



# Equitable Access Strategy for Women and Girls in Scouts ACT

## A. OBJECTIVE

To enhance the participation, leadership, and representation of women and girls<sup>1</sup> within Scouts ACT, by implementing targeted actions that address gender inequality and promote a more inclusive environment across all scouting programs, activities, and leadership roles.

## B. STRATEGIC GOALS AND ACTIONS

### 1. INCREASE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS IN SCOUTING PROGRAMS

#### Action 1.1: Inclusive Program Development

- Conduct surveys and focus groups with women and girls to understand their needs and barriers to participation.
- Develop programs that are specifically tailored to encourage the participation of women and girls, ensuring they are accessible, affordable, and culturally relevant.

#### Action 1.2: Socio-Economic Accessibility

- Strengthen financial support initiatives, such as the Scout Fund and Scouting Scholarships, to reduce socio-economic barriers for girls and their families. Actively promote these options to ensure awareness and uptake among potential female participants.

#### Action 1.3: Outreach and Recruitment

- Engage in targeted outreach campaigns in schools, media, and online platforms to raise awareness of scouting opportunities for girls. Use positive role models and testimonials from current female scouts to inspire participation.

### 2. FOSTER FEMALE LEADERSHIP AND REPRESENTATION

#### Action 2.1: Promote Diverse Leadership

- Continued support of the *Women in Scouting* network
- Actively encourage women and girls to take on leadership roles within scouting, including through mentorship programs, leadership training, and visible pathways to advancement.
- Increase female participation in Adventurous Activities (AA) and promote AA leader roles to women.

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<sup>1</sup> This strategy defines "women and girls" as inclusive of all individuals who identify as women or girls, including those whose gender identity differs from the sex assigned at birth, those outside the male-female binary, and those with diverse sexualities, intersex variations, or transgender experiences.

- Set targets for female representation in leadership positions and monitor progress regularly. Ensure that leadership development programs specifically address barriers faced by women and girls in scouting.
- Policy requiring that camps with women and girls should have women and girl leaders/adult supporters in attendance

#### Action 2.2: Leadership Skills Development

- Implement leadership development workshops focused on building confidence, public speaking, and decision-making skills for women and girls.
- Highlight and celebrate achievements of women and girls in leadership roles within Scouts ACT to create a culture that values and recognises female leadership.

### 3. ENSURE INCLUSIVITY AND ELIMINATE GENDER BIAS

#### Action 3.1: Training and Capacity Building

- Provide ongoing training for leaders, volunteers, and staff on gender equity, inclusivity, and unconscious bias. This training should include practical strategies for creating welcoming environments and supporting women and girls in scouting.
- Provide training on cultural competence to ensure that programs are inclusive of women and girls from diverse cultural backgrounds.
- Develop resources and guidelines for inclusive language, behaviour, and practices that support the participation of women and girls.

#### Action 3.2: Program Accessibility and Adaptation

- Conduct regular reviews of programs and activities to ensure they are free from gender bias and accessible to women and girls of all abilities and backgrounds.
- Conduct Scout Group health checks that includes numbers of women and girls membership and those taking on leadership roles within Groups.
- Allocate specific funds to support programs and initiatives aimed at increasing the participation of women and girls.
- Ensure that facilities and equipment are accessible and meet the needs of women and girls.
- Train staff, leaders and volunteers on how to support women and girls with disabilities and introduce adaptive equipment and modifications as necessary to support the participation of girls with disabilities.

### 4. IMPROVE FEMALE-FRIENDLY FACILITIES AT SCOUTS ACT LOCATIONS

#### Action 4.1: Create Female-Friendly Spaces

- Involve women and girls in the planning and design process to ensure that upgrades reflect their needs and preferences.

#### Action 4.2: Upgrade Bathroom Facilities

- Conduct an audit of existing bathroom facilities at key locations, particularly at Cottermouth, to identify areas that need upgrading to better cater to the needs of women and girls.
- Implement improvements such as adding more private, well-lit, and hygienic bathroom stalls. Install mirrors, hooks, and sanitary disposal bins, ensuring that facilities are accessible for individuals with disabilities.
- Enhance privacy by creating spaces that allow women and girls to change in private, including individual changing areas or stalls that offer full-length doors and secure locks.
- Cater for cultural differences and privacy requirements, such as providing areas where women can maintain modesty according to their cultural or religious practices.
- Design facilities that accommodate the varying needs of different women at different times, including provisions for menstrual hygiene management, nursing mothers, and those requiring additional support.
- Ensure all upgrades adhere to child safety standards, including features that prevent unauthorised access to private areas and clear visibility for supervising adults, while maintaining privacy for individual users.

#### Action 4.2: Enhance Safety and Accessibility Through Improved Lighting

- Improve outdoor and indoor lighting at Cottermouth and other frequently used sites to enhance safety and comfort, particularly in areas like pathways, campsites, and common areas.
- Ensure lighting upgrades consider the needs of night-time activities and safe navigation, especially for girls and women who may feel vulnerable in poorly lit environments.

### 5. MONITOR PROGRESS AND DRIVE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

#### Action 5.1: Data Collection and Analysis

- Collect data on the participation and leadership of women and girls in Scouts ACT programs. Analyse this data to identify trends, barriers, and areas for improvement.
- Implement regular surveys and feedback mechanisms specifically targeting the experiences of women and girls in scouting. Use this feedback to refine programs and policies.

#### Action 5.2: Reporting and Accountability

- Establish clear reporting channels for addressing any breaches of inclusivity, with specific attention to gender equity.
- Provide regular updates to the Chief Commissioner, Executive Officer, and Branch Executive Committee on progress towards equitable access for women and girls, including achievements and areas needing improvement.

### 6. STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS

#### Action 6.1: Collaboration with Community Organisations

- Partner with local organisations, schools, and community groups that focus on supporting women and girls to increase awareness and participation in scouting.
- Explore opportunities for joint initiatives that promote gender equity and inclusivity within the broader community.

## Action 6.2: Public Awareness Campaigns

- Launch public awareness campaigns highlighting the benefits of scouting for girls, using diverse and relatable female role models from within Scouts ACT.
- Develop promotional materials that showcase the inclusive nature of scouting programs and the opportunities for girls to thrive and lead.

## C. IMPLEMENTATION AND OVERSIGHT

### Responsibility:

- The Chief Commissioner and Executive Officer will oversee the implementation of this strategy, with support from the Branch Executive Committee, leaders, staff, and volunteers.
- Day to day management and delivery of strategic actions will reside with the Branch Commissioner, Diversity and Inclusion.

### Monitoring and Evaluation:

- Regular monitoring, including annual audits and feedback collection, will ensure that actions are on track and aligned with the goals of the equitable access policy.
- Evaluation results will be reported to the Branch Executive Committee and used to inform ongoing improvements and adjustments to the strategy.

## D. CONCLUSION

This strategy outlines a comprehensive approach to fostering an equitable environment for women and girls within Scouts ACT. By focusing on facility improvements, inclusive program development, leadership promotion, capacity building, and continuous improvement, we aim to create a scouting experience where all women and girls can participate, lead, and thrive.

Approved by: Chief Commissioner and Executive Officer

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