

# VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT, RETENTION & ENGAGEMENT: SCOUTS AUSTRALIA

How can we improve the volunteer experience?



## The Context

In Australia, we love to help others, with around 30% of the population participating in some form of voluntary work. As such, it's important that an adequate focus is placed on the quality of the volunteer experience.

Over the last three years, a team of our researchers has been working in close partnership with Scouts Australia to better understand what makes for a meaningful volunteer position.

Across countless surveys and interviews, over 8,000 different members of Scouts from WA, VIC, TAS and SA have provided their input to help shape the volunteer experiences of tomorrow.



## It Starts With Recruitment

Historically, recruitment campaigns for volunteers have focused on the volume, rather than the quality of volunteers. Through this research, it was identified that changing recruitment strategies could help to attract volunteers who would be a better fit for specific roles.

In close consultation, Scouts rolled out a national recruitment program which includes realistic role previews, scripted training and support materials.

## Effective Training

As a volunteer Scout Leader, individuals are given a high degree of responsibility and must undergo essential training to prepare. The research team soon identified that this training was not designed with the volunteer experience in mind, resulting in an often isolating and tedious process. This training process was found to be impacting on the overall retention of volunteers.

To address this, Scouts was advised to improve the programs by:

- Accelerating Training Completion
- Enhancing the Online Experience
- Enriching Socialisation

## Continuing Growth & Promoting Thriving

A key finding of this research has been around the appetite volunteers have to continue learning and to connect with their peers.

In an effort to promote this, the research team has spent time observing and documenting best practices from existing communities of practice (knowledge sharing channels) within Scouts. In future, there are plans to take this information and develop a best practice framework for future communities of practice.

*Throughout these research themes, a core focus has remained on promoting the overall engagement of volunteers. By focusing on attracting the right individuals, training them effectively and providing them with ways to grow and stay connected, Scouts Australia has drastically improved their volunteer landscape.*

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