

7.1 - GROUP SUPPORT COMMITTEE GUIDELINES

1. National Policy & Rules R4.7 sets out the functions of the Group Support Committee. The following statement sets out the practices in the ACT Branch. The Group Leader and Group Support Committee Handbook also contains valuable advice.
2. In many cases, all members of a Group Support Committee are parents of Scouts, but it is worthwhile to endeavour to attract people from a wider field and, in this way, to obtain the help of people other than those immediately connected with the Group.
3. The Group Leader is the only uniformed member, but must not be the Chair. Parents who are also Leaders do not become members of the Group Support Committee, for this can often cause conflict.
4. The Group Leader occupies a position of adviser to the Committee with a power of veto which may be exercised to keep the activities of the Committee in accordance with the rules of the Association.

APPOINTMENT

5. Members of a Group Support Committee are appointed or retired by the Group Leader. In the case of sponsored Groups, this occurs after consultation with the sponsoring authority.

OFFICE BEARERS

CHAIR

6. The duties of the Chair are to take the chair at all meetings of the Committee and to lead the Committee in its general function of assisting the Group Leader.
7. The Chair is also responsible to ensure that the Group complies with Branch Policy 4.8 (Maintenance of Scout Halls) and other major fixed assets.

SECRETARY

8. The duties of the Secretary are to call the meetings of the Group Support Committee, to draw up an agenda for each meeting, to keep minutes of each meeting and to distribute copies, to receive and answer correspondence at the direction of the Committee.

TREASURER

9. The duties of the Treasurer are to keep a true and proper record of the finances of the Group and to present a financial statement at each meeting of the Committee. Group Support Committees may have considerable amounts of money pass through their hands in a year. The Treasurer is to use the Xero financial management software which is linked to the Branch system.
10. With the exception of Venturer Units noted below, all money received by or on behalf of a Group or any Section of a Group, must be paid into a Bank, or other similar account in the Name of the Scout Association of Australia ACT Branch Incorporated plus Name of Group and operated by a minimum of two signatories. (See Policy 4.1 on Financial Management).
11. Venturer Units are permitted to operate their own account in the Name of Scout Association of Australia ACT Branch Incorporated plus Name of Venturer Unit and be operated by a minimum of two signatories. Their books must be available for inspection by the Treasurer and included in the annual return. (See Policy 4.1 on Financial Management).

12. Although they are included in the Group bank account and annual return, it should be noted that 'subs' collected by a Section are administered by that Section and are not at the disposal of the Group Support Committee. (P&R R4.8(2)). The Group funds are administered by the Group Support Committee acting in consultation with the Group Council.

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

13. The duties of the Membership Secretary include assisting the Group Leader in maintaining the accuracy of Member information on Extranet.

PUBLICITY OFFICER

14. The duties of a Publicity Officer include collecting information for, and editing the Group magazine/newsletter, and passing relevant copy to the Branch Public Relations team. (See Policy Statement 5.1 on Public Statements).

QUARTERMASTER

15. The duties of the Quartermaster are to keep an accurate inventory of the Group property, to check out and return in all Group equipment and report to the Committee on repairs or replacements needed. An accurate assessment of value is required for insurance purposes.
16. Other positions with specific responsibilities can be added as required by the Group.

GROUP FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

(See also Policy 4.1 - Financial and Asset Management)

17. It is good financial practice for Group Support Committees to develop and adopt a budget for each financial year (the calendar year) so that commitments can be foreseen and plans made to raise the necessary income.
18. Many Groups adopt the practice of setting a per capita annual Group fee (usually modified for multi-member families) to cover basic outlays such as hall maintenance, insurance and electricity and water charges; and rely on fund-raising efforts for other expenditure such as the purchase of equipment. It is, however, for the Group Support Committee to decide its own strategy in this matter.
19. In general, Scouting practice is for activities to be self-supporting; that is a fee is charged to those participating which just covers the costs involved. On rare occasions the Group Support Committee may agree to undertake special fund-raising to subsidise attendance at National or International events. (See also Policy Statement 4.2 - Reimbursement of Expenses)

MEMBERSHIP OF THE SCOUT ASSOCIATION

20. All members of Group Support Committees are members of the Association and, as such, are bound by the rules and policies of the Association (Branch Constitution clause (Branch Constitution clause 10.3.2). This applies to all the activities of the Group Support Committee and its members when acting in the name of, or on behalf of, the Association.

MEETINGS

21. It is important that the Group Support Committee meets on a regular basis, usually once a month.

ANNUAL MEETINGS

22. It is necessary also for the Group Support Committee to hold an Annual Meeting and, according to Branch practice, these are generally held between February and the end of April each year. All parents of members of the Group, Leaders, friends and Region staff, and a Branch representative are generally invited and every effort should be made to ensure that this meeting is one of the highlights of the Group's year. A typical agenda would be:

- Reflection
- Welcome
- Apologies
- Minutes of last Annual Meeting
- Matters arising
- Reports
 - Chair
 - Treasurer
 - Group Leader - The Group Leader's report should cover all the Section (Reports are very useful items of business and all should be prepared in consultation to avoid double references. If possible, have them printed for distribution).
- Motion of appreciation of the retiring committee and of the Leaders.
- Announcement of the new Committee.
- Address by Region Commissioner.
(Many Groups stage displays by their youth members and this is an excellent practice)
- Other business - such as votes of thanks, presentations, etc.

AUTHORITY

23. This policy or amended policy was approved by the Branch Executive Committee on 24 March 1993, 25 June 1997, 23 March 2017 and 22 June 2017.