

Factsheet

Group Councils



A Group Council supports the provision of a fun, challenging, adventurous and inclusive program for all age sections within the Scout Group. It also supports the operations of the sections across the Group (from the Joey Scout Unit to the Group's adult Leaders and families). The Group Council ensures there is a strong developmental program for all youth members. The program is fundamental to the success or failure of a Group, and so there must be a clear and consistent approach from all youth and adult towards the core components of Scouting, including all elements of the Scout Method, and the implementation of Plan>Do>Review> for all activities.

Group Council offers the opportunity for youth and adult Leaders to perform checks and balances on what level of cohesiveness, engagement, control and direction they have over the programs, sections and events that are occurring in the Group. The program must reflect the interests, goals and aspirations of the Scouts that will be participating in it, as well as the educational goals of the Scout Movement, supported in their implementation by youth and adult Leaders.

Within the Group, each Section should operate relatively autonomously, filled with youth members and Leaders that are capable of implementing the Plan>Do>Review> process over their whole program. Depending on the youth members, adult members, and program, some support from the Group Leader may, at times, be required by the Section. This may mean the Group needs to actively seek and advertise for new adult Leaders.

The intent of the Group should be to have a consistent program, that flows across all sections. The Group Leader is in the best position to provide advice and facilitate this process to ensure delivery on this outcome. Think of the Group Leader as the Patrol Leader of a Patrol, and the youth and adult Leaders as the members of the Patrol working together to deliver Scouting in your Group. The Group, guided by the Group Leader, should set strategic goals that align with the relevant Branch's goals and have strategies for the Sections to meet the relevant goals. The Group Leader needs to build a positive culture within the Group and support the initiatives of the Branch. Group Leaders will also need support and assistance from time to time. At all levels of the organisation, the support structures are there to support the Group and its Leaders, including the Group Committee, District, Region and Branch teams.

The Group Council should meet regularly so that all members maintain a feeling of engagement, direction and cohesiveness of their program and its implementation. A good suggestion for this is to meet every 6–8 weeks, ideally before planning occurs for the next program cycles. This enables Group initiatives and activities to be captured in the programs. Not all Group Councils need to occur in a formal setting, and sometimes it can be very beneficial for creativity and engagement for the Council to be held outdoors, or away from normal meeting locations. Group Councils should always have youth members present, especially from the three older sections.

Youth members across different section of the Group can come together to plan events such as Group camp, Project Patrol ideas and other Group based activities. Working between sections youth members will be able to meet new people and see opportunities that are available to them in the other youth sections.



Take time with your Group Council to go through the following statements (this includes active engagement of youth members). If you can agree with them as a Council, then you are on the right track:

- We have a Group Council Code which is based around the different sections, Unit Codes.
- We plan and review our Group activities and events. If we need support regarding a unique or specialised event then we look for a mentor that can provide advice and guidance.
- We have a strategic plan as a Group, guided by the Group Leader, and work through all sections to achieve the goals through plans to meet intent.
- We actively Plan>Do>Review> our goals and achievements.
- Youth members and adult Leaders at Group Council make sure there are multi-sectional activities, Project Patrols and whole Group activities planned throughout the year.
- Youth leaders at Group Council, supported by the adult Leaders, organise Group Camp including theme, location, activities and other requirements.
- We ensure the whole Group follows the Scout Method, including Youth Leading, Adults Supporting.
- We support each other to utilise the Scout Method in all the activities that our sections do.
- We understand that Scouting is about personal development, and we support each other to develop our youth members in the six SPICES areas.
- We discuss and support fluid transitions of youth members through the sections at Group Council.
- We have, and demonstrate, respect to sensitive situations and conversations occurring at Group Council.
- We understand and regularly make reference to the Educational Objectives of Scouting.
- We support each other to resolve problems and issues when they arise.
- We are collaboratively coordinating multi-section and inter-Group events and activities.
- We support all members in their Scouting journey and personal lives.
- We set a clear standard of behaviour and engagement throughout Group Council and with communications between members of the Group and support all members of the Group in maintaining it
- We undergo a constant review of our performance as members of the Group including regular Leader reviews, goal setting and realignment of requirements and tasks as required.

To help make your Group Council as successful as possible, you could do the following:

- Have clear guidance from the Group Leader or chair of the meeting
- Have a meeting agenda.
- Make sure there is engagement and participation from all members present.
- Record all the creativity, decisions, discussions and reviewing that occurs in our meeting (this doesn't have to be in formal minutes – try an online collaborative tool to track your planning and reviewing).
- Involve youth members who are Patrol Leaders and Unit Leaders in your Group Council at a minimum from Scouts, Venturer Scouts and Rover Scouts.

