

**Scouts Australia**  
Ten-year vision and 2023-2026 Strategic Plan

November 2023



**Scouts**  
AUSTRALIA

## **Acknowledgement of Country**

As Scouts of Australia, we acknowledge Australia's First Nations Peoples, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as the Traditional Custodians of this land. We pay our respects to Elders past, present, and emerging.

We're grateful to do our Scouting in this country; we commit to use its resources wisely, and develop our understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

We also acknowledge any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Scouts who are part of our movement today.



# We are Scouts Australia

## ***Adventurous. Fun. Challenging. Inclusive.***

*Scouting gives young people aged 5 to 25 the opportunity to take charge of their own goals and potential through adventure, leadership, friendship and fun. Scouting helps young people build resilience, find self-fulfillment and define their values as they navigate and shape a changing world.*

## ***Safe. Accessible. For everyone.***

*The safety and wellbeing of young people in our care is our number one concern and priority. We maintain and continuously improve practices to provide a safe environment and protection from harm. We are committed to an environment of zero tolerance toward bullying, neglect and emotional, physical, psychological or sexual abuse of any kind.*

*In Australia, Scouting has been open to all young people regardless of gender for many decades, and we provide programs that embrace the diversity of our communities and aim to be inclusive of all abilities.*

## ***A global movement. Grounded in communities.***

*Scouting operates in community-driven Scout Groups across Australia. It's also increasingly present in schools and other settings, bringing Scouting experiences to more young people.*

*Scouting is supported by local Branch organisations and Scouts Australia as the national organisation that is an accredited member of the World Organisation of the Scout Movement, linking Australian young people to 57 million Scouts around the world.*

# ***Scouting is the values-driven youth leadership program for Australia, in the community and the outdoors***

The ***Purpose*** of the Scout Movement is to contribute to the education of young people in achieving their full physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual potentials as individuals, as responsible citizens and as members of their local, national and international communities.

The ***Mission*** of Scouting is to contribute to the education of young people, through a value system based on the Scout Promise and Law, to help build a better world where people are self-fulfilled as individuals and play a constructive role in society.



# A big plan for Scouting in Australia

Scouting has a big plan.

It's a plan to grow a vibrant and diverse movement that changes young lives and their communities for the better.

Our plan lays out a ten-year vision for Scouting and the impact we will have. It then sets out the practical steps we will take over three years to make significant progress towards the vision.

Over this period we will see our contemporary Scouting program for young people better supported than ever - young people and their supporters will love leading their program.

We'll see a reshaped volunteer model to get more people supporting Scouting. At the same time we'll tell the community our young people's stories to significantly grow and modernise our public profile, with an integrated whole-of-movement effort to bring more young people into Scouting.

We will see the organisational support of Scouting grow in its maturity, unity and future-readiness, with the financial resources required to ensure Scouting thrives.

Scouts Australia operates within a world framework for Scouting, and this plan assists in aligning with the opportunities and obligations that come from being part of a global Scouting community. This includes the highest standards of child safety, good governance and educational methods represented through world Scouting policies and strategy.

Scouting in Australia is supported by a federated organisational model – this plan lays out a unified direction for our national association as well as state and territory Branch organisations, driving Scouting together.

We will use this plan to drive our efforts and our investments while also mobilising our wider community of support to ensure a vibrant and impactful Scouting movement in Australia.

*We will:*

1. Make delivering our youth program easier and more impactful

2. Build the recruitment and retention machine to grow our movement

3. Reshape a contemporary volunteer model that drives Scouting

4. Unlock and steer resources to future-proof our mission

5. Transform the organisational support of our movement



# Our compelling external drivers for change

*Our external environment presents compelling opportunities and threats that our strategic plan addresses.*

## **The cost to support Scouting and fulfil our obligations is increasing**

Branches and the National Association are squeezed by rising costs, particularly from insurance, while our financial obligations to survivors of historical child abuse are expected to hit a high watermark and could challenge some Branches' viability.

## **Patterns of volunteering are changing**

Volunteers are less willing to make the intense and sustained time commitment required to be an adult in Scouting. Our highly volunteer-driven model of delivery and support is our greatest strength and our greatest vulnerability in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Specialised skills are hard to source.

## **Cost of living is biting for our members**

While Branches and National seek to manage the increasing costs of supporting Scouting, our customer base is also getting hit by other cost pressures, constraining their willingness to pay for Scouting membership and experiences. Our competitors are 'all expenses paid' whereas Scouting membership fees do not cover the full experience.

## **Our reputation is being tested**

While our standing as a trusted brand in the community is holding, media scrutiny and legal proceedings relating to historical child abuse make it harder to tell the forward-looking story that our young people need us to tell.

## **Regulatory burden is not going down**

Growing regulatory expectations are overwhelming our volunteers and driving change fatigue, particularly the administrative burden that lands with volunteer managers. At the same time, the insurability of some activities is being challenged, which constrains our adventurous program offering.

## **There is demand for what we deliver**

The community and young people continue to value the Scouting program and there are no similar programs with our reach and recognition. Enquiries to try Scouting can often exceed our capacity to consistently respond.

# Our compelling internal drivers for change

*Our strategic plan leverages our unique strengths and grapples with weaknesses that challenge our mission.*

## **Our membership has fallen significantly and the trajectory is downwards**

We have had a net 10% drop in membership in 18 months – the crisis is now. The most significant drops are in the Scout section. We don't have deep insight on why young people join, stay or go. Sustained membership loss threatens our ability to correct course.

## **We have passionate volunteers and young people**

We have a culture of volunteerism that is truly unique. We enthuse a volunteer workforce that delivers extraordinary value for young people, not just in front line operations but in significant management functions. 94% of surveyed adults are proud to be an adult in Scouting. Young people are taking up increased leadership in their movement. Nevertheless, the energy and willingness of our members is not limitless.

## **Our leadership culture inhibits collaboration and effectiveness**

Our volunteer and federated model produces siloed, non-trusting cultural dynamics and non-collaborative leadership behaviours. 44% of surveyed adults do not have confidence in the leadership of Scouting. 34% are not confident in the leadership they directly receive.

## **Our membership expectations and processes are complex and rigid**

We're serious about keeping kids safe and controlling who can engage with kids. At the same time our training requirements for uniformed adults are one-size-fits-all. It's also hard to sign members up and we often only offer annual subscription.

## **We lack capability, capacity and agility to deliver strategic change**

The strategic opportunities are often clear to all, but we seriously lack the grunt to actually execute. The national team is a thin overlay and it's difficult to mobilise resources across Branches towards shared priorities. Our 'eyes are bigger than our stomach' when it comes to reform – we don't share accountability for the implementation when designing the change. The next strategic plan needs to confront some of the barriers to fully achieving our aspirations in the previous plan.

## **Delivering our promise of adventure requires us to grow and deploy specialist skills**

Our adventurous program and the diversity of opportunities presented to young people is a key asset – but it's only as good as our ability to deliver. If we can't build systems and capabilities to make our adventurous program accessible and convenient, our educational impact will suffer and some young people will lose interest.

## **The mix and quality of digital systems adds cost and complexity to supporting Scouting**

A key source of friction in the federal model is the diversity of digital systems used across the country serving diverging business rules. Any given decision made nationally potentially requires eight costly implementation approaches. Opportunities to leverage our scale as a purchaser or partner are lost. At the same time, 47% of surveyed adults disagree that Scouting processes and systems support their role. Scouts | Terrain and the digital support of the program is a key painpoint for volunteers.




# The ten-year vision for Scouting in Australia

## Our 2033 vision:

*Our 2033 vision is for a vibrant and growing Scouting movement contributing to more resilient young Australians and communities.*


Unpacking this vision (with the Mission and Purpose of Scouting) provides the 2033 outcome areas that describe our intended impact. These are our 10-year aspirations that guide the tangible 3-year 'Key Moves' that make up our strategic plan.

## Our impact:



A vibrant and growing movement

More Australian young people feel the benefits of Scouting



An impactful and relevant educational youth program

The Scouting program develops young people for life



More resilient young Australians and communities

Because of Scouting, young people shape and strengthen their local, national and international communities

Just as critical to our future direction is the commitment we make now and in the future:

## Our ongoing commitment:

*Our commitment, not just in 2033 but now, is for a Scouting movement that is safe and accessible to all young people, offering a youth program that is Adventurous, Fun, Challenging and Inclusive.*

# Key Moves for 2023-2026

Five Key Moves will focus our energies, investments and partnerships as we strive towards our 2033 vision.

**1. Make delivering our youth program easier and more impactful**

**2. Build the recruitment and retention machine to grow our movement**

**3. Reshape a contemporary volunteer model that drives Scouting**

**4. Unlock and steer resources to future-proof our mission**

**5. Transform the organisational support of our movement**



# 1. Make delivering our youth program easier and more impactful

*We will give our people the tools, clarity and confidence to deliver life-changing, adventurous and safe experiences for young people. We'll scale up our ambitions to deliver Scouting in new settings to expand our reach.*

## Success in 2026 looks like:

- Young people report that Scouting meets and exceeds their expectations
- Adult volunteers report a positive and improving experience of Scouting
- Young people participate, assist and lead in a diversity of rich program activities

## Our priorities:

### We will come together as Scouts Australia to:

1. Set an improvement and investment roadmap, and agreed funding pathways, for the digital tools that Units use to manage the youth program
2. Establish user-friendly benchmarking resources to empower Units and supporters to assess and improve the quality of program delivery
3. Shift to and embed a continuous improvement approach for the youth program nationally, that is inclusive, responsive and informed by lived member experience
4. Identify a limited set of professionally-delivered Scouting models (e.g. schools-based, out of school hours care, holiday programs, etc.) and develop common tools, header agreements, and curricula to significantly scale up consistent delivery
5. Make more adventurous youth program happen, more accessibly, through coordinated upskilling, and outcomes-based training and risk frameworks that seek to answer 'how can we practically help the activity to happen, safely?'

### As a National Team and National Support Team we will:

6. Build out the suite of youth program resources, systematised through the Scout Method of educational delivery, that make it easier and simpler for Units to run great programs, including accessible and affordable experience of specialised program (e.g. creative, international, adventure)
7. Develop the business case for digital systems improvements to support the program, in line with the agreed roadmap
8. Lead the substantial scaling up of adventure participation by supporting the Branches to align risk practices with identified organisational risk appetites.

### As Branches we will:

9. Fully embed the youth program in Units.
10. Select, induct and coach volunteers to support the program with current tools and benchmarks.
11. Develop and deploy adventurous and specialist program expertise to make a full youth program available to Units.
12. Streamline the experience and empower Units to manage risk and deliver safe program, including adventure, calibrating nationally-agreed risk tools to local regulations where compelled.

## 2. Build the recruitment and retention machine to grow our movement

*Scouting has a growth plan. We will 'zero in' on member experience to engage members for longer and grow the positive impact that Scouting has for them. We'll take control of our public image to welcome new and more diverse Scouts and supporters.*

Success in 2026 looks like:

- Our membership grows because we attract more enquiries, convert more enquiries into new members, and retain more members for longer.
- Our members are proud to share Scouting with others
- We are a more diverse movement, representative of the community

### Our priorities:

**We will come together as Scouts Australia to:**

1. Track youth and adult experience to support the development and delivery of proactive improvement strategies for retention
2. Develop a nationally-led strategy to shape youth and community impressions of Scouting and drive membership enquiries, that can be tailored to local context and readiness
3. Explore new flexible youth membership models (beyond an annual subscription) that can be piloted in Branches with learnings shared and embedded.
4. Refresh, embed and systematise diversity and inclusion strategies and action plans in line with our values

**As a National Team and National Support Team we will:**

5. Systematically review national policies, frameworks, practices and the youth program to identify opportunities to improve member retention
6. Partner with organisations representing cultural communities that are under-represented in Scouting to identify shared priorities and needs from Scouting
7. Deploy a marketing campaign in partnership with Branches, tailored to their markets as well as local context and readiness

**As Branches we will:**

8. Deliver retention strategies addressing local youth experience issues
9. Establish or improve systems that enable successful conversion of enquiries into memberships and upskill volunteers in their use
10. Build a local culture that values growth and a capability to engage and onboard new members
11. Establish and action a pipeline of growth opportunities in geographical or cultural communities that are under-represented

### 3. Reshape a contemporary volunteer model that drives Scouting

*Volunteering is the lifeblood of Scouting. We'll make a major update to our unique volunteering model so that many more people can contribute in their own way to Scouting. We'll make the change with the safety of young people at the centre.*

Success in 2026 looks like:

- Scouting is recognised as a leader in child safeguarding
- More volunteers are involved in supporting Scouting

#### Our priorities:

**We will come together as Scouts Australia to:**

1. Reform our model of volunteering to make it more accessible to different kinds of potential volunteers, ensuring that Units can leverage a range of volunteering skills, time-commitments and tenures
2. Streamline and structure our volunteer training requirements to help micro-credential the skills needed for specific roles
3. Identify and reinforce a preferred leadership and volunteer culture that is collaborative, supportive, inclusive and forward-looking

**As a National Team and National Support Team we will:**

4. Build our thought leadership on child safeguarding in the sectors we operate in
5. Continuously review our policies and practices for opportunities to improve our child safeguarding practices and maintain them at highest standards
6. Induct, support and mentor national volunteers/staff and design individual work programs that deliver achievable milestones against Scouting's goals

**As Branches we will:**

7. Make it easier to sign up as a volunteer while maintaining the rigour of our vetting processes.
8. Proactively recognise the existing skills that volunteers bring, within national frameworks
9. Maintain rolling programs of work to improve the adult volunteer experience within the Branch's context

## 4. Unlock and steer resources to future-proof our mission

*We will grow and focus our commercial acumen to fully leverage the value that we bring to the community and others, maintaining Scouting as a financially accessible program for young people as we face increasing cost pressures.*

### Success in 2026 looks like:

- All Scout Groups are supported by a financially-viable Scouting organisation
- External funding grows as a share of our revenue

### Our priorities:

#### **We will come together as Scouts Australia to:**

1. Pursue commercial partnerships that amplify our values, with quantifiable targets to bring new financial and in-kind resources to our program and organisation
2. Develop and deploy contemporary strategies for engaging with the federal government and philanthropy to increase recognition and support for the community outcomes Scouting delivers, supported by more sophisticated and consistent measurement of Scouting's impact.
3. Develop and consider proposals for offering our services (e.g. training) externally on a commercial basis where we can grow our reach and seek to increasingly fund national operations from non-Scouting sources.

#### **As a National Team and National Support Team we will:**

4. Broker expertise across Branches to support Branches in managing insurance and litigation liabilities
5. Support Branches to share tools and lessons-learned in engaging productively with State/Territory and local governments.
6. Seek opportunities where shared procurement can save Scouting money.

#### **As Branches we will:**

7. Upskill our volunteers to engage with community and political representatives appropriately, productively and with consistent goals and messaging in line with our government relations strategy.
8. Support Scout Groups to leverage state/territory and local funding opportunities.
9. Proactively manage our facilities portfolios to ensure safe and attractive places for Scouting to be delivered.

## 5. Transform the organisational support of our movement

*We will set a tangible roadmap together to build integrated organisational support for Scouting that is efficient, fit-for-purpose and future-ready. We'll bring our people on the journey and make the hard calls together.*

### Success in 2026 looks like:

- The cost to members of supporting Scouting is lower
- Our members get a consistently higher quality of support
- Members are highly satisfied with the leadership of their movement

### Our priorities:

**We will come together as Scouts Australia to:**

1. Develop and deliver a staged and opportunity-led plan to increasingly share corporate services across Scouting for efficiency and service improvement
2. Establish a rolling service plan for the national association that identifies nationally-delivered services, agreed service levels, and a picture of success that the National Team and National Support Team can manage to.
3. Develop a piloting framework that endorses and supports local innovation and provides a platform to test better ways of doing things before rolling them out nationally
4. Build better supported pathways and individualised support for young people to lead their movement at all levels
5. Establish a digital roadmap for enabling systems (e.g. membership) to support increasing integration and efficiency based on agreed requirements.
6. Refresh, embed and systematise environmental sustainability strategies and action plans in line with our values

**As a National Team and National Support Team we will:**

7. Broker agreements between national and Branch Scouting organisations to deliver shared services and shared procurement for mutual benefit and efficiency.
8. Build a project management office capability and change management capability that support the effective delivery of strategic priorities across Scouting, including realising their intended benefits.
9. Build the network of engaged and skilled supporters who can assist in delivering nationally-significant priorities, including through corporate volunteering.

**As Branches we will:**

10. Identify opportunities to share lessons, innovations, digital systems and services with other Branches, adapting to identified good practice and proactively contributing to more efficient and integrated services to members across Australia



# How we will deliver the plan together

## Making it happen

Specific accountabilities for delivering Key Moves and priorities will be established across roles, governance forums and any new working groups across Scouts Australia and Branches, with a focus on collaborative models of delivery that build capability across the country. Simple annual workplans will support tactical delivery.

## Living the plan and resourcing its priorities

In addition to any working groups being stood up to lead delivery of priorities, we will also progressively shape our structures and processes in ways that best support the delivery of the plan. The plan will substantially guide how we allocate precious Scouting resources. We will bake our priorities into the daily life of our decision-making forums, annual budgeting, and the expectations of our key volunteer and professional roles.

## Who this plan is for

This is a plan that guides the support of Scouting. We don't expect every young person and Unit to know what's in it, nor do we expect Scout Groups to rigidly tie their own development planning to this document. But we do expect our professional and volunteer supporters of Scout Groups to see where their role fits in this plan's forward direction for the support of Scouting and any Branch-level planning that aligns with it. We hope all Scouts will enjoy the benefits of this.


## Staying on track

We will set up simple monitoring and reporting processes that track the metrics that matter ensuring we're on course with the delivery of priorities, but also ensure that we're getting the three-year and ten-year outcomes that we're aiming for. Reporting on the plan will assist decision-makers in directing focus and resources to correct course if needed.

## Partnering for impact

Our plan presents a prospectus for potential partners who share our values and want to have a positive impact on young people. To deliver a plan of this ambition, we will need to draw on our community of support for skills, profile, advocacy and philanthropy. A key focus in delivering the plan is maintaining our external focus to leverage the goodwill of those that want to support Scouting.

## Our principles for delivery



We'll set simple and effective measures to focus our achievement of Key Moves and outcomes

We'll build strong and trusting partnerships to deliver on shared accountabilities

We'll Plan>Do>Review> our delivery of priorities with those delivering and affected by the change

# Roles and responsibilities for delivery

## **Overall accountability and responsibility**

Ultimate accountability to the National Council for the delivery of the plan rests with the National Executive Committee (NEC), who will make resourcing and policy decisions that support its realisation.

The Chief Commissioner of Australia has the chief responsibility for delivery of the plan, through executive leadership of the National Team and through leadership of the National Operations Committee (NOC). The National Operations Committee and its sub-groups will be substantially driven in their activities by the delivery of this plan and will be expected to test the strategic alignment of legacy initiatives and BAU activities.

## **Priorities delivered together as Scouts Australia**

The default forum for delivery of priorities as Scouts Australia is the NOC, led by the Chief Commissioner of Australia as the responsible individual. Individuals on the NOC will be expected to contribute to the leadership of specific shared priorities.

The National Executive Committee and its sub-committees may have a direct delivery role in priorities that are explicitly corporate in nature, given the non-uniformed support for these functions.

## **Priorities delivered as a National Team and National Support Team**

The Chief Commissioner of Australia will lead a uniformed team and be supported by professional resources in the National Support Team to deliver priorities that sit with the national association itself.

## **Priorities delivered as Branches**

Branch Chief Commissioners will be accountable for delivery of Branch priorities, supported by their Branch Executive Committees. Annual actions and targets will be set by the Branch, and progress reported to NOC. This will form part of the NOC's reporting to NEC on the overall delivery of the plan.

## **Overall responsibility for delivery of 'Key Moves'**

The Chief Commissioner of Australia may allocate individuals to take the overall lead for Key Moves, which could be based on their national portfolio or relevant capabilities. Sub-groups (e.g. National Youth Program Team) of the NOC can also be charged by the NOC with overseeing and delivering shared Scouts Australia priorities.

