



ADVOCACY IN GIRL GUIDING IN AUSTRALIA

Commitment to making the world a better place is an underpinning of the Girl Guide Promise and Guide Law. Girls and young women in Girl Guiding in Australia are empowered to be advocates on issues that they consider will improve their lives and the lives of others.

Advocacy plays a crucial role in achieving the WAGGGS mission to enable girls and young women to develop their fullest potential as responsible citizens of the world and the WAGGGS vision that all girls are valued and take action to change the world.

Advocacy is a powerful tool for influencing decision makers. Advocacy includes speaking out, taking action and educating others. Speaking out and taking action allows a girl or young woman to have a positive impact, both on her own life and the broader community. Advocacy can take many forms which may include writing submissions to a parliamentary enquiry, letters to the editor, meeting with parliamentarians or local community leaders, or taking part in peaceful protests.

Girl Guides Australia has developed six overarching principles for **Advocacy in Girl Guiding in Australia** and guidelines to support **Advocacy in Action**.



PRINCIPLES FOR ADVOCACY IN GIRL GUIDING IN AUSTRALIA

The role of Girl Guiding in Australia with respect to advocacy is to enable girls and young women to learn about the issues from all perspectives, form their own opinions and make their own choices. For adults in Guiding, it is important to be mindful of their position of influence or authority.

Six principles should apply when any member of Girl Guiding in Australia takes part in advocacy in Girl Guide uniform, as part of a Girl Guide organised or promoted activity, or when in any way acting as a representative of Girl Guides.

1. Advocacy should be based on facts

Before commencing advocacy on any issue, all relevant angles should be considered. If discussion on an issue tends to lean in a certain direction, different arguments and relevant facts should be explored so Girl Guides can see the whole picture. Girl Guides should not rely on incomplete information or on an appeal to emotions. Leaders should encourage Girl Guides to use information that is credible and be mindful of bias. The extent to which a source is considered reliable is evaluated based on its accuracy, authority, currency, objectivity, purpose and relevance.

2. Girl Guides should form their own opinions and make their own choices

Girl Guiding in Australia encourages girls and young women to consider appropriate issues for advocacy. To help inform decision-making girls and young women should learn about issues from all perspectives, form their own opinions and make their own informed choices. Girl-led advocacy happens when girls and young women are the ones choosing the issues they want to advocate on, defining the change they want to see and influencing the people they have identified to make the change happen.

3. Girl Guides can directly influence decision makers through Guiding

Girl Guides can directly influence decision makers either individually, or as a Unit or Peer Group, to bring about positive, sustainable change. Girl Guides may also choose to appeal to others (i.e. their community) to take the same actions as long as their engagement keeps within the principles of the Girl Guide Promise and Law.

4. Advocacy activities should align with the Girl Guides Australia Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Girl Guiding in Australia does not discriminate against any member or non-member based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, mental or physical ability, health status, educational background or socioeconomic status. 'Girls and women' include persons who identify as, and live their lives as, females. Girl Guides should not be involved in advocacy that breaches these principles.

5. Girl Guides should not be involved in advocacy that promotes or utilises violence

The safety of Girl Guides is paramount and if there is any indication an activity or event is likely to turn violent Girl Guides should be discouraged from participating. Girl Guides are encouraged to build advocacy around well-reasoned and compelling arguments. When representing the organisation, Girl Guides should conduct themselves in line with the Girl Guide Promise and Law.

6. All programs and activities must be non-partisan or multi-partisan

As a Girl Guide, any member of Girl Guiding in Australia should not be involved in supporting any political party nor canvassing for, campaigning for, and/or joining any third-party campaign that advocates support for a specific party.

This includes:

- Donating money, time, resources or materials to a political party or candidate for political office
- Making public statements (oral, written, photographic, or through social media) that endorse or denounce a political party or candidate for political office, either explicitly or implicitly
- Directly connecting your opinion on an issue with support for a political party or a candidate for political office.



ADVOCACY IN ACTION IN GIRL GUIDING IN AUSTRALIA

Advocacy can be aimed at decision makers and is different to community service. For example, while community service might involve planting trees or participating in Clean Up Australia Day, advocacy involves writing submissions to a parliamentary inquiry on climate change, meeting with parliamentarians, sharing your voice on social media platforms or taking part in a climate change march.

Advocacy by Girl Guides can take many forms depending on the issue. Below are some examples that may provide some guidance on how to bring about change:

Activity	Appropriate	Not appropriate
Engaging with election candidates	Attending a candidate forum and asking questions of all candidates Sending all candidates a letter outlining your concerns Meeting with an elected member of Parliament to discuss an issue that is of concern	Handing out campaign material for a candidate Using a local Unit social media account to support a specific party Raising money for candidates
Advocating with business leaders	Writing to a local business with a heavy carbon footprint, requesting a meeting to discuss its environmental impact Encouraging businesses to adopt more sustainable practices in their supply chain, knowing that girls and women are disproportionately affected by exploitation	Staging a protest outside a local business before properly researching its legal requirements to reduce pollution or its plans and policies
Taking a stand against sexism	Taking part in a peaceful protest or vigil to see an end to the pay gap, after using Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and journal articles to research the issue	Telling the media that Girl Guides support an opposition party Calling for the local mayor to resign



Activity	Appropriate	Not appropriate
Marching for climate change action	<p>Attending a climate change march organised by a coalition of civil society groups, aimed at raising awareness</p> <p>Raising awareness with community members to support climate change reduction through use of renewable energy or avoiding single use plastic</p>	<p>Joining a protest to storm and occupy the offices of a coal miner</p>
Protecting a local park from development	<p>Researching and understanding impact of development on biodiversity, but also what it may offer to community development</p> <p>Attending a community rally to protect green space, or a town hall discussion to ask the developer questions</p>	<p>Putting your safety at risk through disruptive activities, e.g. chaining yourself to a tree</p> <p>Personal attacks against the developer</p>