearly 1:3, and South Australia had the largest at nearly 1:5. Feedback from the member survey suggests that even getting to this ratio has been hard work, and that in some areas it is much worse than this, with leaders leaning heavily on parents for support.

Taking the adult resources into consideration is one of the key criteria that should be considered when designing age sections. WOSM, through the RAP toolbox, raises concerns about ensuring that there are enough adult leaders, in both quality and quantity, to support the program (World Organization of the Scout Movement, 2000), not just in the Joey section, but across the whole program.

"WE MIGHT GET MORE LEADERS IF JOEYS WERE WITH US FROM AGE 5."

The feedback connected this idea suggests that by extending the length of time that the Joey section runs for, to a full two or more years, will mean that parents will get more involved as parent helpers and then the chances of them moving into a leader role are increased. This argument supports the idea of an extended Joey section, rather than lowering the age to 5.

"IF TWO KIDS ARE ALLOWED TO BE IN THE SAME CLASS AT SCHOOL, AND TO BE FRIENDS, WHY SHOULD SCOUTING BE CLOSED TO THE YOUNGER ONE?"

Sometimes, two children are in the same year level at school, but one is 5 and one is 6. They will come and try Joeys together. It becomes an unfair experience then, when these two children, who are in the same social group outside of Scouting, are not permitted to start Scouting together.

Suggestions to alleviate this problem include:

- Allowing children to join the program when they start Year 1, no matter their age;
- Allowing children to join at the same time as their schooling starts;
- Allowing children to join Scouting after six or twelve months of schooling; or,
- Starting the program at the age of 6, or when they commence Year 1, whichever comes first.

Results from the survey of Joey Scouts and their leaders conducted by the WA Branch Youth Council showed that Joeys beginning at the age of six was most preferable, with 59.75 percent of respondents in favour. This also proved a popular answer within the 45 other people surveyed (including adult Members, Older Youth Members and Parents at attendance at 'Joey Leap') with a total of 68.89% agreeing that six is the most ideal starting age with in Joeys (WA Branch Youth Council, March 2015).

WA Branch Youth Council Survey Results:

Starting Age	Joey Responses	Others' Responses
5 years of age	43 (27.04%)	14 (31.11%)
6 years of age	95 (59.75%)	31 (68.89%)
7 years of age	21 (13.21%)	0 (0%)

The national member survey results showed that 51% of respondents believe that the age of 6 is the right age to enter the program, and 27% believe it is too old. Looking at just those connected to the Joey section, 56% believe it is the right age, but 35% believe it is too old.

The Branch Commissioners responsible for each section were also polled. There was strong support for leaving the starting age at 6 (78%). The Joey Scout section commissioners were unanimously opposed to lowering the age to five.

Overall, the research told us that there was no additional benefit to accepting five year olds. The trials in Victoria, while successful, didn't show a large interest in 5 year olds being in Scouting, even when the trial was opened to all Scout Groups. The survey of members showed only 27% who believed that the age should be lowered. The branch commissioners for Joeys in all states were unanimous that it wasn't necessary. The clear message from WOSM was that there is a risk that Scouting could be further seen as a children's organisation rather than a youth development movement. Finally, no clear evidence showed that kids who join sports programs at age 5 stay any longer with that organisation than they do in Scouting.

It is recommended that:

13. The youth program begins at the age of 6.
14. The Joey section be extended by having the transition age occur after the youth member turns 8.
15. Flexibility continue to be built in to this starting age, and consider developing policies allowing those that are younger than 6, but in Year 1 of school, to be able to enter the program.

PROGRAM ENDING AGE
Is the age of 26 the right place for youth members to end their involvement in the Scout Program?

Program ending age is important to define, not just as the time when the Rover section ends, but also because it influences defining the Program (Educational) Objectives.

Globally, there is no one accepted definition of the term "youth". Ages ranges vary considerably, and depends on the context. However, the Renewed Approach to Programme document suggests that the senior age section is extremely important: it enables the association's general educational objectives to be established and evaluated. The age limit should not be higher than 25, since it is important to ensure that Scouting remains a youth movement. The senior section should not be considered merely as a source of leaders for the younger age sections, but as an integral part of the youth membership (World Organization of the Scout Movement, 2000).

There is some debate in Australia about whether the Rover Section should remain ending upon the day a youth member turns 26, or should be reduced to a younger age. Some suggest as young as 22.

The recently completed Rover Review recommended that the Program ending age remains at 26 (Scouts Australia, 2011). It found no compelling reason to recommend changing the ending age.

At the 2015 National Combined Youth Program Meeting, participants were surveyed on their preference to have the ending age remain at 26, or at another age. The majority felt that 26 was the correct age (54%). The next most popular age was 25 (22%). None suggested an age older than 26²⁴.

In the research presented in the 3-7 Progress report, verbal and anecdotal feedback from Bay Jam meetings suggests that leaders did not favour the models which shortened the Rover age range (Scouts Australia Youth Program Review, 2015).

It is recommended that:

16. The time at which the program ends for a young person is the day that they turn the age of 26.

AGE OF MAJORITY

Are we locked into a section that must start at 18?

A young person's 18th birthday often marks a time of freedom, as one can legally vote, consume alcohol and gain independence on the road. State and Commonwealth legislation surrounding the start of adulthood creates difficulties for the arrangements of the age sections. Laws vary from State to State on issues such as legal drinking age, age of consent, and child protection. For instance, a working-with-children check is required for anyone aged 18 or over in most states, however in some states 16 and 17 year olds also need one.

The transition from Venturers to Rovers occurs at a difficult time for many youth, with their 18th birthday often coinciding with the final year of secondary education. Additional pressures in Year 12 have often led to members 'taking a break' from the movement to 'focus on their academic studies'.

With these life pressures in mind, there is a need for stability for some youth members at this time. The option of extending Venturers until a member has completed their secondary school studies could be an attractive option, keeping the social cohort together, and delaying the additional distractions of changing sections, especially into an adult section.

The March 2015 National Operations Committee meeting's position was that there should not be a section that involved both youth under the age of 18, and youth aged 18 or over. However, after further consideration, the June 2015 meeting explored the idea that there could be circumstances where a person still in secondary school could be completing their Venturer award scheme and stay in that section until Year 12 is completed, regardless of whether or not they had turned 18. This position would build further flexibility into transition to meet the personal progression needs of the individual youth member.

In the event that members have turned 18 whilst still in the Venturer section, the expectation is that they will adhere to the rules governing Venturer activities.

This issue has been debated considerably. Some feel that it would simply be a matter of putting appropriate measures in place to prevent any unlawful activity taking place. It would be most appropriate that the 'youth council' (eg. Crew Exec, Organising Team Exec, etc.) put these measure in place, rather than 'rules' imposed by the Branch..

Recommendations from the Rover Review supports the position that the section should start no earlier than the day that the youth member turns 18, although linking activities can occur from 17½ (Scouts Australia, 2011).

²⁴ Combined Youth Program Meeting notes (May 2015). See Appendix C.

It is recommended that:

17. The Rover Scout section begin when the youth member turns 18. Linking activities may occur prior to this.
18. A youth member is permitted to remain in the younger section until they reach the end of Year 12, or turn 18, whichever comes last.

SCHOOL YEARS

Rather than being based on the individual age of the youth member, should our age sections be based on school years? Are there key times in a young person's life that are linked to schooling, that need to be considered when determining age sections?

Additional Issues for consideration:

- Choice in education pathways in Year 9 in Secondary school
- Transitioning to Secondary School in Year 6 – 7 (except South Australia where it is Year 7 - 8)

SCOUTS New Zealand follow the model of sections based on school years²⁵. Children start school in Year 1, and are entitled to start Scouts in the year they turn 5.

SCOUTS New Zealand age sections:

- **Keas:** Yr 2 & 3 (start term 4 Yr 1) - This means that children can be 5 when they start the programme, although it will be after three terms of school.
- **Cubs:** Yr 4,5,6 (transition term 4 Year 3)
- **Scouts:** Yr 7,8,9,10 (transition term 4 Year 6)
- **Venturers:** Yr 11, 12, 13, 14 (transition term 4 Year 10).
- **Rovers:** Ages 18-26

A member of the SCOUTS New Zealand review team offered these notes:

Although there was some wariness to school year based sections, I think it has been pretty widely accepted now. Award Schemes and National Programmes were all changed to support this new system. The main reasons for it were to prevent the extensive membership loss between sections (often caused by individuals being separated from their peer group and friends when transitions were done by age) and also to make it easier for leaders to run programmes and promote progress through the Award Scheme.

I am now a Group Leader and Scout Leader in a small town group with 115 youth members. It does mean large groups moving up a section at the same time – but they all move with their friends and managing the award scheme is much easier. I think many leaders were daunted by the thought of large groups transitioning at the same time but have found this to be less of an obstacle than expected.

Year ones in my experience are doing fine. They join at the fourth term of Year 1 – meaning they are at least five and many are six. In NZ if a child starts school after about April – they are deemed to be Year 0 and would not join Keas until the next year when they had advanced to Year 1. The advantage of this is that the education system has essentially determined when youth are ready to start at Keas – bright kids get pushed forward into Year 1 – slower ones may be held as Year 0. It also means that by the time a

²⁵ (SCOUTS New Zealand; <http://www.scouts.org.nz/scout-sections>; downloaded 4/4/15, n.d.)

*group join in the fourth term they have already made buddies and peer groups with the other kids they are likely to be joining with*²⁶.

McCrimble Research looked at school-year-level based section. When asked whether Scouting sections should align more closely with the school years, the Older Scouts (8-14) Parent group was unsure. The Younger Scouts Parent group, however, brought this up before being asked of the possibility, as a viable option for Scouting in the future.

"I think it should depend on the grades at school they're at instead of what age they are. We have a bunch of kids who are in 2nd class who would love to be in Cubs but have just missed out."

(McCrimble Research, 2014a)

McCrimble's surveys of Scouting and non-Scouting parents also looked at school-year-level based sections. The alignment of the program with school years, the proximity of the program location to where they live, and the integration of technology throughout the program delivery were three elements that national (non-Scouting) parents emphasised much more strongly than Scouting parents (25%, 21%, and 19% point differences, respectively) (McCrimble Research, 2014b).

According to the YPR 3-7 Progress Report, if a School Year level model were to be adopted and implemented, it would help with the social friendship groupings so important in upper Primary and lower Secondary school youth. This links with the BDRC Jones Donald research findings (*Presently the transition occurs on their birthday which resulted in friends moving at different times* (BDRC Jones Donald, 2014)). If the year level group is too large and might disturb section balances, then Group Council could plan to move some members six months earlier or six months later, but still keep youth friendship groups together (Scouts Australia Youth Program Review, 2015).

At AV2015, Venturers and their leaders were surveyed. The survey asked if a change of section to match a change in school year level would be preferred over the current linking method. Only 36% of respondents preferred this option (the question was specifically worded around linking between Scouts and Venturers).

The YPR 3-7 Progress Report reported on some analysis of membership data. To test the feasibility of an Australian School Year model compared to the current flexible transition age range practices in Victoria, the School Year Levels of current members in Victoria were requested of GLs in mid-November 2014, via data entry into the Victorian online Extranet. It demonstrated that, on balance, most kids would be in the same section as now. Section size would be about the same.

In the member survey, when asked about whether sections should be based on school years, rather than age, 49% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 30% agreed or strongly agreed.

Comments such as the following were common:

*Changing section at beginning or end of school year leads to higher incidence of members leaving. It also works against the patrol system, as there will be a greater loss of experience, and more youth who do not get any leadership opportunity*²⁷.

Focus groups looked at the issue of changing sections when youth are transitioning from primary to secondary school. Both parents and young people agreed that age 12 or part way through grade 6 is an

²⁶ Noel Walker, Group Leader, Former NEC Member, and Member of Forward Planning Concepts Group, SCOUTS New Zealand; Email to S.Tyas, 28/4/15

²⁷ A Queensland Scout Leader

appropriate transition point, but should factor in experience/development. Ensuring a place where a young person's social grouping is maintained, when they are simultaneously going through a major life transition, has come across as important in a number of forums.

In the member survey, 55% agreed or strongly agreed that youth should not change sections at the same time as moving from primary to secondary school. Nearly a quarter were unsure and a further quarter disagreed.

Member survey respondents were not convinced that school Year 9 is all that critical when designing section transition times. Respondents were fairly equally split between slightly agree, slightly disagree, and unsure.

A school-year model is centred on the idea of improving retention at transition time, however it potentially ignores beliefs about Scouting's Purpose. Youth members are grouped into year levels therefore must move through the program as a cohort. This approach makes little allowance for individual pathways, personal progression, and developmental needs. The philosophical approach to our educational method is possibly compromised by this approach, and flexibility is lost.

It is recommended that:

- 19. Models be developed for member consultation based on both age and school-year-levels;**
- 20. Youth members should not transition between sections at the same time as transitioning between primary and secondary school;**
- 21. Transition times should be designed to be flexible enough to allow a youth member to move into the next section prior to beginning Year 9, if the individual needs to.**

5 RECOMMENDED MODELS FOR CONSULTATION

The following three models have been developed in line with the research presented in this paper. They are:

1. The current model
2. An age-based model
3. A school-year-level based model

It is recommended that these models be put to members in a consultation phase for feedback and final selection.

The National Operations Committee, in June 2015, had a preference for the YPR Age-Based Model.

The Age-Based Model was modified slightly after feedback from the Branch Commissioners for each section and Rovers in attendance at the Combined Youth Program Meeting. When polled, this group had a preference for the YPR Age-Based Model (70%).

THE CURRENT MODEL

Ages	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	...	25
School Year	F	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12				
JS		■	■														
CS			■	■	■	■											
S						■	■	■	■	■							
VS										■	■	■	■				
RS														■	■	■	■

Features Of This Model:

Existing model has transition windows of six months, starting at age six. Victoria has modified this to 12 month transition windows, although there is some evidence that many don't realise this. There is only a short time in Joeyes.

How It Stacks Up:

- Adolescence focus is low by pushing the Scout section younger and younger. Suboptimal for the patrol system.
- Transition to Scouts happens well before secondary school.
- The Joey section is short, barely 1.5 years, which Joey leaders have given feedback about.
- Individual personal progression is less emphasized due to stricter section starting and finishing.
- Transition in social groupings more difficult.
- Hard deadlines on award scheme completion are in effect. Can't do previous award scheme once started next section.
- Concern of parents that 10 year olds are with 14 year olds.
- Some evidence suggests mainly craft activities in Joeyes.

How does model fare against the "Criteria for a well-adapted system of age sections"? (World Organization of the Scout Movement, 2005)	
<i>It respects the personal development stages of the child</i>	Partially
Over time, the current model's age sections have shifted slowly younger, skewing away from developmental stages.	
<i>It takes existing social groupings into account</i>	Partially
It should, although with six month transitions it can be difficult for Groups to achieve that.	
<i>It respects the necessity to base Scouting on peer group experiences</i>	Partially
The Scout section is too long, which means that the patrol system is not as effective with a large age range between the youngest and oldest member of a patrol. The Joey section is too short, and some would suggest that it is difficult for children of this age to work effectively in teams, although peer groupings could be used without children needing to be working in teams.	
<i>It maintains a good balance between the various sections</i>	Unclear
Given that Scouts Australia already has an imbalance of 71:29 in favour of 12-or-unders, it is difficult to say whether this model will make this worse. Evidence suggests that this has been a problem since at least 1975 and the addition of Joeys in 1990 has made little impact for better or worse.	
<i>It is flexible</i>	Partially
Not enough of an overlap in sections is in place to ensure flexibility. Leader training and resources don't emphasise section flexibility enough.	
<i>It is oriented towards the senior sections</i>	No
The focus on the Purpose of Scouting, and when in a young person's life it is best developed, has been lost.	
<i>It takes the association's adult resources into consideration</i>	Partially
Adults are spread thin across all sections.	

YPR AGE-BASED MODEL

Ages	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	...	25
School Year	F	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12				
A																	6,7
B				T													8,9,10
C							T		T								11,12,13,14
D													T	yr. 12			15,16,17
E																	18-25

T = ideal transition year, but be flexible to meet the developmental and personal progression needs of the individual.

Features Of This Model:

Evolved from the current model, however it pushes the ages a little older for each section. Emphasis on flexibility in linking times, to meet personal progression, development and social group needs. Includes a 'Year 12' year where a youth member may wish to stay in section D while they are finishing school, even though they may be 18.

How It Stacks Up:

Strong adolescence focus – Scout Method at its best from age 11/12 and must include 14 year olds.

Can transition to section C before secondary school starts, but with flexibility to meet individual needs. With the small shift towards parents delaying their kids' entry to school (one study says 31% of NSW children in 2005²⁸). These youth members would certainly be in section C by the time secondary school starts (including South Australia).

Section A has a real program of two full years, but flexibility to meet individual needs. Also responds to strong feedback that 2 years is enough for most kids that age.

Attends to the concerns of parents about 10 year olds with 14+ year olds, and supports the best outcomes for the Scout Method, particularly the small team system.

It encourages a move away from craft in the youngest section – need to extend adventure into the program for 6, 7 and some 8 year olds.

The flexibility will also work for Scouts with special needs.

Section	For...
A	6 & 7 year olds
B	8, 9, 10 year olds
C	11, 12, 13, 14 year olds
D	15, 16, 17 year olds
E	18 - 25 year olds
<i>Youth will transition between sections at a time that is appropriate for their personal progression, development, and social needs.</i>	
<i>Ideally, youth should not be in section A after they have turned 9; not be in section B before they have turned 8 or after they have turned 12; not be in section C before they have turned 11, or after they have turned 15; not be in D before they have turned 14 or after they have turned 18.</i>	
<i>Children who are in Year 1, but have not yet turned 6, <u>may</u> be permitted to start section A. Youth who are 18, but are completing Year 12, would be permitted to stay in section D if desired.</i>	

²⁸ Edwards et al., 2011

This model will raise the minimum age to attend an Australian Jamboree. Although it is likely to reduce the overall size of a Jamboree, a camp of this length will be better suited to older youth. Perhaps a smaller event will also reduce the organisational burden on the host Branch.

An age-based model will continue to have youth members joining at random times of the year. In the past, this has led to program material being repeated multiple times to ensure the Award Scheme requirements were met for each youth. Although this shouldn't happen, it will be a challenge for further YPR Stages to overcome.

This model, along with the One Program concept, can encourage a move away from hard and fast section boundaries. For instance, if the future iteration of the Scout Medallion can be completed in section D, prior to the 15th birthday, then the Scout could be simultaneously a member of both units, free to move from one to the other and back depending on their role in the Troop and Unit. There should be times when all Scouts can be interacting with Venturers and become familiar with what they do.

How does model fare against the "Criteria for a well-adapted system of age sections"? (World Organization of the Scout Movement, 2005)	
<i>It respects the personal development stages of the child</i>	Yes
Child/youth developmental stages have been re-examined and matched against the proposed section age ranges.	
<i>It takes existing social groupings into account</i>	Yes
Transition times have been designed to be flexible in order to give Groups the opportunity to transition youth members in social groups.	
<i>It respects the necessity to base Scouting on peer group experiences</i>	Yes
Section C has been reduced in length, which means that the patrol system is more effective with a smaller age range between the youngest and oldest member of a patrol. Section A is lengthened, and peer groupings could be used without children needing to be working in teams.	
<i>It maintains a good balance between the various sections</i>	Potentially
The development of a program that is adventurous for all ages, with a strong desire to increase the retention of Scouts and Venturers, could potentially rebalance the under and over 12 imbalance, for the reasons discussed earlier. The proposed sections will support this by enabling an "older" program for adolescents.	
<i>It is flexible</i>	Yes
Increased transition overlap between sections. Emphasis on developing training and resources that support this flexibility and the understanding by leaders of when the right time to transition youth members is.	
<i>It is oriented towards the senior sections</i>	Yes
The focus is on the Purpose of Scouting, and when in a young person's life it is best developed.	
<i>It takes the association's adult resources into consideration</i>	Potentially
Today's Adults in Scouting are spread thin across all sections, and this would still be the case with five sections.	

YPR SCHOOL-YEAR BASED MODEL

Ages	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	...	25
School Year	F	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12				
A																	Yr 1,2
B																	Yr 3,4,5
C																	Yr 6,7,8,9
D																	Yr 10,11,12 / 17 yo
E																	Yr 12 / 18-25 yo

Features Of This Model:

A school years model, allowing Joeys to start in term 4 of Foundation (Prep, Transition, Reception). Flexible transition year in adolescent years, to allow for extra leadership opportunities and individual pathways. Generally three years in each section. Pushes the age of sections a little older. Doesn't require flexible transition years because all youth would transition as a cohort at one time of the year. This follows a similar model to SCOUTS New Zealand

How It Stacks Up:

- Strong adolescence focus – Scout Method at its best from age 11/12 – year 6
- Would transition to Scouts well before secondary school starts
- Joeys is a full two years. But no longer than two years, as per feedback from Joey leaders.
- Strongly supports transition in social section groups, although school social groups may not be the same as Scouts social groups. . It assumes the social of an individual is the same as the cohort he/she belongs to.
- Attends to the concerns of parents about 10 year olds with nearly 15 year olds
- Could be tricky conceptually to move to this thinking.
- A school-based model emphasises cohorts of Scouts always 'going up' to the next section together. By beginning this process in Term 4, it avoids that dangerous long-school-holiday time when kids often don't return to Scout when it involves changing sections.

This is the YPR's least preferred model. It is a poor option as it is centred on retention at transition time. It ignores the other core beliefs about Scouting's Purpose. Locking kids into year levels means they must move through the program in a cohort block. This approach makes little allowance for individual pathways, personal progression, and developmental needs. The philosophical approach to our educational method is compromised by this approach. We lose, rather than gain, flexibility.

If we believe in the Scout Method, then it would be counterproductive to go to a model based on school-years.

How does model fare against the "Criteria for a well-adapted system of age sections"? (World Organization of the Scout Movement, 2005)	
<i>It respects the personal development stages of the child</i>	Yes
Child/youth developmental stages have been re-examined and matched against the proposed section age ranges.	
<i>It takes existing social groupings into account</i>	No
Youth will enter and exit sections in cohort groups, based on their year at school.	
<i>It respects the necessity to base Scouting on peer group experiences</i>	Yes
Section C has been reduced in length, which means that the patrol system is more effective with a smaller age range between the youngest and oldest member of a patrol. Section A is lengthened, and peer groupings could be used without children needing to be working in teams.	
<i>It maintains a good balance between the various sections</i>	Potentially
The development of a program that is adventurous for all ages, with a strong desire to increase the retention of Scouts and Venturers, could potentially rebalance the under and over 12 imbalance, for the reasons discussed earlier. The proposed sections will support this by enabling an "older" program for adolescents.	
<i>It is flexible</i>	No
Youth will enter and exit sections in cohort groups, based on their year at school.	
<i>It is oriented towards the senior sections</i>	Yes
The focus is on the Purpose of Scouting, and when in a young person's life it is best developed.	
<i>It takes the association's adult resources into consideration</i>	Potentially
Today's Adults in Scouting are spread thin across all sections, and this would still be the case with five sections.	

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7 APPENDICES

- A. Table of Developmental Stages for Australian Scouting
- B. National Member Survey
- C. Combined Youth Program Meeting Notes – May 2015
- D. Kurumburra Joey Scout Mob

APPENDIX A - TABLE OF DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES FOR AUSTRALIAN SCOUTING

(Teoh, Pearn, Johnson, & Rogers, 2014)

Young Early Adolescence Ages 8-11 years	Early Adolescence Ages 12-14 years	Middle Adolescence Ages 15-17	Late Adolescence, Ages 18-19 yrs
<p><i>Behaviours</i></p> <p>Younger Adolescents have higher energy levels compared with their older adolescents (Kahn et al. 2008)</p> <p>Hormonal changes at this age group may contribute to unpredictable behaviours, especially for boys (Susman et al. 1987; Granger et al. 2003)</p> <p>10-11 year olds engage in more temperament related pro-social behaviours compared with 4-5 year olds. (Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2014. P. 54)</p> <p><i>Cognitive Abilities</i></p> <p>Younger adolescents below the age of 15 years have less sensitivity in identifying negative emotions based on facial expressions than adults, with anger recognition developing later than that of fear (Thomas et al. 2007)</p> <p>Given the differences in brain development in areas of higher order</p>	<p><i>Behaviours</i></p> <p>Early Adolescents, when compared with older adolescents or adults, are more impulsive and are especially responsive to short-term rewards (Steinberg, 2009, 2010). Long term projects need to have lots of short-term goals and rewards along the way.</p> <p><i>Cognitive Abilities</i></p> <p>Early adolescents are able to responsibly plan their tasks (Query & Berkland, 1998), thus should be given more opportunity to do so, and to encourage some degree of independence.</p> <p>The ability to become more aware of thinking and feelings is beginning to emerge (Slife, 1987), and they would benefit from reminders and prompts to use these types of self-awareness skills (Veenman et al. 2005).</p> <p>Early adolescents begin to think about independence and autonomy, and move</p>	<p><i>Cognitive Abilities</i></p> <p>15-17 year olds have mature reasoning ability and are able to demonstrate abstract, multidimensional, intentional, and hypothetical thinking (Davey et al. 2008; Kuhn, 2009). Case studies and discussions are good ways of getting them to think and understand. At this age, there are also better able to understand the value of external expert input (Lewis, 1981), thus use of guest speakers in useful.</p> <p>Middle adolescents are able to think about their future, and explore future careers and roles in life (Bacchini & Magliulo, 2003).</p> <p>Brain development in middle adolescence would suggest that this group begins to make decisions that are affected by how they feel (Galvan et al. 2006). They are more like to benefit from activities that help them to recognise how they are feeling, and to re-focus on the process of critical thinking and reflection. This is related</p>	<p><i>Cognitive Abilities</i></p> <p>Adult-like thinking is common in late adolescent, but lacking in the skills that most adults have (Casey et al. 2008)</p> <p>Late adolescents have greater independence than younger adolescents (Allen & Land, 1999), and want to be treated as adults.</p> <p>Late adolescents experiment with identity development, much more than the younger ages (Kroger Thinking about life and post-school careers often preoccupy the thoughts of late adolescents (Adams et al. 1992; Wigfield et al. 2006), 2003).</p> <p><i>Socialisation</i></p> <p>Many late adolescents are in a serious relationship (Mosher et al. 2005), and intimacy and sexuality issues are the focus for this age group.</p>

<p>problem solving, younger adolescents may not process information as quickly as compared with older adolescents (Casey et al. 2008). Thus younger adolescents may be more responsive if information is presented in smaller chunks instead of larger blocks (Query & Berkland, 1998)</p> <p>Younger adolescents are less able to shift from one category or response to another than middle adolescents (Jaquish & Ripple, 1980).</p> <p>6-7 yr olds, prefer maths more compared with 10-11 yr olds (Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2014. P. 77)</p> <p><i>Socialisation</i></p> <p>Younger adolescents, as compared with older adolescents, still tend to prefer to spend time with their own gender (Barrett, 1996). One of the byproducts of this is the promotion of groups based on common interests, which sometime reduces the adolescent's acceptance of new ideas and activities (Brown, 1990).</p> <p>Parental involvement appears to be more critical for children under the age of 10 years, above this age, their peers play an increasing role in influencing</p>	<p>away from dependence on adult opinions to that of the opinions of peers (Bukowski et al.1996; Laursen & Collins, 2004). Conflict with adults begins. Difficult behaviours are ideally discussed privately with the adolescent. Given the changes in these attitudes, this is a good time to re-think, train and model appropriate communication skills to enhance family relationships, given that parents are no longer viewed as perfect.</p> <p><i>Socialisation</i></p> <p>Peer acceptance is important to Early Adolescents, which is reflected in reward seeking activity within the brain (Waraczynski, 2006). Thus at this age, the utilisation of peer support as a reason for involvement in the activity may be a stronger motivator, as compared with merely the aim of the task (Bauman et al, 1991).</p> <p>Early adolescence are keen to be accepted by peers, so perceptions of normative peer behaviour are important (Hansen & Graham, 1991; Steinberg, 2008). Thus, ensuring that there is accurate information available to stop the "Everyone is doing it" myth is important to prevent risky behaviours.</p>	<p>to the need for short-term reward seeking impulses which is heightened even more in middle adolescence (Steinberg, 2010). Emphasising the short-term benefits of abstaining from risky behaviours is important at this stage. Salient, as opposed to symbolic, rewards for middle adolescents is useful at this stage (Galvan et al. 2006).</p> <p>The short-term benefits of peer influence in risky taking and impulsive behaviours, tends to outweigh adults advice and decision-making at this stage (Gardner & Steinberg, 2005; Cauffman et al. 2010).</p> <p><i>Socialisation</i></p> <p>Preoccupation with interactions with the opposite gender, and "falling in love" begin within middle adolescent (Barret, 1996; Tanner et al. 2010).</p> <p>Middle adolescents are also more emotionally supportive of one another, as compared with young and early adolescence (Bokhorst et al. 2010)</p> <p><i>Emotions</i></p> <p>Dealing with emotions may become overwhelming for the middle adolescent, as a result of development,</p>	
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<p>their behaviours (Higginbotham et al; Topor et al. in Jakes & DeBord (2010). However, these activities need to be carried in a context of a supportive parent environment.</p> <p><i>Emotions</i></p> <p>Young Adolescents: Girls have lower self-esteem, as compared with boys (Givaudan et al. 2008)</p> <p><i>Body Image</i></p> <p>At age 8-9 years, regardless of gender, more children wanted to have a thinner than average body size rather than an average body size.</p> <p>At age 10-11 years, the proportion of girls who wanted to be of average body size was greater than the proportion of girls who wanted to be thinner than average.</p> <p>As children grew older, the proportion who were dissatisfied with their body increased among underweight and normal weight children but decreased among overweight children, regardless of gender. (Daraganova, 2014)</p> <p>Regardless of gender and body mass</p>	<p>When comparing Comparison of Grade 9 (14 yrs) and Grade 11(16 yrs), the Grade 11 were more able to trust, were more autonomous, too more initiative to do things, were more industrious, had a better sense of their identity and were more willing to consider the topic of intimacy (Rosenthal et al. 1981).</p>	<p>leading to a greater prevalence of depression and suicide attempts within this age-group as compared with early adolescents and children (Buchanan et al. 1992).</p>	
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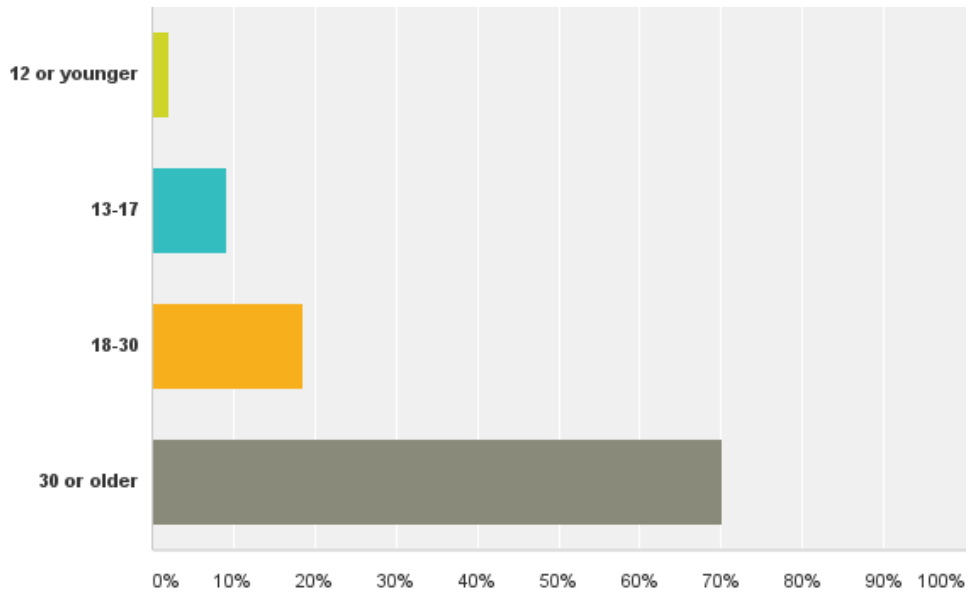
status, 10-11 yr olds tend to report their body size more accurately than 8-9 yr olds. (Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2014. P. 118)			
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APPENDIX B - NATIONAL MEMBER SURVEY

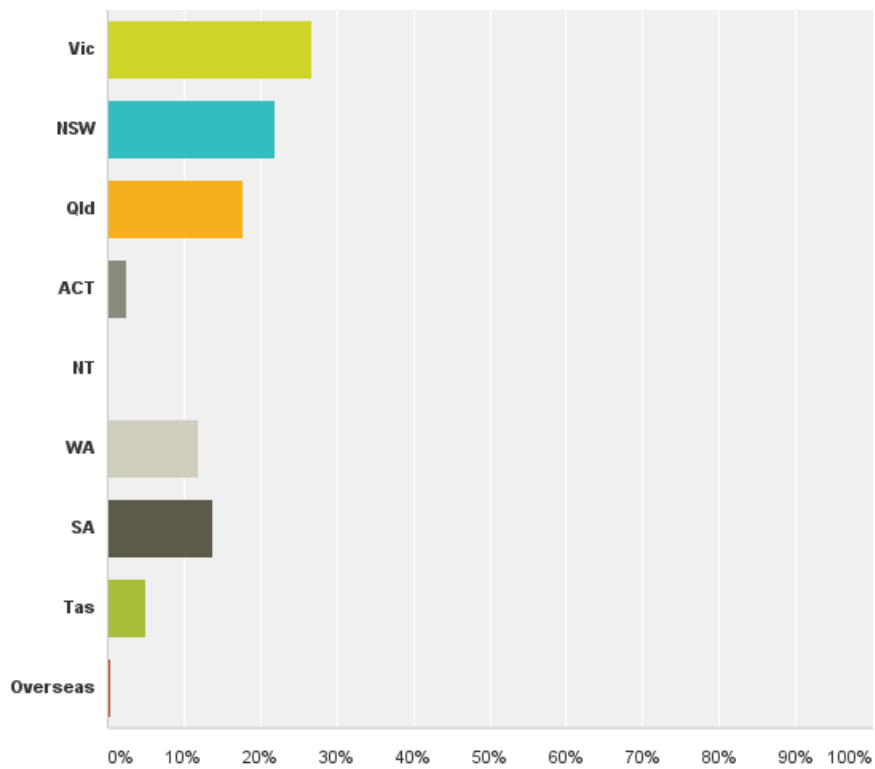
803 Total Responses

The survey was designed to test some concepts about age sections. **Many of the statements that were put to respondents are adaptations of claims made in various WOSM documents.**

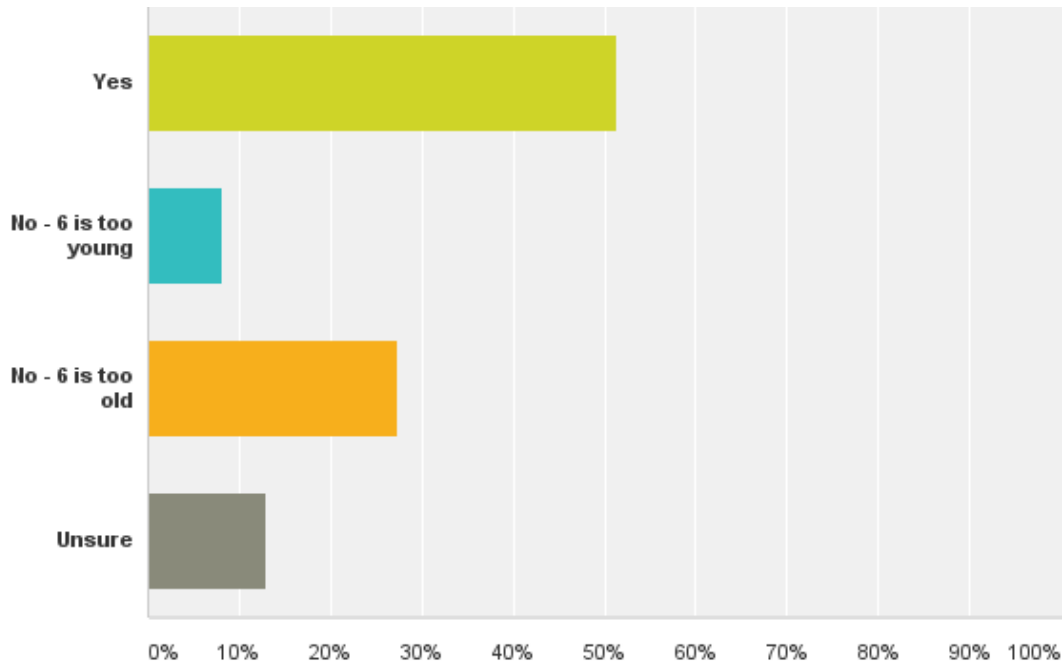
Respondent Age



State or Branch



Currently, kids can join Scouts at the age of 6. Is this the right time for youth to begin their involvement in the Scout Program?



4. Do you agree or disagree with the following:							
Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree	Rating Average	Response Count
The Youth Program should be organised into different age sections based on the development stages of young people.	7	28	37	266	327	4.32	665
The full Scouting program, across all ages, will be better understood and more consistently implemented, at a higher quality, if each section ran for the same number of years.	106	272	146	107	33	2.53	664
A longer overlap of sections will better allow Groups to meet the social and developmental needs of youth members when planning their transition. Having greater flexibility for youth to transition with their social group will help increase retention.	34	118	92	310	109	3.52	663
To increase the opportunities for youth to take on leadership opportunities, for those that wish to, youth members could be in two sections at once for a short period of time; up to one year, for instance.	106	189	126	194	40	2.81	655
The patrol system is most effective when there is a difference in age of no more than 3-to-4 years. This allows more mature youth to stimulate the younger members to develop, and younger youth to stimulate a sense of responsibility in older members.	14	47	82	366	151	3.90	660
It doesn't work when a 10 year old is in the same section as a nearly 15 year old. The age range is too great and meetings go too	54	146	99	214	146	3.38	659

late for the youngest members.							
answered question							667

6. Do you agree or disagree with the following:							
Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree	Rating Average	Response Count
Scouting is particularly suited to the adolescent age range, not primarily for children. To adolescents especially, the Scout Method provides the opportunity to develop decision making skills and autonomy – an essential step in their personal growth.	112	182	76	185	68	2.86	623
As an educational movement whose purpose it is to help develop young people to take a constructive place in society, Scouting cannot fully succeed if it is not contributing to the development of a young person through their adolescent years.	22	53	58	313	178	3.92	624
The Scout Method is not at all suited for children who are too young for it to work effectively: eg. too young to understand the concept of making a personal commitment to a promise and law, or to exercise a leadership role within a small group.	137	260	93	105	24	2.38	619
answered question							626

7. The following are commonly stated reasons for including 5 year olds in the Scout program. Which of these do you believe are important reasons for considering whether the program should be extended to this age group?:	
Answer Options	Agree (out of 485)
Get them while they're young; if we don't, we will lose them forever	138
Including 5 year olds might increase overall membership numbers	187

Sometimes, younger siblings of Joeys and Cubs want to start Scouting right away and are distraught if denied this opportunity.	217
We should be able develop children in the Areas of Personal Growth, no matter the age, so let's accept 5 year olds into the program.	233
Including 5 year olds will increase the length of the Joey section so kids will benefit from a longer time in the section.	250
Even if they join at five and leave at 8, at least we have had some influence over their development	250
Get them going with Scouting principles early, during their formative years.	264
Since other youth development and sports organisations take 5 year olds we should too, or we risk missing out on them altogether.	295
School starts at age 5, so they should be ready for a program like Joeys	337
<i>answered question</i>	485

8. The following are commonly stated reasons for not including 5 year olds in the Scout program. Which of these do you believe are important reasons for considering whether the program should remain starting at age 6:	
Answer Options	Agree (out of 509)
If we include 5 year olds now, there will soon be pressure to include 4 year olds, so when do we stop?	156
Statistics tell us that typically, youth members stay in Scouting for about three years. The Scout Method can make the biggest impact on a young person's life when they are older.	180
If we increase the number of young children in our organisation, we risk losing our emphasis on the development of young people using the Scout Method. Adolescents don't wish to belong to an organisation dominated by children.	138
There is significant developmental differences between 5 year olds and 7 year olds, making it difficult to develop a worthwhile program.	270
It becomes increasingly difficult create an adventurous Scout program as the age group gets younger and younger.	247
Even if kids don't join Scouting at the age of 5 or 6, and go to another organisation, it is still possible that they will move on from that activity and join Scouting when they are older.	226
5 year olds in the Joey program will require a larger adult:child ratio, increasing the burden on an already small leader population.	322
The longer members are in Scouting as children, the sooner they will grow tired of Scouting, and leave before the Scout Method has its greatest impact.	126
<i>answered question</i>	509

9. The youth program in Australian Scouting ends at a youth member's 26th birthday. The age limit should not be higher than this, since it is important to ensure that Scouting remains a youth movement, however a Scout program is still relevant to youth development up to this age.

Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree	Rating Average	Response Count
	24	66	97	269	169	3.79	625
<i>answered question</i>							625

10. Do you agree or disagree with the following:

Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree	Rating Average	Response Count
Scouting can provide young people with some consistency in life. Youth should not change section when they change from primary to secondary school (note that South Australia has an extra year in primary school).	16	128	144	238	95	3.43	621
Year 9 is a significant year because it is a time of change in the secondary curriculum, where students start to take on more personal education pathways, and friendship groups split. Youth members should have already started a section by Year 9.	40	140	194	197	43	3.10	614
Sections based on school years would allow transitions in social groupings at a set time of the year. It would be easier to progress through the award scheme, and there wouldn't be kids starting at all times of the year. Retention would be improved	106	197	130	126	59	2.73	618
<i>answered question</i>							623

APPENDIX C – COMBINED YOUTH PROGRAM MEETING NOTES – 2015

YPR Age Section Proposals

Feedback from Combined Youth Program Meeting

24 May 2015

Attendance: Branch Commissioners for each section, from each branch, and NYPT members.
51 program experts voted.

Feedback on Research

Issues To Do With Developmental Stages:

- Adolescent is where we should be focusing
- Consider growth in all age ranges
- 10-15 in same section – sometimes yes, sometimes no
- Jamborees – could hold kids back to attend
- Where do you put the 10yr old off the street? – Cubs? Look at individual needs.
- Flexible transitions – we currently are doing that
- Section length – hard to determine what's best
- Look at age and sections and see where the drop off is
- Not a big drop off in transitions between sections in Vic
- But big drop off in SA
- Boredom in Scout section (length of time issue)
- Communication/discussion with parents as to when/how they should transition

Issues To Do With Specific Ages:

- Age of 18 – legal issue
- Concept of being fuzzy and allowing flexibility
- Allowing awards to transition is concept
- Legality of Duty of Care cause problems
- Ending age – maybe 23 is a Senior Rover transition point – have leadership role
- Give back to scouting
- Rovers are set-up for social life & transition
- Minimum age – allowing the program to have an effect with the youth with longer time
- Are we contributing something to their learning and personal progression?
- 5 year olds knocking on the door – is it the 5 year old, or the parent?
- Siblings need to wait their turn
- The age of 18 – to develop citizens, not to develop scout leaders
- Equipping Rovers to be better global citizens, not expectation to be a Scout leader
- Legally is not as clear cut

- Boils down to the program – activities need to be open to all in that section
- The age of 18 is a fuzzy point – legal implications vary from 16 – 18
- Do we become elitist by mandating youth members to get WWC cards (or equivalent)?
- Make the joey program longer and more challenging
- Flexibility and flexible transitions
- Can we start working on the next sections program in the previous section?
- Personal progression needs to be the program
- Working on skills across all age ranges (e.g. Adventure skills)

Issues To Do With Schooling

- The strategy of transition is important
- Flexibility, grouping, like minds/peer groups
- Flexible to have transition periods
- Transition in accordance with the function of the individual
- Achieve greater with flexibility
- Transition age is not necessarily the key issue
- Is it a program challenge, rather than a transition problem?
- Transition into program – stages of development
- How do you gauge the starting age?
- There is a lot of pressure at the start of each year
- Add the pressure of a new section might be too much to add
- School years may restrict the flexibility
- Non-mainstream education, where does it fit in?
- School years will keep social groups together – does this assist personal progression
- School year provides a solid program structure
- Fluidity is important
- Based around the school years, as opposed to being locked into school years
- Have set transition times – Term 2 and Term 4
- The school model will create more connections and support
- Need to reference back to personal progression

- There will be differences between the school system and social groups
- A one-size fits-all model will never work – there will always be discrepancies
- RAP emphasizes flexibility – we need to be flexible!
- If we are locking it to a school based year we are losing flexibility
- We talk about transition a lot – need to consider more than just sections transitioning between.
- Nights can play a big impact – if we change sections, we are changing nights too
- School years – we operate in a school year mindset now
- Do we need to be locked into only running during school terms?

Feedback on Proposed Models

Joeys

Preferred Model 4 (age based)

Like: stays with beginning of 6, gives a longer period for the section

Need to ensure value in program

Start transition at 8

Up the challenge in the program

Leaders can be drawn in during this stage, because the section is longer

Ages of 8, 11, 14 – new enquiries could trial both sections they fall into

Cubs

No issue with any models, favour model 4 (age based)

Have a longer transition time? – 10.5 to 12 as transition

Flexibility is key

Some are ready to move to the challenge of the next section younger than others

The change is very quick at this age group

Scouts

Model 4 preferred (age based)

Get rid of "L"eadership year

The problem with the L is that it can go wrong too quickly

Need flexibility

Patrol system works well currently for 11.5-14yr olds

We do Leadership in the 14-year-old bracket already

Venturers

Doing multiple sections at same time is a concern, but its already done through youth helpers and service projects

Model 1 – definite move to rovers at 18 (current)

Transition period moved down to be 14 – 15

Model 2 – preferred model (current with one year transition)

Model 4 – looking at each section

It affects both sections

The concern is that you are separating the "Leader" from the Venturer section

The best intentions can be modified and taken advantage of at the local level

Rovers

The cost of change was much higher than the benefits of changing the 18 starting age

Changing the age of Rovers effects access to the opportunities

Model 4 is preferred (age)

The Rover length of time is impacted by the preparation at an earlier age

How can the Rover section be quality youth-led?

Need young people leading, regardless of their age or the level of governance they fit into.

Not every Rover should be a Leader, and they need time to relax and explore their own development and opportunities.

The aim is to send people out into the community prepared to take an active role, not to produce Scout Leaders!!!

Tally Of Preferred Models

Participants were asked to vote for their preferred model to help the YPR understand overall preferences from the youth program expert group present.

Starting Age?

Age	Votes
5	7
5.5	3
6	35
7	0
8	5

Program Ending Age?

Age	Votes
18	1
22	7
24	3
25	11
26	27

Age Sections Model?

MODEL	Votes
1) Current Model	1
2) Victorian Current Model	12
4) Age Based Model	35
6) School Years Based Model	3

Of the 35 that voted for Model 4, 12 preferred not to have the 15 year old "troop leader" model.

APPENDIX D – 5 YEAR OLD JOEYS AT 2ND KORUMBURRA JOEY MOB

**2nd Korumburra Joey Scout Mob
Pilot Programme – Year 2010
L.I.C. – D.L.J.S. – Shirley Reeves**

- Purpose: to obtain practical experience/information re 5 yr olds as part of Joey Scout Mob.
- 2nd Korumburra J.S. Mob: currently an all boy Mob; 1 W/B leader; 1 Basic Trained Leader; 1 part trained Leader; 1 rostered parent Helper; 1 J.S. Youth Helper.
- Mob consists of: 10 Joey Scouts, 2 Kindergarten 5 yr olds, 2 school 5 yr olds. TOTAL: 14 Youth.

Remembering children grow in all areas of development at varying rates, and come from a wide range of backgrounds etc.

Our observations of the 5 yr olds:

- They interact with the other J.S. and adults well. They learn to co-operate, share plan and develop respect for one another easily.
- They enjoyed all new interests and activities. They often chose to play & work with a special friend or in small groups.
- We found the 5 yrs olds tackle new skill with great concentration. They were thoughtful and very conscientious.
- Imagination is boundless; they were very co-operative and willing to share.
- Physically they coped well with designed programmes: remembering J.S. find it hard to be still for very long.
- All 5 yr olds coped with November District Bike Hike riding the 14 km easily.
- Youth coped well with all 3 sleepovers throughout the 12 months.

Problem Areas:

- Lack of reading skills (one of our 7 ½ yr olds has a bigger problem)
- Lack of writing skills
- Lack of developed fine motor skills – eg using scissors properly.

Engagement of J.S. Youth Helper for the really young people overcame these problems. Repetition also proved a valuable teaching tool.

- School 5 yr olds settled in well: very enthusiastic by Term 2 following basic reading instructions, game details etc.
- At close of 12-month experiment – Leaders and Parents felt children had achieved much. They also thoroughly enjoyed the fun of Joey Scouts and look forward to 2011.
- The parents of Kindergarten 5 yr olds felt that we had given these boys a wonderful start for school.
- We put the 5 yr old youth into uniform.

Leader Recommendation:

- 5 yr olds should be school attending.
- Depending on maturity of child, commencing J.S. at the start of Term 2 would make for a less tired child.
- Staff – a must for 14 J.S. We found 2 trained Leaders, 2 Parent Helpers and our Outstanding J.S. Youth Helper made all the difference in running the programme smoothly.
- We strongly recommend including 5 yr olds in our programme. Particularly for those attending school, it is a workable proposition.