



*Report to the*

**Scouts Australia National Commissioner – Youth Program  
Mrs Julie Creed**

**Chief Director, 13<sup>th</sup> Australian Venture  
Mr Terry Brooke**

**Members of the Venturer Scout National Youth Program Committee**

*from the*

## **National Venturer Scout Youth Forum**

held on 13 January 2006 at the 13<sup>th</sup> Australian Venture,  
Cataract Scout Park, NSW

*Report prepared by*  
**Scouts Australia National Adviser  
National Youth Council & Youth Forums Coordinator  
Mr Scott Sargant**



## **Introduction**

In accordance with the Scouts Australia Major National Youth Events Policy, a Venturer Scout Youth Forum was held on Friday, January 13 at the 13<sup>th</sup> Australian Venture “AV2006”, hosted by NSW Branch at Cataract Scout Park.

Concurrently, a Yakkery was operated at the event, co-located with the Roverscope tent.

This report seeks to provide outcomes of both the Yakkery and the Youth Forum, as well as recommendations for the conduct of each of these concepts at future events.

## **Yakkery**

The operation of the Yakkery was unsuccessful at this event and a number of factors have been identified that influenced this outcome.

This was co-located with the Roverscope static display in order to try and centralise the Yakkery to traffic of the Venturers during the day. This tent was much smaller than anticipated by the Roverscope organisers, and as such, very little area was available to house the Yakkery. Consequently, it was tucked away neatly in a corner and largely hidden from view from passers by. This reduced interest from passing traffic.

Locations of all onsite activities were spread a large distance away from the tents and dining shelters, and whilst all participants had to walk past the Roverscope activities to get to dinner, the Yakkery was hidden from view and as far as possible from the prevailing flow of people.

There were very few Venturers on-site during the day, making it difficult to engage with a large number of Venturers. A trickle of people through the Yakkery at a Venture amounts to 3 or 4 an hour. A similar trickle at a Jamboree would equate to more like 30 or 40 an hour.

The facilitator was also present as an observer from the organising committee for the 14<sup>th</sup> Australian Venture, and whilst every effort was made to ensure these two aims did not conflict, a number of essential meetings occurred during operation hours, meaning the facilitator was not available for some of the time. This had a smaller impact than the other factors that deterred Venturer participation.

It should be noted, the organising committee were very supportive in accommodating all requests for resources in the operation of the Yakkery.

In summary, the Yakkery in the format employed at this event was unsuccessful. The few inputs received were passed on to the Youth Forum and incorporated into the discussions there.

## ***Recommendations:***

1. It is recommended the Yakkery concept is not pursued for future Ventures.
2. If it is to be pursued for future Ventures, then the following recommendations are made:
  - 2.1. The Yakkery should operate for a few hours after dinner when all Venturers and Leaders are on-site and many are looking for something to do and somewhere to sit.

- 2.2. The Yakkery be located in an area with high visibility and high passing traffic. For example, it could be co-located with the Contingent Offices as a “National Contingent” type display – including information on National Structure and Office bearers, International Opportunities, National Youth Council etc and to allow a less casual area for interaction than the Roverscope display.
- 2.3. The Yakkery be provided with a comfortable environment to operate in, including comfortable chairs (perhaps not lounge chairs though!).
- 2.4. National Youth Council members should be considered as likely candidates to man / support the Yakkery.

### **Venture Feedback**

In conjunction with the 14<sup>th</sup> Australian Venture Organising Committee, a series of feedback surveys were constructed and distributed to gauge reaction of the participants to a number of aspects of the Venture.

SANITY Music gift vouchers were offered as a reward for participating in the Survey with five \$30 gift vouchers being presented from completed surveys drawn at random. These were supplied by the 14<sup>th</sup> Australian Venture.

The facility to give feedback online after the event has proven reasonably successful with another 50% of responses given again after the event bringing the total numbers of each survey completed to around 250 to 300 (a 40% – 50% participant hit rate).

The results of these surveys should be available by mid March to allow time for the large amount of data entry required. *A copy of each of the surveys is attached at the end of this report.*

### ***Recommendations:***

3. A similar format of survey be conducted for feedback on future Ventures.
4. No more than THREE surveys should be employed.

### **Youth Forum**

#### **Discussion Topics**

The Venturer Scout National Youth Program Committee were pursued for input some months before the Venture to give input into discussion topics. Contributions were received from Queensland and Western Australian Branches. This proved problematic in determining significant discussions, though the outcome was still very useful, with the Venturers giving tremendous interest and passion to their discussions on the final topics.

The Venturers themselves contributed some very significant and challenging discussion topics in addition to those referred to them. Their consideration of these topics should be commended.

The NYC Discussion Topic reporting format was utilised to help develop discussions amongst the delegates and seemed to work quite well. *The outcomes are attached at the end of this report in this format.*

### ***Recommendations:***

5. The National Venturer Youth Program Committee should consider and contribute discussion topics from its annual meeting in the year preceding the Venture.
6. Discussion outcomes should be forwarded, as relevant, to the:
  - Scouts Australia National Operations Committee,
  - Scouts Australia National Scout Youth Program Committee,
  - Scouts Australia National Venturer Scout Youth Program Committee,
  - 13<sup>th</sup> Australian Venture Organising Committee,
  - 14<sup>th</sup> Australian Venture Organising Committee and
  - Scouts Australia National Youth Council for their considerations.

### **Participants**

Once the discussion topics were confirmed, an information pack, including an application form, was distributed via email to all participants and made available for download on the AV2006 website. This generated interest and gave the participants who put their names in early a chance to speak to their contemporaries and gather a range of opinions and information about the topics. *A copy of the information pack is attached at the end of this report.*

Getting notification of participants from Contingents was still problematic though. Many contingents did not notify their finalised list of participants until the Venture was underway. This disadvantaged those delegates in that they did not have the opportunity to canvas opinion of discussion topics.

A total of 28 delegates participated in the Youth Forum. The delegates who attended did a fantastic job and should be congratulated for their input. *A full list of participants is attached at the end of this report.*

Certificates signed by the National Chief Commissioner, the National Commissioner Youth Program and the Youth Forum Coordinator were pre-printed and presented at the conclusion of the Forum to each delegate. *A copy of this certificate is attached at the end of this report.*

### ***Recommendations:***

7. Information packs and timetables should be prepared and distributed to all delegates and potential delegates (i.e. all Venture attendees) at least 2 months prior to the event.
8. Delegates should nominate to their Branch Commissioner and/or Contingent Leader prior to the event and it should be the responsibility of these two people to ensure their Branch / Contingent is adequately represented.

### **Observers**

A number of observers were present at various points during the discussions:

Mr John Ravenhall, National Chief Commissioner  
Mrs Julie Creed, National Commissioner – Youth Program  
Mr Cory Lang, Chief Director, New Zealand Venture 2007  
Mr Stuart Fleming, Contingent Leader, New Zealand Contingent

Miss Nikketah McGrath, Deputy Chairperson, Scouts Australia National Youth Council  
Mr Terry Brooke, Chief Director, 13<sup>th</sup> Australian Venture (only to greet and answer direct questions)

Thanks are given to John, Julie and Terry for their input on direct questions from the delegates. Thanks are also given to Nikketah for her support in getting the discussion outcomes collated and prepared for reporting.

### **Facilities**

The VIP Function centre was used to host the Youth Forum. Luckily, there was a cool change that day and the centre was reasonably comfortable to be in. Lighting, seating, tables etc were all adequate. Pens, paper, markers, butcher's paper, computing facilities and access to a printer and photocopier were all available and made the execution of the forum possible - particularly in printing the last minute participant certificates and in showing drafts of the outcomes to the participants.

### ***Recommendations:***

9. A facility with adequate lighting, climate control should be made available for the youth forum, as well as access to computing, printing and photo-copying facilities

### **Timing**

The Youth Forum was scheduled to run from 8.30am to 1.00pm with lunch at the end of this time. The discussions took a great deal longer than this as the participants had a great deal of input to give. Perhaps the youth forum should be extended by an hour or so to accommodate this extra input or the number of discussion topics should be truncated by one to allow full consideration of the topics the Venturers themselves contribute.

### ***Recommendations:***

10. A period of at least 4 hours be allowed for discussion of THREE set topics plus the Venturers' own topics and the event feedback. Any breaks and meals should be additional to this time.

### **Catering / Budget**

Lunch was provided by the main catering team and was the same menu as provided to everyone else that day – pies, sandwiches and hot dogs. Lollies for aiding the discussion and drinks were provided at additional expense to the organiser. Additional funds for this was not available from the activities budget.

### ***Recommendations:***

11. A special meal be catered for the participants as a thank you for their input. This could be served in a VIP type fashion.
12. A budget be allocated for the Youth Forum at future Ventures to allow for catering including drinks and snacks for around 30 participants.

## **Summary**

A special thanks must go to Toni-Lee Game, Sharon Douglass and Terry Brooke (AV2006 Organising Committee) for all of their support in conducting the Youth Forum and Adam McLean and Jason Thomson (Roverscope) for their support of the Yakkery. Thanks also to Nikketah McGrath for her contribution to the preparation of the discussion outcomes from the Youth Forum.

***Scott Sargant***  
***Scouts Australia National Adviser***  
***National Youth Council & Youth Forums Coordinator***

## ***List of Attachments:***

1. Extract of Participant Passport describing the Yakkery and Yakkery signage
2. Youth Forum Information and Application pack
3. Delegate Information Pack
4. Participants of the 13<sup>th</sup> Australian Venture
5. Blank Participation Certificate (actual certificates printed on parchment paper)
6. Venturer Scout Youth Forum Discussion Outcomes

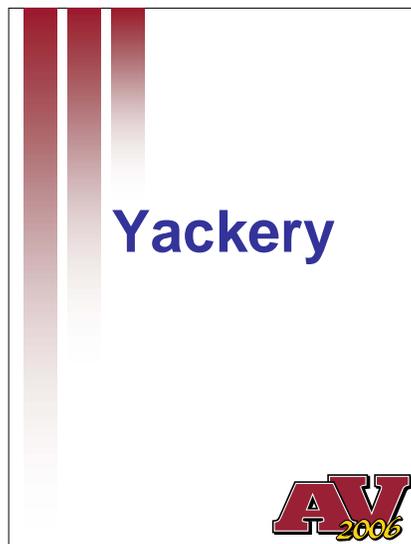
**Attachment 1: Extract of Participant Passport describing the Yakkery and Yakkery signage**

**Yakkery**

Drop into the Yakkery & have YOUR SAY about the Venture...about Venturing...about Scouting...about being a young person in a modern and progressive Australian Society! (Well, that may be a bit heavy...but if you really want to.....) The YAKKERY is your opportunity to tell the "big wigs" of Scouting what you think about how our Organisation is going. Give them ideas on how to make Venturing more inspiring and accessible, how to make Scouting bigger and better, how to make Ventures even more incredible and pretty much anything else you think they need to hear from Venturers themselves! All ideas and comments will be fed into the National Youth Forum, the National Youth Council, the Venture Organising Committee or the National Operations Committee! Located in Roverscope.

**Yakkery Signage:**

Sign Size:  
600x400mm



Number to be Ordered: 1

Please put text in where you need too and symbols as required. Also note the number of each sign.



**National Adviser  
National Youth Council  
& Youth Forums Coordinator**

Scott Sargent M.P.S. (WA)

Email: [nyc.adviser@scouts.com.au](mailto:nyc.adviser@scouts.com.au)

Phone: 0416 114 220



**Memorandum  
3 October 2005**

- To:** All Branch Commissioners –Venturer Scouts,  
All AV2006 Contingent Leaders,  
All BVC Chairpersons,  
All AV2006 Attendees.
- Cc:** Chief Director – 13<sup>th</sup> Australian Venture (AV2006),  
National Chief Commissioner,  
National Commissioner – Youth Program,  
Chairman – Scouts Australia National Youth Council.

**Re: Australian Venturer Scout Youth Forum – January 13 2006 at AV2006**

The arrangements and discussion topics for the Venture Youth Forum have been finalised at last, and it is with pleasure that we invite Venturers attending the 13<sup>th</sup> Australian Venture at Sydney Scout Park in January 2006 to apply to attend.

Applications need to be made through your Contingent, and nominees should be endorsed by both the Branch Venturer Council and your State Contingent Leader.  
Each Australian Contingent should nominate between 3 and 5 delegates to attend the Youth Forum.

Delegates will be required to attend a short briefing meeting on the evening of January 4 to collect the final information regarding the discussion topics, to meet other delegates and to confirm arrangements for the Forum to be held on January 13.

The forum will be conducted on the morning of January 13 and delegates will be attending in place of attending one activity. The Venture organisers have agreed to assist where possible to still allow you to make the most of your activity time so you don't miss out on your favourite activity. The Forum will be concluded with a Luncheon for the delegates, with members of the National Team and Organising Committee in attendance to receive the recommendations of the Youth Forum.

Details of the draft discussion topics have been listed at the bottom of this letter for prospective delegates to consider.

If you have any questions regarding the Youth Forum, please contact me on the details listed herein.

Yours in Scouting,

*Scott Sargent*

*Scouts Australia National Adviser – Youth Forums Coordinator*

**Topic: Your Issues**

**Background:**

The foundation of a good Youth Forum is to allow you to talk about issues that are important to you in Venturers.

One of the first sessions we will run will be aimed at finding out what things YOU want to talk about. What issues currently affect you and your Venturer Unit that you think either other Units or the District, Branch and National teams can or should be able to help with? We will then work these into the topics of discussion if they fit, or hold another session where we look at addressing these issues specifically.

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**Topic: Venturer Apathy – Making a commitment...and sticking to it!**

**Background:**

Scouting is notorious for having trouble getting members to commit to events and reply to requests for information. Many Venturer Units also struggle to make events and activities a reality because Venturers (and some of the Leaders) won't make a commitment to attend and support events and activities until the last minute. This causes a lot of inconvenience and often will affect the quality of the event, or lead to its cancellation?

So what causes this apathy and procrastination? How do we overcome it? How can we spread this new "attention to deadlines" and "commitment to success" through other Sections of Scouting?

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**Topic: Recruiting Scouts**

**Background:**

So you made it this far in Scouting....how?! Are you surprised? What helped you make the decision to join Venturers? What should Venturer Units be doing to help attract and recruit Scouts and non-Scouts alike into Venturing? Is there anything you remember about joining Venturers that discouraged you or other Scouts you know from advancing to Venturers? We think it's fun and rewarding – help us to convince everyone else!

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**Topic: 13<sup>th</sup> Australian Venture**

**Background:**

As much planning and effort as goes into putting on an event such as a Venture, there will always be ways to consider improving things for the rest of the event, and for future events. Consider everything from promotions, to communications prior to Venture, to expeditions and every other aspect of Venture life.

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**Topic: Award Standards Committee / Queens Scout Award**

**Background:**

It has now been about 7 years since the present format of the Queens Scout Award was introduced – including the development of the Awards Standards Committee system. The Venturer Section program (including the Award Scheme) is due for its National Review to start in the coming year.

What do you think of the Awards Standards Committee? Is it a good concept? Does it operate efficiently? Can we make it easier or more simple? If so, how? Does it encourage or discourage people from starting or completing their Queens Scout Award?

What do you think of the Queens Scout Award Structure? Is it too easy, too hard, too simple, too complex, about right etc? Does it have enough tasks? Too many tasks? The wrong kind of tasks? Why do we not have more people attempting or achieving their Queens Scout Award?



13<sup>th</sup> Australian Venture  
Venturer Scout Youth Forum  
Application Form



Full Name

Membership Number  Date of Birth

Home Address

Town/Suburb  Postcode

Scout Group

Region

Branch

Home Phone  ( )

Work Phone  ( )

Mobile Phone

Email Address

Contingent Leader Approval  Date:

Branch Venturer Council Approval  Date:

**Nominee's Declaration:**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, wish to participate in the 13<sup>th</sup> Australian Venture  
Applicant's Name

Venturer Scout Youth Forum. I understand this is a valuable opportunity to contribute to the development of Venturing and Scouting in Australia, and that as a Contingent delegate I will be representing Venturers from my State / Territory.

I will conduct myself at all times in accordance with the principles of the Scout Law and Promise and will do my best to be an active and worthy contributor to this Forum.

Above all, I will do my best to make it fun – oh, and productive!

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Applications signed by the Nominee, the Branch Venturer Council representative and the Contingent Leader should be forwarded to the address below by **1<sup>st</sup> December 2005**:

**Scott Sargant**  
**Scouts Australia – National Adviser Youth Forums**  
**c/- PO Box 467**  
**WEST PERTH WA 6872**



# Australian Venturer Scout Youth Forum

*13<sup>th</sup> Australian Venture  
January 2006*

Delegate Information Pack



## *Discussion Topics*

**Topic:           Your Issues**

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We will then work these into the topics of discussion if they fit, or hold another session where we look at addressing these issues specifically.

**Topic:           Venturer Apathy – Making a commitment...and sticking to it!**

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Scouting is notorious for having trouble getting members to commit to events and reply to requests for information. Many Venturer Units also struggle to make events and activities a reality because Venturers (and some of the Leaders) won't make a commitment to attend and support events and activities until the last minute. This causes a lot of inconvenience and often will affect the quality of the event, or lead to its cancellation.

So what causes this apathy and procrastination? How do we overcome it? How can we spread this new "attention to deadlines" and "commitment to success" through other Sections of Scouting?

**Topic:           Recruiting Scouts**

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We think its fun and rewarding – help us to convince everyone else!

**Topic:           13<sup>th</sup> Australian Venture**

**Background:**

As much planning and effort as goes into putting on an event such as a Venture, there will always be ways to consider improving things for the rest of the event, and for future events.

Consider everything from promotions, to communications prior to Venture, to expeditions and every other aspect of Venture life.

## *Discussion Topics (continued)*

**Topic:** Award Standards Committee / Queens Scout Award

**Background:**

It has now been about 7 years since the present format of the Queens Scout Award was introduced – including the development of the Awards Standards Committee system. The Venturer Section program (including the Award Scheme) is due for its National Review to start in the coming year.

What do you think of the Awards Standards Committee? Is it a good concept? Does it operate efficiently? Can we make it easier or more simple? If so, how? Does it encourage or discourage people from starting or completing their Queens Scout Award?

What do you think of the Queens Scout Award Structure? Is it too easy, too hard, too simple, too complex, about right? Does it have enough tasks? Too many tasks? The wrong kind of tasks? Why do we not have more people attempting or achieving their Queens Scout Award?

## *Youth Forum Schedule*

January 4 A quick “meet and greet” session to distribute final information packs and consider any late additions to the discussion topics. You will meet the other delegates and have the chance to ask all the questions you like about participating in the Youth Forum. There will be a notice at Registration and/or Administration letting you know where and when to meet.

January 13 Meet at 8.30am to take part in the Youth Forum. Please be on time. You only need to bring the thoughts you have on the topics and feedback from other people you have spoken to over the course of the Venture or in your Venturing / Scouting career and contact network.  
We will be providing a special lunch for all the Forum delegates at the conclusion of the Youth Forum. By the end of lunch we should be able to give you copies of the outcomes to look over so you can agree this is what was actually discussed and recommended.

The agenda for the Forum will be as follows:

8.30am	Welcome and introduction
8.45am	Discussion begins
10.00am	Refreshments
10.15am	Discussions continue
11.30am	Refreshments
11.45am	Discussions directed towards formulating recommendations
12.00pm	Collation of feedback / responses / tidy up the loose ends
12.30pm	Close and Lunch

Dress Code: Come in your Venture shirt with your name tag.

## *Some Words of Welcome.....*

### *From the Chief Commissioner....*

Venturing is where most of Scouting's Values and Skills come together. It is a tremendous challenge and learning situation. This Forum is another opportunity to "set the world right".

Try to keep the "big picture" of our Scout world in mind. There are over 20 million of us world wide! Some of your contemporaries have recently attended Forums and conferences in Asia and North Africa. That's where Scouting can take you, but you do have to earn the privilege.

Where should Venturer Scouting be in Australia in ten years time? What do young people of your age need most? A Review starting in 2006 will examine this in detail. Get in now with your views!

Then there is your next challenge - Rovers - the guys you have met on "Dragonskin" or "Hoadley Hide" or other local events. Rovers have been doing well lately! For example, the Rover Peace Boomerang for 2007, taken all around Australia, has been signed by the King of Sweden, the Australian Chief Scout, the Prime Minister and many State / Territory leaders. As well as all this, our NRC Chairman, has been elected to chair the next World Scout Youth Forum in Korea in 2008.

You see, there is no end to Scouting's challenges and opportunities. This Forum is yet another one!

**John Ravenhall AM**

*Chief Commissioner, Scouts Australia*

### *From the Youth Forum Coordinator....*

It is my pleasure to welcome you all to the Youth Forum, to congratulate you on taking on the task of being a voice for the Venturers of Australia and having an interest in the progress of both Venturing and Scouting for the future.

The feedback of the Youth Forum is not only considered as an important part of the National Strategy to increase the input of young people at all levels of the organisation, but is used as an integral source of feedback for the National Venturer Youth Program Committee as well as resourcing the National Youth Council.

I am looking forward to hearing your thoughts and opinions, and helping to put them together so the best ideas of our youth members are harnessed as we move into the next 100 years of Scouting. And let's try and have fun whilst we are at it – it is all part of the Venture experience!

**Scott Sargant**

*National Adviser - NYC and Youth Forums,  
Scouts Australia*

### *From the National Commissioner - Youth Program....*

Congratulations on being prepared to participate in the Venturer Scout Youth forum. The National Team at Scouts Australia is committed to ensuring our youth members have a say in Scouting decisions. Be assured that what you say is heard, and listened to. All your Chief Commissioners will receive feedback from the Youth Forum, as will the National Youth Council, the National Rover Council and the National Venturer Scout Program Committee – made up of the Branch Commissioners for Venturers from each of the Branches. Your suggestions and opinions will be taken on board, discussed and acted upon.

Of particular importance, the Venturer Scout Section Review will begin this year, so it is an ideal opportunity for you to give some constructive suggestions and feedback as to where you want your Section heading in the future.

Have a great time – it is a wonderful opportunity, so make the most of it!

**Julie Creed**

*National Commissioner - Youth Program,  
Scouts Australia*

### *From the National Youth Council Chairman....*

Welcome to AV2006 Venturer Scout youth forum and congratulations on wanting to ensure you get the most of your time in Venturers.

A key goal of Scouts Australia is to ensure that the youth members of this YOUTH organization get to have a fair say on the way events, programs and award schemes just to name a few are operated. That opportunity for your guys and girls starts here today.

AV2006 gives you a rare chance to come together as a nation of Venturers, arguably the most fun and exciting section of Scouting. I encourage you to take this opportunity with both your hands and carefully think about and prepare your discussions on these topics. Remember that your thoughts will go to numerous different Councils and Commissioners within Scouts Australia, thus the thoughts that you come up with today will go directly to the decision makers.

You can make a difference, enjoy the day, enjoy the Venture, enjoy the discussions.

**Mark Grima**

*Chairman – National Youth Council  
Scouts Australia*

#### Attachment 4: Participants of the Venturer Scout Youth Forum

First Name	Surname	Branch	First Name	Surname	Branch
Michael	FREEMAN	ACT	Ben	DONALD	Vic
William	MUDFORD	ACT	Laura	MAYWOOD	Vic
Jade	ELLIOT	NSW	Murray	PATERNOSTER	Vic
James	BROOKER	NSW	Jamie	QUARRIER	Vic
Lizzie	MELVILLE	NSW	Andrew	QUARRIER	Vic
Rebecca	MONTI	NSW	Sarah	BOYLEN	WA
Anthony	HABLER	QLD	Kathleen	BURKE	WA
Tash	MCGRATH	QLD	Georgie	HAYES	WA
Leal	MINNIS	QLD	Katarina	MCDOWELL	WA
Annalise	TAYLOR	QLD	Kate	TRIPOVICH	ACT
Janelle	LAPANOWSKI	SA			
Nicholas	MAC	SA	<b>Observers</b>		
Erin	SMITH	SA	John	RAVENHALL	NCC
Eliza	TUGWELL	SA	Julie	CREED	NCYP
Naomi	HOWE	Tas	Nikketah	MCGRATH	NYC
Rebecca	JONES	Tas	Scott	SARGANT	Coord.
Rachel	FLITMAN	Vic	Cory	LANG	NZ
Jessica	ITALIANO	Vic	Stuart	FLEMING	NZ





*Scouts Australia  
wishes to extend its sincere thanks  
to*

*for your participation in the  
Australian Venturer Scout  
Youth Forum*

*held at the 13<sup>th</sup> Australian Venture,  
Sydney Scout Park  
13<sup>th</sup> January 2006*

*Scott Sargant  
National Adviser  
Youth Forums*

*John Ravenhall AM  
Chief Commissioner  
Scouts Australia*

*Julie Creed  
National Commissioner  
Youth Program*

*13<sup>th</sup> Australian Venture  
Venturer Scout Youth Forum  
13 January 2006  
Cataract Sydney Scout Park*

**Topic: Venturer Apathy – Making a commitment...and sticking to it!**

**Background:**

Scouting is notorious for having trouble getting members to commit to events and reply to requests for information. Many Venturer Units also struggle to make events and activities a reality because Venturers (and some of the Leaders) won't make a commitment to attend and support events and activities until the last minute. This causes a lot of inconvenience and often will affect the quality of the event, or lead to its cancellation.

So what causes this apathy and procrastination? How do we overcome it? How can we spread this new "attention to deadlines" and "commitment to success" through other Sections of Scouting?

**Topic Breakdown / Sub themes:**

- What contributes to Venturer apathy
- How to overcome Venturer apathy
- Cause- organisation of activities
- Committing early to the unit and their activities
- Venturers not being able to make it to activities due to time and money
- Fundraising- need more commitment by parents
- Need more information given about activities
- Other commitments placed on Venturers- e.g. sports, work, school
- Leaders need to be stricter on deadlines for activity and payments
- Need leaders to understand the situation the above issues cause for their Venturers
- Leaders sometimes have the same problems with apathy as well.

**Summary of Discussions:**

- Need incentives to go to Venturers- need to organize nights that accommodate everyone's interests
- Difficulty between Venturer and Scout sections, as Scouts had everything organized for them, where as freedom for programming is given in Venturers
- Everyone who says they will be at an activity needs to be there as the activity may not be able to go ahead with fewer numbers
- Need to condense paperwork- eg. AV2006 had too many forms
- It is possible to get grants from companies to go towards activities and equipment
- Every Venturer in the unit puts in a small amount of money each week to go in to a 'kitty fund' to be used for expensive activities (*like weekly subscriptions*)
- Activity planner- think of one activity for each letter of the alphabet can be used as a source of program development ideas

- More involvement from leaders in the planning and execution of the program.
- Refresher and more advanced unit management courses to be made available for interested members of the Unit Council
- Doers/ followers/ terrorists framework
- HSC / work / sport and heavy commitments for Venturers
- Need early warning of activities from units so Venturers can plan to get time off
- Reputations of Venturing forces Venturers to leave as it is 'not cool'
- Building up Venturers skills for activity planning from a one night activity to a major expedition
- Organisation of activities through delegation
- Need unit councils and units working together with leaders
- Varying size of units and age spread
- Need more courses and easier access for rural Venturers
- Need for more activity ideas
- More exposure to show scouting as being more acceptable
- Combine smaller units to do big activities
- Provide and promote more benefits of training offered to Venturers i.e., charge certificate
- Venturers don't think they can complete their QSA so they don't start it
- Varying images of Venturers, some people see them as being simply another youth group
- There are varying attitudes of youth members in Venturers, due to the big age spread
- Number, cost and range of activities
- Challenges with the QSA with doing reports and getting the report back if it is not acceptable in time to address the identified issues.

### **Recommendations:**

*The delegates of the 13<sup>th</sup> Australian Venture Venturer Scout Youth Forum recommends that:*

- Leaders are trained to encourage and support their Venturers and to actually receive and distribute information
- There is a better break up of the Queen Scout Award, so that Venturers know how they can do it in the time frame
- There is more advertising and publicity of the Venturer and rover sections specifically. Any such advertisements should feature the new uniform only and not the old uniform.
- Venturers are educated about time management
- Venturers are given a more incremental introduction to the processes and responsibilities for activity organisation within the Unit
- A program ideas pack is made and sent to all Venturer units, which includes a pamphlet about activities available in the local area, contact details for Branches, and all state Venturer websites
- Rovers should run the leadership courses and other courses to make them more interesting and to develop skills to build links between the unit and sections.
- There is a massive review of the Unit Management course undertaken
- Venturer units are more strict on deadlines and payments, and those Venturers who don't commit to the deadline do not participate in the activity
- Venturer units give their members more notice of activities, especially to people who are not there when the activities are planned
- Venturers are given more information about major events and given rewards for early registrations eg. Food / music gift vouchers.

*13<sup>th</sup> Australian Venture  
Venturer Scout Youth Forum  
13 January 2006  
Cataract Sydney Scout Park*

**Topic: Award Standards Committee / Queens Scout Award**

**Background:**

It has now been about 7 years since the present format of the Queens Scout Award was introduced – including the development of the Awards Standards Committee system. The Venturer Section program (including the Award Scheme) is due for its National Review to start in the coming year.

What do you think of the Awards Standards Committee? Is it a good concept? Does it operate efficiently? Can we make it easier or more simple? If so, how? Does it encourage or discourage people from starting or completing their Queens Scout Award?

What do you think of the Queens Scout Award Structure? Is it too easy, too hard, too simple, too complex, about right? Does it have enough tasks? Too many tasks? The wrong kind of tasks? Why do we not have more people attempting or achieving their Queens Scout Award?

**Topic Breakdown / Sub themes:**

- Award structure
- Award Standard Committees
- Paperwork: Need for activity approval forms for all activities
- New uniform: fitting the Queen scout award badges and tapes on a new uniform
- Leader involvement
- Award guide lines

**Summary of Discussions:**

- Leaders are not always approving activities and awarding the Queen Scout Award
- Need room for more flexibility to allow more Venturers to participate
- Standards for judging the Queen Scout Award should be realistic
- Too many processes and formalities are required before a Venturer can begin an activity for the award
- Problems with blue cards (child protection requirements) for examiners in Qld
- Should get Duke of Edinburgh forms at end of Scouts, when entering Venturers
- The standard for some of the QSA badges is very low in comparison to other areas
- Leaders are not always well informed on the Queen Scout Award structure
- Diversity and flexibility of the QSA is great
- Organisation is a key part of getting the QSA and Venturers should try to start as early as possible
- QSA needs to be challenging for each individual

- ASC needs to be opened to all Venturers in the area so that they can get to know what other Venturers are doing to achieve their badges
- Have a summary and guide for examiners so that they know what their role is
- Paperwork is a pain but necessary to keep things on track so that people know what they have done
- More encouragement is needed to help Venturers start their QSA as it is the hardest step
- Leaders can be too particular on certain areas of the badge scheme, which causes people to lose motivation
- It is good that Venturers are able to choose their own badge examiners
- The entire QSA can be seen as very daunting to new Venturers, not really knowing where to start
- Having a plan of what you are going to do and a timeline for achieving these things is helpful
- Seeing and hearing about what others have done to achieve their Queen Scout is useful and helps to motivate other Venturers into starting their award
- There is a big step from the award scheme in the Scout section where everything is set out, to Venturers where there is a great amount of flexibility
- ASC works only in some areas; e.g. Sydney, A.C.T.
- ASC needs fixing slightly so that all Venturers know how, what, when where and why.
- We need Region and State standards for who should attend courses (eg leadership, unit management) and how often
- Paperwork discourages Venturers, especially those new to Scouting. The passport required double recording of all of the information – eg needs to be recorded on ASC paperwork, in passport and in the portfolio – perhaps the passport could be used in a loose leaf fashion for inclusion into the portfolio directly and the pocket sized book be just a guide and not a record.
- Need more choices for QSA; e.g. some people don't like hiking/canoeing.

### **CAUSES OF NON-PARTICIPATION IN QSA**

- Organisation required
- Disorganisation within the Unit
- Unit Council and Units not working together effectively
- Size of unit/age
- Teenagers
- School, Sport & work
- Money & Transport
- Peer Pressure

### **HOW TO OVERCOME NON-PARTICIPATION IN QSA**

- More ideas (suggestions, etc)
- Show Scouting as being more acceptable, through more exposure
- Deadlines for QSA are too strict
- Combinations of Units to do badgework together
- More benefits from participating in QSA i.e. obtain charge certificate

### **DEADLINES**

- Need someone to organise everything solidly so arrangements are clearly understood by everyone
- More courses and easier access for all Venturers to attend them

**Recommendations:**

*The delegates of the 13<sup>th</sup> Australian Venture Venturer Scout Youth Forum recommends that:*

- There needs to be a significant reduction in the amount of paperwork that is required throughout the Queen Scout Award
- Guidelines for approval of activities completed without prior approval should be developed
- Interstate courses be made available to Venturers who can't attend their own courses and get the course approved and recognised in their State
- Venturers should submit a review at the end of each diamond, not at the completion of the Award
- There is a summary developed for QSA examiners of what their role is in the approval of completion of the task
- There is a standard badgework approval form to take to ASC across all Branches
- A new edition of the Venturer Scout Record Book is created, which is more user friendly or used in a different way (either in a loose leaf format or just as a guide and not a record book)
- Leadership courses should be available at anytime to learn the skills
- Rovers should run the leadership courses as they are able to make the courses more relevant and engaging for the Venturers

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**Topic: 13<sup>th</sup> Australian Venture**

**Background:**

As much planning and effort as goes into putting on an event such as a Venture, there will always be ways to consider improving things for the rest of the event, and for future events.

Consider everything from promotions, to communications prior to Venture, to expeditions and every other aspect of Venture life.

**Topic Breakdown / Sub themes:**

Activities  
Night activities  
Expeditions  
Communications / organisation  
Site  
Other

**Summary of Discussions:**

Activities:

- More onsite and offsite activities and a wider selection
- Confirmations of offsite activities was shocking
- Booking office was too busy / seemed like a pointless exercise
- Need activities that Venturers are less likely to have done before
- Need more information on the activities available – especially if we have to pay for them
- Onsite activities – good but poor time slots
- Don't like the idea of needing to book onsite activities
- Good mix of free and paid activities
- Big day in the city was not organised enough

Night activities:

- more variety and better advertising to know what is on
- Need famous people to perform for night entertainment or a good cover band
- Need better movies
- Need more music / bands in the arena

Expeditions:

- More variety would be good
- Activities were advertised as being all day activities, but were only a few hours, misleading promotion
- Should try and travel during the night to expeditions, not during the day when daylight is wasted sitting on a bus
- Alpine resort organisation was great

- Buses were bad – there were no stops along the way
- Stay closer to activity bases
- Canyoning was excellent
- Mountain resort was good, tenting wasn't great, too close to the public, not enough food
- Alpine resort – packed in a bit tight but the food and accommodation rocked
- Coastal resort – food good, 1<sup>st</sup> aid sucked
- A good range of activities were provided on the expeditions
- Buses were really poorly organised

Site:

- More communication around the site, with a loudspeaker PA system (also could play like a radio) and notice boards with contingent details and other important information on activities
- ATMs and Phone Charging stations should be provided
- Smoking areas were a great idea but could have been placed in better spots so they weren't the centre of attention that attracted Venturers
- Clearer maps should be provided
- Kitchen was too far from the camping site,
- Most things were too spread out around the site
- Activity areas need to be better planned and organised
- Need lights around the site
- Needs better signage indicating where things are
- More toilets and showers should be provided (especially for the females)
- Should have a Couples tent where you can sit together during the night and day, and be open 24/7
- Tent areas were good but the rules about couples in tents were too variable between Units

General:

- Breakfast needs to go for longer / provide more flexible meal times
- Food was a bit plain and there was not enough variety
- Didn't cater for enough people
- Need better promotion – use people who have been to a Venture, provide DVD promos etc
- Organise and advise participants about transport options and cost for expeditions and offsite activities prior to registration (sending a letter out the week before Christmas was far too late)
- Better rules and organisation of competitions- i.e. Vent dollars got out of control
- SMS Reminders and Info alerts
- Need to condense paperwork- eg. AV2006 had too many forms
- All states should get “sex packs”
- Get the Venturers to design the shirts
- 1<sup>st</sup> aid should have younger people who they Venturers can talk to

**Recommendations:**

*The delegates of the 13<sup>th</sup> Australian Venture Venturer Scout Youth Forum recommends that:*

The above comments are considered along with the feedback from the other attendees in the planning of the 14<sup>th</sup> Australian Venture.

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**Topic: Recruiting Scouts**

**Background:**

So you made it this far in Scouting.....how?! Are you surprised? What helped you make the decision to join Venturers? What should Venturer Units be doing to help attract and recruit Scouts and non-Scouts alike into Venturing? Is there anything you remember about joining Venturers that discouraged you or other Scouts you know from advancing to Venturers?

We think its fun and rewarding – help us to convince everyone else!

**Topic Breakdown / Sub themes:**

- Why Scouts don't link up to Venturers
- What Venturers can do to promote their Units to Scouts
- What Venturers enjoy
- What makes Venturers want to stay in Scouting
- Why young people don't join Venturers
- Venturers need to be seen doing stuff eg. Odd placing of tents in cities
- Break down the old stereotypical images
- Venturers should be running activities for Scouts so they can do not seem as intimidating to young Scouts
- The Venturer section needs to be well promoted, so that Venturers may be perceived as being 'cool'

**Summary of Discussions:**

- Get famous people who have done Scouting to promote the benefits of being a part of the movement
- IMAGE- show what Scouts have achieved, and that there is a 'fun' image in venturers
- Units should aim to put up photos of past activities and information about activities they are doing in their Scout halls so other sections can find out more about the Unit
- Good links between Scouts and Venturer Unit Leaders
- Regular combined nights with Venturers and Scouts and Rovers.
- Promote "try venturing" camps
- Bigger promotion of Venturers eg. Set a world record involving Venturers
- Cross-crediting between the Duke of Ed award scheme and the QSA
- Lack of money, appeal, guidance, other commitments and apathy can be a put off
- Venturers could be integrated into the community, e.g. the unit play as a soccer team in the local competition
- Venturers need to choose between units to find the right unit for their needs
- Need more Leader training
- Scout Leaders need to be more encouraging to Scouts to move on to the Venturer section

- Not many people know about Venturers being the next section after Scouts
- Promote Scouting to other young people not involved, i.e. through schools
- Use 'invite a friend' activities to keep Venturer's interest in the section, and to help recruit new youth members
- Numbers and availability of units holds a big part in guaranteeing whether Scouts will move onto the Venturer section
- Organise events to help make venturers better known to the public, eg a camp of new or odd design to get away from the stereotypical 'camping' issue
- Don't ban 'good' activities like fire twirling as these are the activities the Venturers enjoy
- Need examples and case studies of successful fundraisers
- At the age of 14, each Scout should get a Birthday card from their local Venturer Unit saying happy birthday and inviting them to Venturers.

**Recommendations:**

*The delegates of the 13<sup>th</sup> Australian Venture Venturer Scout Youth Forum recommends that:*

- Inter-section activities are promoted and supported
- A resource of programs are developed for sharing between Units and between Branches to ensure high quality programs are provided to prospective members
- There is more communication between units and sharing of programs
- Promotional campaigns should be developed focusing on the Venturer and Rover sections of the movement, designed to appeal to the target age group
- Any advertising and marketing promotions for Venturers features youth members only in the new uniform

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Venturer Generated Topics

**Topic:** Sexual harassment / sexual abuse

**Background:**

At Venture there have been rumours of sexual harassment and attacks by youth members on other youth members. Whilst this forum has not considered facts of these rumours, the generation of them has contributed interest in the topic. Discussions have centred around steps to be taken and considerations to be made for future events and in the management of Scouting in Groups. The topic also considered recent press about paedophilia convictions and how this impacts on the image of Scouting.

**Sexual harassment:**

**Recommendations:**

*The delegates of the 13<sup>th</sup> Australian Venture Venturer Scout Youth Forum recommend that:*  
For all future Ventures, and where possible for all major Venturer Scouting events:

- Information should be released to youth members and leaders about any incidents and repercussions that result in an effort to curb the “rumour mill”.
- Provide clear information to participants of what they should do if something happens
- Welfare officers need to be highly visible and available at all times. These persons should be independent of the medical officers / first aiders.
- A zero tolerance policy should be adopted and enforced for all youth and leaders who engage in sexual harassment.
- Encourage a safety in numbers policy
- Establish clear guidelines and consequences for tent allocations so that all units operate in the same manner.
- Provide plenty of common areas for people to interact in – particularly for wet weather contingency, whereby reducing the compulsion to congregate within tents.
- Have a visible security / safety officer presence
- Establish a curfew in tent lines – as distinct from the rest of the site

**Vilification:**

**Recommendations:**

*The delegates of the 13<sup>th</sup> Australian Venture Venturer Scout Youth Forum recommend that:*  
For all major Venturer Scouting events:

- Have a clear policy on vilification with both guidelines and repercussions distributed to all persons
- Educate and encourage awareness about vilification and its effects on victims.

**Paedophilia:**

**Discussions:**

John Ravenhall explained the stance of Scouts Australia that is taken nationally – a zero tolerance policy of offenders, involvement of the Police at every opportunities and Scouts enjoys a reputation amongst organisations that deal with youth as a leader in Child Protection.

Delegates raised the point that they feel there is a stigma associated with being a youth member of the organisation, not just as an adult member, linking Scouting to paedophilia. They further noted the only time Scouting seems to be in the media regarding child abuse / sex offences is when they are defending the organisation and in “damage control” mode once an offender has been caught. They feel Scouting should do more to quash this stigma / association within the broader public.

**Recommendations:**

*The delegates of the 13<sup>th</sup> Australian Venture Venturer Scout Youth Forum recommend that:*

- Scouting should be more visible in its condemnation of child abuse and capitalizing on every opportunity to cement our reputation as the leaders in Child Protection.

**Leaders who have Children in their Units**

**Discussions:**

As a result of personal experiences, the Venturers relayed the need to ensure leaders are aware of the possibility of favouritism or persecution of their own child or other venturers in the unit, as a result of their relationship. The delegates accepted the need to recognise that the majority of leaders are parents of youth members and without them the section would not be able to function. Some of the issues identified include:

- Parents should not be allowed to mark off badge work – acknowledged this should be done by the unit council representative in most cases anyway.
- Venturers may choose not to communicate freely in front of the Leader’s child for fear the information / opinions will be fed back to the leader – leading to strained relations within the unit
- Leaders may tend to either favour their child or expect more of them than the other members of the unit.
- Leaders may react differently (either more harshly or more leniently) to situations where their child is the victim or target of any accident / joke / incident / agitation etc.

The discussions led delegates to the conclusion that no policy or enforcement of any guidelines is likely to be practical in order to overcome this problem without alienating the Leader or their child – both of which are recognised as valuable members of the Unit. The delegates agreed there should be an awareness campaign to improve appreciation for the unique issues this relationship creates within the Unit. They further recognised the need for understanding amongst members of the unit to the child of the leader to ensure the Unit does not worsen any issues and then find themselves without a leader.

It was acknowledged that many leaders who have children within their own Unit function effectively and efficiently and do a great job as leaders. This recommendation is made in an effort to support Leaders and their children in maintaining a good working relationship with other unit members and is suggested with everyone’s best interests in mind.

**Recommendations:**

*The delegates of the 13<sup>th</sup> Australian Venture Venturer Scout Youth Forum recommend that:*

Scouts Australia formulates an awareness campaign to assist Leaders with children in understanding the unique implications that come from having a Parent as a Leader in the same section as their child, in an effort to reduce the impact and incidence of any negative effects on the relationship of each of the individuals concerned with the Unit (or other section formation) as a whole. This is to be done in an effort to allow everyone (especially the Leaders) to have a more positive and long lasting Scouting experience.