

PROMISE AND LAW

AUSTRALIAN SCOUT PROMISE AND LAW FAQs



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USING THE PROMISE AND LAW

WHEN DO WE START USING THE NEW AUSTRALIAN SCOUT PROMISE AND LAW?

You may begin using both immediately! Use them as part of your discussions with each other, and in ceremonies. You can find helpful program ideas at ypr.scouts.com.au/pl and resource.scouts.com.au

DOES EVERY MEMBER, YOUTH AND ADULT, NEED TO BE ABLE TO RECITE FROM MEMORY THE NEW SCOUT LAW?

Never has it been a requirement for members to be able to say the Scout Law from memory alone. As youth and adults become more accustomed to the content of the Law, and their understanding grows, so will the parts of the law become more familiar and be able to be recalled. Leaders shouldn't be requiring youth members to recite from memory the Scout Law as part of any ceremony – for some youth members dealing with anxiety, learning difficulties, or other issues, it may actually discourage them from undertaking the investiture. However, formations are welcome to use the Law as part of their ceremonies.

DOES EVERY SECTION HAVE THE SAME PROMISE?

Yes, everyone chooses to use one of the two versions of the Australian Scout Promise when it is time to make or reaffirm their Promise. This is true for Joey Scouts as well as the next Chief Commissioner!

DOES EVERY SECTION HAVE THE SAME LAW?

Yes, every member of Scouts Australia is asked to live by the same Scout Law. However, as the Law has been designed to be accessed in a developmentally appropriate way, Joey Scouts and younger Cub Scouts will concentrate on the three key headings: Be Respectful; Do What Is Right; Believe In Myself.

As the youth member gets older and their understanding of the Scout Law evolves and develops, then the sub-points should be introduced.

DO CUB SCOUTS HAVE TO RECITE THE WHOLE LAW WHEN THEY ARE INVESTED, AS IN THE CEREMONIES BOOK?

It is recommended that at their investiture ceremony, Cubs Scouts are asked to repeat the three key headings after the leader of the ceremony. It isn't expected that they repeat the whole Scout Law, or that they recite from memory any part of the Scout Law.

WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION ABOUT EACH OF THE PHRASES IN THE AUSTRALIAN SCOUT PROMISE AND LAW?

Resources have been developed to help leaders, sixers, patrol leaders, unit leaders, and crew members to discuss the elements of the Australian Scout Promise and Law with their members. Known as Discussion Guides, these help you with discussion points written in a developmentally appropriate way for each section.

Go to www.ypr.scouts.com.au/pl or resource.scouts.com.au to download the Discussion Guides.

CAN WE CHOOSE DIFFERENT ELEMENTS OF EITHER VERSION OF THE SCOUT PROMISE TO COMBINE INTO ONE THAT SUITS OURSELVES?

The short answer is "No"! Members, youth and adult, are given the opportunity to consider which of the two versions they would like to make, and their choice is respected by everyone. Changes to the two versions cannot be made.

WHO DECIDES WHICH VERSION OF THE PROMISE TO MAKE?

The only person that can make this decision is the person making the Promise. Everyone should be supported to understand each version, at a developmentally appropriate level, so that they can consider their choice. They are given time to do so. Everyone else respects this choice, including during the ceremony when the person leading the ceremony may ask the member making the promise to repeat the version they chose, after them.



WHAT HAPPENS WHEN MULTIPLE PEOPLE ARE MAKING THEIR PROMISE AT ONCE?

It will depend on the situation – but it's worth remembering that it's the same situation we've been in for a long time, as prior to the current change we had five different versions of the Promise! Depending on the number of people making their Promise together, and the resources you have to hand, you could:

- Display the two versions on a screen and ask everyone to recite their preferred Promise. You can start everyone off together with 'On my honour...'
- Have two people recite the two versions of the Promise simultaneously (or one after the other), with everyone able to choose who to follow. If choosing this one, it is best to practice in advance, as the two versions have different rhythms and different numbers of syllables on each line
- If it's only a very small group of people, ask everyone which Promise they will be making – no pressure should be put on anyone, but you may find everyone choosing to make the same one

You may find another solution that works better for your circumstances too. It is an optional part of the Joey Scout opening ceremony to recite the Promise, so it's quite ok to come up with alternative ways if you find it troublesome to have Joeys saying different versions at the same time.

WILL SCOUTS NEED TO REAFFIRM THE NEW PROMISE?

Current Australian Scouts will not be required to reaffirm their Promise as a result of this change, although some may wish to. Should they need to reaffirm their Promise at another stage – an investiture into a new section or role, for instance – they will need to reaffirm with one of the two new versions of the Promise.



UNDERSTANDING THE PROMISE AND LAW

WHAT MAKES UP THE CONTENT OF THE SCOUT PROMISE?

The Scout Promise embodies the three Principles of Scouting: Duty to Self, Duty to Others, and Duty to God. As you read through either version of the Promise, you can easily identify which phrases capture each of the Principles.

Importantly, World Scouting permits each country to define Duty to God in a way that meets the needs of the society in which it operates. The version of our Promise that refers to spiritual beliefs allows us to use the new definition of spirituality for Australian Scouting, to meet the Duty to God requirement in the Australian Scout Promise:

Spirituality refers to the feelings or beliefs of a person regarding their purpose in life, connection to others and place in the world around them. These spiritual feelings or beliefs may change as a person develops and guide their actions throughout their life.

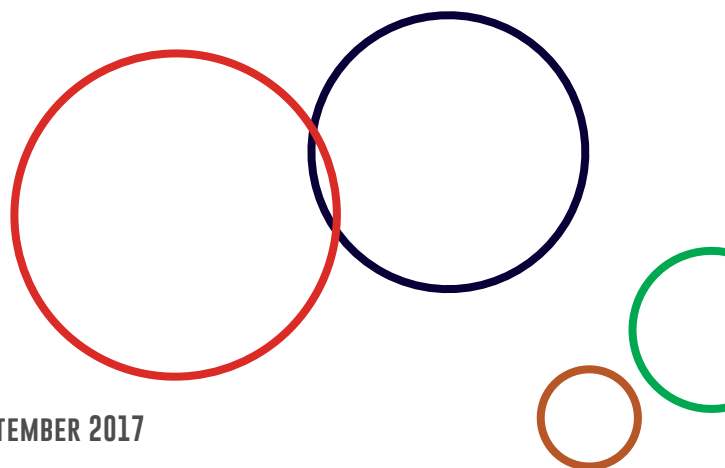
WHAT OTHER PROMISE AND LAW RESOURCES ARE THERE TO USE?

We have developed:

- Posters for your hall
- A series of Discussion Guides to help leaders (adult and youth) to discuss elements of both the Promise and Law
- Some activity ideas to engage with the Australian Scout Promise and Law
- A new tool called the Internal Compass which helps everyone understand spirituality and spiritual development in Scouting
- This FAQ

All are available for download from resource.scouts.com.au or ypr.scouts.com.au/pl

You should have also received copies of the posters to display in your hall.



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PROMISE AND LAW BACKGROUND

WHY DO WE HAVE A PROMISE AND A LAW?

The Scout Promise and Scout Law are integral to the Scout youth program for all sections. In fact, they are one of the elements of the Scout Method. From the Method:

Promise and Law: Scouting values and ideals that underpin all activities and interactions.

They are a part of our education purpose as well, and set a standard for youth and adults to aspire to as they grow and develop through their Scouting journey. Importantly, the Promise captures the three Principles of Scouting in one accessible statement: Duty to Others, Duty to Self, Duty to God. The World Organisation permits member countries to take Duty to God to mean the broader understanding of duty to personal spiritual beliefs, in order to meet the needs of the society in which they operate.

HAVE THE PROMISE AND LAW CHANGED BEFORE?

The words have changed many times in the past 100 years – BP himself was changing them as early as 1911, when he added a tenth Scout Law (though the number of Laws has gone up and down many times since then). Since 1966, there have been four different versions in Australia. You can find different versions in older copies of Scout handbooks – many Scout halls have boxes of them hidden away somewhere, or you can visit a Scout Heritage Centre to see them, as well as some being available online. This change is certainly not the first – and nor will it be the last.

WHAT ABOUT PROMISES AROUND THE WORLD?

Other countries have reviewed their Promises and Laws to ensure they remain relevant to their members and don't exclude young people who want to join. The UK made some big changes in 2013, and New Zealand over the last couple of years. The Promises and Laws of some countries around the world would look very familiar to an Australian Scout, while others look very different – but it's the ideas at their core that we share!

WHY THESE CHANGES?

WHY DID THE YOUTH PROGRAM REVIEW INITIATE A REVIEW OF THE AUSTRALIAN SCOUT PROMISE AND LAW?

For a long time, Scouts Australia has been hearing from members asking about the relevance of elements of both the Promise and the Law for today's Australian society. Words like "thrifty" were often raised in youth forums as being out of date in today's language, for example.

When the Youth Program Review began in 2013, it was clear that a review of the program required looking at all elements of a youth member's experience in Scouting. The Promise and Law is one of the elements of the Scout Method, and since the Method is the way in which the Scout program is implemented, it was agreed that the Promise and Law would be a part of the work of the YPR.

For these reasons, the YPR initiated the Promise and Law review. After the major membership consultation of 2015, the work was passed to a new working party to independently review feedback and prepare the final recommendations.

WHY ARE WE CHANGING THESE IMPORTANT AND TRADITIONAL SCOUTING VALUES AFTER 110 YEARS?

In actual fact, the Scout Promise and Scout Law have evolved and changed numerous times over the history of world Scouting. There are many variations to Australia's own versions that can be found by looking back over the years. Even the word "thrifty" has both disappeared and reappeared across different editions of the Law!

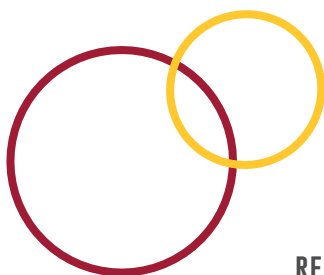
Each and every country writes and reviews their own Promise and Law, and has it approved by the World Organisation. It is important that the Promise and Law meets the needs of the society in which the Scouting organisation operates.

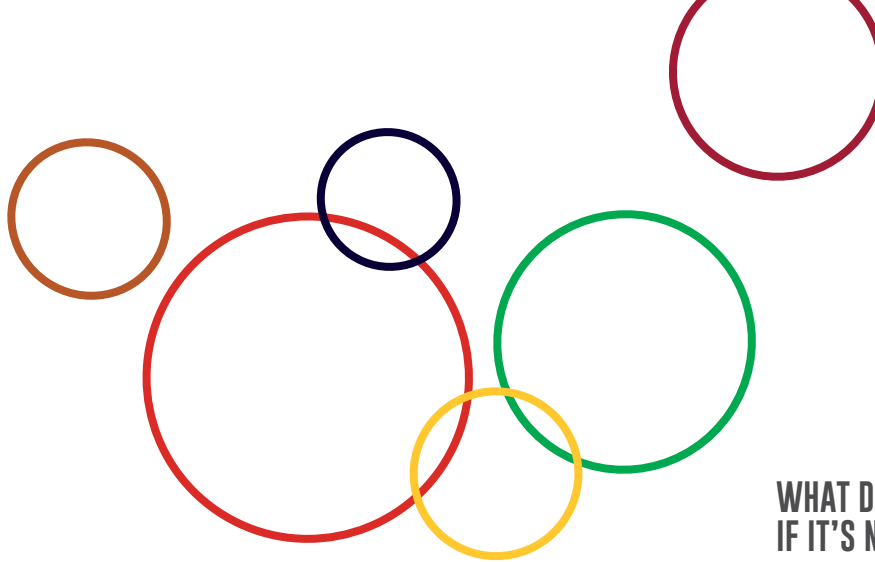
WHY ARE YOU CHANGING THE SCOUT LAW?

We're making it easier for all our members to understand the Scout Law by using common words and phrases of today. By changing the layout, we are engaging youth members of all ages in the one Scout Law. Language changes over time, as does the way that we engage with information, and this change reflects that.

WHY ARE SCOUTS RETAINING THE CURRENT PROMISE?

We asked our members, and though there was very strong support for a new Promise with different terminology for concepts such as spirituality, there was also strong support for the existing terminology. It was decided that providing two options (which is still three fewer than there were) would provide everyone with the opportunity to choose the version that was right for them.





SPIRITUALITY AND RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

WHAT DOES SPIRITUALITY MEAN IF IT'S NOT A RELIGIOUS BELIEF?

For Australian Scouting, the following definition has been created:

Spirituality refers to the feelings or beliefs of a person regarding their purpose in life, connection to others and place in the world around them. These spiritual feelings or beliefs may change as a person develops and guide their actions throughout their life.

WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU DON'T HAVE A SPIRITUAL BELIEF?

Every person has some sense of where they fit in this world – maybe even just being part of nature, or the social connections that are important to them.

HOW DOES DUTY TO GOD, SPIRITUALITY, AND SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT RELATE TO EACH OTHER IN A SCOUTING CONTEXT?

Spiritual Development occurs in Scouting through:

- Exploring a connection with nature and the world around us
- Searching for meaning in life's experiences
- Learning about different religions and non-religious belief systems
- Learning about and respecting others spiritual beliefs
- Participating in Scouts' Owns, reflections or other activities



This allows young people to develop, question and refine their **spirituality**



Through making the Scout Promise, members commit to 'being true to' their spiritual beliefs (**Duty to God**)

Download a copy of the Internal Compass resource guide to learn more about Spiritual Development in Scouting: resource.scouts.com.au or ypr.scouts.com.au/pl

THE PROCESS OF THE CHANGE

WHO APPROVED THE NEW AUSTRALIAN SCOUT PROMISE AND LAW?

Once the research, consultation, and recommendations were complete, the proposal was debated by a committee of National Commissioners and Branch Commissioners from every state branch. Some changes were requested by this committee, before it was shared with the Chief Scout of Australia (Australia's Governor-General, General Sir Peter Cosgrove, for their knowledge.

A submission was then prepared for the Constitution Committee of the World Organisation of the Scout Movement (WOSM). This committee checks it for appropriate reference to the three Principles of Scouting (in the Promise), and that both statements fit within the polices of the World Organisation.

Next the proposals were taken to Scouts Australia's National Executive Committee. This committee is the custodian of our policies, which are held in the document called Policy and Rules. With their approval, and with a change as significant as this one, finally it is tabled for approval by the National Council of the Scout Association of Australia.

As you can see, there is a number of stages that the proposals went through to become officially our new Australian Scout Promise and Law. The next edition of Policy and Rules will contain the new words. Other Scouts Australia publications, as their print runs are renewed, will be progressively updated. Adult training, including eLearning, will also be updated over the coming months.

WHERE CAN I FIND THE BACKGROUND INFORMATION JUSTIFYING THE REVISED AUSTRALIAN SCOUT PROMISE AND LAW?

A number of research papers were prepared between 2013 – 2015 around spirituality, spiritual development, Duty to God, and the Promise and Law, as well as issues to do with recruitment and retention. These were a part of the early stages of the Youth Program Review.

After the major consultation in 2015, a new team came together to work through all the consultation responses. The team prepared a new recommendations paper based on this work. You can download the paper at www.ypr.scouts.com.au/pl

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BUT WHAT ABOUT...

HOW DOES THE OLD LAW MATCH WITH THE NEW LAW? AREN'T SOME IMPORTANT ELEMENTS OF THE OLD LAW LOST IN THE NEW ONE?

As the new Law was being developed, the team spent a lot of time looking at the then current Scout Laws. One of the key things they found was that many laws had very similar meanings to each other, even within a single sections' Law, and could easily be grouped into three categories. The headings of those categories, which make up the core of the new Law, summarise what you're expected to do as a Scout (of any section), and nearly every one of the previous versions of the Scout Laws is either directly incorporated into the new Scout Law, or a word or phrase with a very similar meaning is used in its place.

The colour coded table shows how the old and new laws are linked:



New Law	Old Scout/ Venturer/ Rover/ adult Law	Old Cub Law	Old Joey Law
<p>BE RESPECTFUL Be friendly and considerate Care for others and the environment</p> <p>DO WHAT IS RIGHT Be trustworthy, honest and fair Use resources wisely</p> <p>BELIEVE IN MYSELF Learn from my experiences Face challenges with courage</p>	<p><i>A Scout is trustworthy</i></p> <p><i>A Scout is loyal</i></p> <p>A Scout is helpful</p> <p>A Scout is friendly</p> <p><i>A Scout is cheerful</i></p> <p>A Scout is considerate</p> <p>A Scout is thrifty</p> <p>A Scout is courageous</p> <p>A Scout is respectful</p> <p>A Scout cares for the environment</p>	<p><i>A Cub Scout is loyal and obedient</i></p> <p>A Cub Scout does not give in to themselves</p>	<p>A Joey Scout cares</p> <p>A Joey Scout shares</p>

There are three laws across that table that are in italics: *A Scout is loyal*, *A Scout is cheerful*, and *A Cub Scout is loyal and obedient*. These three do not have direct counterparts in the new Law, though we still believe the important part of their value is represented within the new law.

All three of these laws were found in many of our consultations to be considered less relevant today than they may have been seen as in the past, particularly in comparison to the other points in the Law. Some also raised concerns about blind loyalty or obedience, the latter of which can actually be dangerous and goes against our ideals of 'youth led'. Others noted the expectation of cheerfulness, that someone must always be happy, even when they cannot be so, especially if due

to a mental health issue.

Key parts of these particular values, however, are still represented in the new Law in other ways. Loyalty is about being trustworthy – in being loyal to your team, your family, or your country, you are being trusted by them to do your duty for them. Obedience is about doing what is right – assuming that being obedient is the right thing to do (and it may not always be, such as in the case of accepting or allowing abuse because someone was told to). Cheerfulness can be traced back to BP's original law that 'A Scout Smiles and Whistles under all circumstances' – which is really all about 'fac[ing] challenges with courage': if something is difficult, you keep on battling through.



WHAT HAPPENED TO “ONE WORLD. ONE PROMISE.”?

Those of us that were around in Scouts in 2007 know the phrase ‘*One World. One Promise.*’ pretty well. We wore it on our uniforms, we waved it on flags, and shouted it from the rooftops. The thing is... it was only ever true in the sense that we all share one Promise as a concept.

The phrase is really good marketing, but there hasn’t been a single set of wording for the Promise in a very long time – and John May, a former Vice-Chairman of the World Scout Committee, who came up with it, has said so himself.

Prior to the current Promise, we had not one, but five versions here in Australia – one for Joeys, two for Cubs, and two for Scouts/Venturers/Rovers/adults. But the different versions of the Promise don’t end there. Every country in the world with a Scout organisation has their own Promise (or versions of the Promise). In the UK, there are actually 20 possible combinations of the Promise you can make.

Many countries have their Promise in languages other than English, and in some countries they have multiple versions in different languages. They’re typically quite similar to each other, but none are identical.

The idea of ‘*One World. One Promise.*’ is that we all have made a promise to follow the same set of shared values as Scouts – not that we all use the same words to express that Promise.

I’VE NEVER HEARD ANYONE IN MY SCOUT GROUP COMPLAIN. IF IT’S NOT BROKE, WHY FIX IT?

Every community in Australia is different. Our research showed that we did need to offer an alternate version so that Scouting could be available to a more diverse range of young Australians. All young Australians should be able to say our Promise and follow our Law with understanding and conviction. In some communities, most may well have already felt that the Promise and Law worked and worked well – but in others, they found it difficult to maintain, for a whole variety of reasons.

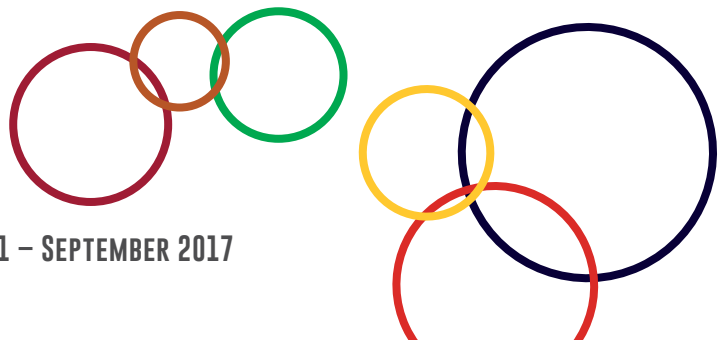
WHY HAS SCOUTS AUSTRALIA CHANGED THE REFERENCE TO AUSTRALIA IN ONE OF THE PROMISE OPTIONS?

Previously, members were able to choose between ‘Australia’ and ‘Queen of Australia’ when making their Promise. Both terminologies encompassed the concept of ‘duty to others’ or ‘help other people’ – in doing your duty to your country, or to the Queen of your country (which represents your country), you’re helping the people in your country.

The two new versions of the Promise no longer provide you with the option of promising just to Australia – your choice is now ‘my community and our world’, or the ‘Queen of Australia’. These two options still encompass the same concepts, but the words we’re using to describe them have changed. Our research showed that many people saw their ‘citizenship’ of the world as more important to capture than Australia, as their duty to others extends beyond the borders of their own country – but that they also see their own communities as important. Others remain happy to represent this concept through the Queen of Australia. We see it as important to provide our members with both of these options.

WHAT DOES THE CHIEF SCOUT OF AUSTRALIA THINK ABOUT THE PROPOSED NEW WORDING?

The Governor-General of Australia, as our Chief Scout, has been kept fully informed and his feedback sought throughout this process. He understands and accepts the changes that have been made.



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