

# Around Australia

December 2008 Issue

Quarterly newsletter published by The National Office of Alcoholics Anonymous Australia  
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HAVE YOU VISITED OUR SERVICE WEBSITE YET?

**[www.aaservice.org.au](http://www.aaservice.org.au)**

The screenshot shows a Windows Internet Explorer browser window displaying the website <http://www.aaservice.org.au/members/>. The browser's address bar shows the URL, and the Norton 360 security bar indicates "No fraud detected". The website header features the AA logo (a triangle with "EMPTY", "SERVICE", and "RECOVERY" around it) and the text "Alcoholics Anonymous Service Australia". Navigation links for "About this Website" and "Contact Us" are visible. The main content area includes a "User login" section with fields for "Username:" and "Password:" and a "Log in" button. Below the login fields are links for "Create new account" and "Request new password". A central message box says "Welcome to the AA Service Website" dated "17 September 2008 - 3:33pm — admin", followed by a welcome message and a link to the "National Office Website". A "Service News Email" section has an "E-mail:" field and "Subscribe" and "Unsubscribe" options. A "This Website" section is partially visible at the bottom.

**INSIDE THIS EDITION: ADVISORY ACTIONS from the AUSTRALIAN GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE OF 2008**

# Stories for Australian Big Book

Stories are wanted for consideration to be included in the new Australian edition of the Big Book which is planned to be published in two to three years.

Any Australian member of AA is eligible to submit his or her story regardless of length of sobriety. Bill W once said that Big Book stories were "personal narratives which describe the drinking history, how the newcomer came to Alcoholics Anonymous, how AA affected him or her and what AA has since accomplished for the person."

You are invited to submit your story for consideration.

Preferred stories will, as Bill W recommended, be those that reach out to the newcomer who is still looking for the AA solution.

Stories should be no more than 3,500 words and can be submitted by email to [ozbigbook@aa.org.au](mailto:ozbigbook@aa.org.au) in Microsoft Word format. (If you do not have a computer, someone in your group is bound to be able to help you.)

Your full name, mailing address, email address and telephone number should appear on the first page of the story.

**Email address for submissions or inquiries: [ozbigbook@aa.org.au](mailto:ozbigbook@aa.org.au)**

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# VACANCY!

## **EDITOR**

**T & CF Newsletter**

*AA Around Australia* is issued every quarter with these supplementary newsletters:

An editor is required for the Treatment and Correctional Facilities news sheet, which relays the latest to the Fellowship, on initiatives being taken in this area.

Please contact the National Office for more information. 02 9599 8866  
[national.office@aa.org.au](mailto:national.office@aa.org.au)

## GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 2008 ADVISORY ACTIONS

The group conscience of the Fellowship of ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS in Australia was expressed in the following Advisory Actions to the General Service Board, based upon the recommendations from the Conference Committees, as indicated in the headings. The background to these Advisory Actions and the submissions from the Groups, individual members or from the General Service Board in the form of Topics which led to them were presented in full detail to all Areas prior to Conference.

### CONFERENCE COMMITTEE ON TRUSTEES

#### **Advisory Action #023/2008**

Conference resolved to ratify the election by the Board of Howard W as General Service Trustee, effective 1<sup>st</sup> January 2009, for a four year period.

No disapproval  
Carried

#### **Advisory Action #024/2008**

Conference resolved to recommend to the General Service Board that Paul D be elected as Central Regional Trustee, effective 1<sup>st</sup> January 2009, for a four year period.

No disapproval  
Carried

### CONFERENCE REPORT CHARTER AND SERVICE MANUAL COMMITTEE

#### **Advisory Action #002/2008**

Conference resolved that the Guideline GL-06, Regional Forums, be changed to state that: "...the General Service Board will pay up to two full fares per forum per Region per year,..."

Voting: For: 33; Against: 2; Abstentions: 0  
Carried

#### **Advisory Action #018/2008**

Conference resolved that recommends that under the heading "Panels & Workshops" on p.83 of Guideline GL-015, National Conventions, the first paragraph be amended to read as follows:

#### Panels & Workshops

*These provide one of the most rewarding activities and can take a variety of forms.*

*A panel arrangement might comprise three speakers and a chairperson, with each person speaking on a number of Steps, Traditions or Concepts for World Service; the panel session can be followed by a short question and answer session.*

*It is strongly recommended that National Conventions incorporate a Service component in their programmes. Those attending National Conventions would gain from the opportunity to hear of the experience, strength and hope of members who are doing great service in AA and the community.*

*Experience shows, however, that workshops or panels on such topics as "How the National Office works" or "Why have a GSR?" or "What does a Secretary do?" attract only small audiences in a Convention setting. These subjects are better presented at specialised service events, and in that case can be better handled by using National Office staff, utilising*

*their familiarity with AA Australia-wide, while any of our Trustees would be delighted to speak on such topics as “How the General Service Board works” or similar themes.”*

Voting: by a show of hands  
Accepted

**Advisory Action #019/2008**

Conference resolved that the following paragraphs be added to the National Convention Guidelines GL-15:

Convention Auditor

*It is important to note that, as the Convention Audit forms part of the audited accounts of the General Service Board, the Convention Audit should be completed as soon as possible after the Convention and forwarded to the National Office Manager. The Convention Audit must be completed and in the hands of National Office by the end of July to ensure that the General Service Board accounts are ready for the National Audit.*

Finance Committee

*The Finance Committee, with the Treasurer, is responsible to the General Service Board for the on time audit of the Convention accounts and must ensure that the audit is forwarded to the National Office Manager before the end of July to ensure compliance with the Audit of the General Service Board Accounts.*

Voting: by a show of hands  
Carried

**CONFERENCE POLICIES AND ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE**

**Advisory Action #008/2008**

Conference resolved that a new methodology be developed to make the existing AA membership survey more effective.

Voting by a show of hands  
Carried

**Advisory Action #025/2008**

Conference resolved that a policy regarding online meetings be adopted in conjunction with the Conference Policies & Admissions Committee, using feedback from international sources.

Voting by a show of hands  
Carried

**CONFERENCE TREATMENT & CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES COMMITTEE**

There were no Advisory Actions from this committee.

**CONFERENCE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE**

**Advisory Action #020/2008**

Conference resolved that the following paragraph be added to the National Convention Guidelines:

*The Host Planning Committee is encouraged, in consultation with our International Delegates, to consider inviting an indigenous member from a developing country within the Asia/Oceania zone, to attend our National Convention.*

*Funding would come from the International Sponsorship Fund, so there would be no financial burden on the Host Planning Committee.*

Voting: by a show of hands  
Carried

**Advisory Action #021/2008**

Conference resolved that the sum of \$2000 be donated to assist with the running costs of the Asia/Oceania Service Meeting Secretariat.

Voting: by a show of hands  
Carried

**CONFERENCE FINANCE COMMITTEE**

**Advisory Action #012-A/2008**

Conference resolved that National Office have available, on request, a flyer or letter for treasurers to take to banks when opening bank accounts for AA business.

Voting: by a show of hands  
Carried

**Advisory Action #012-B/2008**

Conference resolved that a guideline of good practices for groups when setting up bank accounts be produced.

Voting: by a show of hands  
Carried

**Advisory Action #026/2008**

Conference resolved that the Financial Accounts for the period 1<sup>st</sup> July 2007 – 30<sup>th</sup> June 2008 be accepted.

Voting: by a show of hands  
Carried

**Advisory Action #027/2008**

Conference resolved that seed money not be advanced to National Convention Committees until a letter of appointment of an appropriately qualified auditor has been sighted by the National Office Management Group. National Convention audits are necessary in order for the General Service Board audited accounts to be completed. The committee further recommends that this statement be included in the National Convention Guidelines.

Voting: by a show of hands  
Carried

**Advisory Action #028/2008**

Conference resolved that the budget prepared by the General Service Board be based on a standard financial year from 1<sup>st</sup> July to 30<sup>th</sup> June and that it be presented to the Conference Finance Committee to approve on behalf of Conference prior to the start of the next financial year. Under the current system a calendar year budget, i.e. from January to December for the forthcoming year is presented to Conference. However, as with most other businesses, the General Service Board operates on the normal financial year, i.e. the beginning of July to the end of June. It is further recommended that this recommendation be added to the Scope of the Conference Finance Committee.

Voting: by a show of hands  
Carried

## CONFERENCE LITERATURE COMMITTEE

### Advisory Action #001/2008

Conference resolved to approve the concept of a pamphlet based on the article by Class A Trustee, Dr. Vanda Rounsefell on the dangers of giving unqualified medical advice, with the proviso that the committee forward suggested changes, by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2009, to the Trustees Literature Committee via the National Office. Final draft of the pamphlet to be brought back to Conference 2009.

Voting: by a show of hands  
Carried

### Advisory Action #004/2008

Conference resolved that all locally printed pamphlets be printed on non-glossy paper.

For: 30; Against: 5; Abstentions: 0

### Advisory Action #005/2008

Conference resolved that the sentence “*Within the Fellowship, the amount that may be contributed by any individual member is limited to \$2,000 a year*” be deleted from AA at a Glance as it is confusing and unnecessary.

Voting: by a show of hands  
Carried

### Advisory Action #022/2008

Conference resolved that all information contained in non-specific pamphlets for professionals be condensed into one small booklet. Information contained in the out-of-stock and cumbersome Fact File could be included in this booklet.

Voting: For: 25; Against: 8; Abstentions: 1  
Carried

### Advisory Action #029/2008

Conference resolved that the Group Handbook presented to Conference 2008 be published, after final approval by the Trustees’ and Conference Literature Committees. Changes to be made as recommended in the report of the Conference Literature Committee. A note to be included clarifying that there are no ‘State’ Central Service Offices, making reference to a previous Conference Advisory Action. This note to be sent to all Conference members for disapproval, if any, prior to inclusion.

Voting: by a show of hands  
Carried

## CONFERENCE PUBLIC INFORMATION AND CO-OPERATION WITH THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

### Advisory Action #017/2008

Conference resolved to reject the proposal to issue a short-term contract for an individual or group of people to collate the combined experience of the Fellowship in Australia in regard to Public Information and Co-operation with the Professional Community. Conference agreed that an updated and comprehensive PI & CPC Kit would be valuable to the fellowship, but a short term contract to produce this is not the solution. Conference recommends that the Conference PI & CPC committee break down the project into two parts: planning and then execution. The committee undertakes to find and appoint a volunteer project planner from within the fellowship, and once this is done, to find members to carry out the production plan.

Voting: by a show of hands  
Carried

<b>CONFERENCE AGENDA COMMITTEE</b>
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**Advisory Action #030/2008**

Conference resolved that the composition of the Conference Agenda Committee be changed to include one delegate from each region and that the two pre-Conference committee meetings be held via teleconference. It was resolved that the Conference Agenda Committee for 2009 would be:

Delegate, Area C, North Eastern Region

Delegate, Area E, Eastern Region

Delegate, Area B, Western Region

Delegate, Area B, Central Region

Delegate, Area A, Northern Region. (it was agreed that the Northern Regional Trustee should participate in and be entitled to vote in Conference Agenda Committee meetings as required on behalf of the current Area A Northern Region delegate).

Voting: For: 31; Against: 4; Abstentions: 0  
Carried

**Advisory Action #031/2008**

Conference resolved that the only accommodation expenses covered by the Conference Levies will be accommodation and organised meals. Additional accommodation expenditure is to be at the expense of the Conference member and that National Office be authorised to send an invoice to a Conference member who has incurred such expense.

Voting: by a show of hands  
Carried

**Advisory Action #032/2008**

Conference resolved that observers not be permitted to attend the General Service Conference, unless specifically invited by the Conference. Any applications to attend Conference should be forwarded to the Conference Policies & Admissions Committee, stating reasons for wishing to attend. It is suggested that the Trustees' General Service Conference Committee, in consultation with the Conference Policies & Admissions Committee, produce a set of criteria for admission to the General Service Conference as an observer.

Voting: by a show of hands  
Carried

**Advisory Action #033/2008**

Conference resolved that the theme for the 2009 General Service Conference is 'Is your Group in the Loop?'

Voting: by a show of hands  
Carried

**Advisory Action #034/2008**

Conference resolved that the 2009 General Service Conference be held Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2009 at a venue to be advised.

Voting: by a show of hands  
Carried

**Advisory Action #035/2008**

Conference resolved that the Conference Agenda Committee teleconference meetings be held on:

Saturday 20th June 2009 to formulate agendas

Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2009 to allocate topics to Conference.

Voting: by a show of hands  
Carried

**Advisory Action #036/2008**

Conference resolved that the deadline for receipt of Conference topics for 2009 be Friday 26<sup>th</sup> June 2009.

Voting: by a show of hands  
Carried

**FLOOR ACTIONS**

**Advisory Action #037/2008**

Conference resolved to direct the General Service Board to re-list the telephone number of the Melbourne Central Service Office on the national website and in AA Around Australia by February 2009, provided that the concerns of Conference are addressed.

Voting: by a show of hands  
Carried

**Advisory Action #038/2008**

Conference resolved to direct the General Service Board to re-investigate the cost and operational feasibility of establishing a single national phone line.

Voting: by a show of hands  
Carried

**NATIONAL CONVENTION BIDS**

**Advisory Action #039/2008**

Conference resolved to accept the confirmed bid by Area A, Eastern Region to host the 2010 National Convention in Coffs Harbour.

Voting: by a show of hands  
Carried

**Advisory Action #040/2008**

Conference resolved to accept the confirmed bid by Areas A and B, Western Region to host the 2011 National Convention in Perth.

Voting: by a show of hands  
Carried

**Advisory Action #041/2008**

Conference resolved to accept the bid by Area C, Southern Region, to host the 2012 National Convention in Melbourne.

Voting: by a show of hands  
Carried

**REGIONAL FORUM BIDS**

**Advisory Action #042/2008**

Conference resolved to accept the following bids to host Regional Forums in 2009:

- Area A, Central Region
- Area B, Eastern Region
- Area A, North Eastern Region
- Area A, Northern Region
- Area D, Southern Region
- Areas A and B, Western Region (tentative bid)

Voting: by a show of hands  
Carried

**NATIONAL T&CF FORUM 2010 BID**

**Advisory Action #043/2008**

Conference resolved to accept the bid by Area C, North Eastern Region, to host the National Treatment and Correctional Facilities Forum in 2010.

Voting: by a show of hands  
Carried

**NATIONAL PI FORUM 2011 BID**

**Advisory Action #044/2008**

Conference resolved to accept the bid by Area A, Eastern Region, to host the National Public Information & Co-operation with the Professional Community Committee Forum in 2011.

Voting: by a show of hands  
Carried

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## We don't give medical advice

The National Office of AA Australia receives numerous complaints about certain members who advise other members to discontinue prescribed medicines.

This is a dangerous practice. The result can be serious psychotic episodes and even suicide.

Only the person's own doctor should give this sort of advice. If an untrained person does it, it could cause serious harm and places him or her in a dangerous legal position where they could be sued.

If AA members hand out this sort of advice it gives us a bad name and damages our relationships with the medical community.

This is an important issue and you may consider discussing it at a group conscience meeting. For an information sheet on the subject contact National Office (02) 9599 8866.

***"We should keep this door wide open.....We cannot compel the newcomer to believe anything, to pay anything, to do anything.***

***We actually invite them to disagree with everything we say, and still, if they wish to stay around, they're an AA if they say so.***

***This is the charter of individual freedom that is portrayed in this most important Tradition 3, dealing with membership."***

.....a quotation from co-founder Bill W, featured in the video "***Bill Discusses the Twelve Traditions***" (approx 1 hr duration) available now on DVD from National Office; your local CSO or District Office.