

SPECIAL INTEREST AREAS – Why?

V1.0



Some of the early Youth Program Review feedback highlighted that

- Proficiency and achievement badges were continually out of date (use a mantle, develop a film, use a floppy disk)
- Youth members wanted to be challenged versus ripping through a checklist of tedious tasks
- Youth members wanted to drive their journey and do challenges that interested them
- Technology is a part of the lives of all young people and so needs to be a part of their Scouting world to assist, benefit and make a difference

*Scouting is a **non-formal education** movement which means we're all about developing young people as individuals, as responsible citizens and as members of their local, national and international communities.*

Further Youth Program Review feedback said our youth members wanted to

- Take more responsibility for their program
- Have a voice in their organisation
- Participate in a program that is adventurous, fun, challenging and inclusive

We also need to consider that 21st-century **formal education** is no longer about knowledge gathering and rote learning. We know that many schools are beating us at our own game – flipped classrooms, outdoor learning, project-based learning, student goal setting, student voice are all empowering students to take control of their learning, giving learning purpose and direction.

The Special Interest Areas encourage Scouts from all sections to try new challenges plus pursue existing interests to greater depths. Scouts set their own goals, enabling them to design a project that interests and challenges them personally.

Special Interest Areas

Are broad, encouraging Scouts to pursue a diversity of interests and to ensure any activity a Scout could think of can be included

- Are measured against an individual's personal best
- Use Plan>Do>Review> to set and achieve their goals
- Give young people ownership of their development
- Teach Scouts to set, plan towards, and achieve goals

- When units transitioned, it was suggested
 - The unit might choose an area, and then in patrols, an adult supports the patrol to goal set, establish a plan and document the intentions.
 - The initial work might start at the unit, and then the project is finished at home.
 - The adult leader can then check in on progress, provide support and assist as required. The patrols could be interest, ability or age-based.
- Units could brainstorm a heap of ideas under each of the topics to display on the wall
- An adult leader might arrive early or stay late for youth members to seek support to plan a
- Parents can be encouraged to support a youth member to plan a – they will be able to access Scouts | Terrain and the associated resources. For younger youth members they can help in the doing
- Youth members from older sections might come along and have a primary focus in helping in the planning and documenting of a project with younger youth members. This can be an excellent role for parent helpers as well.
- The Special Interest Areas do not replace achievement of Proficiency badges. They are a whole new approach and so need a different approach to implementation.

Bulk Uploads

There are some concerns that you can't bulk upload Special Interest Areas into Scouts | Terrain. The challenge is, how can you bulk upload something different (even slightly) for each youth member? We want them to be empowered, to learn to Plan> Do> Review and take control of their Scouting adventure. That means we need to take risks and explore new ways to make it happen.

We can do this!

We are confident that this approach to can be successful. Why? – Because it is already happening in units across Australia.

