

15 May 2020 at 15:00 (AWST)

Dear Scouts WA members

Thank you for your patience, understanding and ongoing support of Scouts WA throughout COVID-19's interruption of face-to-face Scouting. I would especially like to applaud the collective efforts in providing support and stability to youth members through familiar faces and activities through Scouting@Home.

The COVID-19 Action Group is continuing to review releases and Government Directives about the easing of social restrictions and how it applies to all facets of Scouts WA.

WA Premier Mark McGowan's Stage 2 lifting of restrictions is positive and encouraging, however comes with a warning of "slow and steady" to ensure everyone's safety.

This includes a limit of 20 people per gathering providing there is a minimum of 4sqm per person, continued social distancing of 1.5m between people whenever possible, increased cleaning and good hygiene practices. These restrictions apply to ALL public or indoor/outdoor non-work gatherings - including ANY Scouting activity. For many of our Groups, this is somewhere between very difficult and impossible due to numbers and venue space.

The Government last night released written guidance and expectations that will apply to all Sports and Recreation during Stage 2 (which includes Scouting). It requires written risk assessment, documented safety plans and a series of minimum expectations that MUST be met. The formal directive from the Police Commissioner had still not been published at 8am this morning so the effect of the legislation on Scouting programs could not yet be assessed at the time of writing this advice.

For these reasons, Scouts WA will continue the suspension of face-to-face provision of our program for a little while longer and usual face-to-face Scouting in WA will not resume before June.

BUT the good news is, the opportunity to resume is now within our reach. Any further easing of restrictions is likely to require documented safety plans to be in place. It has also been suggested that further easing of numbers may occur in the coming weeks. So if all goes to plan, face-to-face Scouting could resume sooner than we had originally expected.

We therefore encourage all Scout Groups to start looking at the requirements of the [Sport and Recreation Guidelines](#). Groups should complete a WA Government [COVID-19 Safety Plan](#), before May 31 with a view to hopefully restarting usual face-to-face Scouting in June. Click [here](#) for further information.

In the meantime, we recognise that there may be some capacity for youth members to return to outdoor activities within the current restrictions. This may include sailing or going on a day hike. Please remember that all activities that are run outside of the usual meeting hall requires a Scouts WA risk assessment to be submitted to the Group Leader. Additionally, a written COVID-19 safety plan MUST be completed and submitted by emailing it to virtual.scouting@scoutswa.com.au for confirmation and recording a week prior to commencing activities. (These plans are required by law, enforceable by the Police and responsibility for compliance with the plan will rest with the Leader in Charge AT the activity.)

I recognise people's eagerness to return to face-to-face Scouting however ask that we are all patient for a few more weeks to ensure our return to face-to-face meetings is sustainable and safe for all.

We hope to be able to release more information next week in order to assist Groups in completing their COVID-19 safety plans with Scouting specifically in mind - but in the meantime we commend the Sport and Recreation Guidelines as an easy to follow and well organised approach.

Thank you for your loyalty, patience and support. Let's Be Prepared and look forward to re-starting again soon!

Caitlin Arcus
Acting Chief Commissioner
Scouts WA