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The Scout Association of Australia
Stockton Scout Group



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7 April 1997

Mr A Currie
 Regional Commissioner
 Hunter & Coastal Region
 518 Hunter Street
 Newcastle NSW 2300

- 1 MAY 1997

CC: Mr D Hocking

S. LARKIN'S

Dear Alan

I am writing this letter to formally alert you, and the Scout Association of a potentially damaging situation for Scouting in Stockton and as a whole. Therefore I am seeking some affirmative action from The Scouting Association in this matter.

On Sunday the 6th of April 1997, I was contacted by distraught parents of my Scout Group and parents of children not in Scouts. An adult male with a black beard and hair calling himself Skip and purporting to be a Scout Leader from RE Stockton, was at the Stockton Public Pool approaching children to join Stockton Scouts. This person claimed he lived at REDACTE with his parents living in REDACTE and that he ran Scouts on Friday nights in Stockton. In addition to this he bought these children bags of lollies from the pool canteen, while urging them to join his Friday night Scouts. It was suggested to me by a parent that the description of the person soliciting the children was an ex Stockton Scout Leader whom had been dismissed from both Water Wonderland & Wallaroo Districts by Bill Metcalf the then District Commissioner.

You can well imagine the outrage these parents (not to mention myself) felt at a stranger soliciting their children in this way. Thankfully I was informed and I contacted the parents of these children to confirm these facts. Upon confirmation I contacted Mr Des Hocking Regional Commissioner Operations Port Stephens and availed him of the facts.

I also told the RCO that I would be contacting the Regional Secretary, Craig Whitford the following morning to advise that I would refer this matter to the NSW Police. Unfortunately Craig was on a weeks leave so I could not formally advise Region of my intentions. On Monday the 7th of April, I contacted Mayfield Police and spoke to a detective there and relayed the above facts to him. He was greatly concerned and said he would contact the Stockton Pool to see if he could get their confirmation of a person acting in this matter on the weekend. He also asked if I had an idea who it might be I advised that it might be an ex Scout Leader of RE Stockton as he fit the description given by the children. The detective called back after approximately half an hour and said that he had confirmed with the council employees at the Stockton Pool that a bearded man fitting the afore mentioned description was indeed at the pool on the weekend and had been seen approaching children and

purchasing sweets for them. This employee also confirmed that he had seen this individual previously in a Scout uniform and believed he was Steven Larkins. The detective then advised me that he would contact Mr Larkins to confirm that he had been at the pool over the weekend and had approached the children and offered sweets and tried to coerce them to join his Friday night activities.

The detective called me back at approx 6pm and confirmed that it was indeed Steven Larkins at the pool and he had admitted approaching the children and bought them bags of lollies. He said that he was trying to get them to join Scouts at Newcastle not at Stockton (not according to the children) where he ran Scouts on Friday nights. The detective advised me quote: "that while this was all highly suspicious, it was not unfortunately a chargeable offence and that they could not do much more than keep an eye on him".

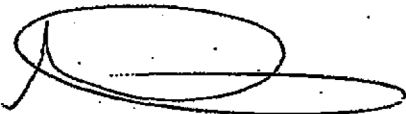
As you can see this situation is intolerable. Here is a Scout Leader acting in a highly questionable way which makes him in my opinion unfit to be in charge of children and a member of the Scouting Association of Australia. The amount of damage this has done to Scouting on a local level is immeasurable. Since when do we adopt recruitment at a local pool with boiled lollies. Not to mention trying to coerce children to join another Scout Group out of their suburb and local region.

This is not the first time that questions have been raised about this individual and I am frankly amazed that he is still in the Scouting movement. My suggestion would be to contact Mr Bill Metcalfe the former District Commissioner of Water Wonderland to confirm previous incidents.

I will be putting a notice in the Stockton Messenger advising of the nights that Cubs and Scouts are held (Wed & Thurs) and the leaders in charge of those sections and advising parents that if their children are approached by any other persons in regards to Scouts to inform the said leaders or myself.

I trust that there will be some positive action taken by the Scout Association in this matter since our first duty is to the children in our care.

Yours in Scouting



Armand Hoitink

Group Leader

RE Stockton Scout Group

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