

Girl Guides Australia

Building Australia
and Contributing to
a Better World



GIRL GUIDES
AUSTRALIA



Since 1910, the Girl Guide Movement across Australia has been enabling girls and young women to become confident, self-respecting, responsible community members.

With more than 22,000 youth members, Girl Guides Australia (GGA) is the peak national organisation for girls and women in Australia. GGA is part of the largest organisation for girls and young women in the world. As part of a movement with over 10 million members in 145 countries, we are a founding member of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) and are involved in the Asia Pacific Region.

We encourage all girls and young women to be their best, to serve their community, be true to their beliefs and discover their potential. As we reach out to new communities, we welcome girls and young women from a variety of backgrounds and a range of cultures. With the support of our amazing team of volunteers, girls and young women who are Guides are our leaders of today and tomorrow.

As part of a worldwide movement of girls and young women, we say:
"Together we can change our world."

Building Australia and Contributing to a Better World

Across Australia the work of Guiding:

- A. Develops the skills of future leaders
- B. Develops a better society
- C. Contributes towards planning for a sustainable future.

Research¹ into the expectations and needs of girls and young women clearly shows that we are:

- 1. Concerned about the natural environment with climate change ranking high amongst our key global issues
- 2. Wanting to see action on poverty and homelessness
- 3. Advocating for the empowerment of women and girls – in education, health and personal safety

These themes are backed up by our commitment to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Girl Guides Australia has undertaken a range of activities and events designed to both strengthen our knowledge of these eight crucial goals. We have also implemented advocacy programs to broaden and deepen our community's knowledge of this blueprint for meeting the needs of the world's poorest.

We educate girls and women:

- Developing the skills and capacity of our 22,000 youth members (or rather developing the skills and capacity of over 30,000 members) across Australia including our volunteer leadership teams, trainers and official officebearers
- Providing opportunities for our young women and girls to participate in programs to develop their understanding of their local environment, their local community and the world beyond
- Partnering with organisations such as UNICEF, to develop meaningful programs to educate our young girls and women on the United Nations Millennium Development Goals

We empower women and girls

- Working with Care Australia and Plan Australia to educate our Guides on how women can address poverty and girls' access to education
- Raising the level of understanding and educating young women on domestic violence issues by being involved with such campaigns as Stop the Violence and White Ribbon Campaign

- Building peace and understanding in our world through developing international friendships and networks with sister organisations and colleagues across the world.
- Promoting and developing skills and education of women across the world and in our own region.
- Building resilience and self-worth in our girls and young women by developing and implementing meaningful learning programs, activities and experiences for our members.

We look after our Environment

- Working with Clean Up Australia Day and resources companies (such as ALCOA) building better environments and being better citizens
- Building our understanding of our natural environment and the personal action that we can take to stop climate change through education and development at outdoor camps and activities
- Undertaking journeys overseas to learn more about our natural world with scientists and research teams

Action for Now:

Girl Guiding in Australia asserts the following priorities for action;

1. That the Australian Government supports work to address the needs of the world's poorest as described in the United Nations Millennium Development Goals
2. That the Australian Government commits to the empowerment of girls and young women with:
 - a. Quality access to education and training for employment and quality of life
 - b. Access to quality health care that specifically meets the needs of women
 - c. Commitment and action to ensure that women and girls are safe in our communities and are free from fear of violence and harm
3. That the Australian Government takes action to address climate change and environmental sustainability for the future of girls, young women and the broader community

¹ Australian Guides Say 2010: an insight into the minds of girls and young women in Australia today
<http://www.girlguides.org.au/public/files/pdf/Guides%20Say%20Report%20FIN.pdf>

Enabling Young Women and Girls

Each community organisation needs to be empowered to support the needs of their members and to deliver their mission.

Whilst GGA is working hard with its membership to achieve this there are systemic issues that, if addressed by Governments across Australia, would enable for better outcomes from community and volunteer utilising organisations (VUOs)

Volunteerism

Girl Guides is blessed with a strong passionate and energetic team of volunteers who diligently ensure the future of girls and young women in Australia. Supported by a small network of paid staff, the organisation does not discriminate in its workforce between those that have a paycheck and those that do not. Our volunteers lead our organisation and direct the efforts of its mission and work.

We strive to work for an inclusive organisation that provides equitable access of resources and opportunities. We support our volunteers by providing them with one of the most thorough learning programs for leaders of young people and enhance their work and community life by continuously building their skills and knowledge.

With the advent of OH&S regulation that now formally recognises the health and safety needs of unpaid labour being akin to paid labour, we ask that similar consideration be extended in policy to support our volunteers.

Furthermore, we value our workers so much that we need to plan for our and their future in the face of changing times. We know that across the globe, behaviours of volunteerism are changing. We need – as a community, as an industry and as a nation – to plan for the future of our volunteers just as much as we plan for the future of our paid workforce. This needs to go beyond rhetoric to practical examples of workforce planning and development.

Action for Now:

4. Better resourcing for volunteers and VUOs by:
 - Providing opportunities in grant funding for support to be provided for volunteer travel and accommodation
 - Giving genuine recognition of volunteer management being a necessary expense item in funding submissions and funding allocations

5. That the funding to service providers that rely on volunteers, explicitly requires and provides for an adequate budget allocation for volunteer involvement, management, recognition and reimbursement
6. A workforce development plan for the future of volunteering which includes:
 - Developing career pathways for young people in volunteering who want to take leadership positions and give back to the community
 - Creating sustainable organisational development practices for VUOs to build their resilience during a time of change in volunteerism
 - Create greater cohesion between the development of skills in volunteer work and paid opportunities – create greater recognition of the economic benefit of volunteer work to national productivity

Youth for Now.

Young Australians are not only our future – they are here ready now to contribute to a better tomorrow. Whilst at Girl Guides we strive to embody this reality at all levels of our organisation, greater action needs to be taken to ensure that this happens more broadly.

Actions for Now:

7. Create better policy by undertaking regular research to discover the needs and issues facing girls and young women in Australia today
8. Create leadership pathways for girls and young women in our community to develop and prepare our future female role models.
9. Involve our young people in decision making of their local area – they are the ones that know what needs to happen now and for their future. Practical goals and outcomes can come from young people talking to young people about change.
10. Create better linkages between girls and young women and Government Youth Policy. Position the voice of girls and young women at all levels of government to ensure that policy reflects the needs of our community.

Skills for the Future

Learning occurs throughout our life and the Australian Government policy setting of life long learning should be practically embraced by better recognising education and training that occurs outside of the formal education system.

The skilling of our volunteers is both an issue to develop and drive our community as well as a productivity issue.

Action for Now:

11. The skills development of volunteers is recognised as a national productivity issue.
12. Quality skills developed in the community organisations are better harmonised with the national education system. This will enable the skills that young people develop in community work to be formally recognised in the national education system.
13. Better recognition and support of “non-formal” education to support the development of youth²
14. The value of outdoor adventure education be recognised as a key strategy for girls to learn resilience, confidence and develop the capacity to assess risk.

²As per United Nations General Assembly, Resolution by General Assembly A/66/L.56 (section 231), “The Future we Want” which was contributed to by a delegation of Girl Guides including representation from Australia.

Position Support

We, the undersigned representatives of Girl Guides in Australia, support and advocate for this position to Australian Governments.



Chief Commissioner



National Executive Officer



State Commissioner
NSW and ACT



State Executive Officer
NSW and ACT



State Commissioner
Victoria



State Executive Officer
Victoria



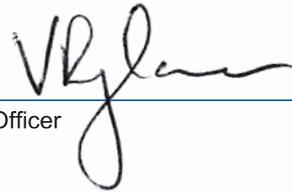
State Commissioner
Queensland



State Executive Officer
Queensland



State Commissioner
Tasmania



State Executive Officer
Tasmania



State Commissioner
Northern Territory



State Executive Officer
Northern Territory



State Commissioner
Western Australia



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State Commissioner
South Australia



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