Tools for Effective District Scout Leading
C. Running Effective Mindaris

Module Overview
Regular District Mindaris are a central feature of an overall communication and support strategy. These are opportunities to share information and ideas, make contact with other leaders in the area, pass messages to and from Region, State and National support structures and deliver ongoing training. A busy Section Leader must find value from attending these meetings. It is the role of the District Leader to ensure Mindaris are effective and add value to the role of the Section Leader.

Expected Outcomes
In this module, it is expected that you will:
- Produce a forward plan of Mindaris for the next 12 months
- Enhance your skills are chairing meetings
- Plan and implement creative and effective meeting agendas
- Establish a process to review the effectiveness of your meetings

Practical Outcomes
By completing this module, you will have the next 12 months District Mindaris planned. By making the meetings more effective, you will increase attendance, improve communication and support to your Section Leaders.

Amount of Work
This module should take between 2 and 4 months to complete depending on the frequency of your District Mindaris. There are two face to face meetings for setup and review with your RC (S) and two District Mindaris. Around these is some time in planning and preparation.
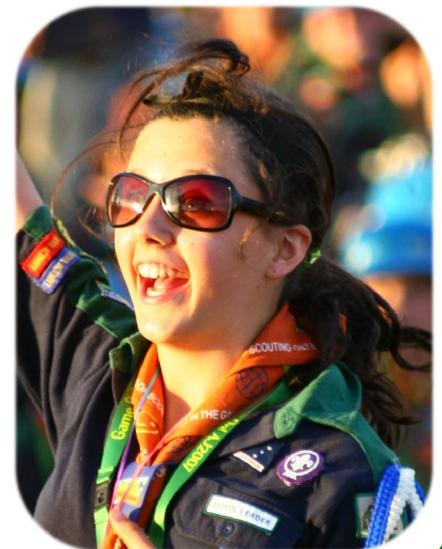
In This Pack
To support the implementation and running of the module, the following resources are provided:
- Regional Commissioner (Scouts)'s Briefing
- Participant Briefing
- Module Resources
- Module Completion and Feedback

Other Modules in the Scheme
Following this module, you might like to consider one of the other modules in the scheme:
- District Communications
- Recruitment, retention and supporting adults
- District Events and Activities
- Scout Leadership Courses
- Actively Supporting Troops
- Accessing the award scheme
- Training others
- Cross Sectional Development

About the Tools for Effective District Scout Leading Scheme
This scheme was introduced in 2008 to support the work of new and existing District Scout Leaders. There are several modules in the scheme focusing on different areas of the role. District Leaders should negotiate with their Regional Commissioner (Scouts) to decide which modules are most relevant to your situation. The modules are designed to be practical in nature and completed in any order. For more information, visit www.nsw.scouts.com/scouts/districtleaders.htm.

Region Commissioner (Scouts)'s Briefing

This module can be run with an individual or with a number of District Leaders. The outcomes for each participant are the same. Your set up and review of progress may be structured differently if working with a number of District Leaders.

Your Role in this Module

After the initial input and set-up of the module, your role in this module is to provide support, advice and example resources from your own operations or those you have seen in use. You may find it useful to collect these into a resource folder before starting the module and adding to the resource over time. At the end of the module, the Region Commissioner (Scouts) must review the module's effectiveness and submit the review report to the State Commissioner (Scouts).

Setting Up the Module

The module should be set up during a single set-up session with the participant(s). This should preferably be done face-to-face where practical, but can be achieved over email or telephone. The session would cover:

- Understanding and acceptance of the module outcomes
- Review of current skills, knowledge and experience
- Review of the resources available in this pack and elsewhere, written and human
- Outline plan for development, including milestones and timescales
- Identification of support required and a plan to provide it
- Expectations of completion and review – how do we know we have finished?

This session may or may not form part of your regular Region Mindari.

Support to the Region Commissioner (Scouts)

Support is available to you in facilitating this module from your State Commissioner's Team. This could include telephone support or further working examples of Mindari operations types. You should also look to the District Commissioner and other members of your Region Team for ideas and advice on this topic. Where a District is already running effective Mindaris, you could use them as a model and encourage other District Leaders to visit.

Measuring Success

Scouting has always been based on doing your best. With this in mind, measuring success can be a very subjective task. Emphasising the positive achievements of the participant(s) will further build confidence. Remember the expected outcomes of the module and measure against those – Did the participant(s):

- Produce a forward plan of Mindaris for the next 12 months?
- Demonstrate effective chairing skills?
- Plan and implement creative and effective meeting agendas?
- Establish a process to review the effectiveness of the meetings?

About the Tools for Effective District Scout Leading Scheme

This scheme was introduced in 2008 to support the work of new and existing District Scout Leaders. There are several modules in the scheme focusing on different areas of the role. District Leaders should negotiate with their Regional Commissioner (Scouts) to decide which modules are most relevant to your situation. The modules are designed to be practical in nature and completed in any order. For more information, visit www.nsw.scouts.com/scouts/districtleaders.htm.

Participating District Leader's Briefing

Welcome to the Running Effective Mindaris module of the Tools for Effective District Leading scheme. This is not a formal training scheme, but a practical, project driven support scheme designed specifically to support and develop you in your Scouting role.

Your Role in this Module

You will meet with your Regional Commissioner (Scouts) (RC (S)) to discuss the expected outcomes of this module and to set a plan. Part of that plan will involve you working alone and with others to develop effective Mindaris for your District. Although there is room to experiment and trial different approaches, ultimately, the module will lead you to a working model that will be the basis of your future Mindaris.

Setting Up the Module

The first step is to meet with your RC (S). There may be other participants completing the same module, so it would be helpful to meet together and share ideas. In your meeting, you will cover:

- Your understanding and acceptance of the module outcomes
- Review of current skills, knowledge and experience in this area
- Review of the resources available in this pack and elsewhere, written and human
- Outline plan for development, including milestones and timescales
- Identification of support required and a plan to provide it
- Expectations of completion and review – how do we know we have finished?

This session may or may not form part of your regular Region Mindari.

Support Available

Your RC (S) and your Region Mindari are probably the central supports to you in this module, but you should also talk with your District Commissioner, other members of your District Team and the Section Leaders you are supporting to seek their views and strategies on communication as well. Be prepared to visit other District Mindaris.

Module Layout

There are five elements to this module:

- The purpose of the District Mindari
- Planning meeting content and agendas
- Chairing meetings
- Reviewing effectiveness
- Module Review

You will find information on each over the next few pages.

Element A: The purpose of District Mindaris

Despite most leaders agreeing that regular District Mindaris (Mindaris) are an important part of our support structures, there is a weak understanding of what should and should not be covered during these meetings. The simple answer is that anything goes, but this element will help you develop your own understanding of the purpose.

The Task

Using the accompanying resource sheet,

- make a list of all items you have discussed, would like to have discusses or think you should discuss at your District Mindaris.
- Next to each one, identify whether it was information sharing, decision making, general advice/discussion or practical activity/training.
- Share the list with a Scouting colleague (RC (S), member of the District Team or a Section Leader maybe) and grade each item by relevance and importance – Very important, important, not very important.
- Also list how the item was delivered – verbal presentation, visual presentation, practical activity, group discussion, brain storm, workshop, etc.

Your resource sheet should be presented at your review meeting for discussion.

Definitions of a District

"The role of the District is defined as being a support unit of human and physical resources covering a defined geographical area. The key word in this definition is "support" and extends to providing guidance and training to local Groups, ensuring a strong flow of communication and providing (where available) physical resources to aid the delivery of the scouting program. Regular visits by District personnel is encouraged to ensure adults working at the Group level feel they are encouraged with their development and that of their youth."

NSW Scouts Organisation and Information Handbook

This definition of a Scout District gives a clear indication that our role is to support our Sections in several different ways:

- Guidance and training
- Flow of communication
- Physical resources to aid program delivery

Our Mindari is one vehicle for delivering this support.

Who's bringing the rake?

"Each year, our District organised and ran the Athlete's badge at a local school. The event was discussed in detail at our District Mindari the month before. One of the activities was the long jump and a particular Troop would be asked to manage the activity. This Troop would be advised that they would need a rake to smooth the sand after each jumper. We would always spend a few minutes working out who would bring the rake"

Report from a District Mindari

Remember that your District Mindari is a valuable time to achieve very important outcomes. Consider the relevance of each item the Mindari encounters and aim to maximise your time at the meeting to support as best you can.

Resources to Support This Element

We have created some resources for you to support this Element:

- Mindari Agenda Items review grid

Element B: Planning meeting content and agendas

As with all things in Scouting, being prepared is a key to success. Planning for your Mindari will focus the meeting and give greater productivity. Of course, things change month on month in Scouting, so having flexibility in the plan is also important – but this isn't any different to a Section Leader responding to the unexpected in their Section planning. As for all Scouting activities, fun and training are core themes.

The Task

- Prepare an overview of meetings for the next 12 months, including dates, times, locations and major agenda items for each meeting.
- For the next 2 meetings, plan in detail the agenda and delivery of the meeting.

These items should be presented at your review meeting for discussion.

Long Term Planning

Most Scouting plans run across a calendar year, but for District meetings and events, there is no reason why the planning can't stay a year in advance, on a rolling program. Keep aware of future events and meetings running at Region or State that may impact your District Meetings. Give consideration to school holidays, local events and the programs of the Groups and Sections in your District. Here are some questions to ask when planning your meetings:

- How many should we have? Monthly, bi-monthly, termly, longer?
- Who should attend? Section Leaders, Assistants, District Team members, Group Leaders, Associate Leaders, parents, Region Team members, advisors, Patrol Leaders, more?
- Should it be the same day and time for each meeting?
- When should the meeting start?
- How long should it last?
- What major events do we need to consider?

Short Term Planning

Establishing, distributing and then following an agenda gives the attendees a chance to attend the meeting feeling prepared for the items under discussion. Structure your agenda in a logical way so that the meeting flows and achieves. All good Section Leaders know the importance of changing your presentation style to gain and maintain the interest of the youth members – adults are the same, so consider how you can vary your meetings to include activity, practical work, different groupings, etc. Outside visitors are often great for a lively session and add subject expertise to the discussion. Always refer to your long term plan to ensure you cover everything effectively.

Preparing for the meeting

The next element considers how to prepare and deliver the meetings, but at this stage, you should consider how you will prepare the meeting attendees. How and when will you distribute the agenda and invite to the meeting? How can you ensure everyone receives it, understands it and either attends, sends a representative or makes plans to have their input to the topics?

Resources to Support This Element

We have created some resources for you to support this Element:

- Suggested meeting agendas

Element C: Chairing Meetings

All the best planning can be for nothing if a meeting is not effectively chaired. This element considers setting up the meeting environment and ensuring the meeting flows.

The Task

- Either Chair or select and support the Chair of two District Mindaris.
- Using the agendas set in Element 2, facilitate the presentation of agenda items.
- Ensure that accurate minutes are taken and distributed promptly after the meeting.

Present these minutes at your review meeting.

Meeting Chairperson

It is the responsibility of the District Leader to ensure the meeting achieves the outcomes, but not necessarily to chair it themselves. Ensure that the meeting is chaired by an appropriate person who gives adequate time for discussion, consideration and decision making. The Chair person must be well versed in the agenda items and keep the meeting flowing without over-influencing the decisions being made. A Chairperson's skills would include: Listening, summarising, pushing for decision, controlling, steering and clarifying.

The Meeting Environment

Where you hold your meetings and how you set up the room really depends on what you hope to achieve. For serious work, a quiet room with little distraction and chairs around a table might set the mood more appropriately than an informal gathering at a local hotel! Perhaps you have some practical activity that needs open space, special equipment or youth members to take part in a trial? For overhead projectors or other visual presentations, a horse-shoe shape is a good idea. Remember that arranging seats in a circle puts nobody at the head of the room whereas a rectangle will give a clear indication of who is running the meeting. Both are equally effective for different purposes. Ensure that the room is comfortable (temperature, seating, lighting, clean) so the attendees can focus on the agenda rather than their comfort. Will you provide refreshments? What about a break?

During the meeting

Be aware of the amount of items you need to get through on your agenda and the time you will need to leave for each. Allow discussion on each item if required, but make sure you move for a decision once everyone has made their point. Check with the minute taker that the final outcome or any action point has been appropriately recorded.

Resources to Support This Element

We have identified some resources for you to support this Element:

- http://www.meetingwizard.org/

Element D: Reviewing Effectiveness

Since we started this module acknowledging that effective meetings were important, it is essential that we continue to review that effectiveness. In this element, we ensure that there are mechanisms in place to have that review.

The Task

- Set up a simple and brief mechanism to review the effectiveness of your meetings from your own viewpoint, from the viewpoint of an attendee and against the tasks required.
- Review one of your meetings conducted as part of this module

Bring the results to your module review meeting.

Methods of Receiving Feedback

You can get feedback in many different ways:

- Verbal feedback from participants
- Simple questionnaire
- Target setting/review
- Open discussion

Measuring Targets

Your role as a District Leader will include setting some development targets for your District and for individual groups. You may have a Development Plan in place that helps to focus these issues. You might measure the success of your meetings by the level of attendance, work covered or success in developing areas of your plan.

Handling Feedback

Feedback is only relevant if it is accepted and acted upon. When receiving feedback, avoid dismissing or judging the feedback. Accept it graciously and review it at a later time. What does it tell you? Is it a personal or shared view? What can you change to address it?

Resources to Support This Element

We have created some resources for you to support this Element:

- Mindari Effectiveness Review

Review and Feedback

Now you have completed this module, it is time to review your experiences. The review has three purposes:

- To ensure you have developed in your role as a District Leader in this area
- To ensure the contents of the module are relevant, appropriate and support the outcomes
- To identify the next steps for your development

You will complete this review in consultation with your RC (S). The RC (S) will submit a copy of the review to the State Commissioner within 4 weeks of your meeting. If you would like to attach examples of your work, the State Team would be grateful to receive them.

DL's Name: _____   Date of review: _____

District: _____   Region: _____

Reviewer: _____

About Your Experiences

Did the module lead you to:	Achieved	Close to	Started	Did not
Consider the purpose of a District Mindari?	❑	❑	❑	❑
Create a timetable for the next 12 months?	❑	❑	❑	❑
Demonstrate effective chairing skills?	❑	❑	❑	❑
Plan and implement effective meeting agendas?	❑	❑	❑	❑
Establish review of effectiveness of the meetings?	❑	❑	❑	❑

Notes:

About the Module and Resources provided

Please rate the resources in this module:	Excellent	Suitable	Weak	Poor
C.1 Mindari Agenda Items Review	❑	❑	❑	❑
C.2 Mindari Agenda Examples	❑	❑	❑	❑
Website www.meetingwizard.org	❑	❑	❑	❑
C.3 Mindari Effectiveness Review	❑	❑	❑	❑

Notes:

The Next Steps

There are more Modules available in the scheme. You should now discuss with your RC (S) which would be the most appropriate for you.

❑ I will be taking a break from Effective Tool Modules for a while
❑ I would like to do another one, but I am still choosing which
❑ I am going to try _____ next

Instructions to RC (S) on completion of this form
The completed form should be forwarded to the State Commissioner for your Section within four weeks of the review meeting. You may wish to take a copy of the form for your own records and/or share the information with your Region Commissioner or the participants District Commissioner. The contents of the form will be used to monitor overall region progress on develop

Resource C.1: Mindari Agenda Items Review

- Use this resource to make a list of all items you have discussed, would like to have discussed or think you should discuss at your District Mindaris.
- Next to each one, identify whether it was information sharing, decision making, general advice/discussion or practical activity/training.
- With help from a Scouting colleague (RC (S), member of the District Team or a Section Leader maybe), grade each item by relevance and importance – Very important, important, not very important.
- List how the item was delivered – verbal presentation, visual presentation, practical activity, group discussion, brain storm, workshop, etc.

Agenda Item	Purpose	Relevance	Importance	Delivery Method
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				
11.				
12.				
13.				
14.				
15.				

Your resource sheet should be presented at your review meeting for discussion.

Resource C.2: Example Mindari Agendas

Traditional Mindari Agenda	Contemporary Mindari Agenda

1. Flag break, prayer, welcome
2. Apologies for absence
3. Confirm Minutes of Last Meeting
4. Items from Region/State/National
5. Troop Reports
6. District Events
7. Training Elements
8. Any Other Business
9. Date of Next Meeting
10. Close
	1. Welcome and introductions
	2. From the Troops
	    Items to be taken from the Troop lines to District, Region, State or National
	3. From the Support Structures
	    Items from District, Region, State or National for communications
	4. Around the District
	    Events, ideas, sharing and issues
	5. Close

Special Agenda Items ▪ Presentation by Region Commissioner (Activities) on new canoeing requirements ▪ Talk by District Patrol Leaders Council on their last meeting ▪ Preparations for Scout Promotion at the local Council's County Show ▪ Program ideas on Community Award ▪ Standards for Adventurer Cord Hikes	**Guest Speakers** Members of your Region team Youth members Local councillors and community leaders Local personalities Activity providers (third party) Members of your District team Local heroes Venturer Section leaders

Resource C.3: Mindari Effectiveness Review

Review by: _____   Meeting Date: _____
Location: _____   Times: _____
Chaired by: _____

Meeting Preparation

	Excellent	Average	Poor	Never again	Comment
Venue for the meeting	❑	❑	❑	❑	_____
Date and Timing	❑	❑	❑	❑	_____
Notification to attendees	❑	❑	❑	❑	_____
No. of Troops represented	❑	❑	❑	❑	_____

Notes:

The Agenda

Item	Excellent	Average	Poor	Never again	Comment
	❑	❑	❑	❑	_____
	❑	❑	❑	❑	_____
	❑	❑	❑	❑	_____
	❑	❑	❑	❑	_____

Notes: