



Scouts Australia – ACT Branch

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Annual General Meeting of the Branch Council of Scouts ACT – FAQs

Dear Members,

Thank you for your support of Scouts ACT, particularly during very challenging times for our Branch.

As many of you know, in 2020 we had to hold our Annual General Meeting of the Branch Council of Scouts ACT (AGCM) remotely due to the restrictions necessitated by COVID-19. This included a new online voting platform for the meeting.

We had some questions about various parts of the meeting which the BEC and Branch Office wanted to answer, particularly ahead of the upcoming 2021 AGCM which will also be held remotely. These are set out below in a question and answer format.

Q. Who is a Branch Council member?

A. According to the Scouts ACT Constitution, the following persons comprise Branch Council:

1. the Chief Scout of the Branch, if one is appointed;
2. the President;
3. the Chief Commissioner;
4. the Branch Treasurer;
5. the President, Secretary and Treasurer of each Formation except Rover Units , as last notified to the Branch;
6. all Members of the Branch holding a Certificate of Adult Appointment within the Branch;
7. all Rover Unit Leaders of registered Rover Units and the Chair of the Branch Rover Council;
8. one additional member from each registered Rover Unit , nominated by that Unit ;
9. all Honorary Commissioners and Life Members of the Branch; and
10. such Supporters as shall be elected under clause 18 of the Branch Constitution.

It's very important to remember that not all members of Scouts ACT are members of Branch Council, although we welcome all members to attend and, if unable to vote, observe the meeting.

Q. When will notices sent out about the AGCM? How will they sent?

A. Email notices will be sent out regularly through ScoutsIT, the main communication distribution list for the Branch. Initial notice will be given on 4 March 2021, including a call for nominations for the position of Branch President, nominations for BEC members, and for nominations for Supporters to Branch Council under section 18 of the Branch Constitution. We will also be asking for Group Support Committee member's details be updated on Extranet. A formal notice to hold the AGM will be sent out on 13 May with a reminder on 19 May 2021

All members of the Branch Council are subscribed to ScoutsIT when they are added to Extranet as part of their membership process. If you change your email address and need to be re-added to ScoutsIT, please make sure you contact the Branch Office at admin@scoutsact.com.au.

Emails providing voting login details will be sent to each Branch Council member using their current email address in Extranet. This includes all Group Presidents, Secretaries and Treasurers that are recorded as such in Extranet. It's very important that your Extranet record is up to date, as you will not receive your voting login details if your record is incorrect. If you have any questions about your Extranet record, speak to your Group Leader or, in the case of Branch Council Supporters, contact the Branch Office.

- Q. What if my details, or the details of my Group, aren't up to date in Extranet or the ScoutsIT list?
- A. It's up to members to notify their Group if they've changed their preferred contact details. Groups need to make sure these details are promptly updated in the relevant system when they're made aware that changes are required.

In addition, it's the responsibility of Groups to make sure their current Committee membership is up to date in Extranet no later than 15 April 2021.

Extranet is the Branch's formal (official) record of membership. We depend upon it as our source of truth for members and their contact details. The ongoing effort contributed by Groups to maintaining the accuracy of records is essential and greatly appreciated. It is inevitable that at any point in time there will be instances when the Extranet record is not up to date for particular individuals. For this reason, we also distribute messages through other channels such as Facebook, and by informing Group and Section Leaders in person at their team meetings (eg, Jumbunna) so that they may share information through their usual channels at group level.

- Q. Is there a deadline for updating my details in Extranet to receive my voting login?
- A. As outlined above, your details should always be up to date in Extranet. In order to receive your voting login details, you must have your details in Extranet up to date (including your position) by 15 April 2021. This is because the Branch Office needs time to collate the lists to send out the formal notice and the voting login details to Branch Council members.
- Q. Will all members of Branch Council, including Group Chairs, Secretaries and Treasurers, be notified about the AGCM?
- A. All Branch Council members will be notified using their details in Extranet. In light of our shared learning from last year's AGCM, Groups are asked to check the email addresses listed in Extranet for their Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer and add the generic 'scoutsact.com.au' domain name where appropriate. Upon request, Branch can set up an auto-forward within Google to ensure that the generic email is forwarded to a private email address, if the committee member prefers.
- Q. What happens if I do not receive my voting login details or other emails about the AGCM?
- A. Contact your Group Leader to ensure your Extranet record is correct. If you have not received your voting login details email by 9am Thursday 20 May 2021, contact the Branch Office directly at admin@scoutsact.com.au.
- Q. Who will organise the voting system for the meeting?
- A. The Branch Executive Committee has decided that, due to COVID-19 restrictions, it is appropriate to proceed with an electronic voting process and to hold the meeting online. The BEC has directed the Branch Office to recommend and implement a voting system for the meeting. In 2020, the ACT Branch team consulted with Scouts NSW on their virtual AGCM and recommended using Election Buddy. Scouts ACT will use Election Buddy again for the 2021 AGCM.
- Q. What will I be able to vote on through the voting platform?
- A. Under the Scouts ACT Constitution, Branch Council is authorised to do the following things at the AGCM:

1. confirm the minutes of the last annual general meeting and of any general meeting held since that meeting;
2. receive from the President, the Chief Commissioner and the BEC reports on the activities of the Branch during the last preceding financial year;
3. elect members of the BEC, including the officers;
4. receive and consider the statement of accounts and the reports that are required to be submitted to members pursuant to section 73 of the Act; and
5. nominate as Branch representatives on the National Council those people recommended by the BEC.

These types of resolutions require the Branch Council to either elect a person who was nominated for a position, or to ratify/approve a matter that BEC or its officers propose to Branch Council.

Q. Which items will I be able to vote For or Against?

A. The following items require **ratification or approval**. They cannot be partially accepted or partially rejected by the Branch Council as they are presented as a single resolution by the proposing committee (eg. BEC, BRC, etc). The possible votes are For, Against, Abstain for the following:

1. approval of the minutes from the last AGCM;
2. acceptance of the financial statements for 2020;
3. ratification of the member nominated by the Regions to BEC;
4. ratification of the Branch Rover Council Representative to BEC;
5. nomination of Branch representatives on National Council as recommended by BEC; and
6. appointment of auditor for the Branch.

Q. Which items will I be able to vote For or Against?

A. The following items require **election**. The possible votes are For or Abstain as it is not possible to vote against people for election:

1. election of the Branch President;
2. election of the Branch Treasurer;
3. election of the nominees for Branch Supporters to Branch Council;
4. election of two over 18 year old uniformed members to BEC; and
5. election of two adult supporters to BEC.

This makes sense when you think about how voting works in other elections (e.g. in Territory or Federal Elections, you pick your preference, but you don't vote against people. The Scouts ACT Constitution doesn't allow preferential voting; it relies on simple majority of votes).

Q. How is a person elected? Is there a minimum number of votes?

A. At Scouts ACT AGCMs, the person with the most votes for each position is elected to the position. Branch Council Members have the option of voting for their preferred candidate or abstaining from that vote.

There are no minimum numbers of votes required to elect a person, subject to the quorum of 30 people required to start the meeting being met.

If an election is not contested (i.e. only one person nominated in accordance with the relevant Branch policy), even one vote for that candidate would result in them being elected.

Q. Can I nominate from the "floor" for positions on BEC?

- A. No. The BEC has put in place Branch Policy 2.16 – Conduct of the 2021 Annual General Meeting of the Branch Council, which provides a clear process for nominating for the various positions on BEC that are elected by the Branch Council. Nominations close at 5:00pm on 19 May 2021, and nominations after this time will not be accepted.
- Q. How can I ask questions about aspects of the meeting, the Audited Financials or the Annual Report?
- A. We strongly encourage you to ask any questions you might have about any part of the meeting or the relevant documentation before the meeting. The BEC has, for many years, answered questions before the meeting when raised by interested Branch Council members, which has streamlined the AGCM while ensuring that the process remains transparent for Branch Council members. As there was last year, there will be a chat function that members can use to ask questions of the Chair. The Chair will endeavour to answer all questions raised, but requests that questions are asked clearly and that respect is shown to and by all members of the Branch Council, as the Scout Law and Promise requires.

As you can appreciate, holding a digital AGCM for the first time in 2020 presented a challenge for the Branch Office, and the BEC last year. We learnt some lessons throughout the process which have been taken on board for this year's AGCM.

Thank you to all members for your enthusiasm and commitment: Scouts is the organisation it is because of each and every one of you.

Yours in Scouting

Rick Goode
Chief Commissioner
Scouts ACT

Jackie Stenhouse
President
Scouts ACT