

# Fact Sheet

## Guidelines For Local Political Engagement



### 2020 is an election year State Government election will be held on 31 October 2020

We are seeing increased interest from politicians and candidates in Scouting, which we welcome.

We encourage your Group, District and Region to get to know your local candidates:

- It is a chance to share our stories and create more awareness of Scouting.
- It is an opportunity to seek support for our programs and facilities.
- It is an educational opportunity for your youth to learn more about the local Council, State and Federal Government processes.

#### But we need to do this wisely

In Scouting we should be:

- **Politically engaged but non-partisan**

When we represent Scouting, we put our personal views aside.

- We treat all parties equally, if we invite one candidate to our ARP, what about the others?
- We welcome pledges to support Scouting, but we treat them cautiously. (First the candidate has to be elected, then their party has to win government), and while we welcome offers of support, we don't endorse or support any candidates or parties.
- We do not participate in any election materials like brochures, posters and billboards.
- The Scout brand, our uniform and youth members must not be used to support any candidate.
- When Scouting appears in social media we gratefully acknowledge the support of MPs and candidates but we do not endorse them.
- We also work hard to balance our posts, so party events get equal coverage.

- **Coordinated**

It is vital that Scouts Queensland is aware of all local political engagement, in particular when the Government enters the caretaker period. If you are approached by MPs or candidates wishing to make a Scouting-related announcement, or even if it's just local political candidates visiting a Section meeting or attending a Group or District event, please advise the Branch Support Office asap before it happens. (We may be able to assist with information, or promotions such as social media.)

**Please email our General Manager Dougal Mayor at [gm@scoutsqld.com.au](mailto:gm@scoutsqld.com.au)**

- **United**

As part of our briefing material for all parties, we maintain a wish list of dozens of projects we are seeking help with.

Please don't derail our State-wide effort by making the upcoming elections a referendum on your new kitchen! Your gain could cost the rest of us millions.

Please do not seek support for your pet local project without checking first with our **General Manager Dougal Mayor at [gm@scoutsqld.com.au](mailto:gm@scoutsqld.com.au)**

- **On Message**

There are two 'safe' areas to engage with politicians:

- Our general messages on how Scouting contributes to the Queensland community (the benefits to the whole State, not just what we get out of it as members).
- Stories about your local Scout members (as leaders in their schools and other bodies, their community service, their achievements, major adventures by your Group, etc).

- **Respectful**

Politicians have a tough job, long hours, criticism, and plenty of challenging issues. Regardless of our personal political views, show respect to all who provide this community service. This includes the example we set our youth members, in our words and actions.

- **Prepared**

If you have local political candidates visiting, please ensure:

- that youth and others know who they are, and what they do (avoid embarrassment);
- that any youth who will speak with them or be involved in other ways (e.g. scarfing up, demonstrating an activity, or thanking them for attending) are fully briefed and rehearsed;
- that your event is well-organised so it runs smoothly, as a positive example of Scouting.

- **Opportunity**

Apart from voting, election day is a good day for fundraising activities such as democracy sausages, raffle tickets, etc. If your den is a polling booth, that's easy. If not, you might like to approach a local polling site and do a partnership deal.

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### • Messages

We tell young people that Scouting is adventure, fun, and friends.

We tell parents that Scouting is about skills for life.

We tell educational bodies that Scouting is the largest provider of non-formal education.

Politicians want to hear how Scouting will help them, local communities and the State of Queensland.

Messages like:

- Scouting develops Queensland's future leaders. (In Scouting everyone gets a turn at developing leadership - unlike schools and sport.)
- Scouting helps build communities and social cohesion.
- We welcome all. We are diverse and inclusive, and represent the total Queensland community.
- We are booming in growing outer metropolitan areas, and re-generating in the inner suburbs.
- We are opening new Groups in country areas.
- Scouts Queensland is growing.
- Our database includes thousands of recent members, and a further 13,000 members who are highly active each week.
- Scouting is contemporary.
- Our values have lasted more than 110 years, but our program is always evolving.
- Scouting is active and outdoors – rather than being screen-based.

### • Involvement of Youth

Youth members are the best ambassadors for Scouting. If your Group is asked to provide youth members for a political announcement:

- Ensure that all youth and parents involved give their informed consent.
- Ensure they understand it is about promoting Scouting, not endorsing a political candidate or party.
- We are simply acknowledging a promise of support and that we would do the same for another party which wants to help Scouting.

Also, please ensure that your youth members present well in dress and behaviour.

### • ARPs

There will be ARPs before the State election so it is worth remembering that well-run, youth-focussed ARPs are a great way of involving local political candidates (local Council, State and Federal).

Options for their participation include:

- Acknowledge them all in the welcoming comments, and, at the end, thank them again for attending.
- Ensure they are hosted by trusted people during supper, rather than left to their own devices.
- Introduce them to as many members of the Group/District/Region as possible. (That's what they're there for.)
- Ask one 'neutral' person to respond to the annual report on behalf of all the community guests, this might be the local Mayor, rather than a politician or candidate.
- However let every community guest have the opportunity to say a few words.
- Most importantly, show they are appreciated and welcome!
- Ensure your ARP is a strong representation of the messages of Scouting and stories of local success.

### • Branding and Photography

Scout Groups may be offered a free marquee by an elected politician. These are very generous offers however they often mean that the politicians name will appear on the marquee. When accepting such offers please request that the Group Name appear on the marquee and that the words 'supported by...' pre-fix the politicians name.

For further advice regarding marquee branding please contact the Brand and Sponsorship Team at [brandsupport@scoutsqld.com.au](mailto:brandsupport@scoutsqld.com.au).

Elected politicians regularly share photographs of themselves attending community functions and these are freely shared on social media. In the event of the Government entering a caretaker period prior to an election, please ensure Scout members refrain from appearing in photographs for candidates that could be perceived as promoting one political party.

### • Charity Status

When engaging with local politicians please remember, The Scout Association of Australia Queensland Branch Inc. is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC). The Charities Act (Cwth) 2013 requires that a charity not promote or oppose a political party or a candidate for political office.