



Scouts
NSW

November 2019

YOUTH FORUM IN A BOX

A guide to youth forums for all:

- Scout groups
- Regions
- Branches
- Major events/camps

Prepared by

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NSW State Commissioner (Youth Empowerment)
Scouts NSW Youth Commissioner

WHAT IS A YOUTH FORUM?

A Youth Forum is an educational tool that supports the element of the Scout Method - '*Youth Leading, Adult Supporting*'. A Youth Forum empowers and inspires young people to develop skills in decision-making that can be used in Scouting and the wider community. A Youth Forum is a place for information sharing, training, discussion and increased understanding of important Scouting and social issues.

ROLE OF A YOUTH FORUM

A Youth Forum is the chance for youth in the Scout Movement to be engaged with Scouting and have their say.

A Youth Forum has an impact on the deciding bodies of Scouts through producing recommendations. They allow for the sharing of ideas and experiences on current issues and trends affecting young people in Australia.

A Youth Forum suggests ways of strengthening Scouting policies and training young people for world citizenship.

A Youth Forum allows for youth to contribute new ideas to the Movement on how to enrich educational programs for young people.



Leave this world a little better than you found it.
- Lord Robert Baden-Powell





We ourselves feel that what we are doing is just a drop in the ocean. But the ocean would be less because of that missing drop.

- Mother Teresa



WHO PARTICIPATES?

Any youth member can participate in a Youth Forum. Adults can also run forums to gather ideas and information from all members of Scouting. There are many different levels of Scouting that can be involved in a Youth Forum, for example:

- Your local Scout/Venturer/Rover Section
- Entire youth body of local Scout Group
- District Sectional forum
- Regional Sectional forum
- Branch youth body (eg. Youth Council)
- Scout Camps (Local, District, Region or Branch)

ROLE OF ADULTS

Our adult Leaders play an important part in supporting a Youth Forum. Adult involvement will vary depending on age of the youth members. In a Cub Youth Forum, a Leader may assist running the Forum. In a Venturer Youth Forum, a leader may act as an adviser. It is a great idea to get older Sections involved in your forum.

Adult leaders assist in the following ways:

Moderators: Leaders may need to step in if arguments occur

Time Keepers: Leaders are great time-keepers who can make sure conversations do not 'drag on'

Empowerers: Leaders can inspire youth to speak their mind and seek change

It is important to remember the Youth Forum is run to hear the voice of the youth, so adult Leaders should not influence the opinion of the youth where possible.

HOW DO WE PICK A TOPIC?

It is important to pick and clearly define a topic that is relevant to the group of youth involved in the Forum. Remember, break large topics into small points to allow for productive responses and adjust the wording of topics to cater for the age group involved. Think about what has been happening in Scouts and the wider community and ask youth members their opinion on important things to discuss. Also, ask different Councils and Conferences if any particular topics are already going to be discussed and add youth voice to the idea.

Examples of topics are below:

Youth Engagement

How can youth be involved in decision making?

Community Involvement

What ways can Scouts be involved in the community?

Sustainable Development Goals

How can Scouts help complete the UN SDGs?

Communication

How can we improve communication about opportunities to youth members?

Leadership

What other ways can we provide leadership opportunities to members?

Need more ideas?

Head to the State Youth Council's website to check out some youth forum topic ideas: <https://www.nsw.scouts.com.au/state-youth-council>

Do you have a great topic idea?

Submit it through our Google Form: <https://forms.gle/q7JD3jybscBENpiX7>

PLANNING AHEAD

There are a lot of things to think about when planning a Youth Forum, so make sure you take time and plan ahead. Have a think about the following things:

What level is the Forum?

Will the Forum be held at a local Scout Group? Will it be at a Region/Branch camp? Will the Forum be in conjunction with other Sections? Will the forum occur at a region or Branch Leader meeting?

Participants

Who will you ask to participate in the Forum? If your Forum is at a Group level, will it be a Unit Forum or will it include just the Patrol Leaders? If your Forum is at a Scout camp, will you have one representative from each Group or each Region?

Where will you hold the Forum?

Will you hold the Forum at the Scout Hall? Will you host the Forum at a local bowling club? How will you add a fun element to the Forum?

Organisers

The first step is to get facilitators for the Youth Forum. It is essential that youth members assist in the facilitation of the Forum and adult Leaders advise and support.

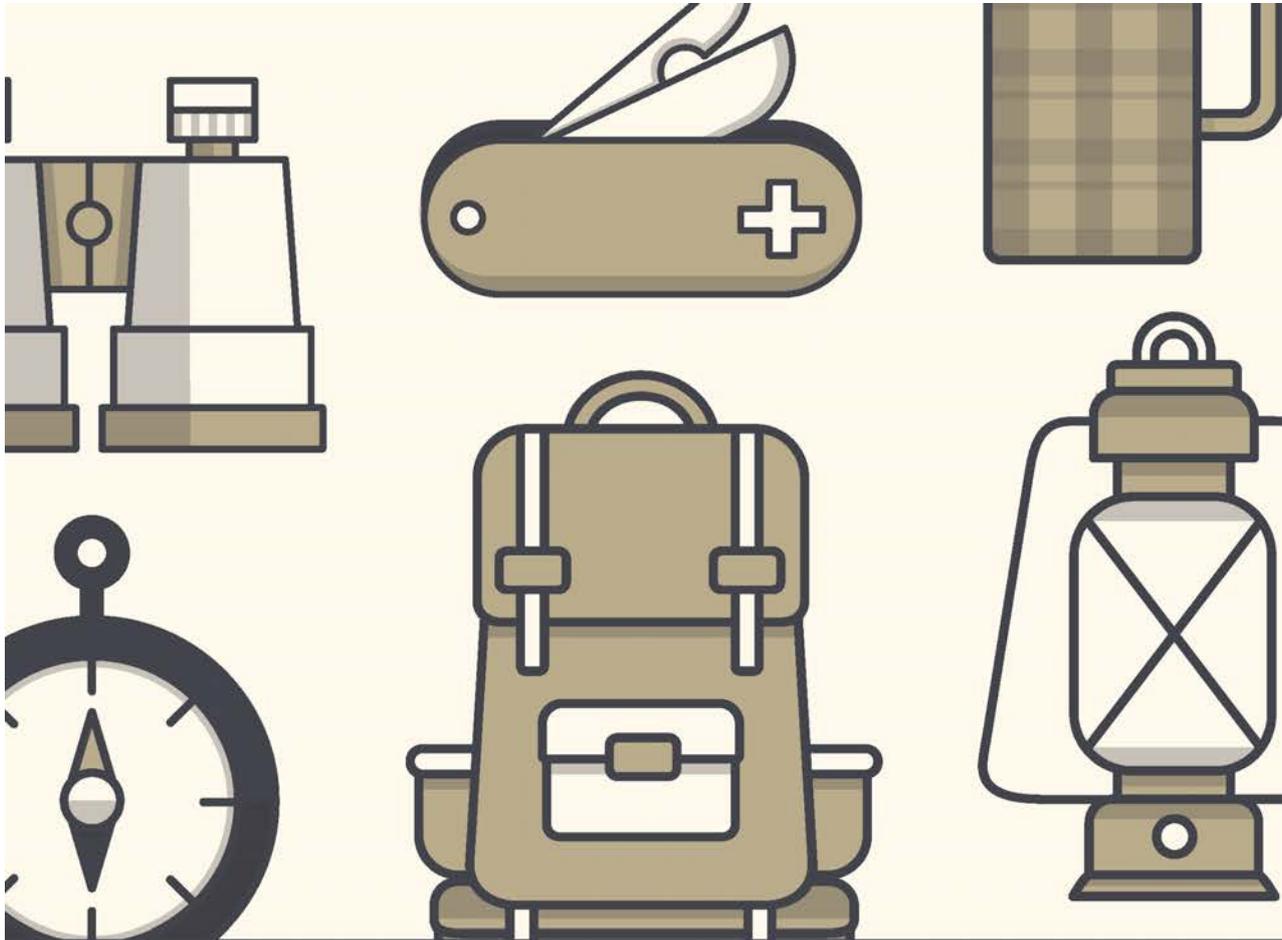
When will you hold the Forum?

Is it appropriate to hold the Forum before an AGM or Leader meeting to allow for resolutions to be displayed? Will you hold it at the beginning or middle of the year? Will it be a weekend event or an evening event?

Advertisement

Create an ad for your Youth Forum and send the advertisement to possible participants.

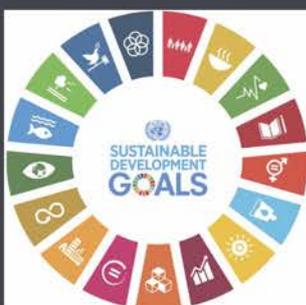
EXAMPLE OF ADVERTISEMENT



WE WANT YOUR OPINION!

2019 YOUTH FORUM

Come along, make new friends and help us reach the UN Sustainable Development Goals.



4PM 15 JULY 2019
MT KEIRA SCOUT CAMP

for more information and to register
visit: www.youthforumkeira.com/sdg



Scouts
NSW

YOUTH FORUM PROGRAM

Here are some things to include in your program:

1. Introduction to Youth Forum

Spend some time talking about what a youth forum is, why it is important and where the responses will be taken. The role of adults and how adults will support should be outlined at the beginning.

2. Icebreaker

In order for participants to share, it is important they feel comfortable. Icebreakers are encouraged at the start of the program.

3. Introduce the topic

Think of a fun way to introduce the topic being discussed. This may be a short video, a few discussion questions, asking participants to draw a mind-map or use silent reflection time. If appropriate, ask a Subject Matter Expert guest speaker to explain the importance of the topic.

4. Split participants into discussion patrols

Allocate participants to a certain table, split up participants to ensure maximum discussions. Think about what resources you might have on each table. Ideas include: butchers paper, markers, sticky notes, lollies, resources, information packs and a 'thank you' gift.

5. Choose youth members to record findings

Make sure to involve youth members in all stages of planning and running the Forum. Ask for volunteers from each discussion patrol. Youth members should also be chosen to complete the recommendations at the end of the Forum. Youth members should be supported if they require resources or proofreading.

6. Discussion questions/activity

Ask a series of questions for the participants to discuss as a patrol. Ensure questions lead to a constructive solution by being 'open-ended'.

7. Reporting back

Include time at the end of the session for participants to report back to the group. Ensure any solutions have been recorded - these will be made into recommendations.

8. Make it fun!

Remember, the Youth Forum is also a great opportunity for youth members to make friends, feel empowered and enjoy themselves! Make sure you add a fun element to the Forum, whether it be a few games in between, ice cream or other fun snacks or a social event at the end (e.g. Roller skating or Laser Tag).

YOUTH FORUM PROGRAM EXAMPLE

This is an example program for the topic 'Sustainable Development Goals':

1. Introduction to Youth Forum

A Youth Forum gives youth a voice. The role of youth is to creatively and thoughtfully express their ideas on how to improve communities so they can be the best possible environments for adolescents to live in.

2. Icebreaker - BANG

Gather youth members into a circle. One member stands in the centre of the circle and points to a Scout in the circle and yells their name (e.g. Grace). Grace ducks and the two Scouts either side of Grace shoot each other with their hands in the shape of a gun and yell "BANG". The person who shoots the slowest loses, or if Grace didn't duck, she loses. This encourages youth members to learn each others names and adds an element of fun.

3. Introduce the topic

Watch this video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mdm49_rUMgo&t=10s. Stick Sustainable Development Goals around the room and ask youth members to walk to the Goal they find MOST IMPORTANT in their life. Encourage one youth member from each goal to present their reasons.

4. Split participants into discussion patrols

Each table must have lollies, string, each SDG cut out in squares, 3 lots of different coloured card and 1 lot of white cards, markers and information on the SDGs.

5. Choose youth members to record findings

Each patrol will choose two presenters.

6. Discussion questions/ activity

Before activity, stick a triangle up on the wall for each patrol.

- Ask members to write down problems on each card (green = environmental issues, blue = economical issues, red = social issues) and stick cards around the triangle on wall
- Find issues that are connected and attach a string between them
- Find solutions to these problems at a Scout/local level
- Attach Sustainable Development Goals to issues/solutions

7. Reporting back

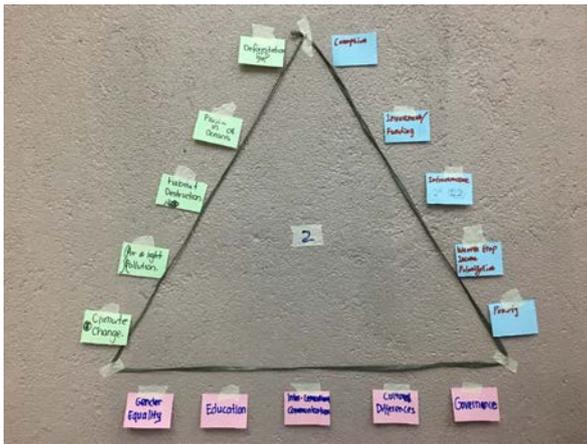
Each patrol reports back 2 of the solutions and the SDG it relates to.

8. Make it fun!

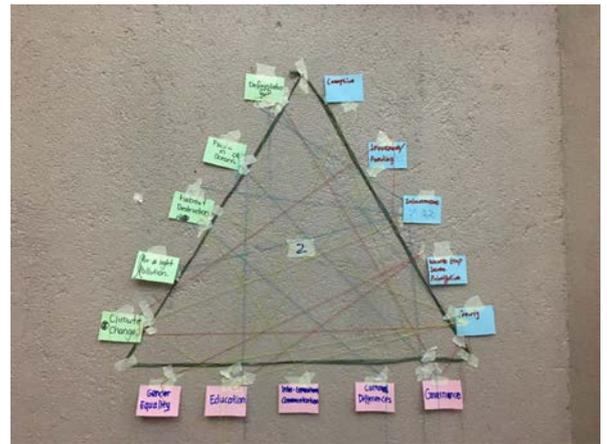
Watch a movie afterwards! Finding Nemo.

DISCUSSION EXAMPLE

Below is a visual representation of the Sustainable Development Goals Activity:



1. Environmental / Social / Economic Issues



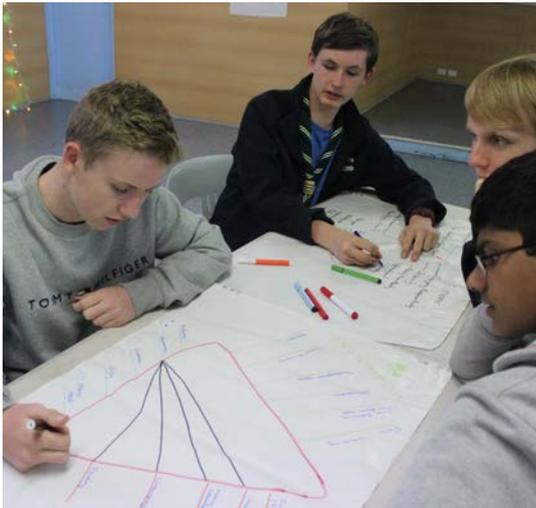
2. Connect issues



5. Link Sustainable Development Goals



3. Find solutions



*In a gentle way, you can
shake the world.*

– Mahatma Ghandi



WHAT HAPPENS WITH THE RESULTS?

It may not feel like having discussions at a Unit level will have an impact on Scouting or your community but this is a great chance to have your say AND be heard.

The State Youth Council have been working hard to ensure the 'Youth Voice' is heard at all levels, and we need your help to make this happen. Once you've had a discussion on the topic and decided on a shared opinion, it's time to draft a recommendation.

These recommendations will be collated by the State Youth Council and will help to drive change in the State at all levels.

If you don't feel that your topic is a State issue, then have a look at the next page to decide where the results need to go. If you have any questions or require support in any way, take a look at page 15 for more information.

WRITE RECOMMENDATIONS

It is important to write recommendations from the discussions in the Youth Forum. This makes sure that anything you talk about and any solutions you have come up with can be given to the right person in order for REAL change to occur.



WHO TO TELL

Remember any information gathered at a Youth Forum is incredibly important to the Scouting Movement. It is integral to pass this information on and allow for changes to occur.

Contact your **Group Leader** if:

It is an issue that needs to be addressed in your section or group. Can you bring your recommendation to the Group Meetings?

Contact your **Region Office** if:

It is a grassroots issue that may need to be implemented in local groups in the area. Find out if there is a Region meeting you can attend or if there is a Region Commissioner you can contact.

Contact the **State Youth Council** or **State Commissioner (Youth Empowerment)** if:

It is an issue that you think needs addressing at a State or National Level.

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

- Margaret Mead



HOW TO WRITE A RECOMMENDATION

The following information has been provided by the 13th World Scout Youth Forum Document 6.

1. Start

Make sure your solution:

- Identifies a clear need, challenge or problem
- Is relevant to youth in Scouting
- States the background of the idea and solution
- Gives specific actions

2. Decide on audience

Make sure you have decided on who you are going to give your recommendation to (e.g. Branch Commissioners, Region Scout Leaders Meeting, Scout Leader or Scout Group). This will give you an idea of how much background information to provide and how to word your recommendation.

3. Get to writing

A draft resolution is usually one long sentence with different bullet points to separate the ideas. You want to split up your draft resolution into three parts.

- a. Heading: Gives the topic (depending on where the Forum is held, it will also say who has submitted it and who has seconded it – e.g. Submitted by South Coast and Tablelands region and Seconded by Hume Region).
- b. Preamble: Provides the background to the issue, explains why it is important.
- c. Operative: Explains what actions should be taken.

4. Think about your word choice

When you write your preamble, think about using the following words:

Having considered/heard/examined/studied/adopted, bearing in mind, taking into account, noting

When you write your operative part, think about using the following words:

Declares, confirms, further invites/resolves/requests, suggests, supports, urges, adopts, calls upon

EXAMPLE OF RECOMMENDATION

Here are some examples of recommendations put forward by youth members:

Region Scout Forum Recommendation

Greater Western Sydney Scout Youth Forum recommends to the organisers of the Region Jamborette that a group of Scout youth members, representing the Districts in the Region, are fully involved in the planning process of the camp.

State Youth Council Recommendation

NSW State Youth Council calls upon the NSW Chief Commissioner to ensure youth members across the state are educated on the UN Sustainable Development Goals through interactive workshops, and are given the opportunity to work towards these goals within Scouting, as per Scouts for SDGs.

Unit Recommendation

1st Keiraville Venturer Unit urges the Group Committee to provide support to all Sections and encourage participation in community involvement projects in the Illawarra area, including, but not limited to, Clean Up Australia Day, Plant a Tree Day, White Ribbon Day and Daffodil Day.



Action is the foundational key to all success.

- Pablo Picasso



POST FORUM SURVEY

As part of the 'Plan > Do > Review' process in Scouting, it is essential to for participants to reflect on how they feel the Forum went. This can be an online form (post-Forum), a paper form (whilst concluding Forum), a group discussion or personal reflection.

If you wish to use an online form, we suggest using the following websites to write up a survey. Think about sending out a Forum 'wrap up' email with the resolutions written up and the reflection link.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/>
<https://www.google.com.au/forms/about/>

Youth Forum Survey

We would really appreciate it if you could fill in this short survey to help us improve our youth forum into the future.

Which section are you in?

- Cubs
- Scouts
- Venturers
- Other

How did you hear about the forum?

Your answer _____

What did you think the forum would be like?

Your answer _____

What did you like about the forum?

Your answer _____

What didn't you like about the forum?

Your answer _____

What was your favourite resolution from the forum?

Your answer _____

What do you think we need to change for next time?

Your answer _____

TIPS AND TRICKS

Never say no

Try your hardest to not shut down ideas provided by Youth Forum members as soon as they are suggested. It is important to make everyone feel heard, otherwise you may not get honest, open opinions.

Break up the schedule of the forum

Don't expect the Youth Forum members to sit around for hours chatting, so make sure you keep an eye on participants. If they look sleepy, jump up and have a game. If arguments are getting out of control, take a break, run around or talk about something else for a bit.

Don't be scared to check in

Remember, it is the Youth Forum organiser's responsibility to make sure the decisions of the Forum are heard. Don't be afraid to check on the progress of your recommendation and make sure it gets to the right person.

If you aren't sure... ask

We are all in this together; when it is your first time running an activity, it can be daunting. Ask as many questions as you can to your leaders, role models and the SYC. If you are unsure, give it a Google. There are youth forums held all over the world, both in Scouting and outside.

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

If you can't find the answers in this resource, get in touch with us!

The NSW State Youth Council: speakout@sync.nsw.scouts.com.au

NSW State Commissioner Youth Empowerment: SC.YE@nsw.scouts.com.au

NSW Deputy Chief Commissioner (Youth): youth.comm@nsw.scouts.com.au



REFERENCES

This resource is a compilation of resources from Scouting sources around the world. If you want any more information, please use the following links:

World Scout Youth Forum

The World Scout Youth Forum is held every three years, before the World Scout Conference. Participants from all WOSM National Scout Organisations are invited.

<https://www.scout.org/node/296016>

Asia-Pacific Youth Forum

Scouts Australia is part of the Asia Pacific Region of Scouting. It is run similar to the Youth Forum and allows youth members from all National Scout Organisations in the Region to have a say in issues that affect them.

<http://www.26aprsc.com/aprsyf/>

'ILT in a Box'

The Interamerican Scouting Region holds a Regional Leadership Training course and then provides resources for the Course to be run within the National Scout Organisations. This resource includes information on running a National Youth Forum.

http://www.iltx.org/#ilt_in_a_box

Scouts Trinidad and Tobago Youth Forum

National Scout Organisations around the world often hold National Youth Forums. Our Scouting friends in Trinidad and Tobago assisted us with information for this resource.