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MEDIA RELEASE

SCOUTS WA KEEPING KIDS ACTIVE AND ENTERTAINED AT HOME WITH NO COST TO PARENTS DURING COVID-19

Leading youth organisation Scouts WA is ensuring kids and their families can stay active, entertained and engaged despite restrictions in place due to COVID-19, launching Scouting@Home – an exciting new online initiative allowing kids in communities across Western Australia to get involved with Scouting from the safety of their homes.

Living up to the world-famous Scouts tagline ‘be prepared’, Scouts WA responded quickly when restrictions on group activities were put in place, implementing the web-based Scouting@Home program to allow kids to meet, socialise and take part in exciting Scouting activities safely.

Scouts WA Chief Commissioner Caitlin Arcus said the organisation was committed to delivering a fun and challenging program online to almost 6,000 local members while restrictions to slow the spread of COVID-19 remained in place.

“Now that so many sports and other activities are on hold, playgrounds are closed and visiting friends is discouraged, there is even more necessity for Scouting to occur online and in the safety of back gardens and homes across Western Australia,” she said.

“People in our community are feeling the effects of the pandemic, whether through job losses, challenging finances and the general confinements of being at home; its lonely.

“Keeping young people active and entertained is only going to become increasingly important.

Scouting@Home is all the best things about Scouting, just from a safe distance for now – there are so many other activities that simply can’t be done at the moment, and



we're very excited to have found a way to keep delivering Scouting to our many members, and to anyone new who is interested in giving it a go!"

Ms Arcus said Scouts WA was committed to giving every young person in Western Australia the opportunity to participate in the scouting journey.

"To support members of our community who genuinely cannot pay fees, the Scouts WA Board will absorb costs families are unable to pay; we will not let an absence of income get in the way a child's development," she said.

Scouts WA members will be offered free Scouting until July; from July, quarterly invoices will replace the usual annual membership payment.

Each Scouts WA Group has been given the freedom to determine how they will meet virtually. Ms Arcus explained that no matter how groups chose to meet – whether through popular video services like Skype or Microsoft Teams or another online medium – the outcome would be the same: a robust and challenging program to entertain and inspire young people.

"Using technology has really been a youth led, adult supported experience for Scouts WA," Ms Arcus said.

"Our young members are helping their Leaders to explore and conquer a medium that is often outside their own comfort zone. It is proving to be a watershed time – not only are we delivering a brand-new youth program but we're doing it through a new medium while adhering to our child safe principles," Ms Arcus said.

To continue supporting members, Scouts WA will keep all full-time staff in their jobs.

Scouts WA Chair Greg Higham said it was in the nature of Scouts to respond positively to challenges.

"These are indeed strange and challenging times but, as has been the way for 113 years, strange and challenging are exactly the things upon which Scouts' creative and practical minds thrive," Mr Higham said.



“Scouts continue to live by founder Lord Baden Powell’s adage of being prepared and whilst the current situation is not one for which they have actually prepared, they are certainly making the best of it in very quick time.

“Our Scouts can’t get out and be face to face with their Crew, Unit, Troop, Pack or Mob. No problem – they’ll just do it at home, virtually. When most other activities have been curtailed or cancelled, Scouts are finding a way to carry on, business as usual, and it is the very fact that it is different that makes it so much fun for Scouts.

“I am thrilled and proud to be part of this organisation, as it seeks to find significant positives in a world full of negatives and continues to make a significant difference to the lives of young people – the future leaders in the new world ahead of us.”

More information about Scouting@Home

Learn more about Scouting@Home by emailing [**recruitment3@scoutswa.com.au**](mailto:recruitment3@scoutswa.com.au)

More about Scouts WA and the programs available for different age groups is available online at [**www.scoutswa.com.au**](http://www.scoutswa.com.au)

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