

Around Australia

September 2008 Issue

Quarterly newsletter published by The National Office of Alcoholics Anonymous Australia
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2008 General Service Conference

Topics on page 4

Attraction
vs
Promotion

from Bill discusses the 12 Traditions see page 7

Stories for Australian Big Book

Stories are wanted for inclusion 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 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

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

HIGHLIGHTS FROM BOARD MEETING 18-19TH JULY, 2008

Comings & goings

It was so good to see the Northern Region occupying its seat after so many years. Doubly excellent that the occupant is our first Aboriginal Trustee. We welcomed him warmly. Leon J is known to many members Australia-wide. He has a quiet strength and wide knowledge of AA and some of its most challenging service areas, and we have already benefited from his wisdom.

The Chairman John Loty has seen through his last July meeting. We had apologies from Class A Harold Bates-Brownsword and Central Regional Trustee Eric B. Best wishes to Eric for a speedy recovery: this would have been Eric's last July meeting also.

Chairs for next year's Trustees' Literature & Archives and Treatment & Correctional Services Committees were elected: congratulations to Western Regional Trustee Jann M and North-Eastern Regional Trustee Kell C respectively. These roles will not start until January 1st, 2009.

Money

Financially we are overall in a similar position to last year. Most variation tends to come from big swings in National Convention surpluses (down this year due to the calendar ~ exactly when they are received makes a difference to the annual figures). Donations have been dropping somewhat: down in most categories (Birthday, Action Clubs, Loners etc).

Regionally, while some are calendar effects, it is interesting to break this down by Region: E up 12.3%, S down 22%, NE up 17.4%, C up 169.9%, W up 9.3%N up 1.3%The Prudent Reserve looks excessive (16.5 months), but this will soon be reduced by expected large expenditures such as paying for a reprint of the Big Book (which usually costs something like \$50-60,000) and sending our Delegates to the World Service Meeting later this year.

Literature

Big Book sales have undergone a steady increase over the last 5 years or so, 4986 in 2008 and 4566 in 2007, which seems to suggest the newcomer numbers are increasing. Literature sales are up 7.2% overall.

We have some new literature either about to go to print or to Conference as Topics. The redesigned Group Conscience pamphlet has been approved by Conference in a Mail Poll and will be produced soon. *The AA Group*, updating and Australianising the American booklet and conflating that with our Group Handbook, is a substantial piece of editing work. Its first journey to Conference will be this November, and subject to approval, should be available next year. If Conference requires more work, we will continue using these two pieces of literature separately for a while longer.

As **stories for the Australian Big Book** project have tended to be shorter than last time, calls for submissions have been re-opened so that we can have as much reading as previously. **Please contribute!!**

The DVD for deaf alcoholics is now available. Many thanks to Kevin H & his team.

Difficult matters

The Board is often asked to behave as the 'AA Police' in power-related matters in a variety of settings ~ which it can not do, as the Groups are autonomous. It may be about violation of Warrant 4 (Concept XII). Sometimes it is about violent behaviours that are not AA's to solve, but for Groups to hand over to the real police where they belong.

Conference

Conference this year will be longer, to accommodate a *Memory Lane* party: 'Fifty Years of Love & Service' is the Conference Theme for 2008. All former Conference members have been invited to attend.

In Service Vanda Rounsefell, Deputy Chairman GSB

2008 CONFERENCE TOPICS

The following topics will be considered at the 2008
General Service Conference
to be held 5th – 9th November 2008

CONFERENCE POLICIES & ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE

TOPIC NO: 008/2008

We propose AA conduct a nationwide survey to assess exactly how effective we are in carrying AA's message of recovery from alcoholism through the teaching and practice of the 12 Steps as outlined in our book "Alcoholics Anonymous".

TOPIC NO: 009/2008

That Conference formally acknowledges the 2008 National Indigenous AA Convention.

TOPIC NO: 010/2008

Resubmit from General Service Conference 2006 re bidding process for National Indigenous AA Convention.

“That Conference recommends that Areas/Districts bid annually at the Annual Australian General Service Conference to host a National Indigenous Convention in their Area.”

TOPIC NO: 011/2008

That a working party be established by the General Service Board and the National Office of AA, to examine the best way to develop a National AA Indigenous Central Service Office, that is consistent with the principles of Service as outlined in the General Service Manual (Australia)

CONFERENCE PUBLIC INFORMATION & CO-OPERATION WITH THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

TOPIC 017/2008

The National Office of Alcoholics Anonymous (NOAA) and the General Service Board (GSB) 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 (PI&CPC). This information could then be packaged into a comprehensive PI&CPC Kit that would be available for Groups, Districts and Areas for use as a consistent base for carrying our important 'primary purpose' to the professional community and the general public.

CONFERENCE LITERATURE COMMITTEE

TOPIC NO. 001/2008

The General Service Board recommends to Conference that an article written by Class A Trustee, Dr. Vanda Rounsefell on the dangers of giving unqualified medical advice be produced as a pamphlet.

TOPIC NO: 004/2008

For all pamphlets that are included in the Sponsors Wallets to be printed on non glossy paper.(we also include "a message to teenagers" in ours)

TOPIC NO: 005/2008

A.A. At A Glance. in the section that reads:

How A.A. Is Supported

Over the years, Alcoholics Anonymous has affirmed and strengthened a tradition of being fully self-supporting and of neither seeking nor accepting contributions from non-members. Within the Fellowship, the amount that may be contributed by any individual member is limited to \$2,000 a year.

That the sentence that reads: "***Within the Fellowship, the amount that may be contributed by any individual member is limited to \$2,000 a year***"

Be deleted.

TOPIC NO: 007/2008

Include a glossary of terms in the Big Book

TOPIC NO: 014/2008

Is it possible that the pamphlet 'A Message to Teenagers' be updated? We realise it is a New York publication.

TOPIC: 015/2008

Conference to look at reproducing/producing literature that is suitable for the culturally diverse population of Australia. For example – Message to Teenagers is directed towards the Anglo Saxon. i.e. Schools and Prisons.

TOPIC: 022/2008

The General Service Board recommends to Conference 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.

CONFERENCE FINANCE COMMITTEE

TOPIC: 012/2008

Proposal for national office to write, print and distribute a flyer or letter for treasurers to take to banks when opening bank accounts for AA business.

TOPIC NO: 013/2008

That the two National Coordinators for T&CF and PI&CPC be paid as part-time positions.

CONFERENCE TREATMENT & CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES COMMITTEE

No topics were allocated to this Committee.

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE ON TRUSTEES

No topics were allocated to this Committee.

CONFERENCE AGENDA COMMITTEE

No topics were allocated to this Committee.

CONFERENCE REPORT CHARTER & SERVICE MANUAL COMMITTEE

TOPIC NO: 002/2008

The Board recommends to Conference that the guidelines on Regional Forums be changed to read that up to two people could be invited to attend.

TOPIC NO: 018/2008

That National Conventions incorporate a Service Workshop in their programs.

TOPIC NO: 019/2008

The General Service Board recommends to Conference that the following paragraphs be added to the National Convention Guidelines:

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.

CONFERENCE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE

TOPIC NO: 020/2008

The General Service Board recommends to Conference 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.

TOPIC: 021/2008

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

It started to be evident that this attraction and promotion business represented 2 poles, and taken at their extremes the conservative rabbit on the attraction theme was so conservative that his do nothing policies would rot us for lack of action and the promoters if given their way would publicise us from hell to breakfast with all the philanthropy of the media plus probably sound drugs to.

In other words the conservatives would rot us and the promoters would ruin us, so the line between attraction and promotion has got to be a matter of common sense interpretation.

FIFTY YEARS OF LOVE AND SERVICE

THE AUSTRALIAN GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE

Enquiries from Australia about Alcoholics Anonymous first reached the G.S.O, in New York in the year 1942., but it was 1945 before AA was functioning in Sydney, N.S.W, on an established group basis, making Australia the first country outside of North America, to accept Alcoholics Anonymous as a means of recovery from the ravages of alcoholism.

During the next 2 years, the message of Alcoholics Anonymous spread to other states and the year 1947 saw group meetings established in Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia and Queensland. It took a further 2 years for the fellowship to reach Tasmania and the first meeting was held in Hobart in 1949. Perhaps by reason of its geographical isolation, it was much later before the Northern Territory was impacted by Alcoholics Anonymous. The inaugural meeting was held in Darwin in 1955.

By now meetings were springing up all over the continent and several central service offices were opened in various capital cities, the first being in Sydney.

In 1954 the suggestion, emanating from N.S.W, was proposed that the states get together for a national forum discussion. This resulted in subsequent pooling of ideas which culminated in a first national convention being held in Melbourne in 1959. At this convention a resolution to establish a national AA body, to be known "Australian General Service Conference", was passed by an overwhelming majority of the conventioners. The resolution contained proviso would not become effective until confirmed by the various states.

This confirmation was forthcoming and it was decided to hold a second national convention in Sydney over the Easter weekend of 1961, and the first one under the auspices of the Australian General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous.

During this convention, elected representatives from the various states met in session for the first Australian General Service Conference meeting. The Australian General Service Conference was then and is now an all Australian body in which Australian AA can act on its administration side at the national level of general service. Among many other things, it was resolved at this first conference to explore the possibility of establishing an Australian Publishing body for an Australian magazine, along the lines of the similar services within the parent movement in the U.S.A. It was also agreed to recommend for adoption, this short summary of the purposes of the Australian General Service Conference:

The Australian General Service Conference is part of the AA Fellowship in which all groups in Australia join together for unity in service to alcoholics who seek recovery. Alcoholics Anonymous is more than a set of principles, it is a society of recovered alcoholics in action. A.A's twelve step, carrying the message, is the basic service that our fellowship gives. The Australian General Service Conference exists to further our collective twelve step work at the nation-wide level.

WHY DO WE NEED A GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE

We may not need a General Service Conference to ensure our own recovery. We need it to ensure the recovery of the alcoholic who still stumbles in the darkness one short block from this room. We need it to ensure the recovery of a child being born tonight, destined to alcoholism. We need it to provide in keeping with our twelve step, a permanent haven for all alcoholics who, in the ages ahead, can find in AA that rebirth that brought us back to life.

We need it because we, more than others, are conscious of the devastating effect of the human urge for power and prestige which we must ensure can never invade AA. We need it to ensure government, while insulating it against anarchy, we need it to protect AA against

disintegrating while preventing over integration. We need it so that Alcoholics Anonymous and Alcoholics Anonymous alone, is the ultimate repository of its twelve steps, its twelve traditions, and all of its services.

We need it to ensure the changes within AA, come only as a response to the needs and wants of AA, and not of any few. We need it to ensure that the doors of the halls of AA, never have locks on them, so that all people for all time who have an alcoholic problem may enter these halls unasked and feel welcome. We need it to ensure Alcoholics Anonymous never ask of anyone who needs us what his or her race is, what his or her creed is, what his or her social position is.

Kevin D
Delegate, Area D, Eastern Region

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New Australian Big Book

Volunteers are needed to evaluate the stories that are coming in for the all new Australian Big Book.

If you have the aptitude to sit down quietly somewhere, read the stories and give them a mark out of 5 for suitability for the new book, then contact National Office.

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DVD's of Bill's Own Story and Bill Discusses the Twelve Traditions are now available from National Office or your local CSO or District Office.