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Child Protection - THE TOP PRIORITY

I know we all have a concern for the safety of young people in Scouting and recognise the importance of ensuring that our processes to guarantee this are simple, speedy and effective.

Leading-edge system

Our Personal Protection Policy is regarded by professional bodies in NSW as leading edge and other organisations seek our advice when developing their policies.

The success of our policy is demonstrated by the extremely few issues which arise.

Scouting in NSW is now operating with a far more open culture on these issues: there is no scope for matters to be 'swept

under the carpet'. Upon receiving any information (whether substantiated or not) which may point towards a risk to children, the immediate approach is to remove that risk.

Remove the risk and refer

Secondly, we will refer matters to outside agencies (such as the Police Service or Child Protection Enforcement Agency) for their investigation and report, rather than trying to investigate such matters internally. We will then act on their advice.

We welcome the opportunity to show how effective our systems are in pro-actively targeting and weeding out unacceptable behaviour.

Take positive action

If you have a concern about the safety of a young person which would include sexual abuse or physical violence you must ensure that this is immediately reported to the Chief Executive Officer at State Office. If the CEO is unavailable, you should make sure I know in the shortest possible time. I can also be contacted through State Office on 02 9799 9244.

I regard this quick notification as absolutely vital. The safety of the young people in our care must never be compromised.

Graeme Fordham
Chief Commissioner

Corroboree 2000

This historically significant event was promoted as a landmark for reconciliation in this country. One of the largest public events in Sydney for some years, it attracted an estimated 250,000 walkers who crossed Sydney Harbour Bridge on Sunday May 28.

The Corroboree Walk finished at Darling Harbour and at the Sydney Opera House forecourt where performers from all parts of Australia entertained the crowds with a full concert program.

Given support by the Chief Commissioner, Graeme Fordham, and promoted to Sydney metropolitan Group Leaders and RCOs, the event attracted few Scouts in uniform.

"The only Group I could see in uniform," reports Shahadat Chowdhury "was 1st Lavender Bay Sea Scout Group."

While others may have attended in uniform it is highly likely that other walkers with their families were Scouts but not identifiable as such.

The event attracted much media attention, particularly on the political side as members of both major parties used the event and its symbolism to stir up the whole reconciliation and 'sorry' debate.

Shahadat believes that the Corroboree was a missed opportunity for Scouts to be seen in uniform in public, and that the resultant media coverage may have done our organisation some good. A counterpoint to this may be the family aspect of the event and the non attendance by many who felt it was being used too much for personal political gain.

Armenian National Day Celebrations

150 Scouts and Leaders assembled in Chatswood to celebrate Armenian National Day in May including youth members from Denistone East, 2nd Willoughby, Fairfield and Daceyville.

The enthusiastic Melbourne Boy Scouts Marching Band led the march to the Willoughby Legion Club where

a wreath was laid to remember those who sacrificed their lives for freedom.

The colourful march was led by banners and flags of the Groups who are all sponsored by the Homenomen (Armenian Council of Physical Culture and Scouting). Enthusiastic parents and friends lined the route and acknowledged the Scouts as they passed.

Members of the Branch and Regional teams as well as representatives of other culturally specific groups also took part.

