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Chief Commissioner
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Dear Commissioners, Leaders and Supporters

Finalisation of (Uniformed) Organisational Structure

I am writing to advise of the finalisation of our (uniformed) organisational structure.

You will recall I released a draft proposal at the end of December for consultation. In response, I received 58 submissions (written and verbal). The quality of the submissions was impressive. I thank all who provided responses.

I apologise for the delay in finalising the structure. It has taken time to carefully consider each of the 58 submissions and, in some instances, feedback has conflicted with comments from others. On occasions, I have needed to go back to individuals to better understand the issues they have raised.

I have endeavoured to develop a new structure that will enable us to deliver against our Strategic Plan 2016-18 and my 7 strategic priorities as Chief Commissioner. It is a structure that addresses our current issues, capitalises on our opportunities, and positions us well for the future. The structure is built on the foundations of empowerment, responsibility, accountability and teamwork.

1. Culture

Many took the opportunity during consultation to raise issues other than those relating to structure. The most common issue discussed was culture. From those comments, and my 5 months listening to leaders, youth and supporters from every Region and different formations, it is clear we have as much, possibly more, work to do on our culture than on structure. In this context, you will recall that my 3rd Strategic Priority, as the Chief Commissioner, is "a positive and enabling culture – with a united team" and that this is also one of the goals of our Strategic Plan 2016-2018. I refer later to the establishment of a Working Group to help us work together to shape a new culture.

Our new structure is not to be seen as the solution to all our problems. It is only one aspect of how we do Scouting business. Our new organisational structure has to be complemented by a range of other interventions for Scouts NSW to arrest our membership decline, and to grow as an organisation. The key is clarity of direction, alignment and a united team.



2. Our New Organisational Structure

Our new organisational structure is at Attachment A.

Note there was almost unanimous agreement that “staying the course” is not an option, and that transformational, not transactional, change is required for success. Our membership is seeking a fresh approach to the way we do Scouting across NSW.

Key changes from the proposed structure, based on consultation, are:

a) Youth Program

The vast majority of respondents believe we are not ready to move to Option B as outlined in the draft structure. I agree. Many believe we need much more detail, and understanding, of the New Youth Program before we can develop an enabling structure; others believe that to move to Option B now will represent too big a change for us at this stage, especially for the Regions.

In adopting the thrust of Option A, many believe we must have a new structure ready to implement when the New Youth Program is known. I commit to this outcome.

In proceeding with Option A for our Youth Sections for the foreseeable future, I expect our 6 Sections to work together much more closely, most particularly on youth retention. The “silo” approach, which many believe has characterised the past, has meant we have not realised our potential. This must change for us to grow membership – our number one priority.

b) Adventurous Activities and Adult Training

There was much comment on these two areas, with many conflicting views. The proposed prominent role for Activities to help us grow as an organisation attracted considerable positive comment. Others saw the need for even more rationalisation between Adventurous Activities and Adult Training. Some sought little change and were concerned that the proposed structure will dilute the importance of Gilwell training. A number expressed strong feelings that the proposal was “top heavy”, with too many DCCs.

On balance, I have decided to have a more streamlined arrangement, by combining the proposed DCC Adventurous Activities with the DCC Adult Training and Support Formations. I acknowledge this is a substantial change, and will not please everyone. The extent of challenges we have demand a different approach. We will review the effectiveness of this approach within 12 months. With a dedicated State Commissioner, Adult Training and Development, there will be no diminution to the importance of Gilwell training.

c) The Number of Positions

While some believed there were too many positions overall in the proposed structure (and with some positions appearing to be "light on"), others commented there needs to be an additional position dedicated to administrative support (for the Chief Commissioner to be relieved of an onerous workload, and to focus more on strategic issues). There were particular concerns that the number of State positions will divert critical resources from the Regions, Districts and Groups, and be very costly. Yet others believed there was a need for additional State support.

I acknowledge the "top heavy" structure. This is because of the extraordinary number of challenges we are facing, and the need to "turn around" our performance as an organisation. Importantly the structure is designed to support our Regions, Districts and Groups, not be in competition with them. Specific roles (eg ACC Group Support Strategies including Leader Recruitment and Retention Strategies) exist for the sole purpose of supporting Groups, Districts and Regions.

As one respondent said "If we are going to turn around Scouting in NSW we have to do it in the heartland of Scouting – the Groups". This year is after all, the Year of the Group and the Group Leader!

Having said that, I have significantly reduced the total number of positions in the structure without, hopefully, reducing support for Groups. For administrative support, I will be relying more on our Honorary Commissioners, as well as our State Commissioners (Special Projects), and may need to appoint additional Special Projects Commissioners for particular projects, to manage our excessive workload. Already, a number of Honorary and Special Project Commissioners are stepping up and providing extraordinary assistance. Thank you! Each Special Projects Commissioner will have tasks to perform and a timeframe for completion. We have so much talent amongst our Commissioners and I seek their ongoing assistance. But a co-ordinator role is required.

At the appropriate time in the future, we will need to review the number of Regions. Now is not the right time, with the extent of change we need to manage. The focus at the moment must be on support for them, especially the country regions which have very real challenges.

If any State position in the new arrangement is not value adding, especially for our Regions, Districts and Groups, the structure will be further rationalised.

d) Air Activities

I have now had the benefit of a detailed briefing on our Air Activities Centre, including the very difficult challenges they are confronting, and the unique regulatory regime with which we must comply. In light of the expectations of the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA), and until such time that the current challenges are addressed, I will have the State Commissioner (Air Activities) report direct to the Chief Commissioner.

e) Titles

In the draft proposal, I suggested we adopt the term "Branch Commissioners", consistent with our Constitution. In light of comments, I acknowledge the term "State Commissioner" has far more meaning for our external stakeholders than "Branch Commissioner", and is more contemporary. I have therefore reverted to the use of the word "State" for all relevant positions.

The same argument applies to the term "General Manager" versus "Chief Executive Officer". I appreciate the "One Chief" decision and the argument for changing the title CEO to GM. However, this has had the unintended consequence of diminishing the status of the Head of our State Office, with very significant responsibilities, in the eyes of our external stakeholders. (I know this from personal experiences in the past few months.) This is at a time when our new Strategic Plan, and my own strategic priorities, highlight the need for stronger engagement with our stakeholders. I am liaising with the Board, and will canvass the proposition with our Branch Council, that we revert the "GM" title to "CEO". In so doing we note it is very clear in our organisational structure that the GM/CEO reports to the Chief Commissioner of the day.

f) Risk Management

Informed comments were received about the best location for the Risk Management position – whether it be placed in the compliance or the activities stream. It could sit in either. However, my preference is for it to have an "enterprise-wide" focus, and help us focus on risks additional to those in the activities stream.

g) Matrix Management

I appreciate the incisive observations some made about matrix versus hierarchical management. Success requires both.

As well as managing within the respective streams (hierarchical), we must do more to cultivate, nurture and maintain relationships across our streams (matrix management). The arrows across streams on the organisational chart depict some of those relationships.

In particular, I will be seeking a much more effective working relationship between our Region Commissioners and the DCC's (and their respective teams) – *One State, One Team – a United Team!* While I have overall accountability to the Board and to the Branch Council for the performance of the organisation, I will be holding Region Commissioners accountable for membership numbers, and the DCCs accountable for outcomes within their streams. Importantly, this includes support to the Regions, Districts and Groups.

h) Uniform/State Office Alignment

This issue was raised by various people during consultation. Alignment across various elements of our organisation is critical for success. Our General Manager and staff are very much in tune with our new strategic directions, and I am talking further with Andrew Smith to ensure good alignment with our uniform organisational structures. I know Andrew and his Team will want to do whatever is required to support our new direction.

i) Project Groups

Some were concerned that specific project groups (eg Mawson Fellowship, Scouts Australia Leadership Project) and particular Committees (eg Branch Trust Management Committee) are not shown in the organisational chart. It would be unusual to show this level of detail in an organisational chart, which focuses on senior positions. Those project groups and committees remain, of course, important functions within the new arrangements.

j) Working Groups

To help us advance our work across a number of critical areas, I am establishing various working groups and which will include a number of non uniformed personnel (in some cases they might be experts external to our organisation). Proposed working groups include:

- Inclusive Scouting (with a particular focus on gender diversity - LGBTQI)
 - The terms of reference have been drafted, and membership proposed
 - "We should not forget to promote diversity as an opportunity to increase the relevance of Scouting" World Scout Bureau: 1st World Education Congress.
 - Diversity and inclusion, access, equality and equity are the cornerstones of Scouting.
- Support for Country Regions
 - The draft terms of reference are currently being developed, and suggestions made by various people regarding membership. Importantly, non-uniformed personnel will be invited to join the group to ensure we are capturing the best ideas that are available.
- Shaping an Enabling Culture
 - The draft terms of reference are currently being developed. I would welcome suggestions of people who have particular skills, or insights, into this critically important topic.
 - I will also be providing to the group de-identified comments that various people have provided during the consultation on the structure.
 - Again, to ensure we are capturing the best ideas that are available, we need to invite non uniformed people, both internal and external to Scouts NSW, to join the group. We can also learn a lot from other Branches, especially Scouts Vic.

k) An Accountable and Agile Structure

The structure is based on the tenet of each position being both responsible and accountable for outcomes. Each position will be empowered to “get on” with the job of growing Scouting, primarily through well placed and timely support for our Regions, Districts and Groups. Each appointee will have a performance agreement with key performance indicators, with annual reviews.

Our new structure will be agile. As one astute respondent said during our consultation phase : “Scouting, in general, needs to be more nimble and flexible to be able to adapt and modify itself to emerging needs than it has been in the past”.

3. The Process from Here

I commend the new structure to you. We will now proceed with implementation.

As advised in the September and November meetings, and my December letter, all positions in the current structure will be “spilled” (with the exception of Section Commissioners, as discussed below). I will commence advertising with the Deputy Chief Commissioner (DCC) positions, with Position Descriptions now being drafted. The DCC positions for: Program Transformation and Membership Growth; Activities, Training and Support Formations; Youth Program; and Child Protection, Support and Compliance, will be first, followed by Youth Commissioner, and Development and Future Scouting.

Position Descriptions will be developed for every new position, and will be available at the time of advertising. Positions will be advertised state-wide, through our website. Individuals will have 2 weeks to submit their applications, from the date of advertising.

I reiterate that selection will be merit based. Every applicant will be expected to present their claims against the selection criteria for the position, and those claims will be assessed by a panel. The panel will include:

- A mix of males and females
- A young person (under the age of 30)
- A Region Commissioner (where appropriate).

I intend chairing all DCC selection processes, with the successful DCC to then chair the selection process for the ACC and SC positions within their team.

It has been commented that some individuals have been “promised” positions. This is **not** the case. All positions are open, and decisions will be made on the basis of merit against the advertised selection criteria. Occupants of positions in the current structure are free to apply.

Consistent with earlier advice, and as we proceed with Option A for the Youth Program stream, those people currently holding the current Branch Commissioner positions (Joey Scouts, Cub Scouts, Scouts and Venturers) will automatically transfer to the respective

State Commissioner positions. When we have the proposed structure for the New Youth Program, I will again consult, and the new positions will be advertised.

More generally, occupants of positions in the current structure will stay in their positions up to the point that successful applicants for the equivalent positions in the new structure are announced.

I acknowledge there will be many issues as we transition from the old to the new structure. Those issues will be dealt with the best way we can. I ask for your patience and understanding as we work through the transition.

Conclusion

I sincerely thank all those who provided comments. I have carefully considered all 58 submissions and spent additional time working through conflicting advice. As a result of that consultation, many changes have been made. I now ask everyone, whether or not you agree with the new structure, to support the direction we are taking and which our membership has sought.

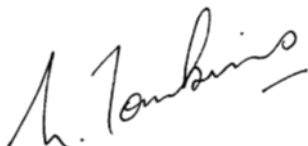
I am realistic enough to know we will not get right every aspect of the new structure from the start. Where something is not working optimally to meet our strategic goals, especially to grow membership, it will be changed.

You are most welcome to forward this letter and the new organisational chart to your team members and others who you feel need to aware of the new arrangements.

Whilst we have enormous challenges as an organisation, we also have considerable opportunities. I am confident that, with a strategic approach, the right people, an agile and aligned structure, and a united team, we will be able to capitalise on those opportunities, and grow as a Movement.

I very much look forward to working with you as we take our next step in revitalising Scouts NSW, so that it can have a vital and exciting new role within all NSW communities. I thank each of you for your dedication to our wonderful Movement.

Yours in Scouting,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Tomkins', with a horizontal line underneath.

Neville Tomkins OAM, JP
Chief Commissioner
Scouts Australia (NSW Branch)
12 February 2017