

For a Scout program to be relevant to the young people participating in it, they must always be involved in the planning and reviewing phases. The program must reflect the interests, goals and aspirations of the Scouts participating in it and is fundamental to the success or failure of a Scout Unit.

Unit Councils in each Scout Unit are an essential way for Scouts to perform checks and balances on what level of engagement, control and direction they have over the Unit program as well as the management of the Scout Unit.

## Who runs the Unit Council?

In a nutshell, the Scout Unit should be running the Unit Council with minimal support from adult leaders. They should be leading the way, setting the agenda and running the meeting. Adult leaders are there to support and provide guidance only when necessary.

## How often should the Unit Council occur?

A Unit Council should occur regularly – every four to six weeks but sometimes it can occur once a program cycle. By having regular Unit Councils, all members of the Unit maintain a feeling of engagement and direction with the creation of their program and its implementation.

Remember – these don't have to be boring, formal meetings inside the Scout hall! There are benefits to having Unit Councils in an outdoor, unfamiliar or creative location.

## How do we know if we are on the right track?

Take the time to go through the following statements with your Unit, Unit Council and adult leaders.

- We design and implement our program through the Plan>Do>Review> cycle, including full plan and delivery of activities and events.
- We do the planning and reviewing on activities, programs and events. Adults supports us only if necessary.
- We ensure that the whole Unit is following the concept of **youth leading, adults supporting**.
- The Unit Council has a significant position of leadership, allowing us to support all Unit members in both their Scouting journey and personal life.
- We discuss and put into place, checks and balances of our Units' application of the Scout Method.
- We solve problems and issues if or when they arise.
- We are engaging collaboratively with inter-Group events.
- We discuss and approve achievements, challenges and endorse peak awards.
- We have a strong patrol system and Patrols often operate as sole entities. We maintain a balance of doing Patrol only activities and Unit activities.
- We actively review our activities individually, as well as part of a program cycle.
- We set a clear standard of behaviour through a Unit Code and support all Unit members in maintaining it.
- We undertake a constant review of our performance as members of the Scout Unit.

## How to make your Unit Council as successful as possible!

- The Unit Leader needs to provide clear guidance to the Unit Council and Unit.
- Adult leaders need to provide an appropriate level of support to the Unit and Unit Council.
- Ensure that when support is given that it is at a level that empowers the Unit Council to work with adult leaders to come up with a solution.
- Have a meeting agenda to follow and a clear plan for execution of the meeting.
- Ensure that there is creative and active time during the Unit Council meeting.
- Ensure that all members present are engaging and participating in the meeting.
- Record all the creativity, decisions, discussions and reviewing that occurs during the meeting.
- Celebrate important achievements!

For more information about Unit Councils and programming for the Scout section, please refer to Scouts | Terrain, the Program Handbook, **youth leading, adults supporting** documentation and Scouts Australia program support documentation.