



**Scouts Australia NSW**

ABN 42 460 434 054

Level 1, Quad 3, 102 Bennelong Parkway  
Sydney Olympic Park NSW 2127

P O Box 125, Lidcombe NSW 1825

T: (02) 9735 9000

F: (02) 9735 9001

[info@nsw.scouts.com.au](mailto:info@nsw.scouts.com.au)

[www.nsw.scouts.com.au](http://www.nsw.scouts.com.au)

**Chief Commissioner**  
**Neville Tomkins OAM, JP, FAIM,**  
**GAICD, BA (Hons), Dip Mgt.**

Dear Commissioners, Member and Leaders,

**Draft Organisational Structure for Consultation – Scouts NSW (Dec 2016)**  
**Commentary**

I am writing to seek your comments on the draft new organisational (uniform) structure for Scouts NSW.

**Overview**

Following development of the draft Strategic Plan 2016-2018 by the Chief Commissioner's Council, and subsequent consultation, the Scouts NSW Board endorsed this key document at its November 2016 meeting.

The final Plan was also informed by the Chief Commissioner's 7 Strategic Priorities, namely:

- Membership growth
- Further building trust
- Positive and enabling culture
- Active youth engagement
- Enhanced child protection
- Stronger community engagement, and
- Financial sustainability.

Over the past 4 months, I have travelled extensively across NSW and listened to the views of many thousands of Leaders, Commissioners, youth, supporters and parents. I have also listened to the views of parents and youth who have left Scouts NSW, as well as those who have consciously chosen to not join Scouting.

Scouts NSW is seriously challenged. Data at both the Branch and National levels demonstrates our poor performance according to different measures – in some instances, we are the worst performing Branch in Australia. We continue to experience membership decline, and were the only Branch of Scouts Australia to not achieve membership growth last year. **Staying the course is therefore not an option.** In the meantime, Victorian Scouts has recorded its 10 consecutive year of growth. Yet our organisation has enormous potential. With the right culture, structure, resources and people, I am strongly of the view that Scouts NSW can become a top performing organisation.

My role, as the new Chief Commissioner, is to reposition Scouting in NSW to a new and exciting role in the community.

Following endorsement of the Strategic Plan 2016-2018 (see attached), with its new goals, priorities and targets, a new organisational structure is required. Our Strategic Plan informs the development of a new structure.

A draft new structure is attached for your consideration and comment. It is designed to help bring about the much needed transformational (and not transactional) change. Importantly, the new structure is designed to shift our focus, and to better align our functions and resources, to meet our new strategic priorities. It also reflects a measured approach, and offers short, medium and long term perspectives. The changes are intended to improve the way we do business; they are not proposed for the sake of change.

While I started with a much more ambitious plan, I have come to the realisation, after listening to many people, including Commissioners and Leaders, across all Scout Sections and Regions, that a more modest approach is appropriate at this time. This recognises the enormity of other challenges we have to manage at the same time as introducing a new structure.

The one exception is a strategy to position us for the new youth program. We can proceed now with a conventional model arranged around current Sections (Option A at Attachment 4) or take a bold step and arrange ourselves around the 4 Challenge Areas of the new youth program (Option B at Attachment 4). That would position us well for the future. **Your thoughts are sought on this specific issue.** If, on balance, we decide to stay with the conventional model for now, and transition to Option B in the near future, I suggest we retain the Section Commissioner positions and the occupants for the time being.

Whatever the form of our new structure, it will need to be adjusted over time. This recognises that new challenges that will inevitably arise, and the need to “fine tune” key elements to ensure optimum performance and alignment. Put simply, if parts of the new structure are not helping us to turn around our performance, then it is incumbent on us to change it.

Whilst the draft structure is designed to address past and current issues, and position us for the future, it cannot and will not solve all our problems. It will be accompanied, and supported by, many other strategies to attend to cultural and resource issues.

You will also see at Attachment 2 the “big picture” – including our accountabilities and responsibilities. We exist to serve our membership, predominately our youth. Together with my senior leadership team, I am ultimately responsible for membership numbers and accountable for our performance.

A final word, if I may, on nomenclature. Our Branch Constitution outlines position titles and hierarchy as follows : Chief Commissioner; Deputy Chief Commissioner, Assistant Chief Commissioner, Branch Commissioner, and Assistant Branch Commissioner. The proposed structure adopts those position names and hierarchy, noting they vary from current arrangements. This includes changing the current State Commissioner title to Branch Commissioner.

## Some Specific Comments on Draft Structure

### 1) Deputy Chief Commissioners

- An additional 2 DCCs are proposed, reflecting the enormity of challenges we have to reposition the organisation, implement the biggest change to our youth program in a generation, and to return to strong membership growth. However, 2 of these positions (Program Transformation and Membership Growth, and Youth Advocacy and Empowerment) are transitional only. It is expected these roles will be completed within 2½ to 3 years, and the functions “rolled” into other mainstream positions.
- The additional number of total positions (DCC, ACC, BC) in the proposed structure also reflects the fact the Chief Commissioner is now responsible, and accountable for, the State Office and, ultimately, for all paid employees of Scouts NSW and their functions (including budget performance, property management, risk management etc). This differs to the arrangements for every other Branch Chief Commissioner in Australia, and represents significant additional responsibilities. Because the Chief Commissioner’s role is voluntary, and a demanding reform program needs to be actively pursued, additional support is required to manage the uniformed side of Scouting.

### 2) DCC Youth Program

- The dilemma we have is whether to proceed with a conventional model (based on the current youth sections) or to get ourselves ahead of the curve, and prepare our Branch for the YPR implementation by moving now to a structure based on the 4 Challenge Areas of the new youth program (ie Outdoors, Creative, Personal and Community). See Option A and Option B at Attachment 4. Moving to Option B is inevitable – the question is when. In other words, do we implement Option A now and transition to Option B, or go straight to Option B? At whatever stage we move to Option B, the regional structures will need to follow the Branch structure.
- The draft also attempts to better align key elements of the youth program (Environment, International, Creative Arts, Special Needs, Lone Scouts) with the core youth program.

### 3) DCC Program Transformation and Membership Growth

- The focus of “Program Transformation” is the successful implementation of the new youth program, resulting from the wideranging Youth Program Review. This will be the biggest change in a generation to our program, and needs to be appropriately resourced. Put simply, we need to have our Branch “change-ready”.
- The focus of “Membership Growth” is to further develop strategies, in consultation with the RCs, to increase recruitment and, importantly, retention of both leaders and youth. It is to support, and not do, the role of Group Leaders. This focus is in response to the fact that Scouts NSW continues to experience serious membership decline. The ACC Recruitment and Retention Strategies position will work closely with ACC Communications and Marketing, and the Branch Office Communications and Development Manager.
- **Arguably, the most important organisational unit of Scouts is the Group. But, from months of listening to them, it is clear our Groups and Group Leaders need a lot more support. Working**

**closely with the RCs and DCs, the ACC Group Support Strategies (preferably a former Woodbadged Group Leader) will focus on strategies to best support Groups to grow membership, and will lead this important work during 2017 - The Year of the Group and Group Leader. To redirect the focus to where it needs to be, we need to turn the traditional Scouting model on its head.**

#### 4) DCC Youth Advocacy and Empowerment

- We need to reposition Scouts NSW so that it is genuinely a “youth-led, adult supported” organisation, consistent with the new youth program. This will take time. However, it needs to be done in such a way that ensures we do not lose the enormously valuable contribution of our mature, experienced and wise Leaders and Supporters.
- This position will also work closely with ACC Child Protection, especially with regard to Element 2 (Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously) of the Royal Commission’s July 2016 “Creating Child Safe Institutions” publication.
- The ACC Youth Empowerment will also have responsibility for diversity and inclusion. A working group is currently being formed to develop policies and procedures in this area, and for them to be implemented sensitively and respectfully.

#### 5) DCC Adventurous Activities

- This proposed arrangement is in response to the many complaints made that our youth want a greater focus on outdoor and adventurous activities. They joined Scouting because of our promise to give them outdoor activity experience; many are leaving because we are failing to deliver. From many discussions, it is also clear our Regions need more support in this area.
- The proposal also responds to complaints that we need to rethink our Branch approach to activities training. Those calls have been both persistent and consistent during my many visits. They have also led to considerable frustration. Some argue there is disconnection. Having listened to the views of many, and reflected, I have concluded that we need a single person accountable for both adventurous activities and activities training (for group activities, general training and skill training). I acknowledge this proposal may be controversial for some, but it is equally clear that a “no change” position is not tenable.
- The DCC AA would be responsible for
  - All activity Commissioners (including those providing activities in the Regions, and who have a dual reporting relationship to Region Commissioners), and
  - All activity training (both accredited and non-accredited).
- To position ourselves for implementation of the new Youth Program, and to support the high levels of the new Award Scheme (once introduced), we need to substantially increase the number of nationally appointed instructors (adventurous activities). The DCC AA&T will drive this outcome.
- The ACC Outdoor Activities will focus on internal training (non accredited) and will oversee, with the RC’s, the regional activities.
- An area of particular focus for the ACC (AA and VET) is to streamline our Branch processes and procedures.
- There obviously needs to be a strong synergistic relationship between the ACC New Program Implementation and the ACC Adventurous Activities & Vocational Education & Training.

- The change of DCC (Major Events) to ACC (Major Events) reflects the fact that we will not be hosting a national major event for some time.
- The proposal will also provide a more coherent structure, and support arrangements, for related Branch activities such as Water, Air and Rock.

#### 6) DCC Adult Training and Support Formations

- Whilst this stream has the fewest number of Commissioners, it has critically important functions to perform.
- A major challenge is to ensure our Branch approach to Adult training and development is as streamlined, simple, and as flexible as possible, within the constraints of the national framework.
- One of the biggest challenges is to support our Leaders to make the transition to the new youth program, which requires a refocused role for Leaders.
- The proposal also responds to the concerns that our Fellowships (in their various forms) need to be brought together, and better supported.

#### 7) DCC Child Protection, Support and Compliance

- In response to both historic and contemporary child sexual abuse matters, and the Royal Commission's observations in relation to our Branch, this function is being boosted, through a new ACC Child Protection. Inter alia, and in partnership with our Child Protection Officer at State Office, the position addresses the 10 Key Elements of the Royal Commission's July 2016 publication "Creating Child Safe Institutions".
- Members Support is to also be extended to include both adults and youth.
- As an increasingly large proportion of our time is being consumed by issues management, a key initiative of the DCC role is to explore, in consultation with RCs and CCC, a more streamlined complaints management process. This is to enable us to focus more on the main game of Scouting.
- Whilst the ACC Risk Management (incorporating health and safety) role could be aligned with any one of different streams (such as Major Events, Adventurous Activities or Support Formations), its location depends on the specific focus we want it to have. At this stage, the priority is for an enterprise - wide (corporate) focus, and to be aligned with like minded compliance functions in the Child Protection, Support and Compliance stream. Alternatively it could be placed in the Adult Training and Support Formations stream. Comments are welcome on this specific issue.

#### 8) DCC Development and Future Scouting

- This function is forward looking, to lay the foundations today for tomorrow's Scouting.
- In so doing, the function, especially ACC Communications and Marketing, will work closely with the membership growth function, and with the Communications and Development Manager in our Branch Office.

- We are working hard to establish a **partnership with the NSW State Government**, and with **philanthropic organisations** but much more needs to be done. Other partnerships, including with **corporate bodies**, need to be explored for Scouts NSW to establish and sustain growth.
- Every Region and our Branch Office has major challenges with **Councils** across the State. **We need capacity to co-ordinate a Branch-wide approach to Councils and to assist Regions to deal with current issues, but to also actively explore opportunities in our growth corridors.**
- To actively pursue all the opportunities available to us, we need two new ACC positions, namely:
  - ACC Strategic Development, Networks and Partnerships, and
  - ACC Local Government Liaison
- Your thoughts on the appropriate resourcing of these key and exciting functions are welcomed.

#### 9) Regional Structure

- So we can effectively implement a new organisational structure at the same time as managing many other challenges, changes to the regional structure are **not** proposed at this stage.
- However, it is evident that the current structure is not sustainable, especially for the country regions. They need more support. Some argue that support will not eventuate until we rethink the way we organise ourselves, and perhaps rationalise the number of Regions.
- To this end, a Working Group is being established. This will be a medium to long term project. Given the vulnerabilities of our Branch, I believe a measured approach is required.

#### 10) Branch Commissioners (Special Projects) and Honorary Commissioners

- All Branch Commissioners and Honorary Commissioners are responsible, and accountable to, the Chief Commissioner of the day. They must each have meaningful roles.
- To effectively mobilise our available volunteer resources, I believe Branch Commissioners (Special Projects) should have specific tasks to perform, with identified outcomes to be achieved, and completion dates. This is currently not the case.
- I have written to all Branch Commissioners (Special Projects) and will be following up in the coming months. Given the number, and complexity, of issues we need all the help we can get.
- Our policy handbook states that Honorary Commissioners “are to be working for Scouting in a positive and beneficial manner generally as a consultative task force for the Chief Commissioner.” Again, I will be following up with each Honorary Commissioner in this regard.
- We are currently developing a register of the skills, interests and tasks of our Commissioners to ensure we are utilising these valuable resources optimally.

#### **Timing and Process**

I now welcome your comments on the draft structure. Please email them to me at [chief.commissioner@nsw.scouts.com.au](mailto:chief.commissioner@nsw.scouts.com.au). You are welcome to share this draft structure and the commentary with other groups whose views you think will help us to make improvements.

If you would like to see changes to this draft, I would be most grateful if you could describe:

- precisely the change you seek
- how that change would be an improvement
- how it will enable us to better achieve our Strategic Plan 2016-2018.

So that we can have part of the new structure in place by the start of the new Scout year, I seek your comments by **5 pm Thursday 12 January**. If you want to make comments, but cannot meet this deadline, please email me to this effect. If you are at the Cuboree, and have had a chance to consider the proposal, you are most welcome to give me your comments then – I am planning to be there the full 5 days.

Selection of personnel for the new structure will be strictly merit-based. Candidates will need to establish their claims against the selection criteria for the position, and nominate referees. Depending on the number and quality of applications, interviews may or may not be required.

All positions in the current structure are being “spilled” (with the exception of the RC’s, BC (Special Projects), Honorary Commissioners, BRC Chair who would become the ACC Rovers, and the Chairs of the SYC and SSYC). Current occupants remain in their position until announcements of the successful applicants for the new structure are made. Current occupants are most welcome to apply for any of the new positions. Applications from young leaders and young people are encouraged. All selection advisory panels will include a female and a young person. Where a function relates closely to the work of the Regions, our Regions will be represented on the panel.

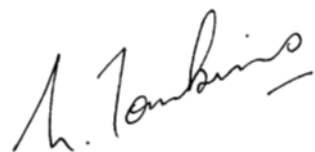
For those who apply for a particular role, and are unsuccessful, but would still like to make a positive contribution to Scouts NSW, I would welcome a discussion with you about how you could best make that contribution.

Each DCC, ACC and BC will be accountable for their performance. Performance Agreements with measurable key performance indicators will be put in place, and appraisals conducted regularly.

To enable effective management, my intent is to implement the structure in stages, commencing with the Deputy Chief Commissioners. I hope we can have a number of the DCCs in place for the start of the 2017 Scout year or soon thereafter. Once selected, the DCCs will then lead the selection process for the Assistant Chief Commissioners and so on.

I very much look forward to receiving your comments on the draft structure. Thank you for the significant contribution you have made, and will continue to make, to Scouts NSW.

Yours in Scouting



Neville Tomkins  
Chief Commissioner  
Scouts Australia (NSW Branch)

30 December 2016.