



## Branch Newsletter | 1 January 2026

### Chief's Update

[Daniel Bartlett](#), *Acting Chief Commissioner*

Welcome back to the first day of Scouting in 2026, this promises to be a busy and adventurous year with a variety of improvements to be completed at Camp Cottermouth, Cuboree is planned for October and a variety of international opportunities are on offer.

Our Venturers had a fantastic mid-December Coast Venture enjoying kayaking, surfing and canoeing, culminating in a Sunday morning dawn canoe paddle to see the sunrise.



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The Pathways Camp was an amazing November experience for 360 Cub Scouts - getting together for a weekend of adventure, fun and mayhem, exploring their different pathways through Scouting and life. It's also a great inspiration for next year's Cuboree in October! Thank you to the amazing organising committee, the activity leaders, welfare team and all our great participants.

I had the pleasure of attending Meisha Readman's Kings Scout award at Southwell on 20 December – her citation is impressive and goes to show that working together, and reaching out for the support that Scouting can provide, we can achieve the incredible!



I also took the opportunity to take Baden Powell's walking stick out from secure storage so the attendees could see and touch one of our most significant heritage items. We are continuing to work with Government House to organise a date for our next BP and King Scout presentation there.

Scouts ACT is working with other branches across Australia to prepare for the migration from Operoo to Consent2Go with Microsoft Forms - a challenging transition made all the more difficult with the short lead times imposed on us by the withdrawal of Operoo from the Australian market at the end of January.

I thank Andrea McCarron-Benson for her years of work as Assistant Chief Commissioner, People and Culture. She built up the People and Culture team and handled many of our more challenging and sensitive circumstances with thoughtful consideration and great distinction. If you or someone you know is interested in taking on this challenging but rewarding role, please contact me directly.

I hope you're enjoying a great Christmas break, choose your own pathways and choose your own adventures. Come back for a new and exciting year of Scouting in 2026.

## National Executive Committee U30 Position

The National Executive Committee (Board) of Scouts Australia is seeking applications to fill the vacancy of Non-Executive Director – under 30 years of age. Applications from women and those who identify as gender diverse are strongly encouraged.

As a Non-Executive Director, you will contribute to the decision-making of the NEC. You will assist in guiding Scouts Australia's leadership to ensure good governance is in place along with appropriate and contemporary policies, quality planning, and appropriate financial management and risk measures.

Prior board experience and/or membership with Scouts Australia is not necessary, but candidates must have a strong desire to help guide the direction of Scouting in Australia and have a genuine interest in youth development. Applications close 5 January 2026. For more information visit: [scouts.com.au/blog/2025/11/20/nec-non-executive-director-under-30-position-vacancy/](https://scouts.com.au/blog/2025/11/20/nec-non-executive-director-under-30-position-vacancy/)

## The Connection Fund

This ACT Government grant supports community focused projects. The goal is to create a sense of community and belonging for LGBTIQ+ people. Individuals can get a grant of up to \$5,000, and not-for-profit organisations and businesses can get up to \$15,000.

Applications close on **18 January 2026**. For more information visit: [act.gov.au/money-and-tax/grants-funding-and-incentives/funding-to-promote-connections-for-lgbtqiqa-people](https://act.gov.au/money-and-tax/grants-funding-and-incentives/funding-to-promote-connections-for-lgbtqiqa-people)

The Branch Office is happy to work with youth members, especially Venturers and Rovers, who are interested in applying. Contact [eo@scoutsact.com.au](mailto:eo@scoutsact.com.au) if you would like assistance with your application.

## International Opportunities

[Georgia Elliott](#), Branch International Commissioner

### Have fun and enjoy: Australian Contingent to 16th New Zealand Venture

This month we wish 30 Venturers and Leaders well as they head to the 16th New Zealand Venture near Wellington. The Venturers will join expeditions stretching from the upper South Island to the middle of the North Island, doing activities such as sailing, cycling, hiking, cooking, photography, scuba diving and wildlife sanctuaries! We look forward to hearing their stories on their return.



### Applications Open: 19th Nippon Scout Jamboree 2026

The Jamboree will be held from 1st - 11th August 2026 in Jinseki Kogen, Hiroshima, Japan. Applications are open to Scouts (born before 3 August 2014), Venturers, Leaders and IST. Applications close on 15 December 2025 or when all available positions are filled. All applicants must register using the Australian Contingent's online application system, OLEMS: <https://registrations.international.scouts.com.au/>



Find out more here:

<https://registrations.international.scouts.com.au/documents/Nippon%20Contingent%20Information-Cover%20Pages%202025%20-%20LP%20approved.pdf>

### Applications Open: Australian Contingent to 31st Icelandic National Jamboree



The Jamboree will be held from 14th July – 2nd August 2026 in Akureyri, Iceland. Applications are open to Scouts (born before 20 August 2014), Venturers, Leaders and IST. Applications close on 15 January 2026 or when all available positions are filled. All applicants must register using the Australian Contingent's online application system, OLEMS:

<https://registrations.international.scouts.com.au/>

Find out more here:

<https://registrations.international.scouts.com.au/documents/Iceland%202026%20-%20Contingent%20Information%20Sheet%20LP%20approved.pdf>



## Heritage Matters

*Peter Harris, Branch Commissioner Heritage*

This year has marked several significant group birthdays but perhaps the oldest was that of Air Scouts, Deakin who can trace their Scouting history back to 2nd Canberra. This Group was first formed on 17 December 1925 – 100 years ago. What do you know about your Group? Do you know when your Group first formed – and the meaning behind your Group scarf colours?

Next year the Heritage Team plan to launch a new badge to encourage participation in Group and Branch heritage activities. So far, our plans include awarding the badge to those who can demonstrate:

1. Their participation in a heritage activity
2. Sharing their knowledge of their Group or Branch heritage and
3. The running of a heritage activity in their Unit.

Our dilemma is – we need a design for the badge – can you help? Please send your badge suggestions/designs or requests for further information to our heritage Team c/o [peter.harris@scoutsact.com.au](mailto:peter.harris@scoutsact.com.au) by the end of January 2026.

Lastly, on 22 February 2026, you are invited to meet at Camp Cottermouth for a BYO afternoon tea to celebrate the birthday of Lord Baden Powell – the founder of Scouting. More information to come.



# Event in Focus - Scouts ACT's Support of The Christmas Party – Canberra 2025

Since 1997, Scouts ACT has supported The Canberra Special Children's Christmas Party. This is a day of fun and respite for 1600 children nominated by charities, schools, not-for-profits and community services. These children face significant socio-economic, learning, physical or health challenges, and The Party gives them and their carers a day of fun and gifts from donors. Now known as "The Christmas Party



Canberra", the event is still supported by Scouts ACT. In fact, charity organisers Paul Munro and Donna Bowen rely on Scouts exclusively to run the set-up day.

This year, across the two days (setup on November 28 and Party on November 29), one Scout, six Venturers, five Rovers and 20 Adults in Scouting worked efficiently and well, many having supported the event in earlier years.

On day 1 we

- unloaded pallets of toys and materials
- set up the toy/gift room
- set up Santa's Grotto
- put together decorations and placed them about the venue, and
- set up the Scouts ACT Indoor Archery range as an activity for guests.



On Day 2 we

- set up the parking for 1600 vehicles and managed the traffic flow of volunteer, service and guest vehicles
- staffed the Lost Children/Information booth
- assisted with managing queues at food stalls and amusement rides
- staffed the guest registration booth
- operated the Indoor Archery range, including a Venturer from the team's last course.
- served food like waiters amongst the crowd



- cleaned up all rubbish and recycling
- packed up all the seating and signage
- packed away all the decorations, including a full inventory and grouping items together for next year
- re-boxed unclaimed toys for future charity gifts, and
- packed down Santa's Grotto and the gift room, including re-instating the venues furniture, all in record time.

During his final feedback and thank you session with our participants, Paul Munro remarked that our support has become essential to the Party's success, and that Scouts ACT is the only branch in Australia to provide a team of volunteers. But even our team is shrinking, so we need your help!



Information on next year's Party should appear in ScoutsIT and BVC emails, Venturers ACT WhatsApp posts and Branch Facebook posts during June/July 2026. We strongly encourage Youth Members over the age of 13 to volunteer. Venturers and Rovers who are interested in learning to coordinate the overall effort should reach out to Vance at [Vance.Lawrence@scoutsACT.com.au](mailto:Vance.Lawrence@scoutsACT.com.au).

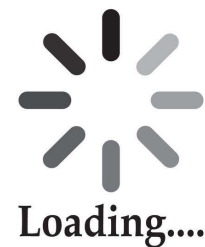
## Upcoming Events

[Bryn Catlin](#), Branch Commissioner Events

### Gang Show 2026

[Zeno Hamer](#), director

Back in my day we used to do gang show... Well lucky for you it's back! The production team have been hard at work preparing the show for 2026 and are getting ready to launch. Applications for Cast (11-30 yrs), Tech crew (14+), Wardrobe (skill based), Welfare (18+), and other teams vital to the success of Gang Show. Rehearsals will run from March through July, with shows running the first week of July school holidays (8th -11th July). Please reach out if you have any questions,



## Ku-ring-gai-Chase Hoporee

ACT has been invited to send a contingent of Joey Scouts to the North Hornsby District Hoporee. **21-23 March 2026**. Please contact [kristy.vanputten@gmail.com](mailto:kristy.vanputten@gmail.com) if your Joey Scout unit would like to participate.

## Cuboree 2026 – Cubs in Time

A small team has already started planning for Cuboree 2026. It's going to take a real team of people to make it happen so please reach out to the committee at [Cuboree2026@Scoutsact.com.au](mailto:Cuboree2026@Scoutsact.com.au) and put the dates 1-6 October in your calendar. More details at the website [Cuboree 2026 - Cubs in Time](#)

## National News

The [latest issue of National News is out](#), featuring:

- The Honourable General David Hurley AC CVO DSC (Retd) appointed National President
- Assistant National Commissioner - Youth Program vacancy
- Resilient Youth Survey results
- Scouts Australia-Operations Branch approved
- Scouts Australia AGM 2025
- Scouts Australia Annual Report

## Training

Are you passionate about your section? Want to organise the next Mindari or section equivalent, or maybe create something new? Do you want to be a part of a team that makes being a section leader easier by networking, sharing ideas and providing opportunities for informal training? Then maybe a **Branch Training Advisor** role is for you! There are positions for leaders of the **Scout, Venturer Scout and Rover Scout Sections**.

In these roles you would:

1. Facilitate the ongoing training and development of the relevant Section leaders.
2. Provide networking and planning opportunities for the relevant Section leaders.
3. Coordinate the development, publication and sharing of resources for the relevant Section.
4. Provide targeted training support to groups to grow and develop their relevant Section.

## Training Team Vacancies



In addition, we are also looking to expand the training team more broadly. So if you are interested in starting on that journey, and contributing to the growth and development of both leaders and youth members, or just find out more about the roles, please send your expressions of interest to the training email inbox ([training@scoutsact.com.au](mailto:training@scoutsact.com.au)).

We are seeking interested and experienced individuals to take on the following vacant key Training Team roles:

The **Assistant Chief Commissioner, Adult Training & Development** will lead the delivery of training and development related services principally to adult members of Scouts ACT, and some older youth members, to support the Youth Program. The position does so through the three Branch Commissioners reporting to the role, and specialist resources including the Training Team; ensuring well trained and qualified Members are supporting the program in a risk minimised and child safe environment.

The **Branch Commissioner, Adventurous Activities** role is to lead, guide, and manage the ACT Branch Adventurous Activities team, lead the effective and high quality delivery of the Scouting Program's adventurous activities, provide support, guidance, advice, feedback and support to the ACT Adventurous Activities team and to be an advocate for, and keep up to date with, all aspects of the development and evolution of the Scouting program, particularly in respect of adventurous activities.

