

OLAVE PROGRAM HISTORY

Prior to 1996, young women in Guiding aged 18-25 years could be members of the Ranger Section and participate in the Ranger Program. This was a unit-based model, although in contrast to younger-aged Guide Units, Ranger Units could have participants from across Districts, even from multiple Regions. Ranger Units were run by the young women themselves, and typically had a Ranger Counsellor (selected by the Unit) available as a mentor. It was unusual for a Ranger to also be a Leader of Youth, although some young women were involved in both Ranger Section and leading Guide Units.

1996 PROGRAM AND TRAINING CONFERENCE

In the lead up to the 1996 Program and Training Conference, a series of workshops were held around the country in preparation for the development of the Australian Guide Program. As this program was only for girls under 18, the young women between 18 and 26 who were involved in the Ranger Program sought to be recognised as adult members and represent themselves at State and National level.

To create opportunities for young women to remain involved in Guiding without needing to commit to running a Guide Unit, the concept of a program for young women aged 18 – 30 was formed. In June 1996, the Australian Executive approved the development of the Olave Program.

The aspects that were identified in 1996 as being necessary to include in any program for young women were:

- Fundamentals of Guiding
- Contact peer group
- Opportunities to challenge oneself on a personal and peer group level
- Badges to facilitate this challenge, specifically the Olave Baden-Powell Award (which had previously existed for the Ranger Section)

It was also decided that the age range would be from 18 – 30, and all within that age group would automatically belong to the program. This was because there are international opportunities up to the age of 30, and because WAGGGS had adopted a definition of ‘young woman’ as being from 18 – 29.

OUR PAST OUR PRESENT

A national Olave Program forum “Our Past Our Present” was held in Melbourne in 1998 which developed many of the key aspects of the Olave Program. The inaugural National Olave Program Team was established; its members were Melissa Anderson, Kate Moore, and Maryanne Gunner (elections were to take place in April 1999). Many states had a State Olave Program Chair, but they did not sit on the National Team.

DEVELOPMENT OF STRUCTURES

Between 1998 and 2002 was a period of formation for the Olave Program as it sought to develop structures and processes for the new program across Australia. In 2003 the first face-to-face meeting of the National Olave Program Team with State Chairs took place, producing an Olave Program Operational Plan and the Olave Program Vision ‘that the Olave Program is highly valued by Guiding and the wider community’.

Initially, the National Olave Program Team was made up of the National Chair, the Secretary, and the Treasurer. Each member had a three-year term, but it was a rolling term so that there was one new member of the Team each year. Most states followed the National Team model and had three people on their State Team. There were no formal lines of communication between the National Team and the State Teams.

The first Guiding Overseas Linked with Development (GOLD) project also got underway that year with the Girl Guides Association of Thailand and Girlguiding UK. GOLD is an international service project for Olaves. The project is a partnership project between two or more WAGGGS Member Organisations, aimed at developing Guiding in one of those organisations. The participating Member Organisations work together to determine what area of Guiding the recipient organisation wishes to focus on and the project is mapped out over a fixed term. Girl Guides Australia has been involved in GOLD projects with the Girl Guide Association of Thailand (together with Girlguiding UK), as well as the Girl Guide Association of the Cook Islands (together with Girl Guiding New Zealand).

10-YEAR ANNIVERSARY

In 2006, the National Olave Program Team determined that a review of the Olave Program was necessary to help re-focus and expand the Olave Program. Natasha Hendrick (one of the original State representatives who created the Olave Program) was appointed the facilitator of this process and worked with the National Olave Program Team to conduct the review. The Olave Program definition and Framework emerged as a result of this process.

The motto ‘Serve, Support, Succeed’ was also developed around the same time.

2006-2012

Across 2008 / 2009, the National Olave Program Team followed the lead of the other national departments and restructured to its current form of a National Olave Program Committee consisting of the Olave Program Manager, Olave Program Assistant Manager (if appointed) and State Olave Program Managers. The National Olave Program Manager received equal recognition with the other volunteer departments (instead of being represented by the Program Manager). State Olave Program Managers were all granted places on the State Management Committees (or equivalent) around this time, providing a much greater voice for young women in Guiding.

In 2009 the Olave Program developed the Mobile Phone project, which was launched at Girls Celebrate in 2010. This was a project in partnership with Clean Up Australia Day to encourage the recycling of mobile phones, which ran until 2012.

The Olave-Baden Powell Award was updated in 2010 to reflect the six aspects of the new Olave Program Framework, and the AGP-OP Link Badge was introduced in 2011 to encourage 16 and 17-year-old Guides to explore the Olave Program. The first Guide's Guide to the Olave Program was launched in 2011. The Olave Challenge award was launched in June 2012.

A new GOLD project was launched in 2012. Olaves from Australia worked together with Girl Guiding New Zealand to deliver training in the Cook Islands through annual visits for 3 years.

2013: OLAVE PROGRAM REVIEW

In 2013 the Olave Program Review process began, with the purpose of examining all aspects of the Olave Program to ensure it remains relevant for both current and future Olaves.

A comprehensive research program underpinned the review and incorporated desktop research, focus groups, consultation meetings and surveys.

- 32 focus groups held throughout Australia captured the views of 350 members.
- 435 members responded to the main Olave Program Survey, including 57 youth members, 239 Olaves and 139 adults aged 30 years or over.
- Secondary desktop research was undertaken on a number of Girl Guiding and Girl Scouting organisations as well as voluntary youth organisations in Australia.

A number of recommendations were made in the Olave Program Review Report (with the assistance of external consultant, Kim Parish), which were approved by the Australian Guiding Committee and the Girl Guides Australia Board in August 2014.

Following this review a number of improvements were made and an ongoing project called Olave Program Ignite was launched in 2015 to implement the recommendations of the Olave program Review Report across 2015 and 2016.

One of the recommendations of the Olave Program Review was a new Olave Program Framework incorporating the areas of community, adventure, and self-development.

A national online and in person event Spark! was held in September 2015 to launch the outcomes of the Olave Program Review and Olave Program Ignite.

3 before 30 was a PR initiative for Olaves to share their three goals they want to achieve before they turn 30.

Inspire, An Introduction to the Olave Program was launched 2015. Inspire is a one-hour program for Olaves to run in Guide Units of all ages to introduce them to the Olave Program and facilitate connections between Olaves, Guides and Unit Leaders. Inspire introduces the Olave Program Framework areas of community, adventure, and self-development.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OLAVE PROGRAM REVIEW

In 2016, the Olave Program Awards were reviewed to align to the new Olave Program Framework (Community, Adventure and Self-Development), with updated Olave Baden-Powell Award Syllabus, Olave Challenge Syllabus, and AGP-OP Link Badge Syllabus launched in 2017.

The Guide Your Money program was developed for Olaves with the aim of building financial literacy and wellbeing. The program uses a proven learning approach and includes links to reliable resources and information. The program was developed by Colleen Fitzgerald, Monica Gyoery, Jill Pleban and Sharon O'Brien. The program had a number of partners and consultants including Financial Literacy Australia, JiMo Partners, Rooftop Social, and RTO Advance, contributing funding, support, and expertise. The draft program was piloted and reviewed by Olave Program Peer Groups from New South Wales, South Australia, Victoria, and Western Australia.

One of the recommendations arising from the Olave Program Review was the establishment of the role of Olave Program Mentor. This role is for more experienced Olaves to provide advice and support to enable other Olaves to explore and take on project, committee, and event management responsibilities. This provides an additional challenge for women who have been involved in the Olave Program for several years and who have a wealth of networks, skills, and experiences to share with younger Olaves. The Olave Program mentor was never formally adopted and remains an informal arrangement for Olave Program

Committees or Peer Groups that seek support as they need. Further information about the scheme was part of the Olave Program Ignite project.

The Olave Program celebrated its 21st birthday in 2017 with several events held across the country to commemorate the milestone.

MOVING FORWARD

During 2019/2020 the National Volunteer Team restructured to have a National Coordinator to cover each portfolio area of the Olave Program, Adult, Youth and International. The National Olave Program Committee remained unchanged consisting of the National Coordinator – Olave Program with representatives from each State Girl Guide Organisation on the committee.

The Young Women’s Forum was established in 2020 to help amplify the voice of girls and young women in decision-making nationally. The forum is chaired by the Assistant Chief Commissioner – Young Women and the National Coordinator – Olave Program is also a member of the forum.

A national branding update was undertaken in 2020 and as part of this branding update, Olave Program icons were developed for each of the three areas of the Olave Program Framework. The Olave Program Handbook was developed in 2022 and brought the information from the Olave Program Resource into alignment with other national resources, with the policy elements of the resource moved to *Guide Lines*.

