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Draft

Jane Goodall Institute Australia: Definition and position statement

Confidential

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INTRODUCTION

This proposal sets out a revised definition and position statement for the Roots & Shoots program of the Jane Goodall Institute Australia (JGIA). It has been prepared in response to the Institute's desire to augment program participation rates. It dovetails with national and international moves to review the aims and objectives of JGIA as part of scoping its future direction.

BACKGROUND

Roots & Shoots Australia is a youth-based action program, established in 1992 to execute JGIA's constitutional aims and objects relating to:

- *The protection and enhancement of, and the provision of the information, education and the carrying on of the research about, the natural environment shared by Earth's living creatures.*
- *The promotion of awareness of, and the formulation of projects to address, environmental issues, including deforestation, drought, extinction and sustainability, through the education of children involved in the Roots & Shoots Australia program.*¹

It is one of nearly 100 world-wide chapters which provide opportunities for young people to engage in a range of self-directed conservation activities, in line with founder Jane Goodall's vision of empowering young people to take responsibility for the future wellbeing of 'animals, people and the environment' (APE).

Roots & Shoots Australia is currently serviced by volunteer coordinators and supporters in several South Australian states, who seek to promote the program through school presentations and at local environmental events and venues. The school presentations also provide a means to lever class-based environmental projects and school membership to Roots & Shoots.

State coordinators are supported by a volunteer national coordinator through email and phone links, and via monthly on-line meetings. In 2018, a part-time, paid general manager was appointed to the Roots & Shoots program to increase membership, build educational collateral, manage budget and fundraising, create partnership opportunities, and support and engage volunteers through meetings, training and events.

As part of these responsibilities, a review of the Roots & Shoots program has been undertaken to identify barriers and opportunities to increase membership and program outcomes.

¹ Constitution of Jane Goodall Institute Australia Ltd, 2007 (updated 2015)

DISCUSSION

The review of Roots & Shoots program has included observations and discussions with JGIA personal, and review of relevant literature and other youth environmental program models.

It has addressed a number of questions including:

1. What are the issues, problems and opportunities of attracting new volunteers and members?
2. Can functions be restructured for improved service delivery?
3. What activities would be better performed centrally?
4. How should states deliver their services, structures and staffing?

The review has identified the commitment and dedication of existing State Coordinators to the goals and objectives of JGIA, and their firm interest in delivering the Roots & Shoots program across their states, in line with Jane Goodall's vision.

However, the study necessarily focussed on matters to be changed or improved, and as such has identified weaknesses in the current modus operandi.

A core concern expressed by survey participants was the disparity between the broad visions of Roots & Shoots, vis a vis the resources available to drive it. That is, the program is high on rhetoric, but low on capacity. Its overarching JGIA organisational structure is also top-heavy and its aspirations are not underpinned by corresponding means of delivering them.²

In part, this is because that as a not-for-profit organisation, JGIA depends heavily on volunteer support.

In turn, its Roots & Shoots program also fully relies on the endeavours of the National and State Coordinators and their supporters to roll-out its educational and promotional activities.

² The subject of organisational structure and capacity will be concurrently discussed at the JGIA strategic meeting in October 2018.

Under the current Roots and Shoots structure, volunteer State Coordinators are responsible for planning, implementing and coordinating all aspects of program delivery in their states, as outlined below:

- Correspondence with schools
- Organising schedules of school talks;
- Preparing presentation material and curriculum resources;
- Delivering school presentations;
- Facilitating schools to undertake conservation programs;
- Engaging students in Roots & Shoots membership;
- Providing on-going support to schools;
- Identifying and supporting local conservation-themed events and partnerships;
- Developing environmental activities such as film screenings;
- Creating a volunteer management plan;
- Promoting volunteer opportunities through traditional and new media outlets;
- Supporting volunteers through meetings, phone calls and at events;
- Developing and circulating promotional materials;
- Handling finances, and undertaking fund-raising activities;
- Meetings, correspondence and reporting;
- Travelling between home and places of the above activities.

This list represents a significant workload for the volunteer State Coordinators, given the general lack of material and in-kind resources available to support them.³

State Coordinators are effectively one-stop-shops for Roots & Shoots in their states, required to both undertake operational activities, while simultaneously managing program planning and administrative responsibilities.

In turn, this limits opportunities to attract and retain the number of volunteers needed to expand and effectively deliver the current program, since State Coordinators are largely engaged in hands-on activities.

³ The program is reinforced by a volunteer administrator, and is linked to the JGIA's National Youth Leadership Council (NYLC).

Achieving the dual coordination-operational expectations of the role has been achieved with varying degrees of success across the states, according to time availability and skills base of individual coordinators.⁴

A summary of Roots & Shoots activities by states during 1 July 2016 – 30 June 2017 is identified in the table below:

SUMMARY OF ROOTS & SHOOTS ACTIVITIES BY STATES *					
1 July 2016 – 30 June 2017					
Activity	Western Australia	NSW	Queensland	Victoria	South Australia
State Coordinator					
Total coordinator's hours					
No. of volunteers					
Total volunteer hours					
School R&S programs					
Youth memberships					
Annual events					
Funds raised	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
*Note: General manager to provide final figures					

The table above highlights the generally low volunteer support base in each state, relative to the scope of program expectations. Ironically, high rates of school and youth membership reflect the time availability of individual state coordinators, rather than program efficiency per se.

The table also reflects the discrepancy between the wide-ranging vision of the Roots & Shoots program, and its inadequate delivery capacity under the current program structure.

As such, a revised program volunteer staffing structure is proposed below to help close the gap between expectations and outcomes.

⁴ It is important to also note that each state varies, in terms of its population and communities of interest, and these variables may impact on the outcome of program activities across Australia.

PROPOSAL

- **Pods – definition and intent**

It is proposed to create a more efficient and dynamic Roots & Shoots program structure, by splitting strategic and operational functions between the State Coordinator and local groups of 'pods' respectively.ⁱ

The State Coordinator's role will focus entirely on coordination and administrative activities, while the pods will be responsible for on-ground delivery of program activities.

The 'pods' will be named in consideration of Jane Goodall's 'seeding' concept which underpins the Roots and Shoots' program.

The proposed system will enable the evolution of a network of semi-autonomous groups of volunteers across each state, and will increase the emphasis on organisational decentralisation, while redistributing the workload impact on the State Coordinators.

It will also facilitate cooperative resource sharing between the pods, and increase school and youth awareness of, and participation in, Roots and Shoots across the nation.

- **Structure, roles and responsibilities**

Each local pod will contain a team leader, treasurer, events coordinator, publicity officer, schools liaison officer, and a membership officer who will be based at a location of their determination.

These volunteers will be drawn from a range of backgrounds and interests, and include people in conversant in sciences who can provide relevant and current information about environmental and wildlife information to schools and young people.

Individual pods will plan and drive their own program of activities in their local area.

Their focus will be to reach out to, engage and enable young people to recognise and develop skills to address global nature conservation and associated human challenges at the local level.

In terms of reporting, each pod will be responsible to their individual team leaders, who will report to their State Coordinator. The coordinators will in turn be answerable to the General Manager.

Under the pod system, the State Coordinator's time will be freed up to allow them to concentrate on attracting, training, supporting and overseeing volunteers.

This will allow the organisation to grow its volunteer support base, while increasing youth membership and participation rates.

The structure will also enable State Coordinators to work more closely with the General Manager and other staff on development of curriculum and promotional initiatives, together with systems and administrative functions to support the work of the pods. They will continue to be supported by the National Coordinator through meetings, and in day-to-day matters.

The General Manager will be responsible for overall management and coordination of the States, and in determining supports and services to the pods.

- **Pods - Spatial definition**

The proposed structure will retain its state borders, while local pod boundaries will be aligned with local government boundaries for ease of geographic definition and nomenclature.

This will enable a more expansive, integrated and flexible organisation that provides a networked focus for engaging young people in conservation matters.

NEXT STEPS

The pod system is currently being trialled in Victoria, NSW and Queensland, and already demonstrates potential viability.

In Victoria, three pods have been established in various regional areas and have indicated their plans to organise children's nature events, such as tree plantings and a children's environment day. Meanwhile, NSW and Queensland have each established two pods which are working towards staging activities for young people in 2019.

Subject to approval by the Board, the General Manager will refine and consolidate the new program structure, as well as associated stakeholder responsibilities, delegated authorities, policies and procedures, risk management, reporting, training, funding and resource arrangements.

To ensure the momentum of the concept, the trials will continue to operate in the eastern states until the pod system is finalised and rolled out across the rest of Australia. At that time, the Roots & Shoots program will be restructured, with operational responsibilities devolved and transferred from the State Coordinators to the pods.⁵ The new structure will be implemented by 31 January 2019, and reviewed prior to the completion of the R&S General Manager's 12 month tenure.

ⁱ Appendix 1: Proposed Roots and Shoots structure

⁵ It is important to note that Western Australia will continue its current system of schools talks in lieu of the pod structure, given the successful implementation of the former approach in that state over the long-term.