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### **Relaxation of COVID-19 Rules**

I am pleased to share the news with you that the NSW Government has today announced an easing of restrictions on outdoor gatherings from 20 people to a maximum of 30 people. This easing of the COVID-19 restriction comes into effect from **this Friday 23 October 2020**.

This is great news for our Scout Groups across NSW many of whom have had to make significant adjustments to their weekly program and outdoor activities to accommodate the restrictions. I have even heard of some Scout Groups that have had to impose waiting lists due to the limitations resulting from the current COVID-19 restrictions.

While the Government's announcement will help us welcome some new and current members to join or rejoin Scouts, it does not fully address our most pressing need as an organisation which is the ability for Scout Groups, Districts and Regions to meet and hold activities with the full number of youth members and adult leaders present. Since March, we have experienced a significant decline in our membership with some 2000 resignations.

Scouts NSW has maintained its commitment to the health and safety of its members through the establishment of policies around physical distancing, maximum 1 person per 4sqm, hygiene and record keeping. To date, almost 400 Scout Groups have approved COVID-safety plans.

Given the level of responsibility that Scouts NSW has demonstrated to ensure our members and our local communities in which we operate are safe, I approached the Minister for Public Health and Medical Research last Friday to seek an urgent exemption to the limit of 20. I asked that a maximum of 200 be permitted to gather, allowing Scouts NSW to deliver the full complement of its program. Simultaneously, the Scouts NSW COVID-19 Task Force submitted a similar request to the Ministry of Health for an exemption from the Restrictions on Gathering and Movement Order. I hope that our request is considered favourably and is granted.

I will continue to update you with significant changes to the NSW Government's approach to managing the pandemic. I encourage you to stay up to date by visiting the [Scouting Guide to COVID-19 page](#) on our website.

In the meantime, let us know what else we can do to support you to regain all those youth we lost during COVID-19, and to attract new members.

If you have a question, please email [feedback@nsw.scouts.com.au](mailto:feedback@nsw.scouts.com.au).

With best wishes,

Yours in Scouting,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "N. Tomkins".

Neville Tomkins OAM JP  
Chief Commissioner  
Scouts Australia (NSW Branch)

To contact the Chief Commissioner, please email [chief.commissioner@nsw.scouts.com.au](mailto:chief.commissioner@nsw.scouts.com.au).

#### **Youth Safety in Scouting**

Scouts NSW is committed to operating as a child safe organisation and implementing child safe policies and practices in accordance with the elements of a child safe institution outlined by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse report entitled Creating Child Safe Institutions.

#### **Remember**

All suspicions, concerns or allegations about criminal matters or child protection matters should be reported directly to the Chief Commissioner, the Deputy Chief Commissioner (Youth Safety, Compliance and Support), the CEO or the Child Protection Officer at the Scouts NSW State Office. To make a report use the [online youth protection form](#), call 02 9735 9000 or email [youthprotection@nsw.scouts.com.au](mailto:youthprotection@nsw.scouts.com.au).

#### **Imminent Danger**

If someone is in danger NOW, call 000. When a report is made to the Police, you must subsequently notify the Scouts NSW State Office.

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