

GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 2021 TOPICS

CONFERENCE POLICIES & ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE

TOPIC #003/2021

Can conference consider that for certain topics which are accepted and become advisory actions we can involve the author(s) in conjunction with relevant Trustee (or delegate) in forming and participating in a working group to actually do the work. This will increase the pool of members who can carry out work under Board Advisory actions, increase involvement in service to the benefit of all of the Fellowship.

WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND OR REASON FOR THE TOPIC?

1. With the deferral of topics from 2020-2021 conference and the 2021 list we will be at risk of a backlog of worthwhile suggestions which conference will wish carried out.
2. Delays have always caused frustration in the fellowship
3. The fellowship contains a massive breadth of skills and talents
4. We always need more members to become involved in service

DO YOU HAVE A SUGGESTED SOLUTION?

Appropriate topics that become Advisory Actions could be referred via the relevant Trustee (and Delegate) back to the author(s) for them to look to assemble a working party to complete the tasks required. Timelines and any associated budgets and sign-offs to be Board approved.

This may take some of the large volume of work off Board Members and GSO staff.

HOW WILL THE ALCOHOLIC WHO STILL SUFFERS OR THE FELLOWSHIP OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS BENEFIT FROM THIS SUGGESTION?

1. Completing quickly the advisory actions of conference allows AA to change and adapt more speedily and perhaps more in line with member expectations where possible
2. Provision of more opportunities for attractive service tasks will benefit the entire fellowship through strengthening recovery and the services offered by the AA in Australia to members and those yet to join.

WHAT ARE THE ESTIMATED COSTS OF IMPLEMENTING THIS SUGGESTION?

The costs are likely to be minimal in terms of \$s as any budgets required would have already been approved or allocated via the topic becoming an Advisory Action in the first place. Time and effort to discuss parameters, guidelines and process will be required but members with the dedication, and abilities are already interested.

HAVE YOU ASKED YOUR GROUP, DISTRICT OR AREA TO MAKE A DECISION ABOUT THIS TOPIC AND, IF SO, WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?

This Topic has been drafted following conversations with a group of delegates/ex-delegates but was written too close to the deadline to circulate more broadly.

TOPIC #023/2021

That the fellowship discontinues using gender based titles for it's meetings ie Men's Group, Women's Group , Gay and Lesbian group,

WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND OR REASON FOR THE TOPIC?

1. These titles take away from AA's singleness of purpose.
2. A sick alcoholic may not feel they belong in a meeting that is gender titled.
3. The preamble of AA states we "Neither endorse nor oppose any causes"
4. Gender or sexual preferences are not an AA issue our primary purpose is to carry the recovery message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

DO YOU HAVE A SUGGESTED SOLUTION?

1. Make AA meeting available to all who seek help with their alcoholism by referring to meetings by geographical location, and time of meeting.

HOW WILL THE ALCOHOLIC WHO STILL SUFFERS OR THE FELLOWSHIP OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS BENEFIT FROM THIS SUGGESTION?

1. A new member will more likely attend a mixed group than a single gender or gay and lesbian meeting if going to AA for the first time.

WHAT ARE THE ESTIMATED COSTS OF IMPLEMENTING THIS SUGGESTION?

HAVE YOU ASKED YOUR GROUP, DISTRICT OR AREA TO MAKE A DECISION ABOUT THIS TOPIC AND, IF SO, WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?

No.

CONFERENCE REPORT CHARTER & SERVICE MANUAL COMMITTEE

TOPIC #015/20

Remove the reference to CSO's from the AA Guidelines and call them local service offices directly responsible to their local groups.

WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND OR REASON FOR THE TOPIC?

1. Tradition 6 advises we should not have any affiliation with outside enterprises, etc. The closest fellowship to AA is AI Anon and they are not affiliated with our service structure. So why should the CSO's seem to be affiliated with AA by being in our Guidelines?
2. This confuses the fellowship by the references and the meanings of different words across different countries. E.G in the USA Central means local. In Australia it appears to mean State service offices which has the potential to give us 6 services structures instead of 1. We need to reduce the confusion in our fellowship structure as much as possible

DO YOU HAVE A SUGGESTED SOLUTION?

That the removal of the CSO guidelines to be replaced by Local Service Offices.

HOW WILL THE ALCOHOLIC WHO STILL SUFFERS OR THE FELLOWSHIP OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS BENEFIT FROM THIS SUGGESTION?

The fellowship benefits by having a clearer understanding our general (national) service structure.

WHAT ARE THE ESTIMATED COSTS OF IMPLEMENTING THIS SUGGESTION?

Minimal

HAVE YOU ASKED YOUR GROUP, DISTRICT OR AREA TO MAKE A DECISION ABOUT THIS TOPIC AND, IF SO, WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?

We have asked the group and it was suggested at a recent district workshop

TOPIC #016/20

That the Guidelines on National Conventions be sent to a working committee to better reflect the single purpose of Alcoholics Anonymous

WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND OR REASON FOR THE TOPIC?

Over the last 10 years, opening meetings and closing meetings seem to have been more about the family disease and not the solution of AA for the alcoholic who still suffers. It should only be the fellowship of AA on display. No other fellowships to be involved. See Guidelines on cooperation with AI Anon. It is either an AA event of an AI Anon event. It cannot be both.

DO YOU HAVE A SUGGESTED SOLUTION?

Change the Guidelines to affect and reflect the will of the Conference. i.e. the fellowship

HOW WILL THE ALCOHOLIC WHO STILL SUFFERS OR THE FELLOWSHIP OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS BENEFIT FROM THIS SUGGESTION?

The alcoholic will benefit by having a single message delivered on how to stay sober and the fellowship will benefit by sticking to its singleness of purpose at all events.

WHAT ARE THE ESTIMATED COSTS OF IMPLEMENTING THIS SUGGESTION?

Minimal

HAVE YOU ASKED YOUR GROUP, DISTRICT OR AREA TO MAKE A DECISION ABOUT THIS TOPIC AND, IF SO, WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?

aHave discussed this with numerous groups at numerous conventions over the past years.

TOPIC #018/20

That the Service Manual be changed to suggest that the outgoing Area Delegates be given the responsibility to be the AAAA rep for that Area

WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND OR REASON FOR THE TOPIC?

In the USA the outgoing Area Delegates are the Grapevine representative.

DO YOU HAVE A SUGGESTED SOLUTION?

That each area Assembly where the new delegate is elected the past one be offered the AAAAA representative position

HOW WILL THE ALCOHOLIC WHO STILL SUFFERS OR THE FELLOWSHIP OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS BENEFIT FROM THIS SUGGESTION?

The Fellowship would benefit by continuing to have the experience of the previous delegate within the general service structure. This would also assist the work of the Area Registrar and free the current delegate to communicate more with their DCM's and GSR's. And he would also be available to help in new incoming delegate.

WHAT ARE THE ESTIMATED COSTS OF IMPLEMENTING THIS SUGGESTION?

Minimal

HAVE YOU ASKED YOUR GROUP, DISTRICT OR AREA TO MAKE A DECISION ABOUT THIS TOPIC AND, IF SO, WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?

They said go ahead.

CONFERENCE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE

TOPIC #014/2021

Gender-inclusive global Big Book

It is proposed that the Australian General Service Conference take the following topic to the World Service Conference:

That AA World Services take all necessary steps to bring out a new edition of the standard world-wide 'Big Book', with more gender-neutral language, which is inclusive of men, women, non-binary and other gender diverse members.

That AA World Services do so as soon as possible, rather than waiting until there has been time to compile a revised set of personal stories in the second half of the Big Book, after p 164, as it normally would. OR if there is insufficient support for that, bring out an e-book of the gender-inclusive version of the first 164 pages only and no personal stories (like a pocket BB), pending publication of a full hardcopy Fifth Edition which could include an updated set of personal stories.

WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND OR REASON FOR THE TOPIC?

1. To help women, non-binary and gender diverse people identify with the Big Book and AA, and avoid losing them unnecessarily.
2. To promote unity.
3. A gender-inclusive Big Book would help make AA seem more inclusive overall to alcoholics who face other forms of discrimination (eg race, disability, religion, etc).

4. AA can preserve the integrity of the AA message and the original wording of the first 164 pages by continuing to print 'First Edition' versions of the Big Book – or even by starting to print a cheaper, more accessible version of something like that, as a companion text.

DO YOU HAVE A SUGGESTED SOLUTION?

1. Locate all gendered language from the title page to page 164 of the Big Book inclusive, eg:
 - a) pronouns,
 - b) “men and women” (which leaves out non-binary members),
 - c) “statesman”, and
 - d) God as “He/Him”.
2. Make most of it gender neutral, or use a more equal mix of male, female and non-binary pronouns.

Where there are anecdotes about male AA members in the first 164 pages:

3. Keep male pronouns for very iconic figures such as Bill W.
4. Change other anecdotes into gender-neutral language, such as “they” or “the member”, even though these men really existed. That is, anonymise their gender.

This would promote balance and unity, because the first 164 pages mostly talk about men at the moment.

It could potentially be done with Jim’s story, the atheist starting p55, etc.

5. Consult at least one female and one non-binary member before finalising the draft.

See the [attached](#) example.

HOW WILL THE ALCOHOLIC WHO STILL SUFFERS OR THE FELLOWSHIP OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS BENEFIT FROM THIS SUGGESTION?

1. See above. It would promote unity and inclusivity for all – even men who are uncomfortable with the current wording.
2. It would help carry the message to the newcomer, who may be put off AA or the steps otherwise. It would be easy to say they are just not desperate enough, and refuse to help them. But we could give them a better chance at sobriety this way.
3. It would promote long-term unity. If AA does not make such changes, we may eventually see members split off and form a new, more inclusive 12-step fellowship for alcoholism.
4. It is important to make these changes in the Big Book, not just the 12+12 or other texts. The Big Book is central. It is used heavily in meetings, and by sponsors taking sponsees through the steps. It is important for all members to be able to use it.

WHAT ARE THE ESTIMATED COSTS OF IMPLEMENTING THIS SUGGESTION?

Cost of publishing a new edition of the Big Book unknown to me.

HAVE YOU ASKED YOUR GROUP, DISTRICT OR AREA TO MAKE A DECISION ABOUT THIS TOPIC AND, IF SO, WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?

Not raised.

CONFERENCE TREATMENT FACILITIES & ACCESSIBILITY COMMITTEE

NO TOPICS WERE ALLOCATED TO THIS COMMITTEE

CONFERENCE CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES COMMITTEE

NO TOPICS WERE ALLOCATED TO THIS COMMITTEE

CONFERENCE PUBLIC INFORMATION & CO-OPERATION WITH THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY

TOPIC: 002/2021

That Conference resolve to create a dedicated first response page on aa.org.au for the still suffering alcoholic who has not yet joined our fellowship and invite all AA websites to place links to this page as their website's response to requests for information on help to stop drinking from the still suffering alcoholic.

WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND OR REASON FOR THE TOPIC?

AA Australia's website does a great job in catering for the alcoholic who has already found AA (ie members of the fellowship), but could do more to attract the still suffering alcoholic who is wanting help to stop drinking.

Over several years District became aware that a search such as "help me stop drinking" resulted in aa.org.au invisible until page seventeen of Google.

A first Response website was purpose built by District and Search Engine Optimization (SEO) was used to attract results from searches such as "help to stop drinking" and is outperforming all other AA websites locally.

We now understand Links are much more powerful than SEO and believe a united fellowship approach would be beneficial in reaching prospective members.

SEO is purchasing your own reference; Links are free reference's written by others and highly valued by search engines.

DO YOU HAVE A SUGGESTED SOLUTION?

It is clear to us that Links are an aphrodisiac to search engines and more powerful than SEO. Our meetings list is hosted by aa.org.au and all AA websites link to this list.

aa.org.au smashes page one for searches on "AA Meetings" but is invisible until page seventeen when "help me stop drinking" is put to Google. A search "help me stop drinking meeting" results in aa.org.au placed prominently on page one.

We came to believe if GSO had a dedicated first response webpage and used its distinction to request all other AA websites to link to this webpage, the power of Links would ensure aa.org.au would become prominently visible. AA Websites would also stop competing with each other for attention while offering help. Replies received from AA websites about linking indicated this request needs to come from GSO, to be considered.

HOW WILL THE ALCOHOLIC WHO STILL SUFFERS OR THE FELLOWSHIP OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS BENEFIT FROM THIS SUGGESTION?

The hand of AA will become much more visible on the worlds most utilised platforms when the still suffering Alcoholic searches for information and answers for help to stop drinking. This would provide an opportunity for the Fellowship to come together in unity of purpose.

WHAT ARE THE ESTIMATED COSTS OF IMPLEMENTING THIS SUGGESTION?

The district has a dedicated funds account and can cover the implementation costs up to \$1,500 (but more may be available) if required.

HAVE YOU ASKED YOUR GROUP, DISTRICT OR AREA TO MAKE A DECISION ABOUT THIS TOPIC AND, IF SO, WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?

District supports this concept as do our National AA PI&CPC Coordinator, Area PI&CPC Coordinator, and fellow District PI&CPC representatives.

Area Assembly whole heartedly endorsed this cooperative "whole of fellowship" approach for aa.org.au to become more prominent on Google's page one results.

TOPIC #004/2020

***Note: Raised as floor action at Conference 2020.**

Advisory Action #034/2020

Conference resolved that the Conference PI&CPC Committee investigate a Chat Now function on our website and provide a report to be sent as an attachment with topics submitted in 2020 which were deferred to Conference 2021.

That conference look at developing a “CHAT NOW” feature on the aa.org.au website, which would allow a newcomer to “talk” (typing questions in real time to a live person / volunteer AA member, on a national roster)

WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND OR REASON FOR THE TOPIC?

1. This feature has been successfully developed and is already in use in the UK (www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk) where it is reported to be getting excellent results
2. A large majority of websites today use such a feature and it is vital that Alcoholic Anonymous remains current in it's use of online technology
3. It will create the potential to reach more sick and suffering alcoholics through one to one live “chat” (typing), and will appeal to young people in particular

DO YOU HAVE A SUGGESTED SOLUTION?

1. Employ a website developer to build a function into the existing aa.org.au website to allow this feature to operate
2. Create a position for National Chat Now Coordinator to organise a roster system to man the incoming “chats”
3. Liaise with and replicate the same model which is already successfully in use in the UK

HOW WILL THE ALCOHOLIC WHO STILL SUFFERS OR THE FELLOWSHIP OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS BENEFIT FROM THIS SUGGESTION?

1. The still suffering alcoholic who ventures onto the aa.org.au website will be able to ask questions of a recovered alcoholic in real time
2. The 'seed of AA' can be planted in a way that will particularly appeal to younger generations who are already comfortable communicating online
3. Establishing this feature now will pave the way for future members of alcoholics anonymous who are growing up in the digital age

WHAT ARE THE ESTIMATED COSTS OF IMPLEMENTING THIS SUGGESTION?

Unknown. Conference would need to research.

HAVE YOU ASKED YOUR GROUP, DISTRICT OR AREA TO MAKE A DECISION ABOUT THIS TOPIC AND, IF SO, WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?

Area PICPC Committee, with the encouragement of the National PICPC coordinator are in support of this topic

TOPIC #006/2020

Creation of 2 additional radio community service announcements (CSAs) to supplement our existing CSAs. One targeted at Indigenous Australians, another at the LGBTI+ community.

WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND OR REASON FOR THE TOPIC?

1. The use of radio CSAs is perfect for spreading the message of AA across vast areas of Australia. As part of their charters to operate, all radio networks are required to provide a certain number of free time slots to not-for-profit organisations — which AA is.
2. In 2018/2019 Area D. Southern Region managed to get our current CSAs on 26 stations. However, there is a need for diversity in our AA radio CSAs so we can target different areas of the community.

DO YOU HAVE A SUGGESTED SOLUTION?

1. Create one CSA aimed at indigenous Australians and another for the LGBTI+ community.

HOW WILL THE ALCOHOLIC WHO STILL SUFFERS OR THE FELLOWSHIP OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS BENEFIT FROM THIS SUGGESTION?

1. Radio covers large areas of Australia - especially remote regions, reaching suffering alcoholics who might otherwise fail to hear our message.
2. CSAs are spoken word so alcoholics with literacy issues can hear our details.
3. There are many indigenous radio stations across Australia we could target (<https://firstnationsmedia.org.au/our-industry/radio-services>). During the Area D radio campaign we played on an indigenous station so we know they are open to running them.

4. We currently have 25+ meetings aimed at LGBTI+ members. A CSAs highlighting AA inclusivity, could carry the message to suffering LGBTI+ alcoholics fearful of judgement in our rooms.

5. There are LGBTI+ radio stations such as Joy FM (they ran our CSAs for 13 months, twice a day from Dec 2018) and LGBTI+ radio segments across various networks. We could approach radio networks year round but especially around the time of the Mardi Gras (Sydney), Midsummer (Melbourne).

WHAT ARE THE ESTIMATED COSTS OF IMPLEMENTING THIS SUGGESTION?

Members could voice the CSAs to keep costs down. Total costs — approx. \$1500. A sound studio — approx. \$200 an hour (Melbourne.) Sound mixing/exports to broadcast standard — approx. \$1000. However as we are a not-for-profit we should be able to get discounts on these figures.

HAVE YOU ASKED YOUR GROUP, DISTRICT OR AREA TO MAKE A DECISION ABOUT THIS TOPIC AND, IF SO, WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?

This topic was taken to 7th June 2020 Southern Region, Area D Assembly and after minor word changing (which has been included) was endorsed by the Assembly.

TOPIC 007/2020

To make a series of engaging videos aimed at Professionals within the health, prisons and Armed Forces sectors.

WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND OR REASON FOR THE TOPIC?

1. We currently only have 4 videos on our web site aa.org.au which are very dated and they are American based. We have no Australian video content on the Australian website.

2. People are used to getting content quickly. Video is a powerful way to attract and educate. It can be an easily digestible way to deliver information and more convenient than a wall of text.

3. Generally people can digest information that they see and hear faster than they can if they just read the information.

DO YOU HAVE A SUGGESTED SOLUTION?

1. To create a series of videos similar to those on <https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/Professionals/Videos-for-Professionals> which can be aimed at Professionals looking to use AA as a resource and including a generic Public Information video. These could be filmed and edited at the same time to minimise the overall costs of the videos and to give them a uniform look.

HOW WILL THE ALCOHOLIC WHO STILL SUFFERS OR THE FELLOWSHIP OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS BENEFIT FROM THIS SUGGESTION?

1. Can be accessed from anywhere across Australia making it usable in remote areas.

2. Great for engaging with Professionals (doctors etc) as members can link to and share the content when emailing them. Providing a quick Information portal for time-poor Professionals. Making our information more accessible and more likely to be referred to patients.

3. Versatile media - Can be also be used at presentations such as rotary, schools, nursing colleges etc

4. Can be used across Area, District and Group websites allowing a constant and professional look to our material.

5. Good for people with literacy issues.

WHAT ARE THE ESTIMATED COSTS OF IMPLEMENTING THIS SUGGESTION?

Costs will be dependent on the number of videos we wish to commission. However, as we are a not-for-profit organisation we would be given discounts, For a budget of \$5000-\$7000 we should be able to produce 2 to 4 three minute videos. (Costing based on professional knowledge.)

HAVE YOU ASKED YOUR GROUP, DISTRICT OR AREA TO MAKE A DECISION ABOUT THIS TOPIC AND, IF SO, WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?

This topic was taken to 7th June 2020 Southern Region, Area D Assembly and after minor word changing (which has been included) was endorsed by the Assembly.

TOPIC #010/2020

Taking the advantages and benefits we have seen from the use of online meetings forward, Alcoholics Anonymous in Australia (or Oceania Region) should scope the possibility of developing and using an AA owned and supported Online Video-Conferencing Platform (Our own Version of Zoom etc.).

WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND OR REASON FOR THE TOPIC?

1. These platforms have successfully supported the Fellowship to continue meeting when F2F meetings could not happen.
2. Meetings and service entities have been using funds to support this
3. Funds could potentially be used to set up our own platform supported by donations removing the need to subscribe to outside providers
4. Service meetings in particular have been facilitated by online meetings, for example Trustees can attend all Area Assemblies in the region without financial outlay
5. Sharing between AA entities has become much more frequent and useful both Nationally and Internationally
6. Removing barriers to participation in all aspects of AA benefits all of us

DO YOU HAVE A SUGGESTED SOLUTION?

1. Alcoholics anonymous should consider developing or purchasing an online meeting platform similar to those used successfully during the recent Covid-19 restrictions (Zoom, Skype, GoToMeetings etc.).
2. AA could include/develop our own online security access/functions to prevent intrusions.

HOW WILL THE ALCOHOLIC WHO STILL SUFFERS OR THE FELLOWSHIP OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS BENEFIT FROM THIS SUGGESTION?

1. Facilitates regular connecting of members who live remotely with limited access to other members
2. Elderly or unwell or physically challenged members can be easily included in meetings

3. Allows guest speakers to participate more economically and in a time efficient manner
4. Service positions may become more attractive given removal of travel time, particularly for members in rural/remote communities, or those with caring duties for family members
5. Service positions may be required to be created to administer such a platform to support its running in the Fellowship
6. Similarly group or Service entities may need an additional commitment to support this once up and running

WHAT ARE THE ESTIMATED COSTS OF IMPLEMENTING THIS SUGGESTION?

Minimal to the Fellowship in terms of scoping or tendering the development to suitable providers. It should also be considered to find out if any members have the requisite skills in this area to either consider doing the work, or certainly advising on the Tender development to ensure we ask the correct questions.

HAVE YOU ASKED YOUR GROUP, DISTRICT OR AREA TO MAKE A DECISION ABOUT THIS TOPIC AND, IF SO, WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?

This has been discussed by the District including in principle support from Area Delegate and Regional Trustee.

TOPIC #019/2021

Due to the continuing digitalisation of our community, we need the AA Service Website to be more user friendly, current and navigable to encourage more engagement from AA members and Service Committees

We propose:

- a. That the current working group expedite the Update of the Service Website
- b. This action be taken by the end of 2021

WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND OR REASON FOR THE TOPIC?

1. The website is difficult to navigate, not current and populated with outdated material.
2. Search facility illogical
3. Ad hoc information storage
4. Index not always related to content
5. Selection and search criteria confusing
6. Not user friendly.
7. Not suitable for mobile phone use

DO YOU HAVE A SUGGESTED SOLUTION?

1. The GSB employ an “expert” to oversee the management of the current working group to achieve the desired outcome, within the proposed period.
2. GSO to allocate staff effort into regularly updating and maintaining the website as a specific responsibility, including ongoing technical support and website oversight.
3. Ensure the archiving of relevant material of historical significance
4. Website design to be weighted to Mobile Phone use
5. Addition of meetings lists and searches and a source for AA Event listings

HOW WILL THE ALCOHOLIC WHO STILL SUFFERS OR THE FELLOWSHIP OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS BENEFIT FROM THIS SUGGESTION?

1. Improve accessibility to service information to encourage member participation in the service structure
2. Improved access to service material to enhance co-operation between all levels and arms of service
3. Increase attractiveness of website to encourage younger members into service
4. Addition of meetings lists and searches would be an additional portal for newcomers

WHAT ARE THE ESTIMATED COSTS OF IMPLEMENTING THIS SUGGESTION?

One source has estimated \$3000 - \$5000, if done professionally

In support of the work already undertaken in this area, a special project could be established to raise the appropriate funds

HAVE YOU ASKED YOUR GROUP, DISTRICT OR AREA TO MAKE A DECISION ABOUT THIS TOPIC AND, IF SO, WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?

This is a joint submission from an online group with representatives from several different Areas and Regions

TOPIC #021/2020

Request that the webmaster and/or responsible committee, source and implement a live chat function on aa.org.au

WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND OR REASON FOR THE TOPIC?

1. This was one of few suggestions which came from the 2019 PI&CPC Forum. Most current AA members are familiar with very basic computer skills, are interested in new and innovative ways to carry the message to newcomers and reported numbers of 12-Step calls coming through our 1300 number are very low.
2. This is a feature of www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk which has reportedly been seeing excellent results.
3. Many young people are comfortable and adept at instant communication and chat. This is a common feature on most contemporary websites where communication is required.

DO YOU HAVE A SUGGESTED SOLUTION?

1. Create an additional Service Position – possibly “Live Chat Coordinator” to implement and maintain a working roster of volunteers.
2. Source and install a Live Chat feature onto the current aa.org.au website.
3. Source those members who installed and operate the UK system and enlist their experience.

HOW WILL THE ALCOHOLIC WHO STILL SUFFERS OR THE FELLOWSHIP OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS BENEFIT FROM THIS SUGGESTION?

1. Anyone who enters the website will be offered instant contact with a recovered alcoholic.
2. Young people will be communicating in a format with which they are comfortable.

WHAT ARE THE ESTIMATED COSTS OF IMPLEMENTING THIS SUGGESTION?

The most highly recommended Live Chat starts at \$19 per month per account/user. Most, if not all, offer free trial periods. A thorough cost analysis would be required.

HAVE YOU ASKED YOUR GROUP, DISTRICT OR AREA TO MAKE A DECISION ABOUT THIS TOPIC AND, IF SO, WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?

Yes, Area supports the topic unanimously.

TOPIC #022/2020

This topic proposes that AA Australia, together with the National and Area PI Committees, develop a series of videos, similar to the UK <https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/Professionals/Videos-for-Professionals>, targeting the professional community including health, employment, correction services and armed forces. These videos should incorporate current evidence supporting the efficacy of AA in helping alcoholics to recover ¹ and use recovery language relevant to the respective professions rather than the unique recovery language of AA. Subject matter experts who are friends of AA should be involved in the production of these videos

An audit into AA communications² suggested that professionals are keen for information to address alcoholism but that AA resources designed for the Professional Community do not speak in a language relevant to the respective professions; are not delivered across platforms that professionals use; and that those within the Conference structure are not necessarily trained (or armed with tools) to forge cooperative relationships with the Professional Community. This is negatively impacting A.A.'s relevance and its effectiveness in reaching the still-suffering alcoholic

WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND OR REASON FOR THE TOPIC?

Anecdotal evidence suggests that AA in Australia has lost its referral base through courts, hospitals, rehabilitation and treatment facilities and human resource departments. In 2016, the Medical Journal of Australia³ reported that less than half of those seeking treatment for alcohol and other drugs are able to access appropriate treatment and recommend resourcing effective referral and treatment pathways. Yet the recently launched Drug and Alcohol Court in the ACT, does not appear to identify AA as an option for preventing recidivism from alcohol related crime.

CPC Coordinators in Australia have extremely limited resources to facilitate their CPC work. Pi/CPC resources available on the AA Service Website are very limited, difficult to locate, do not represent AA nationally and lack professionalism (Attachments 1-3). The most recent CPC publication for Professionals on aa.org.au is dated 2018. See <http://www.aaservice.org.au/membersonly/category/story-type/service-material/>

AA conference approved PI/CPC publications are generic and representative of the US and UK experiences.

DO YOU HAVE A SUGGESTED SOLUTION?

1. Develop digital resources that provide information for the professional communities explaining what A.A. is—the How, What, and Why— using language relevant to the target audience; AA’s efficacy as a strategy for treatment and harm minimisation; and consistent, easy to access contact information
2. These videos should be available on the General Service Office (GSO) and AA Service websites for use by Area CPC Coordinators and Groups to help carry the message of AA to the still suffering alcoholic through hospitals, treatment facilities, courts and employment services.
3. Post digital resources on the National AA Website under the Health Professionals and Media tab for access by professionals
4. Retitle Health Professionals and Media tab to Information for Media, Health Professionals, Employers, Corrections and Armed Forces

HOW WILL THE ALCOHOLIC WHO STILL SUFFERS OR THE FELLOWSHIP OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS BENEFIT FROM THIS SUGGESTION?

“Our Twelfth Step — carrying the message — is ... our principal aim and the ... reason for our existence ... A.A. is more than a set of principles; it is a society for alcoholics in action. We must carry the message, else we ourselves can wither and those who haven’t been given the truth may die.” (The A.A. Service Manual, “A.A.’s Legacy of Service,” page S1)

“Cooperating with nonalcoholic professionals is an effective way to carry the message to the sick alcoholic. Such people often meet the alcoholic in places where A.A. is not present. Through professionals, alcoholics may be reached who might otherwise never find the program, or they may be reached sooner with the help of informed non-A.A.s.” (Cooperation with the Professional Community WORKBOOK 2018, p.6)

WHAT ARE THE ESTIMATED COSTS OF IMPLEMENTING THIS SUGGESTION?

Video production costs vary according to quality and production requirements. Production costs for 5 minutes range from \$5000-\$10,000. Costs could be reduced should AA members volunteer services to perform aspects of production including filming, lighting. Paid professionals should ideally be engaged for assistance with scripting, storyboard, direction and editing

<https://price.advids.co/how-much-does-a-business-video-production-cost-in-australia/>

HAVE YOU ASKED YOUR GROUP, DISTRICT OR AREA TO MAKE A DECISION ABOUT THIS TOPIC AND, IF SO, WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?

Topic presented to Area Assembly in May 2020. Topic supported unanimously

TOPIC #024/2021

We ask that conference adopt the following three videos (please see links below), as conference approved literature. We also ask that conference consider how best to distribute the videos.

Jack & Sophie's Story 30 Second Edit – <https://vimeo.com/556783986>

Jack's Story – <https://vimeo.com/556753757>

Sophie's Story - <https://vimeo.com/556757818>

WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND OR REASON FOR THE TOPIC?

In 2020, Area and CSO commissioned two videos featuring the stories of young alcoholics in recovery to help carry the A.A. message to young people in the local community.

DO YOU HAVE A SUGGESTED SOLUTION?

HOW WILL THE ALCOHOLIC WHO STILL SUFFERS OR THE FELLOWSHIP OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS BENEFIT FROM THIS SUGGESTION?

In the modern age, young people are increasingly turning to video and online sources to obtain information. We feel that our topic will help young people to find the A.A. message in an effective and accessible way through video.

WHAT ARE THE ESTIMATED COSTS OF IMPLEMENTING THIS SUGGESTION?

There are no costs associated with this topic as the videos have already been produced.

HAVE YOU ASKED YOUR GROUP, DISTRICT OR AREA TO MAKE A DECISION ABOUT THIS TOPIC AND, IF SO, WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?

These videos were an initiative developed by Area and CSO in 2020, and received the endorsement at the Area assembly in June 2021

TOPIC #025/2021

That Conference advise the General Service Board to explore options for coordinating the use of Digital Media (eg Facebook, Instagram and Google Adwords) as a method of PI, on a National scale, as a means to attract newcomers.

WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND OR REASON FOR THE TOPIC?

During 2020 lockdown, our PI initiatives, mail drops etc weren't possible but District could still reach the newcomer.

In October District began a Facebook Campaign carrying our message, with outstanding results, demonstrating many people, *seek solutions for their problem in the online world.*

Copying AA posters and videos based on these, within our Traditions, Facebook can target specific audiences. ICD used people aged 18 to 65 who showed online interest in alcohol and/or alcohol ads within 80kms of central Melbourne.

After viewing the AA video or still, clicking on it leads to our CSO website. In 6 months over 24,000 viewed the 'Am I an Alcoholic?' materials. Achieving a cost of 20c per person per questionnaire gaining 24k hits for a total of \$6k is a compelling result.

Effective PI, often costs more - we have spent more on one print advertisement in a publication with less exposure.

DO YOU HAVE A SUGGESTED SOLUTION?

We think that AA and 'the newcomer' would be better served if this was activated and coordinated on a National scale. Because in our experience - the further we went - the more we found.

We are asking that Conference advise the Board (GSB) to look into ways of exploring this, as a PI initiative, conducted on a National scale. Or a broader approach involving other districts and Areas.

This is a giant body of work, and in our experience – is best served by a dedicated committee. We have a wealth of data, and some experience which we would happily share with anyone who would be interested. And we are prepared to join or share our experience with any dedicated committee if that be the way you decide to proceed.

HOW WILL THE ALCOHOLIC WHO STILL SUFFERS OR THE FELLOWSHIP OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS BENEFIT FROM THIS SUGGESTION?

There are many benefits –

- 1) More newcomers will find us; much of the world is online these days, especially the younger generation and we need to be visible to them
- 2) AA will benefit by helping more newcomers / increased membership and opportunities to be of service either through
 - a. helping the newcomer and/or
 - b. involving themselves in this new initiative. We found that there was terrific energy around this project at ICD
- 3) We think that this is a very cost effective way of reaching newcomers

WHAT ARE THE ESTIMATED COSTS OF IMPLEMENTING THIS SUGGESTION?

The set up and ongoing maintenance is easy, and doesn't cost anything. At ICD we have a PI Sub committee which set it up, maintained and report results. All very easy using Facebook and Instagram platforms.

The creative, or 'content' is also easy and can be done by members – inviting them to participate by creating their own content, and therefore being of service.

The cost of the campaign, is the only Financial component. And is discretionary. Programs can be run all the time, periodically or seasonally. Therefore monitoring and maintaining the spend.

We have attached a report, which outlines what is possible. In short, using the broadest of parameters – targeting men and women between the ages of 18-65+, Facebook estimates the following results for a 30 day campaign –

\$5,000. 42k – 122k people reached

\$10,000. 83k – 241k people reached

Please take a look, what we have done is very basic and broad. Alterations can be made to best suit budget(s) and/or required results.

HAVE YOU ASKED YOUR GROUP, DISTRICT OR AREA TO MAKE A DECISION ABOUT THIS TOPIC AND, IF SO, WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?

This District PI initiative was supported by more than a 2/3 majority of GSRs, And Area.

Submitting a Topic is the best way to get details to members of AA across Australia and suggest that this success could be scaled to a National level.

CONFERENCE FINANCE COMMITTEE

TOPIC #026/2021

The wording on the auto-generated email response regarding group requests for Public Liability insurance be changed to

Our group conscience has agreed to donate % of our surplus funds to the General Service Office of AA or local AA Central Service Office to defray the cost of public liability insurance and the other services it provides

WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND OR REASON FOR THE TOPIC?

It currently reads:

Our group conscience has agreed to donate % of our surplus funds to the General Service Office of AA to defray the cost of public liability insurance and the other services it provides

This is confusing and groups may feel obliged to send funds directly to GSO rather than to their CSO.

It is important to clarify that if a group already gives their excess funds to their local CSO, they do not need to comply with the request to send them to the GSO.

DO YOU HAVE A SUGGESTED SOLUTION?

1. Amend the wording on all future email responses and any written communication regarding this.

HOW WILL THE ALCOHOLIC WHO STILL SUFFERS OR THE FELLOWSHIP OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS BENEFIT FROM THIS SUGGESTION?

1. Groups will be clear on where they can send their funds to ensure their insurance cover is in place and be confident that the traditions are being followed

WHAT ARE THE ESTIMATED COSTS OF IMPLEMENTING THIS SUGGESTION?

None as its is an electronic communication

HAVE YOU ASKED YOUR GROUP, DISTRICT OR AREA TO MAKE A DECISION ABOUT THIS TOPIC AND, IF SO, WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?

Discussed and agreed by CSO committee

CONFERENCE REMOTE COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

NO TOPICS WERE ALLOCATED TO THIS COMMITTEE

CONFERENCE LITERATURE COMMITTEE

TOPIC #008/2020

Amend the Group Handbook to add that all groups, Districts and Areas be transparent with members who donate to their group, District or Area about how funds are distributed at Group, District or Area. This is so members can make an informed choice when making their contribution.

WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND OR REASON FOR THE TOPIC?

1. I have been approached by a number of members who are 'in good faith contributing to the hat' and who believed the contribution was to be distributed according to the 60/30/10 Plan or agreed percentage distribution of that Plan.
2. They are concerned that decisions in applying the 'Power of the Purse' are not in the Spirit of the Fellowship.
3. These members wish to be informed about the use of their contributions so they can make informed decisions regarding their contribution.

DO YOU HAVE A SUGGESTED SOLUTION?

1. The Topic, if affirmed by Conference to be added to the Group Handbook.
2. Delegates to carry the affirmed Topic to their Areas, Districts and Groups.
3. Motions which involve Voting on the 'Power of the Purse' to be distributed to all members in the group, District or Area with notice of time and place at which the vote is to take place.

HOW WILL THE ALCOHOLIC WHO STILL SUFFERS OR THE FELLOWSHIP OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS BENEFIT FROM THIS SUGGESTION?

1. Alcoholics Anonymous distributes the 'Hat' contributions as suggested therefore being able to carry the message in a more efficient and effective manner.
2. Transparency as requested by many.

WHAT ARE THE ESTIMATED COSTS OF IMPLEMENTING THIS SUGGESTION?

The cost of updating the Group Handbook could be completed in conjunction with other alterations or edits.

HAVE YOU ASKED YOUR GROUP, DISTRICT OR AREA TO MAKE A DECISION ABOUT THIS TOPIC AND, IF SO, WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?

Supported by Home Group. Had discussions with Members in Service at District and Area levels who provided feedback. Lack of time to present to District or Area.

TOPIC #009/2021

Gender-inclusive Australian Big Book

It is proposed that the Australian General Service Conference:

- take all necessary steps to bring out a new edition of the Australian Big Book, with more gender-neutral language, which is inclusive of men, women, non-binary and other gender diverse members.
- do so as soon as possible, rather than waiting until there has been time to compile a revised set of personal stories in the second half of the Big Book, after p 164, as it normally would. OR if there is insufficient support for that, bring out an e-book of the gender-inclusive version of the first 164 pages only and no personal stories (like a pocket BB), pending publication of a full hardcopy Third Edition which could include an updated set of personal stories.
- seek copyright permission from AA World Services or any other relevant entity, if necessary.

Alternatively, if it cannot do so for copyright reasons:

- bring out a publication that is as close as possible to being a gender-neutral version of the Australian Big Book, without breaking copyright law.

WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND OR REASON FOR THE TOPIC?

1. It is worth bringing out a gender-inclusive Australian Big Book as soon as possible, even if World Services looks at doing the same thing. It is unpredictable how long a World version might take: a few years, or 15, or longer. There has been unhappiness for decades, without change. Even if Australia only ended up being a few years ahead, it would still make a difference to many members, especially newcomers who we might lose otherwise.

2. If Australia does this, it could make it easier and less daunting for AA World Services and other countries to bring out their own gender-inclusive Big Books.

3. To promote unity.

4. To help women, non-binary and gender diverse people identify with the Big Book and AA, and avoid losing them unnecessarily.

5. To help alcoholics from other diverse backgrounds (eg race, disability, religion) feel safer and that AA is for everybody.

DO YOU HAVE A SUGGESTED SOLUTION?

1. Locate all gendered language from the title page to page 164 of the Big Book inclusive, eg:
 - a) pronouns,
 - b) "men and women" (which leaves out non-binary members),
 - c) "statesman", and
 - d) God as "He/Him".
2. Make most of it gender neutral, or use a more equal mix of male, female and non-binary pronouns.

Where there are anecdotes about male AA members in the first 164 pages:

3. Keep male pronouns for very iconic figures such as Bill W.

4. Change other anecdotes into gender-neutral language, such as “they” or “the member”, even though these men really existed. That is, anonymise their gender. This would promote balance and unity, because the first 164 pages mostly talk about men at the moment. It could potentially be done with Jim’s story, the atheist starting p55, etc.
5. Consult at least one female and one non-binary member before finalising the draft.

See the **attached** example.

HOW WILL THE ALCOHOLIC WHO STILL SUFFERS OR THE FELLOWSHIP OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS BENEFIT FROM THIS SUGGESTION?

1. See above. It would promote unity and inclusivity for all – even men who are uncomfortable with the current wording.
2. It would help carry the message to the newcomer, who may be put off AA or the steps otherwise. It would be easy to say they are just not desperate enough, and refuse to help them. But we could give them a better chance at sobriety this way.
3. It would promote long-term unity. If AA does not make such changes, we may eventually see members split off and form a new, more inclusive 12-step fellowship for alcoholism.
4. It is important to make these changes in the Big Book, not just the 12+12 or other texts. The Big Book is central. It is used heavily in meetings, and by sponsors taking sponsees through the steps. It is important for all members to be able to use it.

WHAT ARE THE ESTIMATED COSTS OF IMPLEMENTING THIS SUGGESTION?

Cost of publishing a new edition of the Australian Big Book unknown to me.

HAVE YOU ASKED YOUR GROUP, DISTRICT OR AREA TO MAKE A DECISION ABOUT THIS TOPIC AND, IF SO, WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?

Not raised.

TOPIC #011/2020

That a 4-year AA service position of Editor of *AA Around Australia* be created and advertised on aa.org.au.

WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND OR REASON FOR THE TOPIC?

1. The position of Editor of *AA Around Australia* is contemplated in *The Australian AA Service Manual*.
2. The quarterly production of *AA Around Australia* is a time consuming task which is currently undertaken by staff of the General Service Office who have numerous other tasks.
3. The General Service Office has a high workload and a small staff.
4. General Service Office staff do not necessarily have the skill set required to produce a national newsletter with high production values.
5. AA in Australia needs a national newsletter which is world standard.

DO YOU HAVE A SUGGESTED SOLUTION?

That a 4-year AA service position of Editor of *AA Around Australia*, be created and advertised on aa.org.au.

HOW WILL THE ALCOHOLIC WHO STILL SUFFERS OR THE FELLOWSHIP OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS BENEFIT FROM THIS SUGGESTION?

1. The topic if accepted will result in the production of *AA Around Australia* by AA members with relevant skills and plenty of time to devote to the task.
2. The topic if accepted will result in the production of *AA Around Australia* to a high production standard.
3. The topic if accepted will divert a large portion of the workload of the General Service Office to the Editor of *AA Around Australia*.
4. The topic if accepted will provide another AA service opportunity for AA members.

WHAT ARE THE ESTIMATED COSTS OF IMPLEMENTING THIS SUGGESTION?

Nil. The position of Editor of *AA Around Australia* would be an AA service position, not a paid position.

HAVE YOU ASKED YOUR GROUP, DISTRICT OR AREA TO MAKE A DECISION ABOUT THIS TOPIC AND, IF SO, WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?

No.

TOPIC #012/21

To update the Australian AA Group Handbook to include an extra section on how an online AA group may function.

WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND OR REASON FOR THE TOPIC?

1. We now have AA groups that have an exclusively online presence. Currently the AA Group handbook only outlines how face to face groups can function. A small online group-specific section could deal with any required variations on what is currently being generally suggested.
2. With a virtual area in the works already, it makes sense to outline what a fully functioning AA online group looks like. This section, once initiated, could grow over time, becoming a placeholder for updates as this new aspect of AA establishes itself.
3. Member's lives depend on carrying the message. This so often depends on being a part of a healthy AA group. The Group Handbook outlines what a healthy group looks like. Why not give online groups similar assistance?

DO YOU HAVE A SUGGESTED SOLUTION?

1. Suggest an online group-specific section be added on page 46 – i.e. at the end of the handbook, just before the traditions. It should be noted, the vast majority of the information in the handbook is wholly appropriate for on online group, but there are some differences. This small section would simple outline these – e.g. different group service positions, suggestions for setting up a group.

HOW WILL THE ALCOHOLIC WHO STILL SUFFERS OR THE FELLOWSHIP OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS BENEFIT FROM THIS SUGGESTION?

1. Active AA Groups do more than just host a meeting. They carry out many other actions that directly carry our message. Including virtual meetings in the AA resource that focuses so heavily on our primary purpose will no doubt encourage, and educate, online groups to consider PI, CPC, providing 12 step help etc by feeling the handbook applies to them as much as a face-to-face group.

WHAT ARE THE ESTIMATED COSTS OF IMPLEMENTING THIS SUGGESTION?

No more than for any other reason the handbook is updated.

HAVE YOU ASKED YOUR GROUP, DISTRICT OR AREA TO MAKE A DECISION ABOUT THIS TOPIC AND, IF SO, WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?

Yes. The outcome was that the topic was discussed, and voted on (to submit to conference) without change.

TOPIC #013/2020

This submission proposes AA utilise modern technology to streamline the Australian AA Two Arms of Service Structure to minimise duplication of effort and expense, by establishing a national online literature sales and distribution service. This includes the availability of electronic literature where possible.

WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND OR REASON FOR THE TOPIC?

1. The current two-tiered system of literature distribution involves double handing, is expensive and often requires double postage.
2. There is confusion at group level about where to purchase literature, especially as there are many sources within AA and outside.
3. Major changes in technology (web, phone services, video conferencing) in the last 30 years offer low cost alternatives to the distribution of literature and public information, and the holding of meetings.
4. Online shopping has been embraced by the wider Australian community and is a growing market.

DO YOU HAVE A SUGGESTED SOLUTION?

1. Establish one online national service for distributing of AA conference approved literature directly to groups and the public. Groups have a discount code. Individuals pay retail value. Direct sales to groups would remove duplication.
2. This could have a flow-on effect to carrying the message, as financial and other resources currently used for literature sales through 12th Step offices (CSOs/Intergroups) could be diverted to carrying the message to local communities through Public Information strategies etc. see attached additional information).

HOW WILL THE ALCOHOLIC WHO STILL SUFFERS OR THE FELLOWSHIP OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS BENEFIT FROM THIS SUGGESTION?

Our Australian Service Structure needs to ensure its future by utilising new technologies to maximise beneficial outcomes of members' financial contributions.

1. AA literature would be more accessible to groups and the general public.
2. An increase local public information outreach should reach more problem drinkers and improve their entrance into AA local groups.

WHAT ARE THE ESTIMATED COSTS OF IMPLEMENTING THIS SUGGESTION?

A Joomla E-Shop website set-up with 225 products would be approx. \$4000 with annual costs approx. \$1000 pa.

Overall medium-term costs of a single National Online would be the same or less through:

- increased literature sales
- monies saved from renting facilities diverted to local PI activities or to the GSO.

HAVE YOU ASKED YOUR GROUP, DISTRICT OR AREA TO MAKE A DECISION ABOUT THIS TOPIC AND, IF SO, WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?

This specific topic has not been put to my Group, District or Area. However, our Southern Highlands area has run a "virtual" CSO along with a "district" local public information role since 2008, with local groups' support. This proposal is based that experience, and more recent experiences brought by COVID-19.

TOPIC #017/2021

Include the personal story "(16) ACCEPTANCE WAS THE ANSWER" from the Alcoholics Anonymous World Service, Inc.; © 1939, 1955, 1976, 2001 Fourth Edition ("American Big Book") 'Alcoholics Anonymous', into the Alcoholics Anonymous World Service, Inc.; © 1939, 1955, 1976, 2001 Second Australian Edition ("Australian Big Book").

WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND OR REASON FOR THE TOPIC?

This story has played its role in freeing many a suffering alcoholic. The paragraph "And acceptance is the answer to *all* my problems today." on page 417, is even read out during some meetings. I have spoken with many other members who have been quite amazed that it wasn't included in the Australian version.

DO YOU HAVE A SUGGESTED SOLUTION?

Submit a Third Australian Edition of Alcoholics Anonymous to be approved by A.A. General Service, then all printing for sale should commence of the Third Australian Edition.

HOW WILL THE ALCOHOLIC WHO STILL SUFFERS OR THE FELLOWSHIP OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS BENEFIT FROM THIS SUGGESTION?

Seeing this story in the big book, as well as the Australian stories in the back, will allow a broad range of people to identify with that story, and the message of acceptance that

it provides. It will also prevent anyone who wishes to read along when the previous mentioned passage is read out at meetings, to follow along without confusion. This will also make it easier when helping people in early sobriety, by allowing an older sober member to guide that person to this story, regardless of which version they have.

WHAT ARE THE ESTIMATED COSTS OF IMPLEMENTING THIS SUGGESTION?

Considering the only suggestion is to include a story that already exists in one book, into another book, and only to commence printing of this edition, the cost of approving this literature should be very low.

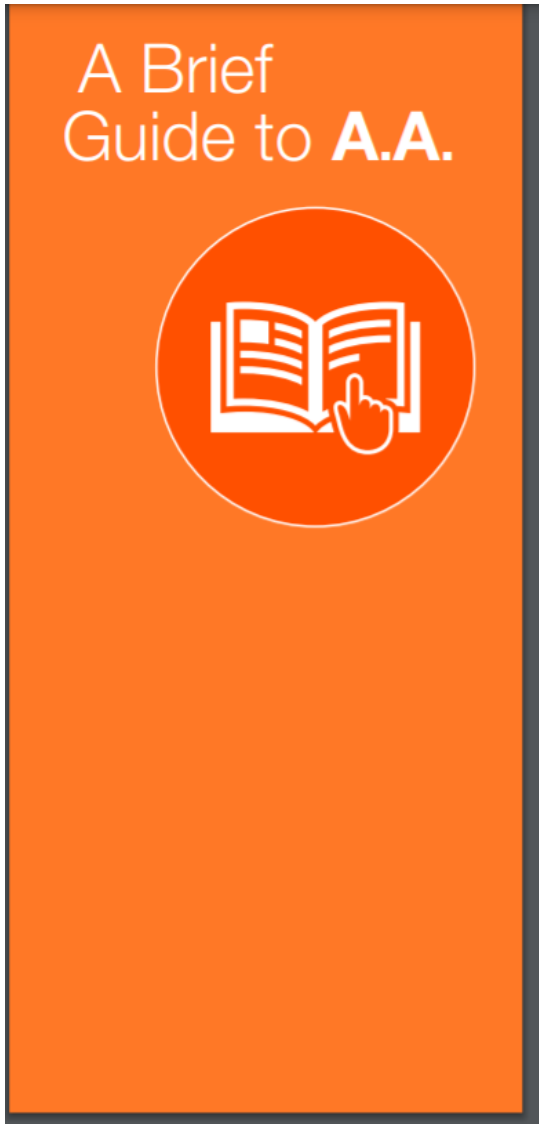
HAVE YOU ASKED YOUR GROUP, DISTRICT OR AREA TO MAKE A DECISION ABOUT THIS TOPIC, IF SO, WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?

I took this topic to our Group Conscience, and it was decided by the group that I submit this topic on behalf of the group.

TOPIC #020/2021

To remove the pamphlet “A Brief Guide to AA” from all Australian literature sources

WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND OR REASON FOR THE TOPIC?



7. A.A. does *not* accept money from sources outside A.A., either private or government.

*Taken from page 11 of this pamphlet

1. As a consequence of AA Australia accepting government funding AA can be held up to public scrutiny (Public record – i.e. a simple google search). We are aware that this is a breach of tradition 7 and tradition 10:

- Tradition 7 - 'Every AA group ought to be fully self- supporting, declining outside contributions'. Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions p164-165, it is concluded with "They pointed out that the irresponsible had become the responsible" by making

financial independence part of AA tradition. (See attachment)

- Tradition 10 – ‘AA has no opinion on outside issues; hence the AA name ought never be drawn into public controversy’. The information contained within this pamphlet stating that we “do not accept money from sources out-side AA either private or government”.

In this respect by publicising such information which is not true, as an organisation we could be held up to ridicule for publishing false information

3. Big Book page 58 lines 9 & 10 “Grasping and developing a manner of living which **demand**s rigorous honesty”

DO YOU HAVE A SUGGESTED SOLUTION?

1. Removal of this pamphlet from all AA literature sources within Australia (to the best of our knowledge we are only aware of Australia receiving such payments)

HOW WILL THE ALCOHOLIC WHO STILL SUFFERS OR THE FELLOWSHIP OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS BENEFIT FROM THIS SUGGESTION?

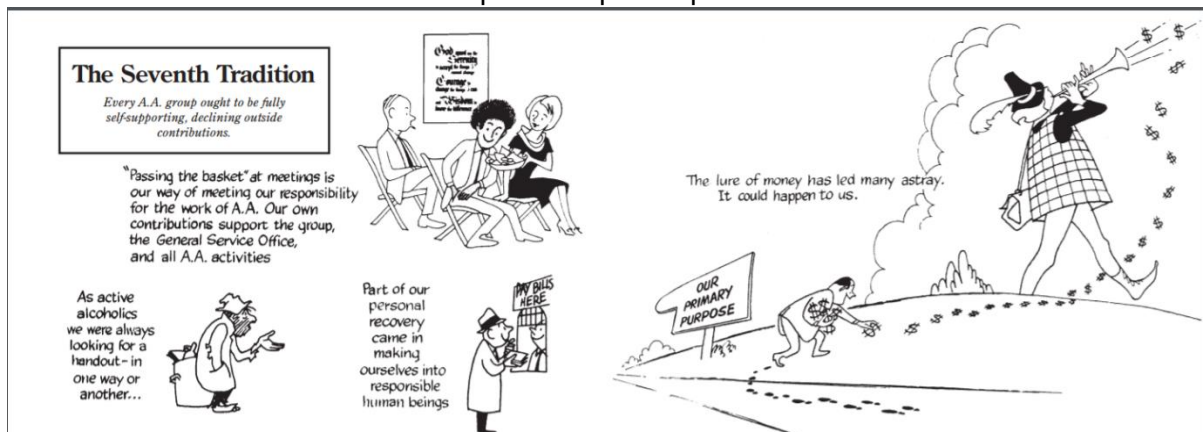
1. Humility
2. Credibility
3. Integrity
4. Honesty

WHAT ARE THE ESTIMATED COSTS OF IMPLEMENTING THIS SUGGESTION?

1. Freight costs (?) to forward the remaining stock of these pamphlets to another country where it involves no controversy.

HAVE YOU ASKED YOUR GROUP, DISTRICT OR AREA TO MAKE A DECISION ABOUT THIS TOPIC AND, IF SO, WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?

The consensus of Area was that we put this up for topic at conference





CONFERENCE COMMITTEE ON TRUSTEES

TOPIC #005/2021

That the General Service Conference (GSC) suggests that the General Service Board (GSB) consider terms of employment and set a policy that any FUTURE General Service Office (GSO) staff appointed, are done so on a reasonable fixed term contract, Maximum 5 yrs. (option of +2 yrs. by negotiation)
 This Topic would like to respectfully acknowledge the work remunerated and commitment to AA, of any past/current GSO staff.

WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND OR REASON FOR THE TOPIC?

1. Future fixed-term contracts ought to adhere to the present legislation in the Fair Work Act and in keeping with the prescribed spirit of rotation. National Employment Standards have undergone great change in the last 20 years. The Australian Fair Work System is designed to protect both employee & employer in a dynamic, technologically advanced employment market. Industry awards, hours, conditions etc are required. 5yr fixed-term contracts with +2yr option would align us with the contemporary employment practices and open AA Australia to an ever-changing workforce, one increasingly proficient in the possibilities & uses of current technology, to further our aim of reaching as many alcoholics as possible.
2. This is a matter of policy and a large matter on which the groups need to be consulted. The GSB serve the AA groups and are responsible for employing GSO staff. It is the GSBs responsibility to exercise adequate custodial oversight.
3. AA Australia may not be considering that despite being a paid position, they are still subject to the spirit of rotation, as exemplified by the US/Canada General Service Structure.
4. Long appointments of these privileged roles, deny other members the opportunity to serve the fellowship in this capacity.
5. Concepts XI and XII support the spirit of this Topic.

DO YOU HAVE A SUGGESTED SOLUTION?

1. As stated in the Topic.

HOW WILL THE ALCOHOLIC WHO STILL SUFFERS OR THE FELLOWSHIP OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS BENEFIT FROM THIS SUGGESTION?

1. The GSO offers a range of very important services to the still suffering alcoholic. Its health and functioning benefit the alcoholic.
2. AA Australia will be more aligned with the Spiritual Principles set out in the Twelve Steps, Traditions and Concepts, which benefits the alcoholic.

WHAT ARE THE ESTIMATED COSTS OF IMPLEMENTING THIS SUGGESTION?

Minimal, some costs may be incurred in drawing up contracts of employment.

HAVE YOU ASKED YOUR GROUP, DISTRICT OR AREA TO MAKE A DECISION ABOUT THIS TOPIC AND, IF SO, WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?

Unanimously supported by the homegroup, first draft endorsed by the District members, minority opinion considered by the group, 2nd draft attached taken to Area. Minority opinion of Area considered, and topic was revised. Extra-ordinary assembly was held, and topic was endorsed by Area..

CONFERENCE AGENDA COMMITTEE

TOPIC #001/2020

The General Service Board recommends that the General Service Conference considers changing the Conference Committee system by having three committees instead of the current eleven. The Board makes this recommendation having reviewed the committee system of the Great Britain General Service Conference. Two documents are attached. Document 1 is the proposed new committee system. Document 2 shows how many topics each current Conference Committee has been allocated in the last five years.

WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND OR REASON FOR THE TOPIC?

There is an imbalance of topics allocated, with some committees regularly having no or few topics, with others being overloaded.

The current committee system only allows for committees to meet for a maximum of two hours (some 1 hour 50 minutes). During that time they have to review their Composition, Scope & Procedure document, review their Action List and make recommendations on topics allocated to them, and also elect a Chairperson and Alternate for the following year.

DO YOU HAVE A SUGGESTED SOLUTION?

Having three committees would spread the workload more evenly, with each of these committees having at least 3.5 hours to complete their business.

It would allow time for committees to thoroughly review their Composition, Scope & Procedure documents, paying particular attention to their Scope.

Each committee would consist of at least 7 Area Delegates, 2 Trustees & 1 staff member. World Service Delegates would both be allocated to the most appropriate committee.

There would be time available on the agenda for any topics allocated directly to the full Conference rather than committees.

There would be time available for committees for any unfinished business.

It would no longer be necessary for combined sessions of more than one committee to be organised.

HOW WILL THE ALCOHOLIC WHO STILL SUFFERS OR THE FELLOWSHIP OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS BENEFIT FROM THIS SUGGESTION?

The Conference would operate more efficiently.

WHAT ARE THE ESTIMATED COSTS OF IMPLEMENTING THIS SUGGESTION?

No cost.

HAVE YOU ASKED YOUR GROUP, DISTRICT OR AREA TO MAKE A DECISION ABOUT THIS TOPIC AND, IF SO, WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?

Discussed at February 2020 General Service Board meeting.

¹ <https://www.cochranelibrary.com/cdsr/doi/10.1002/14651858.CD012880.pub2/full>

² http://www.area82aa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/A.A.%20Internal_External%20Communications%20Audit%20Report_ABRIDGED_180821.pdf

³ Ritter, A. & Stooove, M. Med J Aust 2016; 204 (4): 138. || doi: 10.5694/mja15.01372. Published online: 7 March 2016

TOPIC #023/2021

That the fellowship discontinues using gender based titles for it's meetings ie Men's Group, Women's Group , Gay and Lesbian group,

WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND OR REASON FOR THE TOPIC?

1. These titles take away from AA's singleness of purpose.
2. A sick alcoholic may not feel they belong in a meeting that is gender titled.
3. The preamble of AA states we "Neither endorse nor oppose any causes"
4. Gender or sexual preferences are not an AA issue our primary purpose is to carry the recovery message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

DO YOU HAVE A SUGGESTED SOLUTION?

1. Make AA meeting available to all who seek help with their alcoholism by referring to meetings by geographical location, and time of meeting.

HOW WILL THE ALCOHOLIC WHO STILL SUFFERS OR THE FELLOWSHIP OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS BENEFIT FROM THIS SUGGESTION?

1. A new member will more likely attend a mixed group than a single gender or gay and lesbian meeting if going to AA for the first time.

WHAT ARE THE ESTIMATED COSTS OF IMPLEMENTING THIS SUGGESTION?

HAVE YOU ASKED YOUR GROUP, DISTRICT OR AREA TO MAKE A DECISION ABOUT THIS TOPIC AND, IF SO, WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?

No.

TOPIC #024/2021

We ask that conference adopt the following three videos (please see links below), as conference approved literature. We also ask that conference consider how best to distribute the videos.

Jack & Sophie's Story 30 Second Edit – <https://vimeo.com/556783986>

Jack's Story – <https://vimeo.com/556753757>

Sophie's Story - <https://vimeo.com/556757818>

WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND OR REASON FOR THE TOPIC?

In 2020, Area and CSO commissioned two videos featuring the stories of young alcoholics in recovery to help carry the A.A. message to young people in the local community.

DO YOU HAVE A SUGGESTED SOLUTION?

HOW WILL THE ALCOHOLIC WHO STILL SUFFERS OR THE FELLOWSHIP OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS BENEFIT FROM THIS SUGGESTION?

In the modern age, young people are increasingly turning to video and online sources to obtain information. We feel that our topic will help young people to find the A.A. message in an effective and accessible way through video.

WHAT ARE THE ESTIMATED COSTS OF IMPLEMENTING THIS SUGGESTION?

There are no costs associated with this topic as the videos have already been produced.

HAVE YOU ASKED YOUR GROUP, DISTRICT OR AREA TO MAKE A DECISION ABOUT THIS TOPIC AND, IF SO, WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?

These videos were an initiative developed by Area and CSO in 2020, and received the endorsement at the Area assembly in June 2021

TOPIC #025/2021

That Conference advise the General Service Board to explore options for coordinating the use of Digital Media (eg Facebook, Instagram and Google Adwords) as a method of PI, on a National scale, as a means to attract newcomers.

WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND OR REASON FOR THE TOPIC?

During 2020 lockdown, our PI initiatives, mail drops etc weren't possible but District could still reach the newcomer.

In October District began a Facebook Campaign carrying our message, with outstanding results, demonstrating many people, *seek solutions for their problem* in the online world.

Copying AA posters and videos based on these, within our Traditions, Facebook can target specific audiences. ICD used people aged 18 to 65 who showed online interest in alcohol and/or alcohol ads within 80kms of central Melbourne.

After viewing the AA video or still, clicking on it leads to our CSO website. In 6 months over 24,000 viewed the 'Am I an Alcoholic?' materials. Achieving a cost of 20c per person per questionnaire gaining 24k hits for a total of \$6k is a compelling result.

Effective PI, often costs more - we have spent more on one print advertisement in a publication with less exposure.

DO YOU HAVE A SUGGESTED SOLUTION?

We think that AA and 'the newcomer' would be better served if this was activated and coordinated on a National scale. Because in our experience - the further we went - the more we found.

We are asking that Conference advise the Board (GSB) to look into ways of exploring this, as a PI initiative, conducted on a National scale. Or a broader approach involving other districts and Areas.

This is a giant body of work, and in our experience – is best served by a dedicated committee. We have a wealth of data, and some experience which we would happily share with anyone who would be interested. And we are prepared to join or share our experience with any dedicated committee if that be the way you decide to proceed.

HOW WILL THE ALCOHOLIC WHO STILL SUFFERS OR THE FELLOWSHIP OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS BENEFIT FROM THIS SUGGESTION?

There are many benefits –

- 1) More newcomers will find us; much of the world is online these days, especially the younger generation and we need to be visible to them
- 2) AA will benefit by helping more newcomers / increased membership and opportunities to be of service either through
 - a. helping the newcomer and/or
 - b. involving themselves in this new initiative. We found that there was terrific energy around this project at ICD
- 3) We think that this is a very cost effective way of reaching newcomers

WHAT ARE THE ESTIMATED COSTS OF IMPLEMENTING THIS SUGGESTION?

The set up and ongoing maintenance is easy, and doesn't cost anything. At ICD we have a PI Sub committee which set it up, maintained and report results. All very easy using Facebook and Instagram platforms.

The creative, or 'content' is also easy and can be done by members – inviting them to participate by creating their own content, and therefore being of service.

The cost of the campaign, is the only Financial component. And is discretionary. Programs can be run all the time, periodically or seasonally. Therefore monitoring and maintaining the spend.

We have attached a report, which outlines what is possible. In short, using the broadest of parameters – targeting men and women between the ages of 18-65+, Facebook estimates the following results for a 30 day campaign –

\$5,000. 42k – 122k people reached

\$10,000. 83k – 241k people reached

Please take a look, what we have done is very basic and broad. Alterations can be made to best suit budget(s) and/or required results.

HAVE YOU ASKED YOUR GROUP, DISTRICT OR AREA TO MAKE A DECISION ABOUT THIS TOPIC AND, IF SO, WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?

This District PI initiative was supported by more than a 2/3 majority of GSRs, And Area.

Submitting a Topic is the best way to get details to members of AA across Australia and suggest that this success could be scaled to a National level.

TOPIC #026/2021

The wording on the auto-generated email response regarding group requests for Public Liability insurance be changed to

Our group conscience has agreed to donate % of our surplus funds to the General Service Office of AA or local AA Central Service Office to defray the cost of public liability insurance and the other services it provides

WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND OR REASON FOR THE TOPIC?

It currently reads:

Our group conscience has agreed to donate % of our surplus funds to the General Service Office of AA to defray the cost of public liability insurance and the other services it provides

This is confusing and groups may feel obliged to send funds directly to GSO rather than to their CSO.

It is important to clarify that if a group already gives their excess funds to their local CSO, they do not need to comply with the request to send them to the GSO.

DO YOU HAVE A SUGGESTED SOLUTION?

1. Amend the wording on all future email responses and any written communication regarding this.

HOW WILL THE ALCOHOLIC WHO STILL SUFFERS OR THE FELLOWSHIP OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS BENEFIT FROM THIS SUGGESTION?

1. Groups will be clear on where they can send their funds to ensure their insurance cover is in place and be confident that the traditions are being followed

WHAT ARE THE ESTIMATED COSTS OF IMPLEMENTING THIS SUGGESTION?

None as its is an electronic communication

HAVE YOU ASKED YOUR GROUP, DISTRICT OR AREA TO MAKE A DECISION ABOUT THIS TOPIC AND, IF SO, WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?

Discussed and agreed by CSO committee
