National Rover Council Review

Final Report

April 2021

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Correction

The table on page 18 of the August 2020 discussion paper 'Functions and structure of the National Rover Council' did not include the Northern Territory in a list of current Branches. This omission was in error and we apologise for any harm or distress caused.

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Abbreviations

APR	Asia-Pacific Region
AT&D	Adult Training and Development
BRA	Branch Rover Adviser *
BRC	Branch Rover Council *
M&PR Officer	Marketing and Public Relations Officer
NEC	National Executive Committee
NOC	National Operations Committee
NRC	National Rover Council
NSO	National Scout Organisation
P&R	Policy and Rules
RRC	Region Rover Council
RRIT	Rover Review Implementation Team
WOSM	World Organization of the Scout Movement

* The generic terms 'Branch Rover Council' (BRC) and 'Branch Rover Adviser' (BRA) are used, noting that the naming of these organisations and positions varies between Branches.

Executive Summary

This report presents the findings and recommendations from the 2019-2021 National Rover Council (NRC) external review commissioned by the NRC in early 2019. The review examines the NRC operations, its function and its structures to improve the NRC's effectiveness and deliver better outcomes for Rover Scouts in Australia.

Since 1979 the National Rover Council (NRC) has provided representation and support to Rover Scouts across Australia. The NRC has undertaken projects that have improved Rover Scouts' experience within Australia and other National Scout Organisations (NSOs). Whether leading the organisation of the 8th World Moot in Melbourne 1990-91 or ongoing reforms to the Rover Scout training or the achievement pathways, the NRC has sought to improve Rover Scouts' experience and provide a unique opportunity for Rover Scouts to influence the youth program directly.

For its members, the NRC provides opportunities for growth and personal development and supports the realisation of the vision of the World Organization of the Scout Movement (WOSM) for Scouting to be a youth led, adult supported organisation.[1]

Throughout its history, the NRC has undertaken several reviews and audits to ensure it effectively meets Rover Scouts' needs. The NRC should be commended for this commitment to ongoing reflection and development, as:

> *'Openness to criticism and learning plays an important role in building an effective [organisational] culture… Organisations that respond to external criticism defensively or dismissively… put at risk their ability to build an effective governance culture and embed the characteristics of a learning organisation'[2]*

During the 2019 NRC Conference, it was agreed that an external review should be undertaken, following concerns raised that the NRC was not delivering against its goals. The Review Team asked Rover Scouts, Rover Advisers and other stakeholders about the effectiveness and value-for-money presented by the NRC (**Table 1**) and found that overall, there is room for improvement.

Our recommendations focus on improving the NRC's operations to ensure it meets Rover Scouts' needs effectively and efficiently. This is an opportunity for the NRC to strengthen its governance arrangements and improve its benefits to Rover Scouts.

Through reflection and continued development, the NRC could be well placed to act as a global leader in Rover Scout governance and provide leadership and inspiration to similar bodies within Scouts Australia and other NSOs.

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[1] WOSM (2015) 'World Scout Youth Involvement Policy' <https://www.scout.org/youthinvolvement/docs>
[2] Australian National Audit Office (2019) 'Implementation of Recommendations' <https://www.anao.gov.au/work/audit-insights/implementation-recommendations>

Table 1: Assessment of the NRC's effectiveness and value-for-money.

How effectively is the NRC in achieving its strategic objectives?	Score (out of 5 points)
Active engagement of Rover Scouts throughout all subcommittees and workgroup of Scouts Australia relevant to the aims and objectives of the NRC.	2.8
Provides open and dynamic governance at all levels that delivers an innovative Rover Scout program.	2.7
Supporting the delivery of quality Rover Scout programs which align with the youth program.	2.8
Supporting access to relevant and engaging training that provides Rover Scouts with the skills to deliver a quality program.	3.2
Develop and maintain a nationally consistent image of Rover Scouts Australia which engages all sections and prospective members.	2.8
Value for money assessment	**Score (out of 5 points)**
Does the NRC provide good value-for-money?	2.5

Source: Review Team Survey February – June 2020.

To understand the problems facing the NRC, the Review Team examined NRC documentation and consulted widely with Rover Scouts, Rover Advisers and other key stakeholders in Australia and internationally through discussions, workshops, surveys and a discussion paper. We conducted best practice research to benchmark effective governance arrangements, against which we compared the NRC.

Our findings reveal broad support for the NRC and the opportunities it provides for Rover Scouts throughout Australia. As with all organisations, there is room for improvement. The recommendations put forward seek to strengthen the NRC's governance approaches and ensure it is best placed to fulfil its purpose and objectives.

We have worked with the NRC to amend its purpose statement based on extensive feedback. The NRC's new NRC purpose statement and functions were accepted by the NRC in March 2021 and are in the process of being approved by the Scouts Australia National Operations Committee (NOC). The most significant change is a greater focus on supporting the growth of Rover Scouts while also supporting ongoing improvements to the Rover Scout program's quality.

In light of these changes and widespread confusion among Rover Scouts about who is ultimately responsible and accountable for different matters impacting Rover Scouts (e.g. training, marketing, retention), the NRC should work with key stakeholders to provide greater to clarify as to who is responsible and accountable for different elements of the Rover Scout program.

Structurally, the NRC consists of representatives from each of the eight BRCs, an elected Executive, and elected and appointed Project Officers. While the overall structure of the NRC is broadly fit for purpose, we have made three recommendations to amend the structure of the NRC to ensure it is effectively meeting the needs of Rover Scouts:

- The Training and Development Officer should be reclassified from an Executive member to a Project Officer to better match the scope of its duties as managing a portfolio rather than the operation of the NRC, and in reflection of changes to the Rover Scout training curriculum.
- A new role of Treasurer should be established as an Executive member to provide greater financial reporting and accountability, to support work being undertaken by the NRC to improve the handling of their finances, to reduce the workload of the Secretary (who currently handles this role), and to identify new sources of income for the NRC (e.g. Government funding).
- The NRC Delegate role should be abolished as it is not effectively fulfilling its two main roles of raising Rover Scout awareness of the NRC and undertaking NRC project work. We recommend this workload be transferred to other members of the NRC (see below).

We also recommend that the NRC develop a short, induction-style training process for new NRC members to ensure that they understand how the NRC operates to ensure that they can maximise their contribution and involvement.

There is a clear disconnect between the NRC and the Rover Scouts who it represents, with some BRCs suggesting they are better placed than the NRC to deliver its work. Across all our consultations, there was a near-universal agreement that Rover Scouts are unaware of what the NRC does. This lack of awareness, coupled with their annual payment of the Rover Levy to fund the NRC's operations, has led many Rover Scouts to question the NRC's utility.

In light of this, we recommend that the NRC increase the frequency of its public reporting to ensure that Rover Scouts are aware of the NRC and its work, provide updates and outcomes of projects, and provide greater opportunities for Rover Scouts to provide their input into NRC deliberations. To overcome the information loss encountered when messages filter down to Rover Units via their Branch Rover Council (BRC), and in some states their Regional Rover Council (RRC), we recommend that the NRC develop mechanisms to allow it to communicate directly with Rover Units.

We also recommend that the NRC conduct an annual survey to gather information on its performance and seek views and ideas to ensure the projects it undertakes align with the needs and wishes of Rover Scouts.

The NRC uses a combination of face-to-face and virtual meetings throughout the year to discuss matters facing Rover Scouts, put forward proposals for improvement, and report on progress. While the meetings are an effective means of proposing and progressing the NRC's work, the NRC should maximise the value of its Conference by using it as a forum for strategic planning and reporting and move the discussion of operational matters to Remote Meetings.

The costs associated with the annual NRC Conference were raised as a major point of concern among Rover Scouts. While we see the value in continuing the Conference in its face-to-face format, we recommend that the NRC choose the location and date of the Conference based on value-for-money considerations rather than the existing rotation system. If these recommendations are adopted, the NRC should organise and host the Conference rather than a BRC, to lessen the burden on BRCs and position the Conference as an independent and unified gathering.

The NRC has established effective and transparent voting systems to support decision making and elections. The NRC's approach to voting does, however, include several unique features which we do not believe support transparent and effective governance. We recommend that the NRC amend its approach to voting by:

- Granting each BRC delegation (one for each of the eight BRCs) a single vote rather than the current two-vote system, as delegations rarely split their vote and delegations should provide a unified vote while representing the Rover Scouts who elected them, and
- Organise the NRC Executive and NRC Team members into a delegation and grant them a single vote to give the elected members of the NRC agency and a say in matters which directly affect them.

We found that the NRC has in place fit for purpose by-laws and key governance documents to support its work. We have made recommendations to further improve and strengthen these documents by addressing identified gaps in the by-laws and policies and ensuring a consistent approach to creating and reviewing future NRC policies.

The NRC has established robust document management systems to support their decision making and projects. Their online OneDrive system supports the NRC's work and provides easy access to important documentation and a suitable platform for information sharing. To maximise the benefit of their document management system, we recommend that the NRC ensure that all documents and files created as part of an NRC project are centrally stored on the NRC document management system to provide greater transparency and accountability.

While the NRC serves as a forum to share information and ideas, it is also an ideal platform to undertake projects which benefit and support Rover Scouts across Australia. While the NRC has a long history of project management, we recommend reviewing and improving its approach to project reporting to ensure projects are delivering on their goals in a timely manner.

NRC Delegates are not viewed as an effective means for undertaking projects. We instead recommend the NRC appoint Project Officers to undertake this work to ensure the right mix of skills and allow the NRC to more closely manage the quality and timeliness of projects.

While the NRC has commissioned several reviews over the years, it has largely not acted on the recommendations arising from these. To achieve the best value from this review, we recommend that the NRC develop an implementation plan to ensure that accepted recommendations are acted on in a timely and transparent manner.

The Review Team believe that the value of the NRC for Rover Scouts in Australia will increase significantly if the proposed recommendations are accepted through:

- greater clarity of the purpose and functions of the NRC compared to other Rover Scout and Scouts Australia governance bodies, leading to more effective cooperation and collaboration
- continued support for and improvement of the Rover Scout youth program
- a greater focus on supporting membership growth
- more robust structure, stronger by-laws and more effective meetings
- improved training of NRC members to support them in contributing to the NRC
- reducing the NRC's operating costs and allowing this money to be invested back into Rovering
- improved communication and consultation with Rover Scouts and other key stakeholders
- better management of projects undertaken by the NRC.

The NRC has significantly improved its internal operations since 2019, during what has proved to be a challenging period for all areas of Scouting in Australia. The recommendations arising from this review seek to further build on this excellent work and ensure that the NRC operates effectively and efficiently and provides benefit to Rover Scouts across Australia through continuous improvement of the Rover Scout program and supporting ongoing member growth.

We thank the NRC for its ongoing support of the review, in particular Ezgi Bridger (NRC Chair 2019-20), Eleanor Hewitt (NRC Chair 2021-22) and Patrick McCormick (NRC Adviser 2019-2022). We also note the contributions of Malcolm Richardson (Queensland), who participated in the early stages of the review. Finally, we thank all the Rover Scouts, Rover Advisers and other interested parties who contributed their time and knowledge to the review.

Jay Reid (Australian Capital Territory)
Chris Young (Victoria)
Clinton Smith (Western Australia)

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: The NRC should undertake work, in collaboration and consultation with other organisations involved in Rover Scout governance, to clearly define and clarify accountability and responsibility for the different elements of the Rover Scout youth program.

Recommendation 2: The Training & Development Officer role should be reclassified as a Project Officer and have a greater focus on delivering non-Adult Training & Development training opportunities. The role should continue to advocate on behalf of Rover Scouts with regard to the AT&D curriculum.

Recommendation 3: A new Treasurer role is introduced to the Executive to handle the NRC's finances and seek new sources of income and is trialled for two years to assess the effectiveness of the role.

Recommendation 4: The NRC should abolish the Delegate role. The NRC and BRCs' Chairs will become responsible for Rover Scouts engagement and awareness, and appointed and elected Project Officers will be responsible for undertaking NRC projects.

Recommendation 5: The NRC establishes a short training and induction process for all NRC members to ensure they understand how the NRC operates and how they can most effectively contribute to meetings and discussions.

Recommendation 6: The NRC should increase the frequency of regular public reporting on project progress and outcomes, decisions made, and opportunities to contribute to the NRC.

Recommendation 7: The NRC should establish a mechanism for it to communicate directly with Rover Units.

Recommendation 8: The NRC should conduct an annual survey of Rover Scouts and key stakeholders to measure the NRC's effectiveness and seek Rover Scouts' views on matters affecting them to help determine the future direction of the NRC.

Recommendation 9: NRC Conferences should focus on strategic planning and reporting, while Remote Meetings focus on proposals and projects to support the implementation of the strategic plan.

Recommendation 10: The NRC Conference's location should be selected based on maximising value for money rather than the current rotational basis.

Recommendation 11: The NRC Executive or a Project Officer should organise the NRC Conference rather than the BRCs.

Recommendation 12: The NRC Conference's date should be moved to low travel season to provide greater value-for-money and support greater engagement with Rover Scouts ahead of the Conference.

Recommendation 13: NRC voting procedures should be amended to give each Delegation a single vote.

Recommendation 14: The NRC should extend voting rights to the elected members of the NRC. The NRC Executive and the NRC Team should form a Delegation alongside the eight BRC Delegations and be granted a single delegation vote. The NRC Adviser, as an adult member of the NRC, should not be involved in voting by the NRC delegation.

Recommendation 15: The NRC should update its by-laws to include sections on committees, parliamentary authority and disciplinary procedures and add further clarity to how voting is conducted.

Recommendation 16: The NRC should establish policies addressing conflicts of interest, procurement, and document management.

Recommendation 17: The NRC strengthen its approach to document management to ensure that all documentation related to decision making or created as a result of a project is centrally recorded.

Recommendation 18: All proposals brought to the NRC should clearly address how they contribute to the NRC strategic plan, demonstrate that the NRC has or can acquire the required skills and experience to complete the project, and provide measures of success.

Recommendation 19: The NRC should establish regular reporting for all ongoing projects at each Remote Meeting and Conference.

Recommendation 20: The NRC should develop an implementation plan for the recommendations arising from this review which are agreed to.

Chapter One: Background

The National Rover Council (NRC) is the peak body for the 3,100 18-25-year-old Rover Scouts in Australia and provides representation and support for Rover Scouts nationally.[3] The NRC consists of representatives from each Branch Rover Council (BRC) and an executive peer-elected by delegations, representing each of the eight BRCs at the annual NRC Conference.

Rover Scouts are unique as the only youth section within Scouts Australia to have this national governance level. While Scouts and Venturer Scouts may have Branch Youth Councils, they do not have a national equivalent.[4] Rover Scouts also elect all young adult leaders (e.g. Unit Leaders, Activity Committees, BRC Chairs, NRC Executives) and adult Advisers, whereas in other sections they are appointed by their Branch.

The NRC was formed in 1979 and held its first meeting at Joseph Harris Park, Mount Martha, Victoria, shortly after Rover Scouts transitioned to a self-management model.[5] The NRC significantly reformed Rover Scouts in Australia over the following decades by revising the Rover Scout Basic and Advanced training curriculums, continually improving the Baden-Powell Scout Award, and introducing the National Rover Service Award, which is presented annually by each Branch to individuals for outstanding service to Rover Scouts over an extended period of time.

The number of Rover Scouts grew significantly during this time, in part due to the work of the NRC. The NRC played a leading role at an international level through the revival of World Scout Moots by organising the 8th World Moot in Melbourne 1990-91, the first World Scout Moot in 30 years.[6] The surplus from this World Moot provided the Rover Development Fund capital, which funds projects related to the Rover Scout program development in Australia. During this time, the NRC produced several program and marketing resources, including brochures, posters and CDs.

The NRC played a significant role in the Bangladesh-Australia Child Health (BACH) project, a twinning project between Scouts Australia and Bangladesh Scouts active between 1986-1992, which supported immunisations in selected villages in Bangladesh to improve childhood health outcomes.[7] The NRC also contributed to the Nepal-Australia Good Turn for

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[3] NRC (n.d.) 'National Rover Council' <https://rovers.scouts.com.au/rovering/nrc/>

[4] There previously existed a National Youth Council (NYC) between 2001 and 2018 which consisted of Branch-nominated Scouts, Venturer Scouts and Rover Scouts from all across Australia. The NYC could make suggestions to the NOC, and arguably had some overlap with the NRC. The NYC elected their own Executive including a Chair who, like the NRC Chair, sat on the NOC and National Executive Committee (NEC).

[5] NRC (n.d.) 'History of Rovering in Australia' <https://rovers.scouts.com.au/rovering/history/>

[6] 1st Epping Rover Unit (2015) 'FAQ' <http://eppingrovers.com/FAQ>

[7] Scouts SA (n.d.) 'History: In Australia' <http://www.sa.scouts.com.au/inaustralia>; Scouts Australia (2000) 'Public Submission – Education of Boys Standing Committee', p. 7 <https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House_of_Representatives_Committees?url=edt/eofb/subs/sub24.pdf>

The Environment (NATURE) projects, which ran between 1993-98 and saw Rover Scouts assist the Nepalese Scouts in reforestation efforts followings the Kristi landslide.[8]

Between 1991 and 2004, the number of Rover Scouts and the wider Scouts Australia members declined by almost half, and many Rover Units (then known as Rover Crews) and Scouts Groups closed as a result.[9]

Since 2005, Rover Scout membership levels have stabilised and grown due to increased recruitment and improvements to the youth program. Rover Units (then known as Rover Crews) and Scout Groups, who were often separate entities, reconnected. The disconnect between Rover Scouts and Venturer Scouts, who are 15-18 years old and serve as a critical source of prospective Rover Scouts, was recognised and become a greater focus of the NRC.

During this time, the NRC also:
- overhauled the Baden-Powell Scout Award, providing greater flexibility for Rover Scouts to tailor their award scheme to their interests
- lobbied successfully for Rover Scouts to receive Adult Recognition Awards
- produced program such material, such as the Rover Fun Guide released in 2005[10]
- organised for a Centenary of Scouting Peace Boomerang to travel around Australia during 2005-06 as part of the Scouting Centenary celebrations and collected stories from Rover Scouts from around Australia[11]
- organised several national competitions and grant opportunities, including Rovering's Greatest Adventure[12], the Crew Challenge[13], and the Plasma Challenge.[14]

Acknowledging the issues facing it, the NRC has undertaken several recent reform attempts, including the Rovering Toward 2020 Report in 2010-11, the 2014 Rover Governance Review, the Rover Federation Working Group, and the 2018 NRC Audit. The NRC, however, self-reports that it has been largely ineffective in implementing many of the recommendations of these reviews and has faced several unsuccessful proposals by members of the NRC to dissolve it, notably in 2015 and 2017.[15]

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[8] Scouts Australia (2000) 'Public Submission – Education of Boys Standing Committee', p. 7 https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House_of_Representatives_Committees?url=edt/eofb/subs/sub24.pdf; Scouts Queensland (1992) 'Group Leader and Group Committee Handbook' p. 53 <https://scoutsqld.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/BOOK-SECTIONAL_Group-Leader_January-1996-2.pdf>

[9] Scouts Australia (2019) 'Overview of the New Youth Program' <https://scouts.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/New-Program-Overview_08-Web.pdf>, p. 5

[10] NRC (2005) 'Rover Fun Guide' <https://www.sarovers.com.au/files/Rover-Fun-Guide.pdf>

[11] Queensland Rovers (2017) 'Rovers Australia – National Rover Council' <https://qldrovers.fandom.com/wiki/Rovers_Australia#National_Rover_Council>

[12] NRC (2006) 'Rovering's Greatest Adventure' <https://web.archive.org/web/20060819022437/http://www.rovers.com.au/rga.asp>

[13] NRC (2018) 'Crew Challenge' <https://rovers.scouts.com.au/2018/11/16/crew-challenge-2018/>

[14] NRC (2020) 'National Rover Scout Update July 2020' <https://scouts.com.au/blog/2020/08/27/national-rover-scout-update-july-2020/>

[15] NRC (2019) 'National Rover Council External Review Consultant' <https://scouts.com.au/blog/2019/02/27/nrc-external-review-consultant-vacancy/>

Establishing the review

A paper presented at the 2019 NRC Conference in Adelaide commented on the NRC's perceived lack of significant outcomes in recent years. The paper identified several operational inefficiencies, such as repeated projects of similar natures and reduced engagement from Rover Scouts, and asserted that the NRC provided poor returns on investment. The paper called for an external review of the functions and structures of the NRC.

It was agreed during the 2019 Conference that an external review of the NRC would be commissioned. In establishing the external review, the NRC identified several systemic issues it was facing, including[16]:

- information loss between stakeholders
- a perceived low return-on-investment from Rover Scouts, who each pay a small annual fee to fund the NRC
- a disconnect between the aims and outcomes of the NRC
- inefficiencies in NRC processes
- difficulties in internal and external communication
- decreasing levels of engagement with the NRC.

The Review Team was formed in early May 2019 and brought together a team with both Scouting experience and experience providing advice or consultancy services around change management and organisational structures. Review Team members were not currently involved in the Rover Scout section as youth or adult members to maintain their independence.

Further information about the review is available at https://rovers.scouts.com.au/nrc-external-review/.

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[16] NRC (2019) 'Position vacant: National Rover Council – External review consultant' <https://scouts.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/NRC-Consultant-Position-Description.pdf>

Chapter Two: Methodology

The review's objective was to examine the NRC's functions and structures to improve the NRC's effectiveness and deliver better outcomes for Rover Scouts.[17]

To form a view against this objective, the Review Team was asked to explore the following matters as they relate to the NRC:[18]

- the NRC structure (NRC Executive, BRC Chairs, Delegates, etc.)
- NRC communication platforms and systems
- how the NRC meets (online and in-person)
- document management systems
- NRC project management practices
- NRC by-laws and governance documentation
- NRC voting systems
- the functions of the NRC as set out in the NRC by-laws.

The Review Team adopted a mixed-methods approach to gather evidence and input throughout the review, encouraging the broadest range of Rover Scouts and other stakeholders to contribute.

NRC engagement

The Review Team met with the NRC Chair and NRC Adviser in Melbourne in late-July 2019 to discuss the NRC's history and functions, the reasons behind the review, agree to the Review scope, and plan out the review.

During 2019-2021 the Review Team attended seven NRC Remote meetings. Participation in the meetings provided the Review Team with the ability to observe the operations and deliberations of the NRC and provide regular progress reporting. The Review Team also presented 'early win' papers, proposals which the NRC could implement quickly and easily to improve its governance arrangements. These papers recommended:

- amendments to the NRC meeting template adding a greater focus on project management
- making NRC minutes and papers publicly available
- improvements to future Conferences
- revisions to the Marketing & Public Relations (M&PR) office role description
- updates to the NRC purpose as described in the NRC By-Laws and Scouts Australia Policy and Rules (P&R).

The Review Team attended the 2020 NRC Conference at Camp Bundilla in Sydney, NSW in mid-February 2020. In addition to observing the Conference's operations and providing a progress report, the Review Team held two workshops with Conference attendees which explored the purpose and functions of the NRC. These workshops were:

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[17] NRC (2019) 'National Rover Council External Review Consultant'
<https://scouts.com.au/blog/2019/02/27/nrc-external-review-consultant-vacancy/>
[18] NRC (2019) 'Position vacant: National Rover Council – External review consultant'
<https://scouts.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/NRC-Consultant-Position-Description.pdf>

- 'NRC Areas of Responsibility', which discussed the responsibilities of the NRC and the practical ways the NRC can contribute to improving the Rover Scout experience.
- 'Grassroots Rovers' involvement in the NRC', which explored how the NRC engages with Rover Scouts and how greater engagement could be facilitated.

Following the Conference, the Review Team presented a paper to the NRC with seven recommendations designed to improve the effectiveness and value for money of the Conference whilst providing more significant opportunities for Rover Scouts' engagement. The outstanding recommendations from this paper are discussed in chapter six.

The Review Team also attended the 2021 Conference, hosted virtually due to the ongoing COVID-19 border closures. The Review Team hosted three sessions:
- 'NRC Purpose', a plenary session to discuss and develop a new NRC purpose statement.
- 'NRC Project Management', a workshop to explore how the NRC can better deliver projects which meet the needs of Rover Scouts.
- 'NRC Strategic Planning', an environment scan and idea generation plenary session to inform future updates to the NRC strategic plan.

'World Non-Formal Education Forum 2019' by World Scouting, licenced under CY BY-NC-ND 2.0.

BRC engagement

During 2019-2021 the Review Team attended several BRC meetings (**Table 2**), as meeting with key stakeholders is an effective way to gather the views of those impacted by organisation change.[19] The Review Team used these meeting as an opportunity to discuss the operations, structure and projects of the NRC with the BRCs, and to discuss current Rover Scout engagement with the NRC within each Branch.

The Review Team were also able to observe the operations of different BRCs, including the various ways in which they were structured, the matters they considered, and their meeting procedures.

Table 2: Dates of Consultations with BRCs

Branch Rover Council	Date	Team member
WA (Exec only)	21 November 2019	Clinton
Victoria	23 November 2019	Chris
NSW	2 December 2019	Jay
ACT (Exec only)	8 December 2019	Jay
NSW	13 June 2020	Jay
Queensland	20 September 2020	Jay
Tasmania (Chair only)	23 September 2020	Chris, Clinton, Jay
ACT	18 October 2020	Jay
Victoria	24 February 2021	Chris
SA	10 March 2021	Chris, Clinton, Jay

Note: the NT BRC did not respond to an invitation to discuss the review.

Stakeholders were also encouraged to contact the Review Team any time via their website if they had insights to share or wished to discuss the NRC or the review.

Survey

The Review Team conducted a survey of current and former Rover Scouts between February and June 2020 using the SurveyMonkey platform. Invitations to participate were widely circulated by the NRC and BRCs using social media, websites, and email contact lists. Surveys such as this provide an excellent opportunity to gather both representative data and case studies.[20]

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[19] Kvam, Reidar (2017) 'Meaningful stakeholder consultation'
<https://publications.iadb.org/publications/english/document/Meaningful-Stakeholder-Consultation.pdf>
[20] Hastak et. al., (2001) 'The Role of Consumer Surveys in Public Policy Decision Making' *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing* 20.2, pp. 170-185.

The survey comprised of 34 quantitative and qualitative questions organised into four sections:
1. respondent demographics (see **Appendices A**)
2. rating the NRC's performance against its current strategic objectives
3. identifying which organisations (e.g. the World Organisation of the Scouting Movement, BRCs, Rover Units) are responsible and accountable for different matters affecting Rover Scouts
4. listing significant achievements of the NRC over the past ten years and detailing what the NRC should focus on and be accountable for over the next ten years.

International engagement

The Review Team contacted Rover Scouts within other National Scouting Organisations (NSOs) to understand how Rover Scout governance is structured and operates internationally. The questions explored how Rover Scout are organised above the Unit/Crew level, including the responsibilities, structures, meetings and achievements of these bodies.

Responses were received from:
- Brazil
- Hong Kong
- Myanmar
- Singapore
- United Kingdom

International comparisons are helpful as they allow organisations to learn from other organisations' experiences and ideally adapt successful initiatives for local conditions.[21] The responses received have informed this report's recommendations and will appear throughout the report as case studies.

Discussion paper

A discussion paper examining the NRC's functions and powers was released in September 2020 and circulated to Rover Scouts via BRCs. The discussion paper built on the earlier survey, and the approach was chosen to allow for more detailed responses, particularly those with knowledge of or experience on the NRC.[22] The discussion paper explored:
- the purpose of the NRC
- the powers of the NRC, including its ability to make binding decisions
- the Executive and non-Executive structure of the NRC, including whether they are meeting the needs of Rover Scouts
- face-to-face and online meetings of the NRC, including ways to create more opportunities for involvement and engagement.

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[21] Barclay, Coryn (2018) 'Learning from International Comparisons' <https://know.fife.scot/wp-content/uploads/sites/44/2018/05/KnowHow-International-Comparisons.pdf>
[22] Department of Health (Tasmania) (n.d.) 'Technical Reports and Discussion Papers' <https://www.health.tas.gov.au/about_the_department/your_care_your_say/a_to_z_of_engagement_techniques/technical_reports_and_discussion_papers>

The discussion paper was also an opportunity for submissions to provide additional background and historic information to the Review Team, especially details and context which was not captured in the NRC minutes, and correct a number of assumptions made by the Review Team.

Submissions closed on 14 October 2020, six weeks after the discussion paper was released. **Table 3** provides an overview of the submissions received.

Table 3: Summary of discussion paper submissions

Submission type	Submissions received
Individuals	6
Branch Rover Councils	2
Regional Rover Councils	1

Cost

Stage One (2019-2020) of the review was conducted at the cost of $1,855.50 against a budget of $5,800. The underspend was primarily due to the cancellation of on-site phase of the 13th Asia-Pacific Region/21St Australia Rover Moot in January 2021, which the team was planning to attend. Stage Two (2020-2021) was conducted at a cost of $60 against a budget of $2,600, the underspend due to the 2021 Conference being held virtually.

All expenditure by the Review Team received NRC prior approval.

'World Non-Formal Education Forum 2019' by World Scouting, licenced under CY BY-NC-ND 2.0.

Chapter Three: Purpose and functions of the NRC

A clear purpose statement is vital for any organisation as it clearly articulates your goals and accountabilities, motivates members and stakeholders, defines relationships with other organisations, and provides a long-term vision. In essence, a purpose statement defines 'why we exist':

> *'A truly powerful purpose statement is one that achieves two objectives: clearly articulating strategic goals and motivating your workforce… When your employees understand and embrace your organization's purpose, they're inspired to do work that not only is good—and sometimes great—but also delivers on your stated aims.'[23]*

The purpose and functions of the NRC are documented in a series of publications, including:
- Scouts Australia P&R
- NRC By-Laws
- the NRC 2018-2021 Strategic Plan, updated in February 2019.

To assess the appropriateness of the current NRC purpose and list of functions, the Review Team undertook extensive consultations with Rover Scouts, Rover Advisers and other key stakeholders. The Review Team then worked with the NRC in early 2021 to undertake an evidence-driven review exercise and co-designed a revised NRC purpose statement and list of functions.

The purpose of the NRC was discussed in a workshop during the 'NRC Areas of Responsibility' workshop at the 2020 Conference, with participants proposing that the role of the NRC should be to:
- set a strategic direction for Rover Scouts in Australia and ensure all BRC's strategic plans are aligned
- facilitate resource sharing between BRCs
- provide coordination for major events planning (e.g. World Moot, Australian Rover Moot).

BRCs consulted by the Review Team during 2019-2021 advised that the NRC should:
- coordinate initiatives, projects and policies between the BRCs
- advocate for Rover Scouts at a national level
- provide support to major events
- provide youth leadership opportunities at a national level
- facilitate the sharing of information and lessons learned between BRCs
- provide support and guidance to BRCs
- function at the national governance structure for Rover Scouts
- provide funding opportunities for projects and major events.

The survey conducted by the Review Team in February 2020 asked respondents to match seven responsible parties to nine areas of responsibility and select the level of responsibility

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[23] Harvard Business Review (2019) 'Why Are We Here?' <https://hbr.org/2019/11/why-are-we-here>

they felt that organisation should have over the particular area. Analysis of these results is provided in **Appendices B**. Overall, respondents believed that the NRC should:

- be responsible for the strategic direction of Rover Scouts nationally
- share responsibility for the quality of the Rover Scout program and marketing of Rover Scouts with BRCs, Rover Units and individual Rover Scouts
- share responsibility for Rover Scout training with Branches and BRCs
- share accountability for Rover Scouts satisfaction with Scouting with Branches and RBCs.

Survey respondents said the NRC should focus on the youth program and training over the next ten years, and that the NRC should be held accountable for the youth program and growth of the Rover Scout section over the next ten years.

The discussion paper 'Functions and structure of the National Rover Council' sought views on what the purpose of the NRC should be. Submissions suggested:

- setting a national strategic plan for Rover Scouts
- providing advocacy, representation and leadership opportunities for Rovers Scouts at a national level
- enabling national consistency and coordination through the development and sharing of resources;
- supporting the Rover Scout youth program
- marketing and growing the Rover Scout section
- the development of Rover Scout policy and procedures.

Submissions to the discussion paper also gave broad support to the proposal that the NRC should be able to make binding decisions which BRCs must adhere to. It was suggested that to overcome challenges and differences between Branches, the NRC should focus on making policy and give the BRCs freedom to choose their how they will implement these policies.

Case studies throughout the report explore the purposes of NRC-equivalents in other NSOs. While there is some alignment with the NRC, the purposes of these organisations range for providing advice to the NSO through to active participation in NSO decision making.

Based on the above consultations and feedback, the Review Team drafted a new purpose statement for the NRC which was workshopped during the 2021 Conference. The purpose statement was revised based on feedback from the Conference and the NRC Executive, and a final version was presented and accepted during the March 2021 Remote Meeting. The proposed new purpose and functions of the NRC are listed in **Figure 1**, subject to NOC approval.

Figure 1: Proposed NRC purpose and functions

> **Purpose:**
> The purpose of the NRC to is to improve the quality of the Rover Scout program and to support BRCs in setting and achieving growth targets.
>
> **Functions of the NRC:**
> - Develop, implement, monitor and report on strategic plans, including the delegation of certain tasks to BRCs for execution
> - Advise and make recommendations to the National Operations Committee, of which the NRC Chair is a member, on issues affecting the Rover Scout Section including policy, training, marketing and program
> - Have the NRC Chair or delegate be the spokesperson for Australian Rover Scouts at a National and International level
> - Act as a forum for sharing of best practice as well as networking and support between Branches
> - Organise contingents to international Rover Scout activities and make recommendations to the International Commissioner on their staffing
> - Be accountable for raising, dispersing and reporting to members of Rover Scout funds at the National level as necessary to achieve the NRC's purpose
> - Encourage the continuing involvement of Rovers in Scouts Australia and the wider community beyond their time in Rover Scouts

One of the biggest changes from the previous purpose of the NRC is a greater emphasis on membership growth. While growth is common theme amongst NEC and Branch plans, over the past 20 years there is limited evidence that the NRC or BRCs have focused on growth as a key objective. As the number of 18–25-year-olds in Australia continues to increase, growth of the Rover Scout Section will allow more young people to benefit from the Scouting program, creating a stronger community and happier, more fulfilled people, as demonstrated in recent research.[24]

A key finding throughout the review was the confusion among Rover Scouts and other stakeholders between the responsibilities of the NRC, BRCs and other Scouting organisations. This may be further increased through the NRC adopting a new purpose statement. The NRC should also work with BRCs and other Scouting organisations (e.g. Branches, NOC) to define clearly define who is responsible and accountable for the different elements of the Rover Scout youth program.

The findings also indicated that a realignment of the NRC purpose should also have an impact on the BRCs' purpose, and a realignment for BRCs will be needed also to create better accountability across the organisation. This will also have implications for the focus of strategic plans. A suggested model is included in **Appendices C**.

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[24] Scouts Australia (2020) 'It's Official! Scouting Builds Resilience for Life'
<https://scouts.com.au/blog/2020/05/29/the-scouting-effect-scouting-builds-resilience-for-life/>

Case Study: Singapore

How many Rover Scouts?
There are around 40 Rover Crews, aged 17-26 years old

Organisation above Unit/Crew level?
Crews are organised into Areas, of which there are four

Do you have an NRC equivalent?
Yes. A representative from each Area forms the NRC

What are its powers and responsibilities?
Verifies peak award reflections/reports. Organises the peak award ceremony. Organises social, adventure and service events, promotes networking between Crews and Areas

How is it funded?
Directed funded by the Singapore Scout Association

Meetings
Meet every two months to provide updates and progress reports

Office bearers and terms of office
NRC members (Area representatives) have two-year terms. The Chair has a three-year term for continuity

Major achievements
Organised an induction camp for newly invested Rover Scouts. Moved online in response to COVID-19 by moving training sessions online

Relationship to NSO
Have an opportunity to speak and vote at the national Commissioners Council

Source: correspondence with the National Rover Council of Singapore (2020).

Chapter Four: Structure of the NRC

Organisations must regularly review their structure to ensure that they reflect their changing needs and effectively enable them to achieve their purpose and strategic objectives[25].

As shown in **Figure 2**, the NRC consists of a five-person Executive, the NRC Team of the Executive and three elected Project Officers, and eight Delegations (one for each of the eight Branches, consisting of three members selected by the respective Branch, the BRC Chair, a second Delegate and the Branch Rover Adviser). The total membership of the NRC generally numbers around 30 members, though attendance increases at NRC Conference.

Figure 2: Current structure of the NRC.
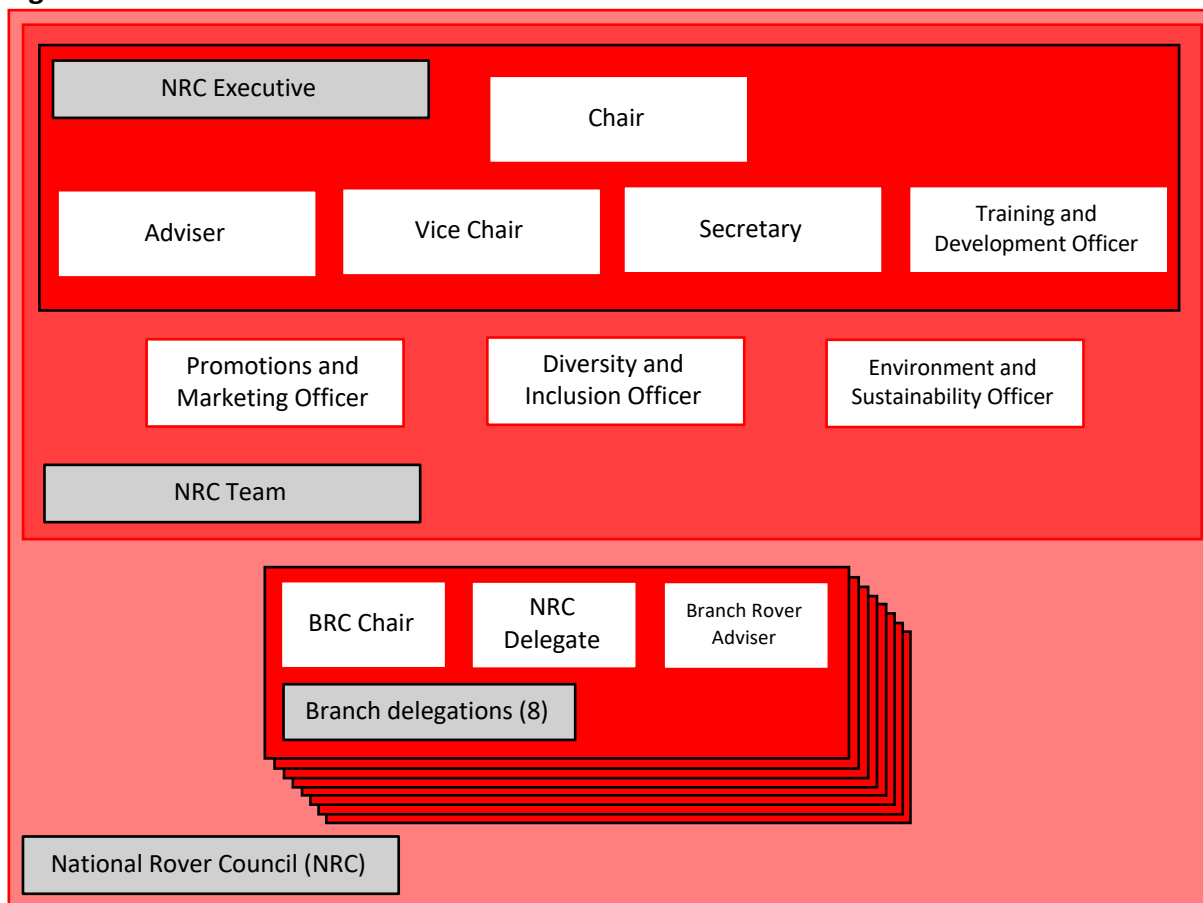
Source: Analysis of NRC documentation.

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[25] Johnson, Eileen Morgan (2020) 'The Basics of Board Committee Structure' <https://www.asaecenter.org/resources/articles/an_plus/2015/december/the-basics-of-board-committee-structure>

Observers to the NRC can include representatives of the New Zealand Rover Council and Branch Venturer Councils, Scout Australia national office bearers (e.g. National Commissioners, National Advisers), and the Regional Youth Representative Australia.[26] Branches are also allowed to have up to two additional Observers per BRC. Generally, these observers only attend the annual Conference and not regular meetings. The Chair of the next Australian Rover Moot typically attends all Council meetings.

The discussion paper proposed several alternative structures for the NRC, though none were favoured in submissions received. The discussion paper can be viewed at https://rovers.scouts.com.au/nrc-external-review/.

Size of the NRC

With around 30 regular members, excluding observers, the NRC is comparable in size to many of the BRC, while include a small executive (on average 11) plus representatives from each Rover Unit or RRC depending on how the Branch is organised, bringing the total members to 20-30 regular attendees, with some having up to 60 regular attendees.

However, the NRC is significantly larger than many comparable executive councils in the wider Scouting Movement and beyond Scouting. Large councils can struggle to maintain engagement with all members and often result in a small number of members doing the majority of the work.[27]

By comparison, as of 2020:
- the Scouts Australia National Operations Committee has 15 members and seven observers
- the Scouts Australia National Executive Committee has 13 members and one observer
- the Asia-Pacific Region (APR) Scout Committee has ten members[28]
- the World Scout Committee has 12 voting members supported by 15 observers (six Youth Advisors and nine non-voting members).[29]

Beyond Scouting, federal nation councils which bring together representatives from states and territories or aligned member organisations at a national level, similar to the model of the NRC, generally only have a small executive and a single representative from each state and territory or member organisation.[30]

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[26] NRC (2019) 'The By-Laws of the National Rover Council of Australia', s.2.2

[27] Johnson, Eileen Morgan (2020) 'The Basics of Board Committee Structure' <https://www.asaecenter.org/resources/articles/an_plus/2015/december/the-basics-of-board-committee-structure>

[28] WOSM (n.d.) 'Asia-Pacific Region – Governance' <https://www.scout.org/node/94/about/132>

[29] WOSM (n.d.) 'World Scout Committee' <https://www.scout.org/WorldScoutCommittee>

[30] Examples include the Cancer Council Australia, Community Council of Australia, the Council of Australasian Tribunals, the National Council of Churches in Australia, the Public Relations Institute of Australia, and the St Vincent de Paul Society National Council.

The discussion paper sought views on the NRC's structure, including the Executive, Project Officers and BRC Delegates. Views on the current structure fell into two categories which preferred:

- a large NRC which provided opportunities for a large range of Rover Scouts to participate, but which was seen as 'bloated' or 'oversized', or
- a small NRC which is more agile and effective at the risk of limiting participation and opportunities to develop skills and experience.

In general, most submissions favoured making the NRC smaller and believed that the current structure is 'unwieldy' and needs to be reduced to a more manageable size. However, it was also noted that a large NRC provides a wide range of development opportunities to Rover Scouts and that reducing the size of the NRC may reduce the talent pool of future members.

Term lengths

Most Executive positions are one-year terms with the option to apply for additional terms; there is currently no term limit. The NRC Chair has been a two-year term since 2016; previously, it was also a one-year term. In extending the Chair's term, the NRC noted that it would provide greater continuity across long-term projects and would allow the Chair to build stronger relationships with key stakeholders.

By comparison, Scouts Australia makes initial national appointments for three-year terms[31], reflected in the NRC Adviser's three-year term.[32] The World Scout Committee elects its members for three years,[33] while the Asia-Pacific Regional Scout Committee elects its members for six-year terms.[34] The NRC has previously identified information loss between outgoing and incoming Executive members as a critical challenge[35], suggesting that increased term lengths may be warranted.

Looking to comparable Rover Scouts governance bodies within other WOSM members, Regional Rover Committees in Brazil and the Hong Kong National Rover Council appoint members for one-year terms, while the Singapore National Rover Council appoints members for two-year terms with the Chair holding a three-year term.[36]

Submissions to the discussion paper were split on this matter. Adult member respondents generally felt that the Executive should have longer terms (e.g. two years), with overlap between them to ensure continuity. At the same time, submissions made by or on behalf of Rover Scouts were satisfied with the current one-year terms.

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[31] Scouts Australia (2018) 'Policy and Rules', p.57
[32] Scouts Australia (2019) 'National Rover Council Advisor' <https://scouts.com.au/blog/2019/01/29/national-rover-council-advisor-position-vacancy>
[33]

 WOSM (n.d.) 'World Scout Committee' <https://www.scout.org/WorldScoutCommittee>
[34] WOSM (n.d.) 'Asia-Pacific Region – Governance' <https://www.scout.org/node/94/about/132>
[35] NRC (2019) 'National Rover Council External
Review Consultant' <https://scouts.com.au/blog/2019/02/27/nrc-external-review-consultant-vacancy/>
[36] Correspondence with the San Paulo Regional Rover Committee (Brazil), Rover Scout Council of Hong Kong and National Rover Council of Singapore (2020).

The submissions discussed the need to find a balance between multi-year appointments, which provide greater experience and continuity but may be less attractive to applicants or limit the pool of available candidates. Possible longer terms need to be balanced against the fact that this is often a period of rapid lifestyle change as Rover Scouts enter the workforce or attend tertiary education either locally or away from home.

Concerning the high costs of the annual Conference (as discussed in chapter six), longer term lengths could mean less frequent face-to-face Conferences. Conference attendees have advised that the Conference provides a good opportunity to get to know candidates, providing insights beyond their formal application. If terms were two years non-overlapping, Conferences could alternate between online and face-to-face, almost halving the cost while still providing an opportunity to meet Executive positions' candidates. However, this opens the possibility of the entire Executive standing down at once and losing their corporate knowledge.

Overlapping terms, in which half of the positions are declared vacant each year, would provide a stronger sense of continuity within the NRC. Balanced against this, Rover Scouts would have half as many opportunities to stand for election, thereby cutting the pool of possible candidates. Current members seeking to be re-elected into an 'out of cycle' position would need to step down from the NRC for 12-months to wait for their preferred position to become available.

The Review Team have examined the composition of the NRC over the last ten years. Each year, 71 per cent of elected NRC members are holding their first NRC position, with 29 per cent having served previously. It is worth noting that the NCR Adviser serves a three-year term (with the possibility to extend the term an additional three years) and provides important continuity and corporate knowledge – when they are taken into account, the average number of new NRC members each year drops to 63 per cent. This represents a good balance between new members with fresh ideas and existing members who provide corporate knowledge and share lessons learned.

On the balance of available evidence and in light of the NRC's current needs, we recommend the existing terms of office are maintained. However, the NRC should regularly review term lengths to ensure they continue to meet the NRC's changing needs.

NRC Executive

As is typical of an executive leadership group, the NRC Executives progress the NRC's work between meetings.[37] The duty statements for the current Executive roles are included in Part II of the NRC By-Laws. Broadly, they are:

- Chair: organising the work of the NRC and representing both the NRC and Rover Scouts at the NOC.
- Vice Chair: establish and oversee projects and working groups, act as the Chair when required.
- Training & Development Officer: encourage, promote and facilitate Rover Scout training opportunities.
- Secretary: oversee administration, governance and finances.
- Adviser: provide guidance to the NRC, Rover Scouts and Rover Advisers nationally.

The Chair, Vice Chair and Training and Development Officer roles are long-standing, with the Secretary and Adviser positions added based on the recommendation of previous reviews.[38] All Executive positions on the NRC must be filled by current Rover Scouts, except for the Adviser, which is an adult appointment.[39]

The Review Team considers that the role of Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Adviser are effectively meeting the needs of the NRC. Noting this, the NRC should undertake regular and ongoing reviews of these duty statements to ensure they are meeting the NRC's changing needs and expectations.

Previously, the Training & Development Officer played a key role in developing the Rover Scout Adult Training and Development (AT&D) curriculum and the Rover Training Team, which deliver training for Rover Scouts by Rover Scouts. They also supported the delivery of training outside the AT&D curriculum (e.g. events management).

However, the role needs to evolve to reflect the new AT&D curriculum, which replaces Sectional specific training streams with two unified training streams – Youth Program and Program Support and moves from Rover Scout training being delivered by Rover Training Leaders to training delivered by unified Branch Training Teams[40].

The Training & Development Officer should continue to represent Rover Scouts on the National Training Committee to ensure that Rover Scouts' needs are heard in regard to the AT&D curriculum. However, the role should pivot toward providing training opportunities outside the AT&D curriculum. The highly successful events management course is a prime

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[37] Johnson, Eileen Morgan (2020) 'The Basics of Board Committee Structure' <https://www.asaecenter.org/resources/articles/an_plus/2015/december/the-basics-of-board-committee-structure>

[38] For example, the Adviser role created in 2012 on the recommendation of Rovering Toward 2020, and the Secretary role was added in 2016 on recommendation from the 2014 Rover Governance Review.

[39] Scouts Australia (2019) 'National Rover Council Advisor' <https://scouts.com.au/blog/2019/01/29/national-rover-council-advisor-position-vacancy>

[40] Scouts Victoria (n.d.) 'Your Training Pathway' <https://scoutsvictoria.com.au/age-sections-adults/training/your-training-pathway/>

example, and there could be scope to offer development opportunities around committee responsibilities and financial management.

In light of this changing role, the Training & Development Officer should be reclassified as a Project Officer rather than a member of the Executive. This move was supported by discussion paper submissions and would better reflect the revised duties of the role. Currently, the Training & Development Officer role is the only Executive role that does not contribute to the NRC's ongoing management. Rather, the portfolio-based scope of duties is more closely aligned to the existing elected Project Officers.

> **Recommendation 2**: The Training & Development Officer role should be reclassified as a Project Officer and have a greater focus on delivering non-Adult Training & Development training opportunities. The role should continue to advocate on behalf of Rover Scouts with regard to the AT&D curriculum.

The NRC has access to two accounts to fund its operations – a General Operating Account, which is funded through the annual Rover Levy and used for operating expenses, and the Rover Development Fund, which was established with the proceeds from the 8th World Moot held in Melbourne in 1990-91 and is used to fund projects which further Rover Scouting in Australia[41].

Duties related to the finances of the NRC are the responsibility of the Secretary[42]. The Chair of the Scouts Australia Finance Committee serves as the Honorary Treasurer of the NRC. However, in practice, this function has been handled in recent years by the National Support Team.

The NRC's lack of a Treasurer was raised as a shortcoming of the current structure in consultations with BRCs. In the last two years, the Executive has had an increased interest in modernising the NRC's financial arrangements, particularly financial reporting, with a paper agreed to at the 2021 Conference with several recommendations to improve reporting.

Once these new arrangements are in place, the NRC will be better positioned to administer its finances. This would present an ideal opportunity to introduce a Treasurer role to the Executive to establish a central point of contact for all financial matters relating to the NRC and to alleviate the burden on the Secretary.

The Treasurer would be responsible for:
- Managing and tracking the finances of the NRC, including project payments, Moot Buddy payments etc
- Developing the NRC budget in consultation with the Executive
- The production of regular financial reporting
- Working with the National Support Office to distribute Rover Levy invoices
- Other relevant duties as assigned by the Chair

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[41] NRC (2020) 'The By-Laws of the National Rover Council of Australia', Part I Article 5
[42] NRC (2020) 'The By-Laws of the National Rover Council of Australia', Part II Section 1

Taking on the above duties, which the Secretary currently handles, will free up to Secretary to focus on their administrative and governance functions. The Treasurer should also identify and secure alternate funding and income streams for the NRC to reduce its reliance on the Rover Levy (e.g. grant opportunities).

The role would also provide a further opportunity for Rover Scouts to develop their skills and experience in this area. As six of the eight BRCs have an elected Treasurer role, there should already be a pool of experienced and suitable candidates to draw upon.

Recommendation 3: A new Treasurer role is introduced to the Executive to handle the NRC's finances and seek new sources of income and is trialled for two years to assess the effectiveness of the role.

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NRC Team

Several non-Executive Officers support the Executive and are referred to internally as the NRC Team. They are elected annually at the Conference and serve 12-month terms. At present, their portfolios are:

- Marketing and Public Relations – created in 2017-18[43]
- Diversity and Inclusion – created in 2018
- Environment and Sustainability – created in 2020.

These roles work to deliver NRC projects within their portfolio area and generally sit on the respective Scouts Australia committee to represent Rover Scouts and provide updates back to the NRC. The current NRC portfolios represent the NRC's interests and priorities and are aligned to the structure of the National Team and its portfolios/committees.

The effectiveness of NRC projects, including those delivered by the NRC Team, is discussed in chapter ten.

Project Officers

The NRC advertises externally for Project Officers to undertake one-off projects, ranging from 2-12 months in duration. Examples include:

- Roverscope Review Project Officer
- Mental Health Resource Officer
- Respectful Relationships Officer
- World Moot 2029 Feasibility Investigation.[44]

Project Officers are accountable to the Vice Chair, who reports on their progress to the NRC. The use and effectiveness of Project Officers are discussed in chapter ten.

BRC Delegations

Each of the eight Branches provides a three-person delegation to the NRC consisting of the BRC Chair, the Branch Rover Adviser (BRA), and an NRC Delegate elected by their BRC.

BRC Chairs and Branch Rover Advisers

The Chair and BRA from each of the eight Branches are ex-officio members of the NRC, in that they are a member due to outside elections or appointments and are not directed elected to the NRC. The BRA position is not a Rover Scout but rather an adult appointment.

Their participation of the BRC Chairs in the NRC mirrors the NOC's structure, which brings together the eight Chief Commissioners to represent their Branch's interests.[45] The Singapore NRC operates under a similar model of four Rover Scouts, one from each Area, forming the NRC alongside an elected Executive.[46]

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[43] The NRC Executive have advised that a similar role existing on and off within the NRC over the past 20 years. The current role was defined in 2017-18.

[44] NRC (n.d.) 'NRC Project Vacancies' <https://rovers.scouts.com.au/rovering/nrc-project-vacancies/>

[45] Scouts Australia (2020) 'Policy and Rules' <https://soz-central.s3.amazonaws.com/products/162/download_file/POLICY_AND_RULES.pdf>, Rule 1.1.4

[46] Correspondence with the National Rover Council of Singapore (2020)

The BRC Chairs are well placed to provide input, ideas and advocacy to the NRC on behalf of the Rover Scouts in their Branch who have elected them.

The BRAs provide support and mentorship to their BRC Delegation and the NRC members more widely and support the development of initiatives and projects. Since 2014 BRAs have been non-voting members of the NRC, and instead focus on providing support to the NRC rather than participating in decision-making.

NRC Delegates
NRC Delegates are elected within their respective BRC and are responsible for providing updates from the NRC back to their Branch and expected under the NRC By-Laws to participate in project work assigned by the NRC Vice Chair.[47] The current NRC Delegate role was formalised in 2012 to act as a second point of contact within each Branch and assist with NRC projects.

Interviews with BRCs and past and present NRC Executives indicate that the NRC has struggled in recent years to complete work due to a lack of willingness on the part of Delegates to undertake assigned tasks. Issues around the effectiveness of the Delegate position have been ongoing and were raised as early as 2014. As their BRC appoints delegates, the Executive lack formal mechanisms to hold Delegates accountable for completing assigned work.

Despite the expectations of the role in the By-Laws, the duties of Delegates are not consistently applied by BRCs. Some BRCs have advised that they do not expect the Delegate to undertake project work and that the role was seen to only involve reporting back on the work of the NRC. Some BRCs appoint their incoming Chair as the Delegate as a way of giving them experience with the NRC, acknowledging that they are unlikely to have the capacity to undertake project work. Some Rover Scouts advise that the responsibilities and expectations of the Delegate are not fully communicated prior to their election.

As opposed to Project Officers, Delegates are not selected based on subject matter knowledge or their ability/capacity to complete project work. While the NRC can actively recruit Project Officers based on their skills and experience, there is no mechanism to ensure the mix of skills brought by the eight Delegates matches the NRC's needs. One of the most successful projects undertaken by the NRC in recent years, the Rover Centenary, was staffed by appointed Project Officers rather than Delegates.

It is worth considering the Delegate role's other major duty – providing updates from the NRC back to their Branch. However, in light of the low level of understanding and awareness among Rover Scouts about the work of the NRC, as discussed in chapter five, the current arrangements are not working.

On the balance of evidence, the Delegate role is not effectively fulfilling the NRC's needs and should be removed.

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[47] NRC (2020) 'The By-Laws of the National Rover Council of Australia', Part II Section One

Recommendation 4: The NRC should abolish the Delegate role. The NRC and BRCs Chairs will become responsible for Rover Scouts engagement and awareness, and appointed and elected Project Officers will be responsible for undertaking NRC projects.

This could create a risk for the NRC that a new BRC Chair or attendee standing in for a BRC Chair would not have prior experience with the NRC and may not understand how the NRC functions. In these circumstances, we would expect the BRA to provide support and guidance to first-time NRC attendees.

Noting that the Delegate role presents an opportunity for personal development, the NRC should continue to allow non-voting Observers to attend the annual NRC Conference as a development opportunity and provide additional Rover Scout voices and areas of expertise.

This would require a change to how the NRC votes. As discussed in chapter seven, each BRC would have a single vote following the Delegate role's removal. This would more closely align the NRC with similar bodies and reflects the rarity of situations in which the two voting members of a BRC split their vote rather than voting the same.

Regarding communicating and engaging with Rover Scouts, the NRC should rely on other mechanisms (e.g. BRC Chairs providing updates, NRC communicating directly with Rover Scouts) as discussed in chapter five.

Training

While the NRC has established pre-requisite training requirements for elected positions linked to the Scouts Australia AT&D curriculum and organises a handover process for new NRC Executive and NRC Team members, it does not have a process for training and inducting non-elected members of the NRC.

The unwillingness of new board and committee members to contribute to discussions is often attributed to a lack of understanding around the board or committee's objectives, background and culture, or how the board or committee functions.[48] A training and induction process can help new members more easily and quickly grasp the process, procedures and objectives of the board or committee, which will help build comfort and confidence, making them more likely to contribute in a meaningful way.[49]

The training package should cover the NRC's organisation and functions, the types of matter it considers (and what is beyond its scope), how to draft proposals and reports, and how to effectively contribute to meetings and discussions.

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[48] Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (WA) (2019) 'Board induction process' <https://www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au/sport-and-recreation/organisational-development/governance/boards-and-directors/board-induction-process>
[49] Institute of Community Directors Australia (n.d.) 'Developing an effective induction process' <https://communitydirectors.com.au/help-sheets/developing-an-effective-induction-process>

While the NRC has historically drawn on the Scouts Australia AT&D curriculum to determine eligibility for positions, it is unclear if this is best suited to supporting new NRC members. Instead, the NRC could look to existing tailored training packings, such as the Good Governance series offered by WOSM Services (https://services.scout.org/service/10), designed for executive member councils.

The organising of this training could be the NRC Training and Development Officer's responsibility, with delivery delegated to a subject matter expert (e.g. governance experts, NRC Adviser, ex-NRC Chair). It may be possible to structure the training to satisfy units of competence offered by the Scouts Australia Institute of Training (SAIT), such as 'BSBGOV401 Implement board member responsibilities.

> **Recommendation 5**: The NRC establishes a short training and induction process for all NRC members to ensure they understand how the NRC operates and how they can most effectively contribute to meetings and discussions.

Case Study: United Kingdom

How many Rover Scouts?
16,000 members aged 18-25 years old, of which 3,000 are active Network members. The remaining 13,000 young adult members can access Network if they wish

Organisation above Unit/Crew level?
Network Units are organised at a District level, above which are Counties then Regions. Not all 700 Districts have a Network Unit, and some are joint Units with other Districts

Do you have an NRC equivalent?
No. The UK Scout Network Commissioner provides support where needed

Source: correspondence with the Volunteer Head of UK Scout Network (2020).

Chapter Five: Engagement with Rover Scouts

Effective engagement with stakeholders is critical for all organisations and is crucial to ensure the successful delivery of projects.[50] Engaging with key stakeholders has long been a challenge for the NRC, with 'difficulties in communication internal and external to the Council' one of the identified systemic issues which lead to this review.[51]

Responsibility for raising awareness of the NRC nationally sits with the Marketing and Public Relations Officer (M&PR) Officer. The M&PR Officer role was established in 2018 and is an elected non-Executive member of the NRC. They are responsible for creating, implementing, and evaluating internal and external marketing and public relations initiatives to promote and support the NRC's strategic objectives and build productive relationships with stakeholders.[52]

The Review Team examined the role of the M&PR Officer in later 2020 and made several recommendations to amend the role description. The NRC accepted these changes to broaden the remit of the role, which was heavily focused on marketing and promoting to Rover Scouts, including developing and maintaining key stakeholder relationships and building awareness of the NRC's work.

The M&PR Officer can establish a team/sub-committee of interested and experienced Rover Scouts to assist them in the role. When the M&PR Officer role is vacant, the responsibilities fall to other members of the Executive.

Within Branches, responsibility for raising awareness of the NRC sits with each respective NRC Delegate. These responsibilities include communicating NRC decisions and changes that may influence decisions to the BRCs, and leading the process of drafting papers and proposals to the NRC and consulting with Rover Scouts within their Branch on papers and proposals put to the NRC.[53]

Structurally, the NRC has established a robust approach to creating awareness with clearly delineated roles. However, consultations with Rover Scouts demonstrates that this is not translating into effective engagement with key stakeholders.

Awareness of the NRC and its role

The Review Team survey explored respondents' awareness of the NRC, with 95 per cent of respondents saying they had heard of the NRC (current Rover Scouts: 92 per cent, former Rover Scouts: 97 per cent). This result likely skews high – respondents who already knew about the NRC would have a higher interest in the survey and be more likely to respond. However, it should be noted that only 25 per cent of respondents were current or past members of the NRC and that the majority of respondents had never been a member of the NRC.

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[50] Association of Project Management (n.d.) '10 key principles of stakeholder engagement' <https://www.apm.org.uk/resources/find-a-resource/stakeholder-engagement/key-principles/>
[51] National Rover Council (2019) 'National Rover Council External Review Consultant' <https://scouts.com.au/blog/2019/02/27/nrc-external-review-consultant-vacancy/>
[52] NRC (2020) 'The By-laws of the National Rover Council of Australia, Part II, Section 1
[53] NRC (2020) 'The By-laws of the National Rover Council of Australia, Part II, Section 1

Awareness of an organisation should not be confused with interest or understanding. 57 per cent of survey respondents could not list a major achievement of the NRC over the past ten years. Participants in the 2020 NRC Conference workshop 'Grassroots Rovers' Involvement in the NRC' discussed how Rover Scouts generally do not understand the NRC's purpose and lack understanding of its work.

During consultations, BRCs advised that Rover Scouts generally either aren't aware of the NRC or, if they are, they aren't aware of what it does compared to other organisations such as BRCs and RRCs. BRCs estimated that only half the Rover Scouts in their state/territory would know what the NRC does. One BRC member stated that they knew what the letters NRC meant – National Rover Council – but they didn't know what the NRC did.

Several survey respondents commented on their lack of awareness around the work and responsibilities of the NRC:
- *'I'm sure it [the NRC] does important stuff, I just have no idea what the stuff is'*
- *'Make your actions and activities more visible - I knew there was a National Rover committee [Council], but not much else beyond that'*

Numerous public relations theories examine the relationships between organisations/brand and their target audiences (**Figure 3**). Based on the above data, the NRC currently sits in the 'cognitive stage' – key stakeholders have an awareness or knowledge of the NRC yet lack an interest it in or a desire to engage with it.

Figure 3: Customer response hierarchy model

Stages	AIDA Model	Hierarchy-of-Effects Model	Innovation-Adoption Model	Information Processing Model	Operational Model
Cognitive Stage	Attention	Awareness ↓ Knowledge	Awareness	Presentation ↓ Attention ↓ Comprehension	Non-Evaluative Thinking
Affective Stage	Interest ↓ Desire	Liking ↓ Preference ↓ Conviction	Interest ↓ Evaluation	Yielding ↓ Retention	Evaluative Thinking
Behavior Stage	Action	Purchase	Trial ↓ Adoption	Behavior	Action

Source: Lannes, Xavier (n.d.) 'The Hierarchy of Effects Theory Applied to Digital Marketing <http://myadgency.com/blog/the-hierarchy-of-effects-theory-applied-to-digital-marketing/>

Ideally, the NRC should aim to move stakeholders to the 'affective stage', where they are interested in the NRC and a preference to engage with it. Moving these stakeholders to the 'behaviour stage' would see them take proactive action around the NRC, such as lodging their self-authored papers for consideration.

Engagement with the NRC

Contributors to the review have noted that the NRC's communication is 'patchy', that Rover Scouts don't see content or updates coming out of the NRC, and that the NRC could do more to let Rover Scouts know how they can contribute to the NRC.

The NRC has developed a strategic communication plan, entitled the Marketing Strategic Plan, to guide its engagement with internal and external stakeholders. The 2020-21 plan focused on supporting 'the growth and development of the Rover Scout section of Scouts Australia… support[ing] the cohesive approach to delivering a nationally consistent youth program, recognition of the skills and service of our members and advocating on behalf of the Rover Scout Section at a National and International level.' This goal was to be achieved through a focus on:
- expanding and improving the NRC's use of social media
- promoting Rover Scouts to an external audience and building relationships with aligned organisations
- improving the marketing of Rover Scouts to internal audiences
- engagement with BRC marketing officers and the Scouts Australia Brand, Marketing and Communications Committee.

The plan is intended to align with and support the NRC strategic plan and be reviewed annually.

A fit-for-purpose and carefully designed strategic plan is vital to ensure organisations such as the NRC can effectively communicate with their key stakeholders to demonstrate their work's value and build support from its members.[54] The NRC should maintain a strategic communication plan and ensure it has clear targets and is regularly reviewed.

The NRC uses several platforms to communicate with its key stakeholders, including social media, the National Rover Scout update included in the Scouts Australia National News monthly email[55] and blog posts on its website.[56] The NRC Executive have advised that they use a content calendar approach to planning social media posts to ensure a steady stream of content to keep the audience engaged.

The NRC maintains the Rover Scouts Australia Facebook and Instagram pages, and has experimented recently with TikTok. BRCs and other Scouts Australia social media accounts regularly reshare this content to maximise reach. Social media is seen as an important tool

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[54] Levine, Stuart R. (2014) 'The Power of Strategic Communication' <https://stuartlevine.com/communication/strategic-communication/the-power-of-strategic-communication/>
[55] Scouts Australia (n.d.) 'Email Campaign Achieve' <https://us8.campaign-archive.com/home/?u=18e05041da3c4b7dbaf2dec8f&id=58c38eacf2>
[56] NRC (n.d.) 'Recent posts' <https://rovers.scouts.com.au/recent-posts/> (login required)

for NRC-equivalents in other WOSM countries, with Brazil and Hong Kong both using social media to engage with their Rover Scouts.

The NRC reports internally on its social media and has increased the number of likes on its Facebook page from 3,842 in April 2020 to 4,051 in January 2021. During this same period, the number of Instagram followers grew from 214 to 732.

These social media platforms are primarily used to share information, events and opportunities about Rover Scouts in general. Content related to the NRC is generally limited to recruiting for vacancies and projects, and there is limited focus on communicating the work of the NRC itself. For example, the NRC could announce the dates of upcoming meetings, the topics to be discussed, and contact details of BRC representatives for Rover Scouts wishing to share their views.

In 2020 the NRC began adding quarterly Rover Scout updates to the monthly Scouts Australia National News, which are also available on the NRC website. Updates provided in July 2020,[57] November 2020[58] and February 2021[59] provided details on NRC projects and opportunities, recent NRC and NOC/NEC decisions, and details of upcoming meetings.

In 2021 the NRC began publishing blog posts on their website which discuss issues affecting Rover Scouts.[60]

While research and submissions to the discussion paper saw Facebook as the NRC's primarily platform, they noted that it not used by young people of Rover Scout age who prefer other platforms.[61] Despite this, the NRC must ensure diversity among its platforms to reach the widest possible audience, noting that not all Rover Scouts will follow them on social media or subscribe to National News.

Submissions to the discussion paper similarly suggested that the NRC publish regular and concise overviews of the NRC's achievements, matters to be discussed at future meetings, and decisions made by the NRC. As one submission noted:

> *'What is lacking are regular and concise details, presented in an easy-to-digest fashion - produced by the NRC and aimed to reach every Rover [Scout]'.*

For example, ahead of meetings the NRC could:
- announce meeting dates and provide contact details for BRC representatives
- list topics to be discussed and encourage Rover Scouts to raise their views with their BRC
- advise Rover Scouts to raise concerns with their BRC for inclusion on the agenda.

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[57] NRC (2020) 'National Rover Scout Update July 2020' <https://scouts.com.au/blog/2020/08/27/national-rover-scout-update-july-2020/>

[58] NRC (2020) 'National Rover Scout Update November 2020'
https://scouts.com.au/blog/2020/11/21/national-rover-scout-update-november-2020/

[59] NRC (2021) 'A New Year, a New NRC Executive' <https://scouts.com.au/blog/2021/02/24/a-new-year-a-new-nrc-executive/>

[60] NRC (2021) 'Recent Posts' <https://rovers.scouts.com.au/recent-posts/>

[61] Wired (2019) 'Teens Don't Use Facebook, but They Can't Escape It, Either' <https://www.wired.com/story/teens-cant-escape-facebook/>

While most NRC work clusters around meetings every two-to-three months, a steady stream of information could keep stakeholders engaged. For example, between meetings the NRC could

- provide quick updates on NRC projects
- conduct short (e.g. one or two question) social media polls on issues facing Rover Scouts which could inform future NRC proposals or projects
- share BRC best practice suggestions and successful projects
- demonstrate how former Rover Scouts are continuing to contribute to Scouting and the wider community.

Ideally, this content should be short and sharp and grab attention – during the 2020 NRC Conference it was suggested that the NRC produce short, to-the-point videos or simple text animations to grab attention and share updates and initiatives. These messages will need to be tailored to specific platforms – content that works on Facebook may not easily translate to Instagram or other platforms.[62]

The NRC could also publish an annual report which is distributed to all Rover Units and covers:

- progress against the NRC strategic plan
- Rover Scout membership growth and satisfaction with the Rover Scout program
- the commencement, progress and results of NRC projects
- the NRC's financial position.

Recommendation 6: The NRC should increase the frequency of regular public reporting on project progress and outcomes, decisions made, and opportunities to contribute to the NRC.

Approaches to consultation

Several discussion paper submissions raised concerns that there has been insufficient time for meaningful consultation to take place with Rover Scouts on proposals put to the NRC. This sentiment was echoed in discussions with BRCs.

Consultation with Rover Scouts was discussed in detail during a workshop convened by the Review Team at the 2020 Conference. Participants noted that consultations for Conference papers take place over the holiday break – far from an ideal time – and advise that they do not always have the opportunity to seek comments and views from Rover Scouts in their Branch ahead of NRC votes. Participants noted low levels of interest among Rover Scouts about the NRC's work but suggested it was still important to offer the opportunity to contribute.

While many raised the lack of time available to consult on papers, it was also observed that papers requiring a vote are required to be submitted three weeks ahead of Remote Meetings, and reports are due two weeks before. This was seen as sufficient time for consultation to occur.

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[62] Hootsuite (2018) 'Stop Posting the Same Message on Social Media (And Do This Instead)' <https://blog.hootsuite.com/cross-promote-social-media/>

The NRC Executive has access to file view statistics for papers stored in their OneDrive file management system (discussed further in Chapter X). They have advised that based on this data, very few BRCs are accessing papers ahead of meetings and that most file views occur a day or two before the meeting, leaving insufficient time to consult.

BRCs do not have a consistent approach to seeking input from their Rover Scouts. Some BRCs advise that they have well-established structures to share papers and gather feedback, and their NRC Delegates provide regular updates and call for volunteers to work on NRC projects. Other BRCs have only recently started to share updates from the NRC. Contrasted to this, some NRC Delegates have been observed to not provide updates on the NRC at their BRC meetings.

While the NRC has established a structured system to seek input from Rover Scouts via their BRC representatives, the system is not working in many cases. A new approach is required – direct engagement between the NRC and Rover Scouts.

The need for the NRC to communicate directly with Rover Scouts was raised in discussion paper submissions. While BRCs have argued that direct engagement with Rover Scouts should be their responsibility and not the NRCs, many saw a degree of information loss at each level of Rover governance – messages from the NRC must filter through BRCs before reaching Rover Units, and in some Branches, they must also filter through RRCs. As a respondent to the survey noted:

> *'I'd like to see more done by NRC to connect with Rovers at the grassroots level. Sometimes I think that just starts with an email now and then to keep the individual up-to-date on what's happening. So many opportunities can get lost once they hit Branch, especially in the bigger ones.'*

It is recommended that the NRC establish mechanisms to allow it to communicate directly with Rover Units. Ideally, it could leverage existing BRC contact lists which should become increasingly easy as Branches move toward unified email systems as part of the Scouts Australia Digital Transformation Strategy.

If direct access to mailing lists is not possible due to IT limitations or privacy concerns, BRCs should be asked to promptly forward messages from the NRC and provide a copy of the forwarded email to the NRC as verification, which will be reported on at Remote Meetings.

The types of information which could be shared include:
- topics and papers to be discussed at upcoming meetings, directing Rover Scouts to their respective BRC if they have comments or concerns
- decisions and copies of minutes from NRC meetings
- progress reports on strategic plans and projects
- finance updates
- calls for Project Officers to support NRC projects.

Direct communication with Rover Units will also address the recommended abolishment of the NRC Delegate role, who is currently expected to fulfil this engagement, as recommended in chapter four.

A similar proposal was discussed by the NRC in mid-2020 and not supported. While we acknowledge the concerns raised by BRCs around the NRC proposal, based on our consultations, survey results and discussion paper submissions we believe the idea has merit and will support better communication with Rover Scouts. We have left the means of implementation open so the NRC and BRCs can find the most suitable approach to implementing.

> **Recommendation 7**: The NRC should establish a mechanism for it to communicate directly with Rover Units.

In addition to direct communication with Rover Units, the NRC should conduct an annual survey of relevant stakeholders to gather information related to:
- The satisfaction of the NRC's performance over the past 12 months, and
- Views on current and emerging issues to help inform the NRC's future direction.

The new youth program has a strong focus on the Plan> Do> Review> methodology of feedback and continual improvement.[63] The information gathered in these surveys could help the NRC improve its performance, address concerns raised by Rover Scouts, and identify emerging issues and risks. An ongoing feedback mechanism would also reduce the NRC's reliance on periodic, large-scale reviews to address issues it is facing (see chapter X).

> **Recommendation 8**: The NRC should conduct an annual survey of Rover Scouts and key stakeholders to measure the NRC's effectiveness and seek Rover Scout views on matters affecting them to help determine the future direction of the NRC.

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[63] Scouts Australia (2018) 'The Adventure Begins – Plan > Do > Review >'
<https://scouts.com.au/blog/2018/02/01/plan-do-review/>

Chapter Six: Meetings of the NRC

The NRC hosts an annual Conference, generally in January, and Remote Meetings every two to three months to discuss and vote on proposals and provide updates and progress reports. The Conference is generally held face-to-face over three days in the state or territory that just hosted the Scouts Australia major event for that year (the Jamboree, Venture or Moot), while the two-hour Remote Meetings are conducted online via video conferencing.

The three-day format of Conferences allows for more detailed reporting and discussions of topics and are generally used to elect the new NRC Executive and NRC Team. Since 2008 the NRC has organised a series of workshops and breakout sessions to allow interested attendees to dive deeper into issues and proposals. Training sessions are also held over the weekend the provide opportunities for personal development.

While controversial proposals are sometimes held over to Conference to allow more time for debate, there is no clear delineation between the Conference and Remote Meetings topics.

Under the current model, the strategic direction of the NRC is set up by the NRC Executive. While the NRC Executive provide an annual report at the Conference, the NRC strategic plan is not discussed or reported against.

The current NRC strategic plan has five strategic priorities (representation, governance, program, training and marketing), and 17 measures of success (termed 'directive indicators') which provide measurable goals.

The Review Team has examined the Executive reports from the last three Conferences, which reported against the NRC's current strategic plan. While the reports were structured around the five strategic priorities, there was inconsistent reporting against the 17 measures of success.

While some measures were regularly reported against (e.g. the involvement of Rover Scouts on Scouts Australia subcommittees, increased NRC social media engagement), other measures were never been reported against (e.g. increased Rover Scout completion of AT&D and SAIT training, Venturer Scout retention, improved relationships with external organisations).

BRC reports similarly reported their own work against the five strategic prioritises but did not report their contribution to the 17 measures of success or link their work to the fulfilment of the NRC strategic plan.

Developing and reporting against a strategic plan allows organisations such as the NRC to improve their accountability and transparency and demonstrate their value to their stakeholders.[64] According to the Institute of Community Directors Australia:

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[64] Institute of Community Directors Australia (n.d.) 'Strategic planning overview' <https://communitydirectors.com.au/help-sheets/strategic-planning-overview>

'The process of strategic planning assists an organisation to enhance its understanding of where it is going, how it is going to get there and how it will know if it has been successful in achieving its aims.'[65]

We recommend that the NRC adopt a new focus for its Conference and Remote Meetings. The Conference should be used to set and report against the NRC's strategic plan. Every third Conference would be devoted to developing a new NRC strategic plan, which aligns with the Scouts Australia, APR and WOSM strategic plans. The two following Conferences would be used to report progress against the strategic plan and discuss possible amendments to the strategic plan.

The strategic plans of BRCs, while focused on their own priorities, should also seek to support the strategic direction of the NRC.

In turn, Remote Meetings should be used to implement and report on projects and initiatives that support the strategic plan's implementation. Under this model, the Conference would focus on strategic planning, while the Remote Meetings focus on operational matters. If proposals are raised at Remote Meetings which don't contribute to the NRC strategic plan, they should be reconsidered, or the strategic plan amended at the next Conference.

This model reflects the operations of WOSM[66] and the Asia-Pacific Region[67] – strategic direction is set every three years at the triennial Conference, and committee implements agreed resolutions between Conferences. It would also give all NRC members, not just the NRC Executive, input and ownership of the NRC's strategic direction.

> **Recommendation 9**: NRC Conferences should focus on strategic planning and reporting, while Remote Meetings focus on proposals and projects to support the implementation of the strategic plan.

While the Conference should be devoted to strategic planning, the emphasis on personal development, especially if non-attendees can join remotely, should remain. First and foremost, the mission of Scouting is to provide education and development to young people, and the NRC Conference provides an outstanding opportunity to fulfil this objective.[68]

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[65] Australian Institute of Company Directors (2016) 'Strategic plan development – Role of the board' <https://aicd.companydirectors.com.au/~/media/cd2/resources/director-resources/director-tools/pdf/05446-5-14-mem-director-rob-strategic-plan-development_a4-web.ashx>
[66] WOSM (n.d.) 'Governance' <https://www.scout.org/governance>
[67] WOSM (n.d.) 'Asia-Pacific Region – Governance' <https://www.scout.org/node/94/about/132>
[68] WOSM (n.d.) 'Mission, Vision and Strategy' <https://www.scout.org/mission>

While there is no requirement for boards to publish their minutes, doing so increases accountability, keeps decision-making transparent, improves awareness of the board and its functions, and encourages stakeholders to be more engaged.[69]

In April 2020, the NRC agreed to the Review Team's recommendation to post meeting minutes and papers on its website behind the Scouts Australia login system.[70] This decision was based on best practice research and consultations with Rover Scouts and BRCs, and was designed to improve visibility of how the NRC operates and to provide a mechanism for members of the NRC to be held accountable.

The NRC should continue to publish its minutes and seek to ensure that the proposals discussed during meetings and the decisions made are widely shared (see chapter five).

Conference

While the annual face-to-face NRC Conference is seen as the NRC's most productive meeting and the meeting at which the NRC does the majority of important work, the Conference represents a significant expense for the NRC.

The Conference represents on average 74 per cent of the NRC's annual operational expenditure. The Rover Levy covers the costs of the NRC Executive and the eight NRC Delegates[71], while the costs of the rest of the BRC delegations (generally between two to three additional Rover Scouts plus an Adviser) are met by their Branch or paid for by the attendees.

The high price of the Conference, and the accompanying environmental impact, was raised both in the survey and in submissions to the discussion paper. As one survey respondent noted:

> *'It's a waste of our money for you [the NRC] to be sent interstate on our dime to discuss things that could be done over Skype.'*

While the travel and accommodation costs of a face-to-face Conference are high, attendees report wider benefits that cannot be achieved during a virtual conference. While the same business can be transacted, a face-to-face Conference presents far more opportunities for attendees to build rapport with their colleagues. Attendees also report that it is an ideal opportunity for attendees to meet nominees standing for election.[72]

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[69] BoardPro (n.d.) 'Board Minutes: the FAQ' <https://www.boardprohub.com/blog/blog-board-minutes-faqs/>; Institute of Community Directors Australia (n.d.) 'Becoming a more accountable, transparent and consultative board' <https://communitydirectors.com.au/help-sheets/becoming-a-more-accountabletransparent-and-consultative-board>

[70] NRC (n.d.) 'National Rover Council Documents' <https://rovers.scouts.com.au/nrc-documents/>

[71] Every Rover Scout in Australia pays an annual 'NRC Levy' of approximately $7.50 which is paid to the NRC and used to cover operational costs and development projects.

[72] it should be noted that nominees are only officially announced moments before the election process commences.

Conference attendees note that some of their most important learnings from the Conference come from casual and impromptu conversations outside the main Conference proceedings; these interactions do not generally occur at a virtual event. Face-to-face events allow connections between participants to be more easily built[73] and are more focused with fewer distractions.[74]

On balance, the Review Team does not recommend that the NRC move solely to virtual meetings. A face-to-face Conference supports our above recommendation of using the Conference for strategic planning, as face-to-face events encourage discussion and idea generation. Balanced against this, virtual Remote Meetings allow the NRC to implement and report on work that supports the realisation of the NRC's strategic plan while keeping costs down.

We encourage the NRC to host future Conferences using a hybrid approach of face-to-face attendance and virtual dial-in – this is discussed in more detail below.

The Review Team acknowledges the significant costs involved with the Conference and has made two recommendations to deliver greater value for money.

'#ScoutCongress' by World Scouting, licenced under CY BY-NC-ND 2.0.

[73] Haman, Ken (2020) 'Mastering the Virtual Practice: Virtual vs. Face-to-Face Meetings' <https://www.alliancebernstein.com/library/Mastering-the-Virtual-Practice-Virtual-vs-Face-to-Face-Meetings.htm>

[74] Ball, Corbin (2020) 'Face-to-Face Vs. Virtual Meetings: Which is Better?' <https://www.corbinball.com/article/44-virtual-meetings-web-meetings-video-and-collaboration/273-f2f-vs-virtual>

Conference location

Currently, the convention is for the Conference to be held in the state or territory which is hosting that year's major event – either the Jamboree, Venture or Moot. It is argued that this is to keep costs down as attendees may already be attending the major event and would only need a return flight home, as their outbound flight would be included in the major event fees. The NRC have advised that they have previously undertaken cost analysis of the Conference location and date, though this has not been publicly shared.

BRCs have raised that the Conference's location, which moves around Australia, can be expensive to travel to. Submissions to the discussion paper raised that the location of the Conference should instead be select to ensure value-for-money, with one submission noting:

> *'Costs should be kept in check through use of centralised meeting venues etc, not just moving the meetings around to satisfy political concerns.'*

Rather than rotate the Conference's location to align with that year's major event, the NRC should host the Conference in the state or territory that provides the best value-for-money.

Preliminary analysis by the Review Team that the NRC could reduce the travel cost of the Conference significantly by selecting the Conference venue based on value for money the composition of the NRC[75] rather than rotating the venue (**Table 4**).

Table 4: Estimates Conference hosting costs by location

Host city	Cost vs average cost ($7,410)
Melbourne	60%
Sydney	61%
Adelaide	68%
Brisbane	86%
Average cost	**100%**
Hobart	110%
Canberra	113%
Perth	127%
Darwin	174%

Source: Review Team analysis.

Note that this cost will change as the composition of the NRC changes, and in Moot years, it may be cheaper to hold the Conference in the state or territory that has just hosted the Moot. We are not proposing that the NRC always hold the Conference in a particular venue. Rather, it selects the venue each year based on value-for-money rather than maintaining a strict rotation.

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[75] Currently two NRC Team members live in the ACT, two in NSW, two in Victoria, one in Queensland and one in WA.

Beyond cost, the location of the Conference also contributes to the environmental impact of the Conference. The Review Team has analysed the distances required to be travelled to host the Conference in each capital city (**Table 5**), based on three representatives from each BRC (Chair, NRC Delegate and BRA) and the current competition of the NRC Executive and NRC Team.

Table 5: Estimated total kilometres travelled to attend the 2022 Conference.

Host city	Total distance travelled (kms)
Canberra	43,319
Melbourne	44,550
Hobart	46,169
Sydney	46,468
Adelaide	48,477
Brisbane	59,024
Perth	104,758
Darwin	110,765

Source: Review Team analysis.
Note: Total distance travelled is based on three representatives from each BRC plus the current composition of the NRC Executive and NRC Team.

Note that the distance travelled will change year to year based on the state or territory in which the NRC Executive and NRC Team live. Distance travelled may also be reduced if the Conference were to coincide with a major event such as the Australian Rover Moot, which may see attendees having already travelled.

Recommendation 10: The NRC Conference's location should be selected based on maximising value for money rather than the current rotational basis.

Presently, the Conference venue, accommodation, catering, on-ground transport and guest speaker are organised by the BRC whose Branch is hosting that year's major event, while the NRC Secretary organises flights and registrations.

If the NRC moves away from selecting the Conference venue on a rotational basis to a value-for-money basis, there could be a reconsideration of who organises the Conference.

We recommend that responsibility for organising the Conference is transferred to the NRC Executive. This role could fall to:
- the NRC Secretary, who already organises elements of the Conference
- a member of the NRC Executive or NRC Team who lives in the state or territory where the Conference will be held
- an appointed Project Officer with an interest in events management, this would avoid distracting the NRC Executive and NRC Team of the burden from their current roles.

While there are benefits to having the organiser be within the host city, the NRC has already agreed that the Conference can be organised remotely. In March 2021, the NRC voted for Tasmania to organise the 2022 Conference in Victoria, while Victoria will organise the 2023 Conference in Tasmania.[76].

Recommendation 11: The NRC Executive or a Project Officer should organise the NRC Conference rather than the BRCs.

Conference date

The Conference is typically held in January each year and is often timed to commence shortly after that year's national major event has concluded.

While this places the Conference during the summer holiday period when attendees may have greater travel availability, it also coincides with peak travel season and higher costs of travel. Preliminary analysis by the Review Team suggests that the NRC could save up to 27 per cent on Conference travel costs by moving the Conference toward the middle of the year.[77] This finding is supported by desktop research, which shows that travelling domestically or internationally in low season can save up to 30 per cent.[78]

Moving the date of the Conference will take careful consideration with regard to term lengths, financial year reporting, and other requirements. There could be benefit in the NRC gradually slowly moving the Conference date to the low travel season over several years to lessen the impact.

Moving the Conference to mid-year would also provide more time for BRCs to consult with their Rover Scouts on proposals being put to the NRC. At present, consultation often needs to take place over the holiday break or during that year's major event. If the Conference was moved to another date, it would provide greater opportunities for the NRC to engage with Rover Scouts to gather their views and suggestions. The NRC's approach to consultation is discussed further in chapter five.

Recommendation 12: The NRC Conference's date should be moved to low travel season to provide greater value-for-money and support greater engagement with Rover Scouts ahead of the Conference.

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[76] The 2022 Conference was planned to be hosted by Victoria following the 26th Australian Scout Jamboree, and the 2023 Conferences was to be hosted by Tasmania following the 22nd Australian Rover Moot. The swap was organised to relieve pressure on Tasmania to organise two events simultaneously.

[77] This analysis is based on comparing June 2021 and January 2022 travel costs as at March 2021 using online comparators. Is general there are less January 2022 flights scheduled which reduce competition in the sector, and there may be an inherent benefit to booking late or early for some destinations. Unfortunately, this information is not readily available.

[78] About Australia (n.d.) 'Airfare Pricing Tips to Australia & the South Pacific' <https://www.aboutaustralia.com/airfare-pricing-tips/>; Investopedia (2019) 'When It Is Cheaper to Fly to Australia?' <https://www.investopedia.com/articles/personal-finance/061215/when-it-cheaper-fly-australia.asp>; Skyscanner (2018) '3 out of 4 Aussies miss out on bagging the best flight deals by booking too late' <https://www.skyscanner.com.au/company-news/skyscanner-reveals-the-best-time-to-book-flights-from-australia>

If the Conference's date is moved to the middle of the year, the NRC could hold a face-to-face meeting during Moots or other major events if a sufficient number of NRC members are in attendance.

2021 NRC Conference recommendations

The Review Team presented seven recommendations to the NRC in July 2020 designed to improve future Conferences' efficiency, improve value for money, and support increased engagement with grassroots Rover Scouts and other key stakeholders. The recommendations were all agreed to in October 2020.

The NRC adopted a number of the recommendations, particularly those related to streaming the event and allowing all Rover Scouts to participate in sessions and workshops. However, several recommendations were not acted on during the 2021 Conference, which related to:
- pre-Conference induction training
- encouraging greater consultation and engagement with Rover Scouts ahead of the Conference
- reporting against the NRC Strategic Plan.

The NRC should either adopt these remaining recommendations in future Conferences or produce a response confirming that they do not intend to implement the outstanding recommendations.

'World Scout Youth Forum 2017' by World Scouting, licenced under CY BY-NC-ND 2.0.

Remote meetings

The NRC meets remotely between Conference using a variety of platforms. Recently these meetings have been held every two months using an enterprise web conferencing platform. These meetings are used to fill casual vacancies, discuss emerging issues, propose and vote on policies and projects, and provide updates and progress reports.

The National Rover Councils of Singapore and Hong Kong and the Regional Rover Councils of Brazil likewise meet every two to three months to provide updates and progress reports. However, their meetings are generally face-to-face. This is likely due to smaller geographical distances and that their councils are directly funded by their NSO, rather than levies collected from Rover Scouts.[79]

During 2020 and 2021, the NRC has undertaken several initiatives to improve the effectiveness of their Remote Meetings, including:
- moving from each NRC Executive and NRC Team member reporting individually to a combined report aligned to the NRC Strategic Plan [80], which reduces time spent on reporting and demonstrates the synergies and coordination between their roles
- formalising Remote Meeting procedures which provide clarity around how the agenda is created, the dates for submitting papers and reports, and how meetings that run late will be handled
- the creation of rules of debate to structure discussion on proposals and ensure time limits for agenda items are adhered to.

Overall, the Review Team considers the Remote Meetings to be run effectively. We have made a related recommendation in chapter five, which encourages the NRC to include regular and ongoing reporting of all underway projects.

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[79] Correspondence with the San Paulo Regional Rover Committee (Brazil), Rover Scout Council of Hong Kong and National Rover Council of Singapore (2020).
[80] This style of reporting was recommended by the Review Team in August 2020 following concerns with the duration of Remote Meetings.

Case Study: Hong Kong

How many Rover Scouts?
Around 1,400 Rover Scouts across 160 Units, aged 18-26 years old

Organisation above Unit/Crew level?
Units are organised into Districts, which are organised into
Regions. These formations have a Rover Scout Board which
are comprised of Commissioners, though some include Rover Scouts

Do you have an NRC equivalent?
Yes. The National Rover Council is a representative body which represents and provides input from Rovers Scouts. It is not a governance or decision-making body

What are its powers and responsibilities?
Provide support and feedback to the Headquarters Rover Scout Board, initiate reviews of policies, and submit proposals to Headquarters for consideration

How is it funded?
Directly funded from the Headquarters budget

Meetings
Required to meet four times a year, though generally more often. Mostly in-person, though now online due to COVID-19

Office bearers and terms of office
Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary for one -year terms

Major achievements
Providing feedback and input to the recent Rover Scout youth program review, and involvement in the rollout of the new award scheme

Communication
Social media, via District and Regional Rover Scout Boards

Relationship to NSO
Provides advice and consultation

Source: correspondence with the Rover Scout Council of Hong Kong (2020).

Chapter Seven: Voting systems

Effective and transparent voting practices are important to ensure that boards and committees make well-informed and considered decisions.[81] Decisions made by the NRC have major implications for the future of not only the NRC, but all Rover Scouts with the flow-on effects directly or indirectly impacting all members of Scouts Australia to some extent.

The current voting practices of the NRC follows expected practices:
- The papers are circulated to NRC members ahead of the meeting, which include a motion (a proposed course of action).
- The motion is put to the NRC, and a second is called for. The second is not necessarily to support the motion, but support to discuss the motion.
- The motion is discussed, and if necessary, amended or withdrawn.
- The motion, possibly now amended, is voted on, with votes made in favour, against, or abstention.

Motions are voted on publicly, with each BRC Delegation having two votes and most motions requiring a simple majority; in the event of a tie, the Chair casts the deciding vote. Amendments to the 'Standing Orders' section of the NRC By-Laws requiring a 'supermajority' of two-thirds.

BRCs which have not paid their Rover Levy or other debt to the NRC are considered non-financial members of the NRC, and cannot vote until they are again considered financial.[82]

Voting generally occurs at the Conference or a Remote Meeting, though votes can be taken out-of-session between meetings. There is currently no formal process for out-of-session voting – a method was proposed during 2019 and put to a vote at the 2020 Conference, though it was seen as too prescriptive and lacking flexibility and was not supported.

Out-of-session votes should follow existing voting principles, should only be used for emergency or urgent matters, and the outcomes of the vote should be noted and confirmed at the next meeting.[83] The current NRC by-laws outline a process for voting 'if voting becomes necessary'.[84] There is merit in clarifying when voting can take place – that is, during Conference, Remote Meeting and out-of-session as necessarily, and the amount/type of notice required – for the avoidance of doubt.

The current by-laws sections addressing NRC voting are further addressed in chapter eight. The NRC should ensure that the by-laws clearly outline the processes for voting, as 'good decision-making is a by-product of a high-quality voting process'.[85]

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[81] Boardable (2021) 'Board Voting: Common Steps & Tips for Better Decision-Making' <https://boardable.com/blog/board-voting/>

[82] NRC (2020) 'The By-laws of the National Rover Council of Australia', Part 1, Article 4

[83] Hynes Legal (2008) 'Voting outside committee meetings' <https://hyneslegal.com.au/news/voting-outside-committee-meetings/>

[84] NRC (2020) 'The By-laws of the National Rover Council of Australia', Part 1, Article 4

[85] BoardEffect (2019) 'Board Meeting Voting Procedures' <https://www.boardeffect.com/blog/board-meeting-voting-procedures/>

Voting rights

The NRC's approach to voting rights has a number of features that appear unique from the outside, though closely mirror how BRCs function. These arrangements see each BRC Delegation having two votes and the elected members of the NRC (NRC Executive and NRC Team) not having a vote.

When a matter before the NRC requires a vote, each of the eight BRC Delegations is granted two votes. The two votes per Delegation are generally made by the BRC Chair and the NRC Delegate for each of the eight Branches, for a total of sixteen votes. The provision of two votes per Delegation allows for split voting, where either the two voting members of a BRC Delegation either voted in different ways, when one member is absent and their vote was not counted, or when one member cannot vote due to a conflict of interest.

BRCs often operate under a similar model, where each Unit or RRC (depending on how the Branch is structured) is allocated multiple votes, often two, when a matter goes to a vote.

Split votes at the NRC are rarely observed at meetings of the NRC when it comes to motions. Over the last three years, only 3 per cent of motions put to the NRC have resulted in a split vote (**Table 6**). Given that each BRC Delegation represent the views of Rover Scouts in their Branch, it seems unusual that a BRC Delegation should be able to cast contradictory votes on a motion.

Table 6: Number of split votes by BRC Delegations (2018-2021).

Motions put to the NRC	Split votes
228	7 (3 per cent)

Source: Analysis of NRC meeting minutes.

The Review Team is not aware of similar Scouting committees (NOC, NEC, APR Scout Committee, World Scout Committee) which grant multiple votes to representative delegations, and it has not been observed in other NRC-equivalent organisations around the world.

Beyond Scouting, it appears uncommon for state and territory delegations to have multiple votes when participation in a federal national council. The Review Team has examined the constitutions and by-laws of a number of these organisations[86], and observe that in general, each state or territory body represented on the council has a single vote.

In instances where state or territory representatives have multiple votes, such as the Cancer Council Australia, the number of votes is linked to the membership size of each state or territory body (e.g. larger states and territories have two votes, while smaller states and territories have one). This form of representation allocation of voting was explored in the discussion paper but was not supported.

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[86] These include the Community Council of Australia, the Council of Australasian Tribunals, the National Council of Churches in Australia, the Public Relations Institute of Australia, and the St Vincent de Paul Society National Council.

Chapter four recommends that the NRC Delegate position is abolished. Separate to this recommendation being accepted or rejected, the NRC should amend its voting procedures to give each Delegation a single vote in acknowledgement that the split vote is rarely used and to bring its voting practices in line with similar organisations. Under this approach, each Delegation responsible for determining their vote among the members of the Delegation.

Recommendation 13: NRC voting procedures should be amended to give each Delegation a single vote.

It is common in BRC constitutions or by-laws for elected Executive members to be non-voting members of the BRC, with decisions made by representations of the Units or RRCs. Notable exceptions to this are the Queensland BRC, where elected Executives vote at monthly meetings[87], and the Victorians BRC, where elected office bearers can vote if the matter relates directly to their portfolio[88].

Submissions to the discussion paper suggested that the NRC Executive should be able to vote on matters directly impacting them, with one submission arguing that:

> *'Every member of the NRC should have voting rights – to not have this is a breach of good governance.'*

This arrangement of non-voting office bearers appears uncommon outside of Scouting. As noted above, the Review Team has conducted desktop research of the constitutions and by-laws of non-Scouting federal national councils. These councils bring together representatives from states and territories or aligned member organisations at a national level alongside elected office bearers[89], in a structure similar to that of the NRC.

In each of these organisations, all members of the national council – both the representatives and the elected office bearers – vote on matters, with the chair casting a second vote to break any ties.

It has been observed that the NRC Executive and NRC Team currently undertake the majority of the NRC's work, so it would follow that they should have a say in the direction of the NRC. Extending voting rights to these members would also empower them and give them agency – under the current arrangements they are largely passive members of the NRC with most power invested in the BRC delegations who hold the voting rights. This may also encourage further interest in these roles if they are seen to be active members of the decision-making process.

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[87] Scouts Queensland (2020) 'Queensland Branch Scouting Instructions 2.3: Rover Scout Section' https://scoutsqld.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/QBSI-2.3-Rover-Scout-Section.pdf, s. 2.3.1.4
[88] Victorian Rover Council (2018) 'Standing Orders of the Victorian Rover Council as Adopted by the Victorian Rover Council', s. 1.3.2
[89] These organisations include the Australian and New Zealand Communication Association, the Cancer Council Australia, the Community Council of Australia, the Council of Australasian Tribunals, the National Council of Churches in Australia, the Public Relations Institute of Australia, and the St Vincent de Paul Society National Council.

Extending voting rights to the NRC Executive and NRC Team is not without its challenges. It would remove the independence under which they currently operate and could lead to instances of 'branch stacking'[90], whereby BRCs seek to hold these positions to increase their voting majority. Under the current arrangements, all voting members of the NRC (the BRC Delegations) are directly elected by their Rover Scouts, whereas non-voting members are elected only by Conference attendees.

On balance, the Review Team recommend that the NRC put in place arrangements to give a vote to the NRC Executive and NRC Team. We recommend that these members are organised to form a Delegation alongside the BRC Delegations in order to disincentivise 'branch stacking' and create a sense of unity between elected members of the NRC. By voting as a bloc rather than individually, elected members of the NRC would be able to maintain their overall independence while still giving them a say in matters requiring a vote.

> **Recommendation 14**: The NRC should extend voting rights to the elected members of the NRC. The NRC Executive and the NRC Team should form a Delegation alongside the eight BRC Delegations and be granted a single delegation vote. The NRC Adviser, as an adult member of the NRC, should not be involved in voting by the NRC delegation.

In the event of a tie (e.g. one or more BRCs becomes non-financial and loses voting rights, leaving an even number of voting Delegations), the NRC Chair should cast a second, deciding vote as per the current voting arrangements.[91]

Referendum voting

Throughout the Review, the question of referendum voting was raised as a possible model for the NRC, which would see all Rover Units in Australia given the opportunity to vote on matters before the NRC.

Looking abroad, the Singapore NRC hosts an annual National Rover Round-Table which brings together representatives of each of the around 40 Rover Crews (one representative for all Crews, and a second representative for Crews with six or more members) twice a year to discuss and ratify votes on matters affecting Rover Scouts.

The discussion paper raised the possibility of giving all Rover Units an opportunity to vote directly on matters brought to the NRC. While it was acknowledged that this method could drive greater engagement with grassroots Rover Scouts, it was not favoured. Issues identified included that it would be impossible to hold debates or discussions involving all Rover Units to inform their votes, and that the effort of administering a nationwide voting system would draw resources away from the NRC.

Rover Scouts already directly vote on their Branch Chair and NRC Delegate, and would presumably do so based on an understanding of how these individuals will govern and what

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[90] Gauja, Anika (2020) 'Explainer: what is branch stacking, and why has neither major party been able to stamp it out?' <https://theconversation.com/explainer-what-is-branch-stacking-and-why-has-neither-major-party-been-able-to-stamp-it-out-140726>

[91] NRC (2020) 'The By-laws of the National Rover Council of Australia', Part 1, Article 4

their priorities are. Rover Scouts can influence the direction of the NRC through their voting of BRC elected officials, and if Rover Scouts are unhappy with the direction the NRC is taking, they can appeal directly to their BRC (or via their elected RRC) and hold them accountable.

By having all Rover Scouts and/or Rover Units vote directly on proposals before the NRC, they would be effectively double-voting – firstly as part of their annual BRC elections to select who will represent them, then again on individual matters. It also provided the opportunity for larger Branches to enact policy changes which are in their favour, against which the current voting system provides an important check and balance.

While the referendum voting may work overseas, compared to Singapore's estimated 40 Units, there is believed to be around 250 Rover Units in Australia.[92] This referendum style of voting (disseminating meeting papers to every Unit, encouraging debate between them, then ensuring the transparency and integrity of vote collection and tabulation) would be a significant undertaking. While individual Branches conduct state/territory-wide voting processes as part of their AGMs, there is no precedent for this to occur on a national basis.

The introduction of representational voting is not recommended. Instead, the NRC should ensure that it is regularly and meaningfully engaging with Rover Scouts to best understand their views on matters which interest and impact them. Recommendations to improve the way the NRC engages with Rover Scouts are included in chapter five

'World Non-Formal Education Forum 2019' by World Scouting, licenced under CY BY-NC-ND 2.0.

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[92] Wikipedia (2021) 'Rovers (Australia)' <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rovers_(Australia)>

Elections

Robust election processes are an important fundamental governance consideration given the influence which elected members can exert over the direction of the organisation[93].

Nominations for elected NRC roles are called ahead of the Conference, and candidates are asked to complete an online form, submit a five-minute speech (voice recording) in support of their application and must be endorsed by their BRC.[94] Questions are then put to the candidate by Conference attendees just prior to the vote.

This election process was put in place in 2020 to encourage a wide range of candidates and in acknowledge that the previous process, which relied heavily on speeches given at the Conference, strongly favoured Conference attendees over candidates not attending the Conference. The NRC has discussed the voting process internally and considers it to be effective.

The election of NRC Executive and NRC Team members follows the voting process described above in that each Delegation has two votes. The key differences are that elections take place in secret, and that voting is preferential. In the event of a tie, the Chair casts a secret vote during the tie-breaking round of voting, which is only counted if a second tie occurs.[95]

If positions are unfilled during the Conference, subsequent calls for candidates are issued and voting takes place at a future Remote Meeting using the same processes.

The election processes established by the NRC are seen as robust, effective and equitable, and seek to encourage the widest range of applicants from across Australia. In recent years a number of NRC Team positions have remained vacant following the Conference due to a lack of applicants. As discussed in chapter five, the NRC should ensure it is effectively engaging with Rover Scouts and encouraging appropriate candidates to apply.

Conflicts of interest

Effectively managing conflicts of interest can help to ensure that committee members always act in the best interests of the those they represent, and helps to protect the reputation of the committee.[96]

While the most common conflict of interest is seen as committee members making financial gain from the decisions of the committee, it extends further to benefits, including those not financial in nature, which can be gained by friends, family and colleagues of committee members and other organisations with which they are involved. [97]

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[93] OECD (2012) 'Board Member Nomination and Election'
<https://www.oecd.org/daf/ca/boardmembernominationandelection.htm>
[94] NRC (2020) 'The By-laws of the National Rover Council of Australia', Part 1, Article 4
[95] NRC (2020) 'The By-laws of the National Rover Council of Australia', Part 1, Article 4
[96] Australia Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (n.d.) 'Managing Conflicts of Interest Guide'
<https://www.acnc.gov.au/tools/guides/managing-conflicts-interest-guide>
[97] Institute of Community Directors Australia (n.d.) 'Handling conflicts of interest'
<https://communitydirectors.com.au/help-sheets/handling-conflicts-of-interest>

Conflicts of interest can be:
- actual (the committee member receives benefit)
- perceived (a reasonable person could believe a benefit is received)
- future (a benefit is gained at a later date based on a decision).

Encountering conflicts of interest is unavoidable, and they should not be viewed negatively. All members of the NRC have relationships, interests, experiences and affiliates outside the NRC. Instead, the focus should on identifying and handling these conflicts. Committee members should not be sidelined unnecessarily or for extended periods[98], and in many instances they may be able to participate in discussions and even voting if their conflicts are declared.

The NRC by-laws do not include process for handling conflicts of interest. Rather, declarations of conflicts of interest are called for at the start of meetings

Conflicts of interest which arise during meetings are handled in a common sense method, where NRC members declare interests ahead of debates and generally excuse themselves from voting. Recent examples include:
- NRC members excluding themselves from discussion about program design for funding opportunities for which they are recent or potential recipients of funding
- NRC members advising they are employees of competing companies to which a procurement contract was awarded.

These conflicts are recorded in the meeting minutes.

Observations of NRC meetings are that it has a positive view of managing conflicts of interest – when raised they are addressed without fanfare and the meeting continued. Culture within a committee is important to ensure that conflicts of interest are effectively handled[99], and the NRC should continue to ensure that disclosures of conflicts are encouraged, supported and seen as normal business.

A policy outlining a committee's approach to managing conflicts of interest is key to ensure these conflicts are effectively managed and raises awareness among committee members.[100] A recommendation to establish a conflicts of interest policy is included in chapter eight. The NRC should be careful to ensure that the policy is not too onerous so as to discourage its use, and the policy should be reviewed regularly.[101]

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[98] Australian Institute of Company Directions (2017) 'Managing conflicts of interest' <https://aicd.companydirectors.com.au/membership/company-director-magazine/2017-back-editions/august/managing-conflicts-of-interest>

[99] Australian Institute of Company Directions (2017) 'Managing conflicts of interest' <https://aicd.companydirectors.com.au/membership/company-director-magazine/2017-back-editions/august/managing-conflicts-of-interest>

[100] OECD (n.d.) 'Managing Conflicts of Interest' <https://www.oecd.org/governance/ethics/conflict-of-interest/>

[101] Australian Institute of Company Directions (2017) 'Managing conflicts of interest' <https://aicd.companydirectors.com.au/membership/company-director-magazine/2017-back-editions/august/managing-conflicts-of-interest>

Case Study: Brazil

How many Rover Scouts?
Around 5,000, aged 18-21. Crews are part of a Group alongside Cubs
(6.5-10 years old), Scouts (11-14 years old) and Senior Scouts
(15-17 years old)

Organisation above Unit level?
Not nationally consistent. Some regions/states have representative
Regional Rover Committee (RRCs), who are generally elected annually
at the Rover Assembly and support the Regional Coordinator for Rovers.
Some regions also have District Rover Teams

Do you have an NRC equivalent?
No. Five Rover Scouts, one representing each region, apply to assist the National Rover
Branch Coordinator (an adult appointment) with their work. There is also a Youth Network
of elected members aged 18-25 who contribute to strategic planning

What are its powers and responsibilities of RRCs?
Managing regional Rover Scout social media, planning events, and program support

How are RRCs funded?
Directly funded by the national program area

Meetings
Every 1-2 months, often in-person but increasingly online due to distance

Office bearers and terms of office
Elected members appoint their own Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and
Communications Officer for one-year terms

Major RRC achievements
Review governance documents, separated the Rover Congress (development event) from
the Rover Assembly (governance event), established the requirement for District Rover
Teams, and provided input on issues related to Rover Scouts

Communication
Social media, direct communication with District Rover Teams, and via the annual Rover
Assembly

Relationship to NSO
Provides advice and consultation, plans events

Source: correspondence with the San Paulo Regional Rover Committee, Brazil (2020).

Chapter Eight: By-laws and policies

Well written by-laws provide clear guidance for an organisation's members on how the organisation functions, what their duties and responsibilities are, and remove the need for assumed knowledge. Robust by-laws allow organisations to handle both their usual business and any new situations which may arise. When all members of an organisation have access to by-laws that are clearly written and easily understood, they can participate on equal standing with their colleagues.[102]

The NRC maintains a set of by-laws which are split into three sections:
- Part I – Standing Orders: these outline the purpose and membership of the NRC, and meeting, voting and election procedures
- Part II – Terms of Reference: duty statements for Council members, and policies and procedures related to the business of the NRC (Conference, Moot Buddies, meeting etiquette, merchandise, and the Rover Challenge)
- Part III – Guidelines: policies and guidance more broadly for the Rover Scout Section in Australia such as awards, interstate/international contingents, websites and social media, Australian Rover Moots, motorsports, Rover Advisers, drugs and alcohol, and bullying and harassment

The NRC has a strong culture of reviewing its by-laws at both the Conference and Remote Meetings. Ongoing reviews of the by-laws should be strongly encouraged, as it ensures that this key governance document reflects the changing nature of the organisation and the environment in which it operates.[103]

Overall, the NRC's by-laws are fit for purpose. However, there would be merit in reviewing the by-laws to ensure they contain all necessary provisions and are concise and easily understood.[104]

There is a generally agreed upon structure for organisational by-laws. At a minimum, the following matters should be covered:[105]
- name and purpose: the formal name of the organisation and the reason it exists, including limits on its jurisdiction (there can be separate sections)

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[102] Hampton, Chris (n.d.) 'Writing bylaws' < https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/structure/organizational-structure/write-bylaws/main >;

[103] Bond, Cindy & Heimlich, Joe (2014) 'Written documents for community groups: bylaws' <https://ohioline.osu.edu/factsheet/CDFS-1570>; Johnson, Eileen Morgan (2020) 'The Basics of Board Committee Structure' <https://www.asaecenter.org/resources/articles/an_plus/2015/december/the-basics-of-board-committee-structure>

[104] The analysis presented in this chapter is based on version 2.2 of the NRC By-laws, which was the most current version at the time analysis was completed.

[105] Hampton, Chris (n.d.) 'Writing bylaws' <https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/structure/organizational-structure/write-bylaws/main >; Bond, Cindy & Heimlich, Joe (2014) 'Written documents for community groups: bylaws' <https://ohioline.osu.edu/factsheet/CDFS-1570>; Westside Toastmasters (n.d.) 'Bylaws Development' <https://westsidetoastmasters.com/resources/roberts_rules/chap19.html>; Jennings, C. Alan (2004) 'Robert's Rules for Dummies', pp. 24-26; California State Association of Parliamentarians (2010) 'Bylaws – The Best Advice' <http://www.roberts-rules.com/parl01.htm>; University of Southern Indiana (2012) 'How to write a constitution and bylaws' <https://www.usi.edu/media/959699/how_to_create_your_constitution_and_by-laws.pdf>

- membership: who are the members of the organisation, what are their duties, and how conflicts are managed
- officers: the titles, duties and responsibilities of officers and the process by which they are elected
- meetings: the frequency and process of conducting regular, annual and special meetings
- executives: the structure, role and membership of the board of directors
- voting: how decisions are made
- committees: membership and duties of standing committees, and provisions to establish new committees
- parliamentary authority: the rules of order under which meetings are conducted
- amendments: the process for amending by-laws.

Other sections can be included as needed to reflect the goals, priorities and responsibilities of the organisation. For example, the NRC by-laws include a section on finances in reflection of their responsibility to administer the Rover Levy, Moot Buddies and Rover Development Fund.

Part I – Standing Orders largely reflects the expected by-law contents outlined above. Two sections are notably absent: committees and parliamentary authority.[106]

The first area to be addressed would address the NRC's use of committees/sub-committees. At present, the by-laws do not make clear provisions for the use of committees, only noting in Part II, Section 1 that the Chair shall be ex officio member of all committees and that there shall be a diversity and inclusion subcommittee. Committees are the mechanism through which organisations such as the NRC complete important work,[107] and it is important to outline how they are formed, how they are staffed, and how they operate. Ideally, this should cover both standing committees, which are regularly maintained (e.g. the NRC marketing team/working group), and special committees formed to undertake project work.

The second section to be added would provide the NRC's parliamentary authority, which are the rules which govern how the NRC operates and provided procedures such as how reports are presented, how motions are moved, seconded and voted on etc. Common examples of these include the rules of order by Robert, Sturgis, Cannon, Demeter, or Riddick. An organisation can elect to use these rules, or given the complexities of these systems, some organisations choose to set a modified and/or simplified set of procedures.[108]

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[106] Note that the expected 'Executive' by-laws section was excluded from analysis as it does not reflect the structure of the NRC.

[107] University of Southern Indiana (2012) 'How to write a constitution and bylaws' <https://www.usi.edu/media/959699/how_to_create_your_constitution_and_by-laws.pdf>

[108] Bond, Cindy & Heimlich, Joe (2014) 'Written documents for community groups: bylaws' <https://ohioline.osu.edu/factsheet/CDFS-1570>; University of Southern Indiana (2012) 'How to write a constitution and bylaws' <https://www.usi.edu/media/959699/how_to_create_your_constitution_and_by-laws.pdf>

While the NRC has operated without a set parliamentary authority, BRCs have raised that the NRC is seen to operate on 'unspoken rules and assumed knowledge'. Uncertainty about meeting procedures, such as how voting worked or how to move and second motions, were raised by 2020 Conference participants and BRC consultations. Clear procedures for how meetings are conducted provide a level playing field for all participants.[109]

The NRC began undertaking work in March 2021 to develop a set of 'rules of debates', which would function as the NRC's parliamentary authority. We encourage the NRC to adopt and develop these rules to strengthen their internal governance approaches.

The by-laws' voting section could be strengthened through the addition of what constitutes a quorum, how proxy and absentee votes are conducted, and how conflicts of interest are handled. The addition of provisions for dealing with grievances would clarify how issues and complaints between Council members would be handled and has been requested by BRCs during consultations.

Within the by-laws, there is room for the NRC to ensure that the by-laws' structure and content support the effective functioning of the NRC. For example, the duties and responsibilities of NRC members are contained within four sections, which could be restructured or merged to aid in readability:
- Part I, Article 2: Membership
- Part I, Article 4: Voting and elections
- Part I, Article 6: Member roles and functions, and
- Part II, Section 1: Duty statements

Part II – Terms of Reference and Part III – Guidelines contain several policies and procedures related to both the operation of the NRC and Rover Scouts more generally. Containing all these documents in one file keeps all this vital information in one spot and easily accessible.

It is common for organisations to include additional information within their by-laws which would be better situated in separate policy or procedure documents.[110] As BRCs raised during consultations, including policies and procedures in the NRC by-laws make the by-laws document appear overwhelming and may dissuade readers, even if the by-laws themselves only make up a portion of the document. In reviewing the by-laws, the NRC should look to move policies and procedures into separate documents to aid the by-laws' readability.

> **Recommendation 15**: The NRC should update its by-laws to include sections on committees, parliamentary authority and disciplinary procedures and add further clarity to how voting is conducted.

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[109] Westside Toastmasters (n.d.) 'Bylaws Development' <https://westsidetoastmasters.com/resources/roberts_rules/chap19.html>
[110] Bond, Cindy & Heimlich, Joe (2014) 'Written documents for community groups: bylaws' <https://ohioline.osu.edu/factsheet/CDFS-1570>; University of Southern Indiana (2012) 'How to write a constitution and bylaws' <https://www.usi.edu/media/959699/how_to_create_your_constitution_and_by-laws.pdf>

As discussed above, the NRC maintains several policies that are fit for purpose and reflect the organisation's needs. The policies are written in clear English, kept short in length (1-2 pages), and are written for their target audience of Rover Scouts.

In addition to these policies, the NRC could strengthen its governance arrangements by putting in place policies around:

- Managing conflicts of interest: explains situations in which members of the NRC should declare conflicts, how and to who these declarations should be made, and circumstances where conflicts would preclude members from voting on a matter. Managing conflicts of interest is central to ensuring an organisation's integrity, especially one that manages funds or money as the NRC does.
- Procurement: outlines preferred suppliers, situations in which multiple quotes for service are required, who can enter into contracts on behalf of the NRC, etc.
- Document management: guidance for creating, maintaining, using and destroying official Council records (see chapter nine).

> **Recommendation 16**: The NRC should establish policies addressing conflicts of interest, procurement, and document management.

The NRC's policies are named policies, procedures, guidelines and expectations without a clear naming schema. To strengthen its approach to policies, the NRC should develop a framework to clearly define each type of document, including the difference between them, who can create them, and how they are amended. A consistent approach such as this will help readers understand and implement NRC policies consistently.[111] The NRC should also ensure that all policy documents have a set review date to ensure regular reviews of the content and necessity of the policy are conducted.

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[111] ANU (n.d.) 'Policy governance framework' <https://services.anu.edu.au/planning-governance/governance/policy-governance-framework>; Tunny, Jennifer (n.d.) 'Do you need a policy on policies?' <https://www.effectivegovernance.com.au/page/knowledge-centre/news-articles/do-you-need-a-policy-on-policies>

Chapter Nine: Document management systems

Establishing and maintaining robust document management systems is essential for organisations such as the NRC to make informed decisions, develop relevant policies, and effectively deliver projects of value to Rover Scouts and other stakeholders.[112] Good document management supports good decision-making, saves time and effort in locating documents for business-as-usual purposes and external information requests, encourages a culture of shared corporate knowledge, and supports the NRC to meet Scouts Australia and legislative requirements. Robust document management practices also build stakeholder faith in the NRC's operations and help mitigate risk.[113]

Overall, the NRC has document management systems in place which are commensurate with its duties, responsibilities, resourcing and expectations. However, there are areas in which the NRC could further develop its management of documents to ensure that it is accurately recording its deliberation and decision-making processes and comprehensively documenting the lifecycles of projects it undertakes.

The NRC has maintained a OneDrive records managements system since September 2020 which captures:
- minutes, papers and reports from NRC Remote Meetings and Conferences
- by-laws, policies and strategic plans related to the operation of NRC and BRCs
- documentation related to projects undertaken by the NRC
- resources for BRCs, including programming and marketing material
- notices for circulation to Rover Scouts by BRCs
- supporting material, including calendars and contact lists.

Prior to this, the NRC used Dropbox as their document management system. The transition to OneDrive aligns with the Scouts Australia Digital Transformation Strategy, particularly the move toward a nationally consistent document management methodology.[114] The OneDrive system also provides more control over access permissions, document version and audit logs.

The Review Team has examined the OneDrive document management system. Except for the missing files discussed below, the expected document are captured within the OneDrive. Superseded versions of documents are stored for historical purposes, and the system allows users to easily access earlier versions of documents created since the system was established in September 2020. Appropriate access controls have been put in place to limit the sharing of documents to unauthorised users, and activity logs provide a high-level audit trail of changes to stored documents.

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[112] Victoria State Government (2017) 'Information Management Governance Standard' <https://www.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-07/IM-STD-03-Information-Management-Governance-Standard.pdf>

[113] National Archives of Australia (n.d.) 'Establishing an information governance framework' <https://www.naa.gov.au/information-management/information-governance/establishing-information-governance-framework>

[114] Scouts Queensland (n.d.) 'Scouts Australia Future Digital State' <https://scoutsqld.com.au/scouts-australia-future-digital-state/>

Folders related to NRC projects often only contain the final report or product and do not capture documents from the project's entire life cycle. An example of good document management is the Rover100 Centenary project, which is often cited as one of the most successful recent NRC projects. The project OneDrive folder includes documents from project initiation (e.g. the original call for project officers), project planning, execution and monitoring (e.g. meeting minutes), and project completion (e.g. copies of deliverables).

Going forward, the NRC should ensure that all files relating to a project and created as a consequence of the project are centrally captured. Project officers should have access to a shared NRC OneDrive folder to support collaboration, ensure documents are not lost, and allow the NRC Executive to better track project progress.

> **Recommendation 17**: The NRC strengthen its approach to document management to ensure that all documentation related to decision making or created as a result of a project is centrally recorded.

The utilisation of a robust, fit-for-purpose document management system with clear and appropriate user access controls, complemented by a regular and secure backup regime, should adequately address instances of intentionally or unintentionally deleting records. It will also reduce the likelihood of knowledge loss during handover between members. The OneDrive system used by the NRC should enable it to establish a system that fulfils these requirements.

While well-designed systems play a crucial role in document management, the human element must also be considered. The NRC has acknowledged past issues with document management,[115] including:

- NRC members deleting records
- NRC members maintaining their records outside of the official document management system.

A brief induction-style training, such as that recommended in chapter four, could outline how records are created, stored, and used for new NRC members. This could improve how NRC documents are handled, avoid unnecessary costs and time lost caused by restoring, finding or recreating files, and improve the NRC's ability to manage internal and external risks.[116]

During the 2021 Conference, the NRC agreed to establish a working group to develop NRC meeting protocols, aiming to improve the NRC's professionalism by setting expectations around communication, behaviour, interactions, meeting etiquette, information sharing, and accountability. This represents an excellent opportunity for the NRC to set clear expectations around its approach to document management and the importance of capturing key documents relating to the NRC's business, decisions, and projects.

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[115] NRC (2019) 'National Rover Council External Review Consultant' <https://scouts.com.au/blog/2019/02/27/nrc-external-review-consultant-vacancy/>
[116] Fanning, B (2013) 'Records Management Governance – Getting it Right in 12 Steps' <https://info.aiim.org/hs-fs/hub/332414/file-420802905-pdf/Training-Briefing-Papers/Q22013_Checklist_ERM_RM_Governance_in_12_Steps.pdf>

To formalise its document management approach, as discussed in chapter eight, the NRC should also develop a framework or policy which is regularly updated and:[117]

- governs how records are created, used, maintained and destroyed
- outlines accountabilities and responsibilities with regards to documents, including induction and training
- defines documents managements systems used by the NRC, including access and security
- provides guidance on backing up documents
- operates within broader organisational and legislative frameworks (e.g. Scouts Australia record keeping requirements, *Corporations Act 2001)*.

'World Scout Youth Forum 2017' by World Scouting, licenced under CY BY-NC-ND 2.0.

[117] National Archives of Australia (n.d.) 'Establishing an information governance framework' <https://www.naa.gov.au/information-management/information-governance/establishing-information-governance-framework>

Chapter Ten: Project management practices

Throughout its history, the NRC has undertaken several valuable bodies of work that focused on improving the youth program, Rover Scout and Rover Adviser training, and significant Australian and overseas events and service projects, gaining the NRC a positive reputation within Australia and internationally. The Review Team survey, which gathered 333 responses between February-April 2020, asked respondents to list the NRC's significant achievements over the past ten years. The following projects were cited most commonly:

- revision of the Baden-Powell Scout Award
- development and modernisation of the Rover Scout training curriculum
- production of advertising and promotional material
- coordination of the Rover Scout Centenary celebrations
- Moot Buddies – financial assistance to attend National Rover Moots
- grant and funding opportunities for Rover Scouts and Units
- previous reviews and audits of the NRC, and
- supporting the Rover Scout youth program via publications and resources.

These projects align with those undertaken by equivalent bodies within other NSOs. The Rover Scout Council of Hong Kong has likewise been involved in revising and implementing an updated Rover Scout training curriculum.[118] The National Rover Council of Singapore has developed resources and courses to support their Rover Scout youth program.[119]

BRCs have advised through consultations that the NRC projects with the most awareness generally relate to funding and grant opportunities for Rover Scouts to undertaken activities or training, such as the Rover Challenge, which provides up to $1,000 every six months to initiatives which 'encourage Rovers to improve their program by challenging themselves and pushing their boundaries.'[120] The Rover Centenary project undertaken by the NRC in 2018 is another often-cited project which was well received by Rover Scouts.[121]

However, the Review Team survey found that the NRC's work is generally either not viewed positively or lacks awareness among Rover Scouts. When asked, most respondents to the review survey (57 per cent) could not name an NRC's achievement over the past ten years. As one survey respondent noted:

'Very little has truly been achieved by the NRC when you look at Rovers and Units at a local level. Sure, things have happened at the higher level, but it rarely achieves the intended purpose at the ground roots level of Rovering.'

Submissions to the discussion paper 'Powers and Functions of the NRC' suggested that in past years the NRC undertook more significant project work, citing examples such as:

- the revival of World Scout Moots by organising the 8th World Moot in Melbourne 1990-91, the first World Scout Moot in 30 years[122]

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[118] Correspondence with the Rover Scout Council of Hong Kong (2020)
[119] Correspondence with the National Rover Council of Singapore (2020)
[120] NRC (2020) 'The By-Laws of the National Rover Council of Australia', Part II Section Six
[121] NRC (2018) 'Rovers100: Celebrating the Centenary of Rover Scouts 1918-2018' <https://www.sarovers.com.au/files/Rovers100_Crew_Resource_Pack.pdf>
[122] 1st Epping Rover Unit (2015) 'FAQ' <http://eppingrovers.com/FAQ>

- producing program resources, such as the Rover Fun Guide in 2005[123]
- the Bangladesh- Australia Child Health (BACH), a twinning project between Scouts Australia and Bangladesh Scouts active between 1986-1992 which sought to improve childhood health outcomes by supporting immunisations in selected villages in Bangladesh[124]
- the Nepal-Australia Good Turn for The Environment (NATURE) projects, which ran between 1993-98 and saw Rover Scouts assist the Nepalese Scouts in reforestation efforts followings the Kristi landslide.[125]

It is worth noting that the above examples were provided by respondents who are not currently involved in the NRC and may involve a degree of idealised history around these projects. Regardless, respondents to the Review Team survey ranked the value for the NRC's money as 2.5 out of 5 points, with 50% of respondents giving a ranking of 2 points or less.

As discussed in chapter five, this could also be an issue of awareness – the Moot Buddies program is seen as well-known amongst Rover Scouts, though there are doubts that many Rover Scouts may realise the NRC runs it.

The Review Team revised the NRC meeting papers template in April 2020. The updates to the current template aim to embed future proposals' project planning and management principles to ensure they come to fruition. The inclusion of an implementation plan in proposals will better help the NRC as a whole to understand how projects will proceed. At the same time, ongoing reporting will increase accountability and provide an opportunity for learnings to be shared. The NRC should continue to review and refine its templates to ensure they are fit for purpose

The Review Team has observed several proposals being put to the NRC that do not address each of the sections in the template, particularly the sections outlining consultations and risks, and the section explaining how the proposal contributes to the strategic directions of the NRC. The NRC should ensure that papers address these sections as failing to do so may risk the achievement of the proposed actions.

> **Recommendation** 18: All proposals brought to the NRC should clearly address how they contribute to the NRC strategic plan, demonstrate that the NRC has or can acquire the required skills and experience to complete the project, and provide measures of success.

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[123] NRC (2005) 'Rover Fun Guide' <https://www.sarovers.com.au/files/Rover-Fun-Guide.pdf>
[124] Scouts SA (n.d.) 'History: In Australia' http://www.sa.scouts.com.au/inaustralia
Scouts Australia (2000) 'Public Submission – Education of Boys Standing Committee', p. 7 <https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House_of_Representatives_Committees?url=edt/eofb/subs/sub24.pdf>
[125] Scouts Australia (1992) 'Group Leader and Group Committee Handbook' p. 53 <https://scoutsqld.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/BOOK-SECTIONAL_Group-Leader_January-1996-2.pdf>

Reporting and accountability

Monitoring and reporting are crucial elements of the delivery of successful projects. They should be ongoing processes that provide regular updates on the progress of projects against their agreed project plan, including changes to:[126]:

- project schedule (early, on-time or late delivery),
- budget (expenditure to date, planned forward expenditure, revised budgets), and
- scope (is the scope still appropriate, does it need to be widened or reduced).

Regular reporting allows decision-makers to assess the project plan's actual progress against the project plan, and if necessary, initiate changes to the project plan to improve the likelihood of successful delivery.[127] Regular reporting also supports good decision making, effective risk management, and provides assurance to key stakeholders.[128]

The revised meeting paper template introduced by the Review Team places a greater focus on project reporting and requires projects to provide regular progress reports, which include updates on:

- the overall progress of the project ('On schedule', 'At-risk', or 'Behind schedule')
- progress against key milestones
- issues or challenges which have arisen, including what is being done to address them
- learnings since the last progress report which may be valuable to this or other projects
- tasks to be undertaken before the next Council meeting.

The Review Team understands that at least one BRC have revised their meeting paper template based on the revised NRC template to strengthen their approach to project management.

However, to date the Review Team has only observed a small number of NRC projects making progress reports to the NRC using the agreed template. Attendees at the 2021 Conference advised that projects still seem to be conducted at arm's length from the NRC, and that regular reporting is not embedded into the NRC processes or culture.

This reporting does not need to be onerous. Attendees to the project management workshop facilitated by the Review Team at the 2021 Conference suggested that one or two short paragraphs for each ongoing project would suffice, with the report taken as read and an opportunity given for questions. Even if the update notes that no progress has been made, it would keep the project in Council members' minds and allow new Council members to quickly understand the work being undertaken by the NRC.

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[126] North Carolina State University (n.d.) 'Monitoring Project Activity and Deliverables' <https://research.ncsu.edu/nctc/study-guide/project-administration/project-management/monitoring-project-activity-and-deliverables/>

[127] Hayes Munson, K. A. (2012). 'How do you know the status of your project?: Project monitoring and controlling'. <https://www.pmi.org/learning/library/know-status-project-monitoring-controlling-5982>

[128] Australian National Audit Office (2020) 'Performance Measurement and Monitoring — Developing Performance Measures and Tracking Progress' <https://www.anao.gov.au/work/audit-insights/performance-measurement-and-monitoring-developing-performance-measures-and-tracking-progress>

Recommendation 19: The NRC should establish regular reporting for all ongoing projects at each Remote Meeting and Conference.

The NRC Executive has maintained an action items list on and off for several years, dependent on the executive's work style. This has been used consistently since January 2019 and assists the NRC with tracking the progress of projects undertaken by the NRC Executive and Project Officers. The document provides an overview of the project, lists the responsible party, aligns the project to the NRC strategic priorities, and includes commentary on the project status and deadline.

An action items list can be a useful tool to ensure that a committee's work is completed promptly and contributes to its vision and mission.[129] Such a list ensures that members know what they need to do after the meeting, who is responsible for delivery, and when it is due.[130]

Based on observations and feedback from Rover Scouts, should the NRC maintain the action item list, it should consider:
- expanding it to include work undertaken by all members of the NRC, rather than limiting it to Executives and Project Officers
- highlighting what specifically has changed between meetings, rather than simply marking that a change has occurred
- keeping the document short to improve readability, for example, completed tasks could be moved to another page or deleted.

Resourcing and staffing

For a successful project, it is essential to ensure that enough personnel are assigned to work on a project who have both the skills and capacity to see the project through to completion.[131] Likewise, it is crucial to ensure that projects have appropriate oversight frameworks to help address emerging issues and ensure project success.[132]

Under the current arrangements, any NRC member can carry out project work, and appropriate individuals outside the NRC could be co-opted to carry out project work to fill skill or resourcing gaps. The existing workloads of BRC Chairs and BRAs in their primary appointments would reasonably see a lesser expectation placed on them to undertake Council project work. This leaves three groups of members responsible for completing projects: Project Officers, Delegates, and the Executive.

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[129] Langtry, A.B. (2016) 'Board Meeting Action Items – How to Effectively Manage the Never-Ending List' <https://strauss.ca/board-meeting-action-items-effectively-manage-never-ending-list/>
[130] Lennon, B (n.d.) '5 Tips for Managing Meeting Tasks and Action Items' <https://www.hugo.team/blog/meeting-tasks-and-action-items>
[131] Knowledge Hut (n.d.) 'Staffing management plan' <https://www.knowledgehut.com/tutorials/project-management/staffing-management-plan>
[132] Panorama Consulting Group (2015) 'The Importance of Project Management Oversight' <https://www.panorama-consulting.com/the-importance-of-project-management-oversight/>

There are currently two types of Project Officers:

- Standing Project Officers are elected annually at the Conference across the portfolios of Diversity & Inclusion, Environment & Sustainability, and Marketing & Public Relations.[133] They are elected with consideration to demonstrated experience in the relevant area, and their expected duties of the role are outlined in the NRC By-Laws.[134]
- Appointed Project Officers (e.g. Roverscope, World Scout Moot feasibility) are appointed upon application to the Vice Chair to undertake ad hoc project work based on their demonstrated experience and/or capabilities.[135]

Projects Officers are expected to complete assigned tasks within their relevant area of expertise. As they are elected members (Standing Project Officers) or appointed members (Appointed Project Officers) of the NRC, direct mechanisms (e.g. dismissal) exist to deal with poor performance or failure to deliver projects.

Under the existing model, project work can also be undertaken by Delegates, who their BRCs elect. However, as discussed in chapter four, the current Delegate model is not operating effectively. The Review Team recommend that role should be removed, with Project Officers elected or appointed to take on most of the NRC's work.

The remaining group which undertakes project work is the NRC Executive. Indeed, the Review Team's observations and discussions with BRCs and current and former NRC Executives indicate that the majority of work not aligned with the three standing Project Officer portfolios is undertaken by the NRC Executive rather than the Delegates.

Senior committee members only have a finite amount of time to discharge their committee responsibilities and take on project work.[136] While it is crucial to devote resources to working *for* the NRC (e.g. undertaking project work), it is also important to devote resources to working *on* the NRC (e.g. generating new ideas, engaging with key stakeholders, setting goals and monitoring progress).[137] As the Australian National Audit Office observes:

> *'Governing is not the same as managing. Governance involves the systems and processes that shape, enable, and oversee an organisation's management. Management is concerned with doing, such as coordinating and managing the day-to-day operations of the entity's business.'[138]*

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[133] NRC (2020) 'National Rover Council Elections 2021' <https://rovers.scouts.com.au/rovering/nrc-elections-2021/>

[134] NRC (2020) 'The By-laws of the National Rover Council of Australia', Part II Section One

[135] NRC (2020) 'National Rover Council vacancies' <https://rovers.scouts.com.au/rovering/nrc-project-vacancies/>

[136] Quay Consulting (n.d.) 'The Key Considerations for Successful Project Governance' <https://www.quayconsulting.com.au/news/the-key-considerations-for-successful-project-governance/>

[137] Smart Company (2013) 'Five ways to work on, not in, your business' <https://www.smartcompany.com.au/people-human-resources/leadership/five-ways-to-work-on-not-in-your-business/>

[138] Australian National Audit Office (2019) 'Board Governance' <https://www.anao.gov.au/work/audit-insights/board-governance>

By having the NRC Executive carrying out projects rather than carrying out project governance, the NRC Executive are not well placed to provide the necessary oversight and project coordination. Going forward, the NRC should ensure that work is delegated away from Executives to Project Officers to give the Executive capacity to effectively steer the NRC.

Value for money considerations

Funding for NRC projects is sourced via the NRC Levy, which is paid annually by BRCs according to the number of registered Rover Scouts in their Branch (the levy is currently set at approximately $7.50 per Rover Scout as of 2020, rising by 2.5% per year).[139] As the NRC uses money paid by all Rover Scouts via the Rover Levy, it should strive to ensure that value for money is achieved and that expenditure occurs in an efficient, effective, economical and ethical manner.

As discussed in chapter eight, the NRC should establish a short procurement policy to provide guidance on how to ensure purchases and contracts represent good value for money, including through the use of multiple quotes and milestone payments.

Case Study: Myanmar

How many Rover Scouts?
Around 6,000 Rover Scouts are school and university-based Units

Do you have an NRC equivalent?
No. A National Rover Council is listed in the NSO constitution, though has not yet been formed. In lieu, Unit Leaders have formed their own online group to share information, resources and ideas

What are its powers and responsibilities?
Were an NRC to be formed, under the constitution the Chair would sit on the National Scout Committee and partake in decision-making at the national level

Source: correspondence with the Myanmar Scout Association (2020).

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[139] NRC (2020) 'The By-Laws of the National Rover Council of Australia', Part I Article 5

Chapter Eleven: Previous reviews

Several governance reviews have examined the role of the NRC, either directly or indirectly. These include Rovering Toward 2020, the National Rover Governance Report, the Rover Federation Working Group, and the National Rover Council Audit Report. However, the NRC has self-reported that it largely has not acted on the recommendations arising from these reviews.

Rovering Toward 2020 (2010-11)

The Rover Review, which produced the Rovering Toward 2020 report, was established by the NOC in early 2020 as part of the regular National Team-led sectional review processes:

> *'To review the Rover program and make recommendations to ensure that Scouting contributes to the education of young adults through a value system based on the Scout Promise and Law to help build a better world towards 2020, where people are self-fulfilled as individuals and play a constructive role in society.'* [140]

The Rover Review Implementation Team (RRIT) was established following acceptance of the report and worked throughout 2012-2015 to implement the Rover Review recommendations.

While the majority of the review's 19 recommendations focused on the broader Rover Scout youth program, including the aims, perceptions, and operating model of Rover Scouts, recommendation seven proposed:

> *'An Implementation Team examines Rover governance nationally and in Branches, including lengths of terms of office, with an aim to strengthen the Rover Scout Section's effectiveness and influence in Scouts Australia.'* [141]

This recommendation formed the basis for the National Rover Governance Report. It also resulted in the NRC examining the term lengths of NRC office bearers and voting to maintain 12-month terms rather than move to 18-month terms. Work was also undertaken within Branches to examine their BRC and (RRC) governance arrangements.

National Rover Governance Report (2014)

The National Rover Governance Review commenced in mid-2013 and was undertaken by a member of the NRC Executive to review and consider Rover Scout governance arrangements at a national level, including:

> *'…how the NRC operates, how the NRC interacts with BRCs, and how the NRC interacts with individual Rovers.'*

The 37 recommendations of the review were not intended to be prescriptive to allow flexibility in their implementation; the review instead described itself as 'a blueprint for reform rather than an actual reform package'. The final report was presented at the 2015

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[140] Scouts Australia (2011) 'Rovering Toward 2020', p. 1 <https://scouts.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/final-report-the-rover-review.pdf>

[141] Scouts Australia (2011) 'Rovering Toward 2020', p. 4 <https://scouts.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/final-report-the-rover-review.pdf>

Conference, where work was undertaken to examine two recommendations related to changes to the NRC Delegate role and the possibility of the NRC making binding decisions.

Rover Federation Working Group (2015)

The establishment of a Federation Working Group arose out of work during the 2015 Conference exploring the NRC's ability to make binding decisions. According to its Terms of Reference, the working group was to:

> *'…consider different governance models and to hypothesise different ways that Rovers in Australia could work.'*

The working group's outcomes were considered during the 2016 Conference, where one recommendation was generated – that the NRC Executive continues to review how the NRC operates and provide recommendations for improvement of the NRC.

National Rover Council Audit Report (2018)

During the 2018 Conference it was agreed that a qualitative audit should be undertaken of the NRC, based on an idea first raised during the 2015 Conference . The audit examined the NRC's:

- capability to understand and support the Rover section
- ability to set and deliver on the strategic direction of the Rover section
- capacity to achieve project/s outcomes
- Executive structure, including their ability to meet operational objectives.

The final report was tabled following the 2019 Conference and included ten recommendations related to the NRC's governance arrangements.

Implementing recommendations of previous reviews

The NRC self-reports that they have largely not acted on the recommendations of these reports[142]. Of the governance reviews undertaken to date, the NRC:

- described the recommendations of Rovering Toward 2020 as being 'largely untouched' in 2019[143]
- saw the recommendations arising from the National Rover Governance Report as still needing to be considered at the 2016 Conference and still needing to be acted on at the 2019 Conference

Furthermore, there is poor awareness of previous reviews, which may contribute to their poor implementation. During the 2019 Conference there was no awareness within the executive of the 2014 audit, and there was a call for an external structural audit of the NRC, which was agreed to, despite similar reviews being undertaken only a few years earlier.

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[142] NRC (2019) 'National Rover Council External Review Consultant'
<https://scouts.com.au/blog/2019/02/27/nrc-external-review-consultant-vacancy/>
[143] The NRC Executive advised in 2021 that the majority of recommendations tabled and approved by the NOC were enacted.

Organisations with a strong governance framework are more likely to implement external recommendations successfully.[144] In accepting recommendations, organisations should examine the recommendations and their intent, state whether recommendations are agreed to or not, and develop a plan to implement these recommendations. The implementation plan should be fit-for-purpose and clearly define responsibilities and accountabilities, timelines, and monitoring and reporting frameworks.

There is no evidence that implementation plans were developed to address the recommendations of the 2014 and 2018 reviews. By comparison, the RRIT, established to implement recommendations from the Rovering Toward 2020 report, put in place sound implementation plans and regular ongoing reporting to the NRC.

> **Recommendation 20**: The NRC should develop an implementation plan for the recommendations arising from this review which are agreed to.

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[144] Australian National Audit Office (2019) 'Implementation of Recommendations' <https://www.anao.gov.au/work/audit-insights/implementation-recommendations>
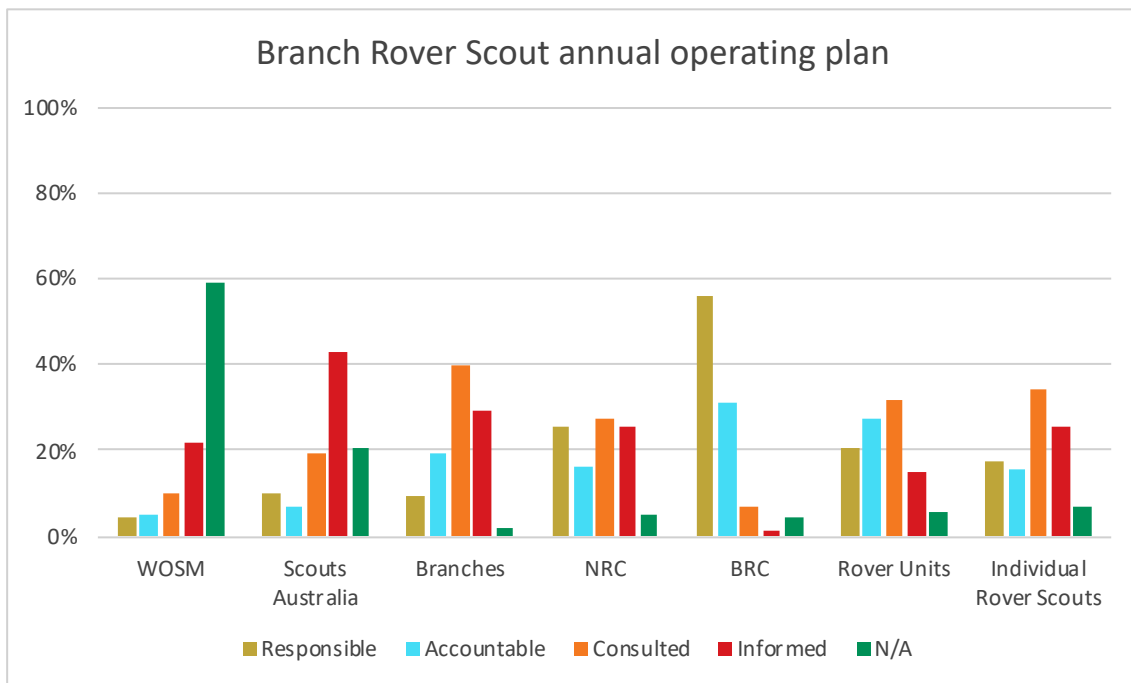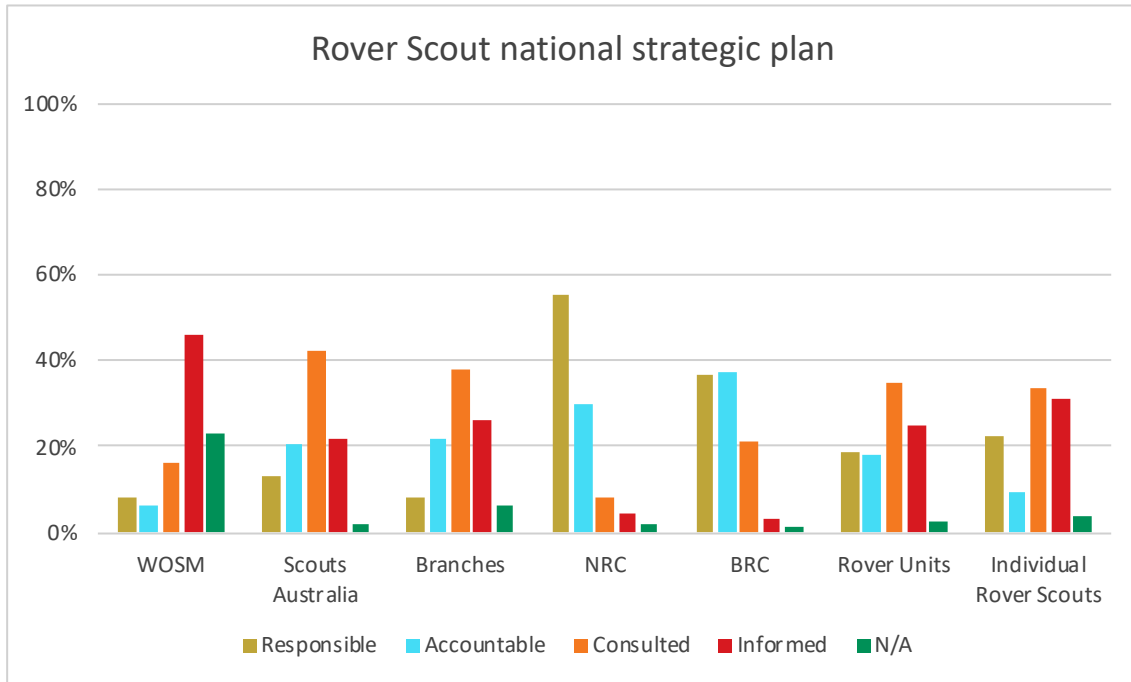
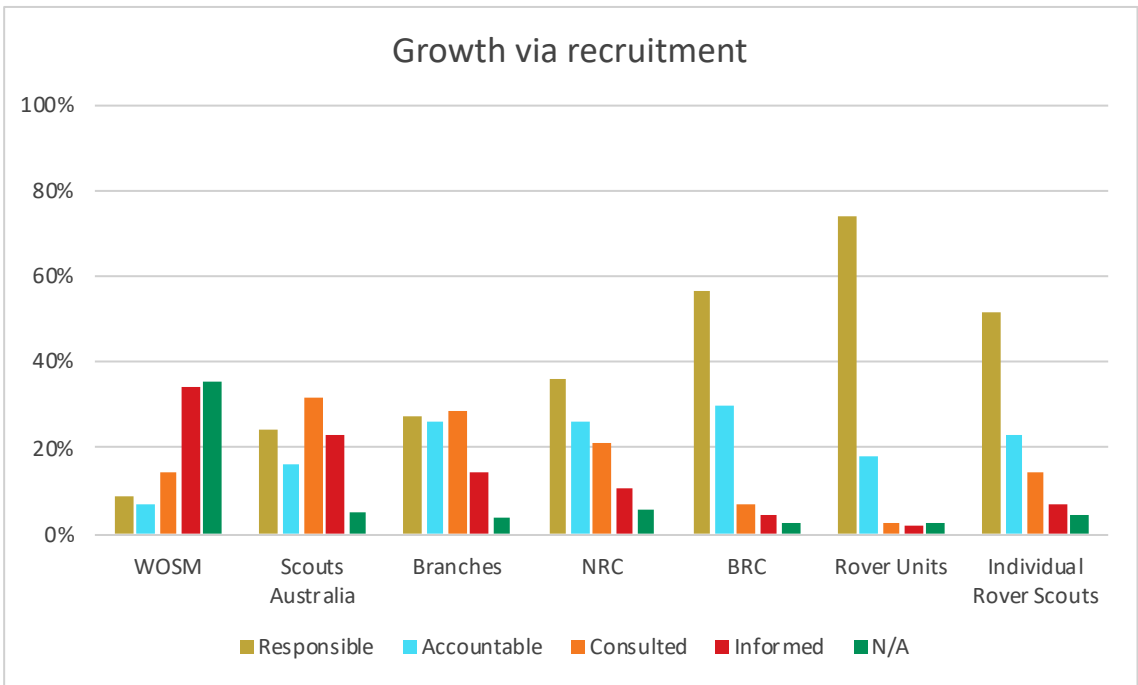# Appendices

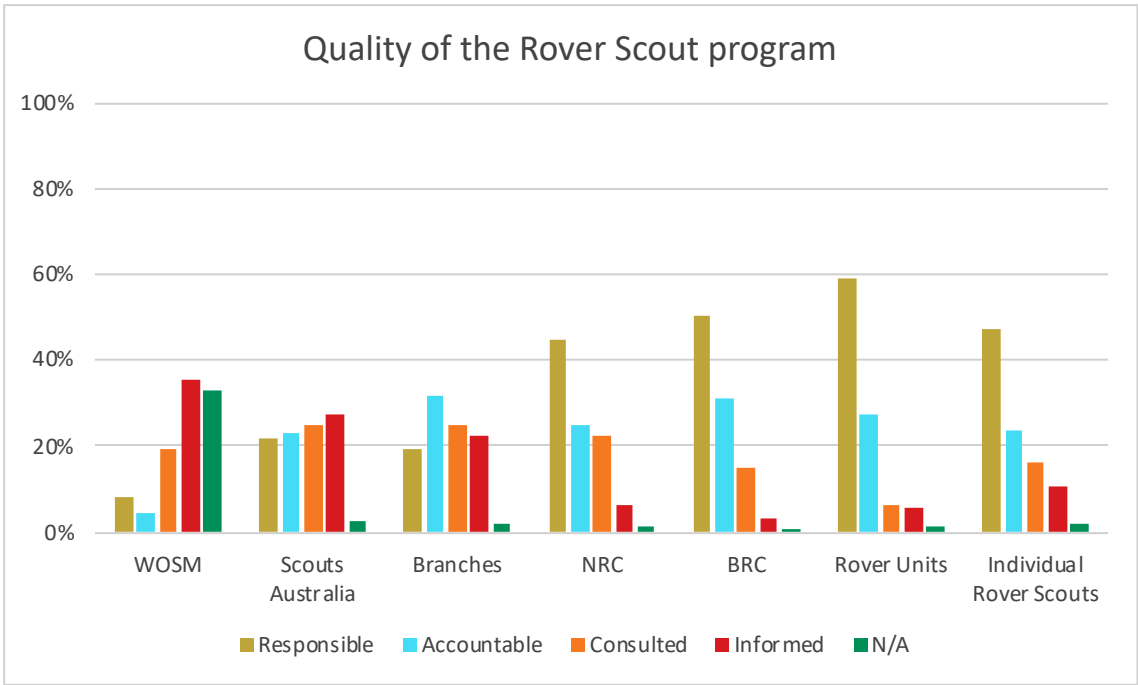## Appendices A: Demographics of survey respondents

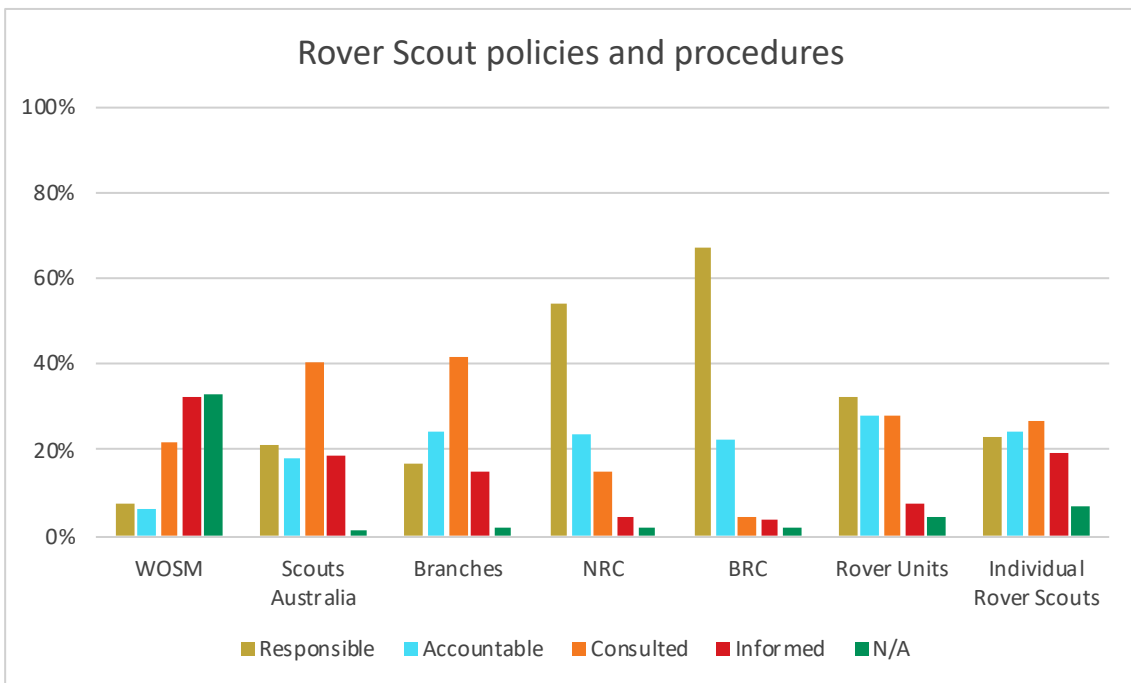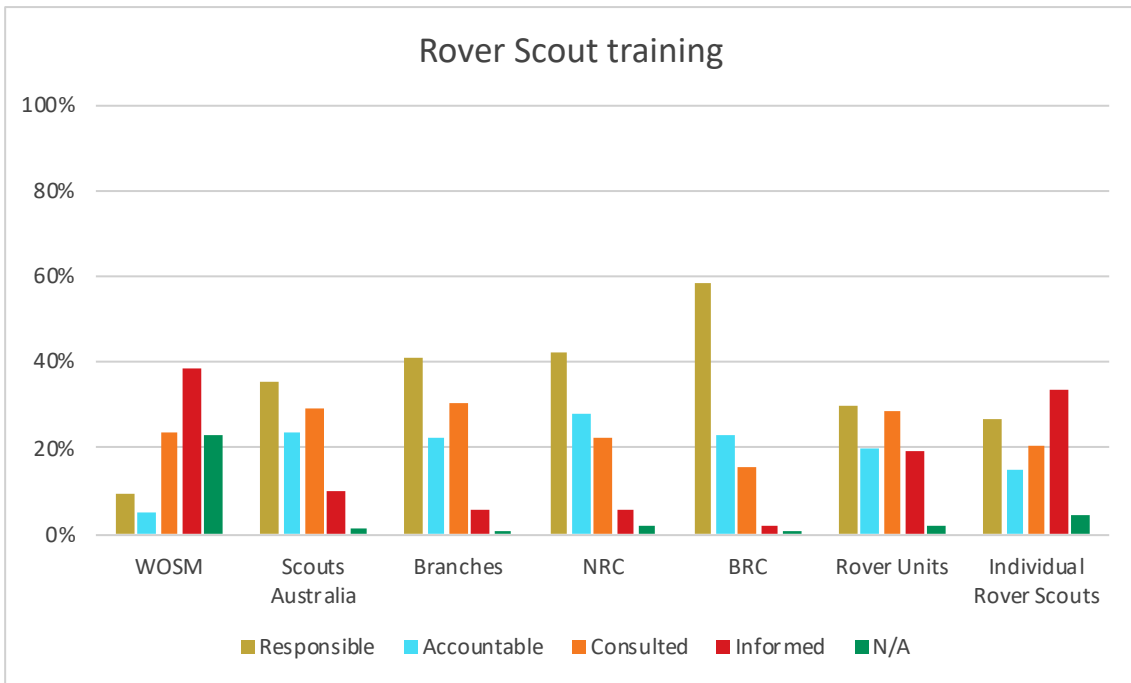| Number of respondents		333
Current Rover Scouts		46.7%
Former Rover Scouts		52.6%
Age	Under 18	0.0%
	18-24	43.8%
	25-34	22.4%
	35-44	13.3%
	45-54	10.0%
	55-64	7.9%
	65+	2.7%
Where do you live?	ACT	10.3%
	NSW	21.8%
	NT	0.0%
	Qld	16.0%
	SA	8.5%
	Tas	4.5%
	Vic	23.3%
	WA	14.2%
	Outside Australia	1.5%
	Metropolitan area	81.6%
	Regional area	18.4%
Gender	Male	60.5%
	Female	38.6%
	Other	0.9%
Current or former members of the NRC		21.5%
Current or former members of a BRC		41.4%
Involvement in Rover Scouts	1-3 years	29.0%
	4-8 years	44.7%
	9+ years	26.3%

Source: Review Team Survey February-June 2020.
Note: Figures are rounded and may not add to 100 per cent.

Rover Scout national strategic plan
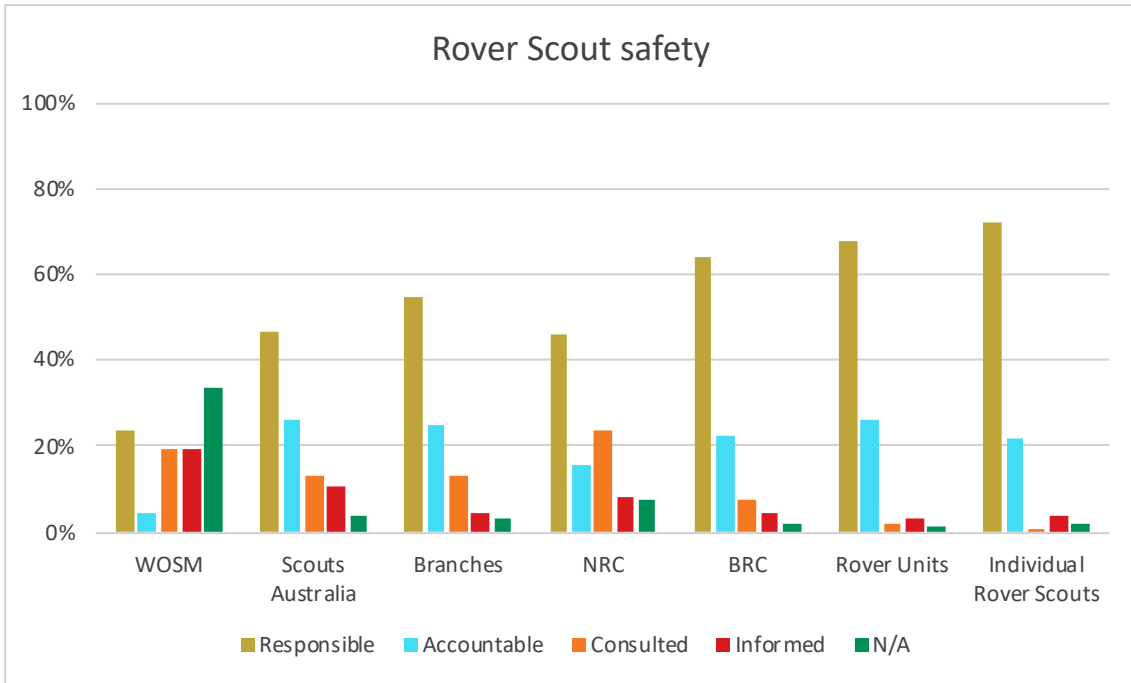

Legend: Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, Informed, N/A

Categories: WOSM, Scouts Australia, Branches, NRC, BRC, Rover Units, Individual Rover Scouts

Branch Rover Scout annual operating plan

Legend: Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, Informed, N/A

Categories: WOSM, Scouts Australia, Branches, NRC, BRC, Rover Units, Individual Rover Scouts

Quality of the Rover Scout program

Growth via recruitment

Rover Scout training

Legend: Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, Informed, N/A

Categories: WOSM, Scouts Australia, Branches, NRC, BRC, Rover Units, Individual Rover Scouts

Rover Scout policies and procedures

Legend: Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, Informed, N/A

Categories: WOSM, Scouts Australia, Branches, NRC, BRC, Rover Units, Individual Rover Scouts

Rover Scout marketing

Individual behaviours

Rover Scout safety

Government relationship management
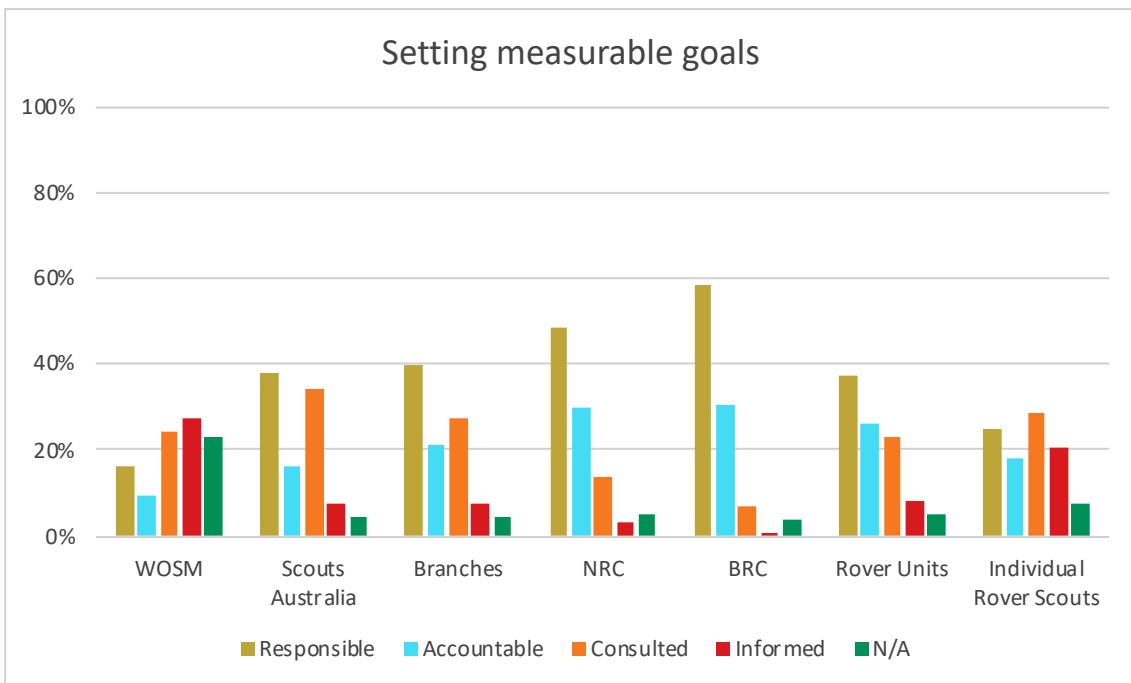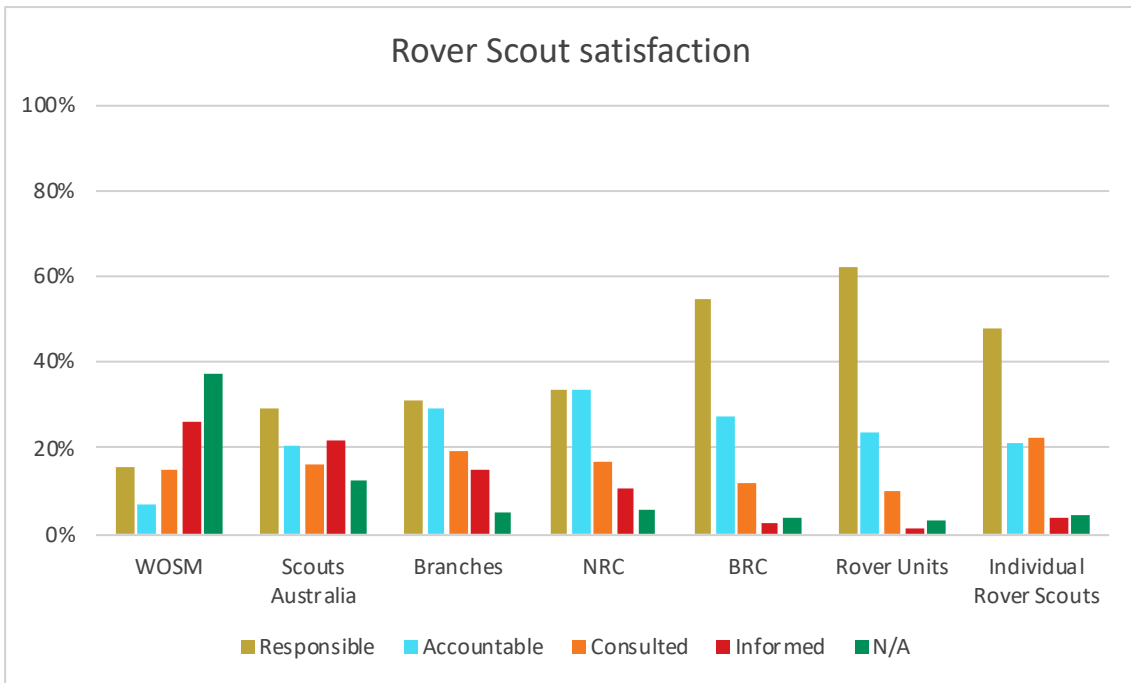
Rover Scout satisfaction

Setting measurable goals

Appendices C: Suggested Rover Scout youth program accountabilities and responsibilities model

Area	Accountability	Responsibility
Rover Scout strategic planning	BRCs are accountable and report on progress annually	NRC supports BRCs in developing their plans and consolidating results for the Nation
Membership growth	BRCs are accountable and report on progress annually	BRCs delegate some accountability to Regions (where applicable) and Units
Quality of the youth program	NRC is accountable and reports on progress annually	NRC develops tools to assist BRCs and Units in delivering a good Rover Scout program at the Unit level
Rover Scout training - curriculum	NRC is accountable	NRC and BRCs are responsible for input to training content
Rover Scout training - delivery	Branches are accountable	BRCs are responsible for delivery of training
Rover Policies [1]	National & Branches are accountable	NRC and BRCs are responsible for input but should avoid writing overlapping policies
Rover Scout marketing [2]	Rover Units are accountable	NRC and BRCs are responsible for delivering some aspects (e.g. the brand strategy) and providing support to Units
Individual behaviours	Individuals and Rover Units are accountable	Branches and BRCs are responsible for managing disputes and non-compliance
Safety of Rover Scouts	Individuals and Rover Units are accountable	Branches are responsible for monitoring and improving safety
Rover Scout satisfaction with Scouting	BRCs are accountable	NRC is responsible for developing and running an independent customer satisfaction survey and delivering results to BRCs BRCs are responsible for running exit surveys for members who leave and using the result to improve retention

Notes:
1. Scouts Australia and Branches are incorporated bodies and have power under their constitution and legislation to create policies. NRC has limited power to do this as all Rovers membership resides with their Branches. NRC can make representations to National and Branches to change policies and can write procedures for its own operation but needs to avoid impacting or overlapping existing policies and procedures that will take precedence.
2. Rover Units are where members are recruited and retained. To achieve growth, each Unit needs to be accountable for marketing themselves and working with BRCs to achieve growth objectives. BRCs can support their Units by providing tools and training to help them recruit and retain members.

Appendices D: Suggest by-laws areas for improvement

In addition to the recommendation/s in the By-Laws and Policies chapter, the Review Team has identified the following areas for improvement to strengthen the NRC By-Laws.

NRC By-Laws v2.2 (as of 29 November 2020)	Areas for improvement
Name and purpose	
Part I, Article 1: Purpose • Names the NRC and provides for its purpose	• May need to be updated based on recommendations in Chapter Three.
Membership and officers	
Part I, Article 2: Membership • Lists who is a member of the NRC • Provides for meeting observers Part I, Article 4: Voting and elections of the NRC Executive • Refers to position descriptions in Part II, Section 2 (though should be Section 1) • Outlines terms of office • Outlines the nomination and voting procedures for Executive and standing Project Officers Part I, Article 6: Member Roles and Functions • Outlines the functions of the NRC and BRCs Part II, Section 1: Duty statements of the NRC Executive and Officers • Provides the edibility requirements and duties and responsibilities for the elected Executive, standing Project Officers, appointed Project Officers, and NRC Delegates	• NRC functions may be updated based on recommendations of chapter three • Ensure there is consistency between the functions of the BRCs against their respective by-laws/constitutions • There could be merit in restructuring these sections in line with the recommended structure, noting that the position descriptions could be a short overview with more detail provided in a separate document • Outline duties, rights and responsibilities of BRC Chairs and BRAs • Clarify that BRAs and the NRC Adviser are non-voting members, possibly through creating two categories of membership (voting and non-voting) • Clarify which members are elected and which are ex-officio • Outline attendance requirements, and procedures for addressing non-attendance • Provisions for honorary members, if desired • Provide disciplinary procedures, including removal from office • Define the date on which elected members take office • Clarify if there are term limits (e.g. can only serve two consecutive terms on the NRC) • Clarify the process if the Chair is vacant – does the Vice Chair act in this role or become the Chair, and if so, is a Vice Chair appointed

Meetings	
Part I, Article 3: Meeting Procedures • Provides for an annual meeting (Conference) and regular meetings (Remote Meetings) • Outlines how submissions are made for consideration • Outlines the preparation and dissemination of minutes • Provides for a handover meeting for the new Executive Part II, Section 2: NRC Conference organising and financing • Policy for organising the annual Conference Part II, Section 4: Remote Meeting Etiquette • Procedure to ensure meetings run smoothly and effectively	• Outline frequency of Remote Meetings • Define, in general, which business is transacted at each meeting • Provide for the early adjournment of meetings by majority vote • Provisions for calling emergency meetings to address single matters • Provisions for special/executive meetings • Link to the Remote Meeting Procedures agreed at the December 2020 meeting
Voting	
Part I, Article 4: Voting and elections of the NRC Executive • Voting by simple majority with each of the two Branch Delegates having a vote (for sixteen total votes), ties from by the Chair • Only financial members can vote	• Define a quorum • Clarify proxy and absentee votes • Procedures for out of session voting • Handling of conflicts of interest – could be in a policy
Committees	
Largely not addressed Part II, Section 1 • Chair shall be ex officio member of all committees, and they shall be a diversity and inclusion subcommittee	• By-laws do not address the process and procedures for committees/ subcommittees
Parliamentary authority	
Not addressed	• Use existing rule set such as Robert, Sturgis, Cannon, Demeter, Riddick, or draft simplified NRC rules of order

Amendments	
Part I, Article 7: Amendments • Changes to Part I require two-thirds majority • Changes to Parts II-III require simple majority • Copy of by-laws provided relevant National and Chief Commissioners	• Outline prior notice requirements ahead of by-laws amendments

• There could also be merit to adding a dissolution clause to Article 5: Finances, to provide clarity around what would happen to the assets of the NRC if it were ever wound up.