



# **65th AUSTRALIAN GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 2023**

**REPORT TO AREA D SOUTHERN REGION LISA  
ROWE | DELEGATE**

## INTRODUCTION

This is my final report as Delegate for Area D.

On page 89 of our Big Book, the phrase 'this is an experience you must not miss' appears. It is in the chapter about working with others, however, having just attended my first and only face to face General Service Conference as a Conference Delegate, I can emphatically say that this is the first phrase that came to mind when I sat down to write this report and reflect on that experience.

I have been very fortunate to be a 3<sup>rd</sup> year Delegate in the year the decision was made to change the committee structure of Conference. This shift from 12 service-area specific conference committees to 3 generic committees also included significant changes to the previous Conference agenda committee (now the steering committee) which as a 3<sup>rd</sup> year delegate I served on, and I also chaired one of the 3 new Conference committees. The inaugural 2023 CSC was tasked with implementing the structural changes to the planning and execution of Conference this year. We knew this was a large undertaking, made more complex with the departure of our long-standing GSO Manager mid-year. So, it has been all hands on deck, with the steering committee meeting largely weekly since June, to implement the changes as well as supporting the 2 remaining GSO staff members in the organizing of Conference. I feel confident that the work of this steering committee will have a lasting legacy. I am especially proud of changes that enhance the spiritual decision-making process, such as the Day 2 "What's on Your Mind" session and the appointment of a Delegate as Conference Chair.

It was all worthwhile once 30 Conference Members were finally sitting in a room together on the first weekend of November in 2023 to carry out the business of the 65<sup>th</sup> Australian General Service Conference. It was a vastly different experience to the last 2 years of Conferences held online. I was solidly reminded throughout the weekend that AA is in very good hands. While several Areas are currently not active or do not have an elected Delegate, those present demonstrated a passionate commitment to the surviving and thriving of AA in Australia. Being part of our decision-making process where differing opinions were expressed and harmoniously accepted, and where a single minority voice opinion can completely reverse a decision, was something I am very grateful I did not miss.

It has been my busiest year general service wise – and also the most rewarding. I have spent the last few years living in regional areas where a connection to AA as a whole is currently not present. I have not had a home group that is attached to the General Service Structure during that time. This service position has kept me sane, grounded and connected to a primary purpose throughout.

The steering committee is currently finalising our work, taking into consideration post-conference learnings, and preparing to hand over to the 2024 committee. It has been a real pleasure to hang out with a group of people every week focused on a shared purpose of delivering the best outcomes for AA as a whole and I will genuinely miss this connection when we disband. However, as a result of the significant changes this year, the Australian AA Service Manual is going to need a major revamp and rewrite – I have put my name down to serve on that working group. Glutton for punishment some would say – I prefer to think of it as staying sober in the nicest possible way.

I encourage all members to keep their eye on the national member website ([members.aa.org.au](http://members.aa.org.au)) for expressions of interest in joining the various working groups being formed to execute this year's Conference advisory actions.

Thank you to Area D for allowing me to serve AA in this way for the last six years.

Yours in service,

Lisa Rowe

<b>CONFERENCE COMMITTEE #1 .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>TOPIC #004/2023: (Gender- neutral 12 Step banners for meetings) .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>TOPIC #009/2023: (Raise the profile of the 12 Concepts).....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>TOPIC #013/2023: (Reformatting GSO Paperwork) .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>TOPIC #017/2023: (Gold Coast Bid to Host NatCon 2026).....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>TOPIC #019/2023: (Shorten Class A Trustee Terms) .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>TOPIC #022/2023: (Electronic 7th Tradition).....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>TOPIC #026/2023: (One Group, One Vote).....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>TOPIC 030/2023: (Change to Service Manual).....</b>	<b>11</b>
 <b>CONFERENCE COMMITTEE #2.....</b>	 <b>13</b>
<b>TOPIC #007/2023: (Standardised interim financial reporting) .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>TOPIC #010/2023: (Video/audio summary/podcast of conference highlights).....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>TOPIC #014/2023: (Acknowledgement of Country Statement at AA Meetings) .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Topic #016/2023: ('Welcome to Country' at National Conventions) .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>TOPIC #021/2023: (Reduce Delegates Term to 2 Years) .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>TOPIC #023/2023: (Volunteers for Phone Line).....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>TOPIC #028/2023: (Resume Printing Service Manual and Guidelines) .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>TOPIC #031/2023: (GUIDELINE # 39 Virtual Area Guideline).....</b>	<b>22</b>
 <b>CONFERENCE COMMITTEE #3 .....</b>	 <b>24</b>
<b>TOPIC #008/2023: (Members who do not identify as human).....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>TOPIC #011/2023: (Rewrite/update the Australian Service Manual) .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>TOPIC #015/2023: (Need for secular AA leaflet) .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>TOPIC #018/2023: (Using materials like the 'Cochrane Report') .....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>TOPIC #020/2023: (Put Cochrane Report in Professionals pack).....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>TOPIC #024/2023: (New PI Poster) .....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>TOPIC #025/2023: (Proposal for a Secular Leaflet) .....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>TOPIC #029/2023: (Dyslexic Font for Big Book) .....</b>	<b>33</b>

## 2023 TOPIC OUTCOMES

### TOPIC #004/2023: (Gender- neutral 12 Step banners for meetings)

Recovery on the Spectrum (RotS) feels that groups should have the option of purchasing gender- neutral 12 Step banners for meetings.							
<p>The Conference Committee #1 recommended to Conference that TOPIC #004/2023 be rejected and that the submitter of the topic approach the copyright holder for guidance and clarification. <span style="color: red;">Rejected re: this part</span></p> <p>The committee further recommended that there be a place on the members website where copyright and how to make changes to copyrighted literature are explained.</p>							
<b>Motion before conference</b>		That topic #004/2023 be rejected					
<b>Vote to endorse the committee recommendation to reject the topic:</b>							
<b>The count</b>	YES -	11	NO -	16	ABS		3
<p>Committee recommendation was rejected as written. Discussion on the topic was held.</p> <p><b>New Motion:</b> Conference recommends that information about inclusive language and literature copyright is added to the member website and updated based on information provided by the world service delegates.</p>							
<b>Vote on new motion:</b>	YES -	27	NO	2	ABS		1
<b>New motion carried.</b>							

### TOPIC #009/2023: (Raise the profile of the 12 Concepts)

That the GSC explore options to raise the profile of the 12 Concepts for World Service.							
<p>The Conference Committee #1 recommends to Conference that TOPIC #009/2023 be rejected. The committee believes that the 12 Concepts for World Service Illustrated, the 12 Concepts booklet, and the 12 Concepts banners are adequate. Further to change the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions book by adding the 12 Concepts is a copyright change which is beyond the scope of conference.</p>							
<b>Motion before conference</b>		That topic #009/2023 be rejected					
<b>Vote to endorse the Committee recommendation to reject the Topic:</b>							
<b>The count</b>	YES -	16	NO -	14	ABS -		
<b>Minority voice spoke.</b>							
<b>Re-vote on recommendation</b>	YES -	9	NO	21	ABS		
<b>Topic discussed.</b>							
<b>Vote on amended recommendation:</b>	YES	29	NO	1	ABS		
<b>Topic accepted. A working group to be formed to explore raising the profile of the 12 concepts without changing existing literature.</b>							

### TOPIC #013/2023: (Reformatting GSO Paperwork)

GSO have a look at the forms such as this topic form and other paperwork that comes out from them and make it easier to read and use.							
<p>Conference Committee #1 recommended to Conference that TOPIC #013/2023 be rejected. Review of GSO documents is an ongoing process. If we were to change from Word it could affect the fellowship's ability to access documents.</p>							
<b>Motion before conference</b>		That topic #013/2023 be rejected					
<b>Vote to endorse the Committee recommendation to reject the Topic:</b>							
<b>The count</b>	YES -	5	NO -	25	ABS -		

Discussion on topic held. <b>Amended Motion: That the topic be accepted.</b> There is a current and ongoing process of document review. <b>Amended motion carried.</b>			
<b>Vote on amended motion:</b>	YES - 29	NO 1	ABS

TOPIC #017/2023: (Gold Coast Bid to Host NatCon 2026)

Gold Coast, Area C, North-Eastern Region host the 2026 National Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous, Australia.			
The Conference Committee #1 recommends to Conference that TOPIC #017/2023 be accepted. Everyone loves the Gold Coast!			
<b>Motion before conference</b>	That topic #017/2023 be accepted		
Vote to endorse the committee recommendation to accept the topic:			
<b>The count</b>	YES - 30	NO -	ABS -
Motion carried. Topic accepted.			

TOPIC #019/2023: (Shorten Class A Trustee Terms)

The General Service Board consider changing the current Class A Trustee term from 5 years to 3 years plus an optional 4th year plus an optional 5th year should the Class A trustee and the board wish to exercise one or both of those 1-year options.			
The Conference Committee #1 recommends to Conference that TOPIC #019/2023 be accepted as it may attract more people to apply for Class A Trustees.			
<b>Motion before conference</b>	That topic #019/2023 be <b>Accepted</b>		
Vote to endorse Committee recommendation to accept the Topic:			
<p>Topic required a 75% majority to pass as it would require changes to the Memorandum of Articles of Association. Committee recommendation was not passed.</p> <p>Discussion against the committee recommendation, including from a Class A Trustee, includes the length of commitment lending itself to a higher quality candidate. A lot of work required. It is important. A shorter term may make it seem less important.</p> <p>I originally voted against the recommendation after this discussion.</p> <p>A previous advisory action also allows a Class A Trustee who rotated off early to complete their term later. It was also noted that the literature re: Class A Trustee terms states may serve up to 5 years.</p>			
<b>The count</b>	YES - 9	NO - 20	ABS - 1
Minority voice spoke and reminded us that the topic was also giving the <i>Board</i> the option to <i>not</i> extend the term past 3 years. It's not just about attracting Trustees.			
Revote on committee recommendation -			
<b>Vote</b>	YES - 8	NO 21	ABS 1
I then voted with the recommendation (and the Area) to accept the topic based on the minority voice. Topic was rejected.			

TOPIC #022/2023: (Electronic 7th Tradition)

Our home group would like guidance from the GSO regarding electronic transfer of payments for 7th tradition, and suggested methods for home groups to facilitate this. We seek guidance on anonymity and legal/administrative issues with bank transfers, and prioritising allocation of funds to home group running costs before splitting the remainder to 60-30-10 (or 50-30-10-10).

The Conference Committee #1 recommends to Conference that TOPIC #022/2023 be accepted. A report from the Finance Working Group will be presented at Conference 2023. This report is based on Advisory Action 2017/023 which resolved that the GSB be requested to research cashless options available and produce an information sheet for groups that wish to become cashless for Conference 2018.

**Motion before conference** That topic #022/2023 be accepted

**Vote to endorse the Committee recommendation to accept the Topic:**

<b>The count</b>	YES - 28	NO - 1	ABS - 1
------------------	----------	--------	---------

Topic accepted.

TOPIC #026/2023: (One Group, One Vote)

One group – one vote is the fundamental principle of Alcoholics Anonymous. This needs to be stated clearly in the AA Group Handbook.

The Conference Committee #1 recommends to Conference that TOPIC #026/2023 be rejected. The Committee understands that this issue is covered adequately on page 15 of the AA Group Handbook.

**Motion before conference** That topic #026/2023 be rejected

**Vote to endorse the Committee recommendation to reject the topic:**

I voted against the committee recommendation.

<b>The count</b>	YES - 24	NO - 6	ABS -
------------------	----------	--------	-------

Minority voice spoke.

<b>Re vote on committee recommendation</b>	YES - 16	NO 14	ABS
--	----------	-------	-----

Topic rejected.

TOPIC 030/2023: (Change to Service Manual)

Recommended change to Service Manual

That the following paragraph:

*There are only two situations in which the Alternate Delegate can be seated at Conference: -*

*if there is an elected Delegate who, for some reason, is unable to attend Conference; and*

*when the Delegate position is vacant. The Alt Delegate will be considered as having served one year as a Conference member and will only be permitted to attend two more Conferences in the Delegate position. (i.e., 3yrs)*

be replaced by:

*\*A Delegate serves one term of three consecutive years. It is strongly recommended that a delegate serve a single term. An Alternate Delegate may, after attending one Conference in place of the Delegate, be elected to serve a full three-year term. (\*please note, this is the wording used in the US/Canada Service Manual).*

The Conference Committee #1 recommends to Conference that TOPIC #030/2023 be accepted with the following changes.

*There are only two situations in which the Alternate Delegate can be seated at Conference.*

*1. If there is an elected Delegate who, for some reason, is unable to attend Conference and,*

*2. When the Delegate position is vacant. An Alternate Delegate may, after attending one Conference in place of a Delegate, be elected to serve a full three-year term.*

*One may only attend Conference once in the capacity of Alternate Delegate.*

**Motion before conference**

That topic #030/2023 be **accepted**

Vote to endorse the committee recommendation to accept the Topic:

**The count**

YES - 29

NO - 1

ABS -

Topic accepted.

## COMMITTEE #2

TOPIC #007/2023: (Standardised interim financial reporting)

That the General Service Conference (GSC) consider the suggestion that the General Service Board (GSB) present standardised interim financial reporting to Regional Trustees at Board meetings (January July and November) that can then be shared with Area Delegates and in turn General Service Representatives (GSR's).

The Committee recommends to Conference that the topic be accepted, and that the GSB present a simple, standardized overview/snapshot of the financial position of the GSB at each Board meeting that can be shared with Area Delegates and GSR's. This provides transparency and gives groups an opportunity to adjust their contributions throughout the year to assist in AA Australia remaining solvent.

**Motion before conference**

That topic #007/2023 be **accepted**

**The count**

YES - 29

NO - 1

ABS -

Topic accepted.

TOPIC #010/2023: (Video/audio summary/podcast of conference highlights)

That GSB organise a video/audio summary or podcast of highlights or top line outcomes from Conference to be held on the AA website so people can access who may have problems with reading etc.

The Committee recommends to Conference that a video/audio summary or podcast of highlights or top line outcomes from Conference be explored further in the form of a sub-committee or working group. The committee recognises that there is support in the fellowship for the topic, and that there are accessibility options to be addressed.

**Motion before conference** That topic #007/2023 be accepted

Vote for the Committee recommendation to accept the topic:

<b>The count</b>	YES - 27	NO - 3	ABS -
------------------	----------	--------	-------

Minority voice heard. Revote.

<b>Revote</b>	YES - 12	NO 17	ABS 1
---------------	----------	-------	-------

Topic discussed on floor. **Revised motion:** That an audio of the Conference report be made available alongside the written report on the member website.

<b>Vote on amended motion</b>	YES - 29	NO - 1	
-------------------------------	----------	--------	--

Revised motion carried.

TOPIC #014/2023: (Acknowledgement of Country Statement at AA Meetings)

..... The General Service Conference needs to address use of an AoC statement by AA Groups and Service entities. We recommend soliciting input from AA Groups around the country, with particular reference to how use of an AoC relates to our Primary Purpose, and the experience and wisdom contained in the Twelve Traditions and AA Preamble.

The Committee recommends to Conference that TOPIC #014/2023 be rejected. While further action is required to explore ways in which AA can more effectively carry the message to First Nations people, this is unrelated to use of an Acknowledgment of Country statement at groups, conventions, committees, or sub committees, where group autonomy applies.

**Motion before conference** That topic #014/2023 be rejected

Vote to endorse the Committee recommendation to reject the topic:

<b>The count</b>	YES - 27	NO - 2	ABS - 1
------------------	----------	--------	---------

Topic rejected.



Topic #016/2023: ('Welcome to Country' at National Conventions)

The Board and Conference direct the host planning committee of the National Convention to not include a 'welcome to country' or 'acknowledgements of traditional owners' announcements or any other political activism during the convention.

**The Committee recommends to Conference that TOPIC #016/2023 be rejected.** Inclusion of a Welcome to Country or use of acknowledgement of country at conventions is up to each Host Planning Committee. Noting that the Host Planning Committee is accountable to but not directed by the General Service Board. The committee would also like Conference to consider that Advisory Action 46/2014 recommended that the GSB Chair include an Acknowledgement of Country in their welcoming address.

**Motion before conference** That topic #016/2023 be rejected

**Vote to endorse the Committee recommendation to reject the topic:**

<b>The count</b>	YES - 23	NO - 7	ABS -
------------------	----------	--------	-------

Topic rejected.

TOPIC #021/2023: (Reduce Delegates Term to 2 Years)

Suggest to Policy & Admissions Committee that Conference Delegates 3-year term be reduced back to a 2-year term.

**The Committee recommends to Conference that TOPIC #021/2023 be rejected.** Consensus of current and previous delegates seems to be that 3 years is the appropriate term of service taking into consideration the learning curve of the role. Furthermore, under the new committee structure 3rd year delegates sit on the Conference Steering Committee, are eligible to chair a conference committee and even eligible to be chair of conference itself.

**Motion before conference** That topic #021/2023 be rejected

**Vote to endorse the Committee recommendation to reject the topic:**

<b>The count</b>	YES - 28	NO - 2	ABS -
------------------	----------	--------	-------

Topic rejected.

**Notes:** While many Delegates reported the groups in their area strongly supported a reduction in terms on face value, the Delegates at Conference felt strongly that 3 years is needed. Particularly under the new conference committee structure.

**Minority voice** – that 2 years might be good for some, while others feel able to continue. What about multiple terms, e.g. 2 years with an option for another 2 years? No-one wanted to change their vote. Might see a topic about this next year.

TOPIC #023/2023: (Volunteers for Phone Line)

Conference to consider asking for volunteers from any location around Australia to assist in answering the 24-hour phone help line.

The Committee recommends to Conference that TOPIC #023/2023 be accepted noting that the Sydney City CSO is currently the default answer line (for unanswered calls). The committee recommends options be explored for an expanded model to ensure all calls made to the National AA helpline get answered. They could be added to Area E Eastern Region roster (as suggested in the topic) or coordinated some other way, such as a CSO or an AA phone service in each state or region be the default answer line for unanswered calls.

<b>Motion before conference</b>	That topic #023/2023 be <b>Accepted</b>		
<b>Vote to endorse the Committee recommendation to accept the topic:</b>			
<b>The count</b>	YES - <b>30</b>	NO -	ABS -
<b>Topic accepted.</b>			
Notes: More information was provided at Conference by those who are involved in the 1300 system and those areas / offices taking overflow calls. There are opportunities for change to keep the phone system sustainable and make sure calls get answered if local rosters continue to struggle.			

TOPIC #028/2023: (Resume Printing Service Manual and Guidelines)

Resume printing of the Australian AA Service Manual and the Guidelines

The Committee recommends to Conference that TOPIC #028/2023 to resume printing a bound book of the service manual and the guidelines be rejected. A printed loose-leaf version of the manual or guidelines can already be ordered from the GSO for approx. \$17 plus postage. The committee recommends that going forward these custom ordered printed versions be sent in a binder with instructions to add or replace new pages when updates are released/advised.

<b>Motion before conference</b>	That topic #028/2023 be rejected		
<b>Vote to endorse the Committee recommendation to reject the topic:</b>			
<b>The count</b>	YES - <b>17</b>	NO - <b>12</b>	ABS - <b>1</b>
<b>Topic rejected.</b>			
Notes: Minority voice heard - it will be important to get the new service manual out to as many as possible. For some hard copy may be easier. <b>Revote. Topic still rejected.</b>			
<b>Re-vote</b>	YES - <b>16</b>	NO <b>14</b>	ABS

TOPIC #031/2023: (GUIDELINE # 39 Virtual Area Guideline)

The Conference Policy and Admissions committee recommends that the current Guideline #39 be replaced with the guideline provided. The reason for this recommended change is to clarify the guideline's intention that group GSRs reside in Australia. A group's GSR should be able to become a member of the Area Committee, which requires them to be a legal resident, and/or become the elected Area Delegate or Alternate Delegate, which requires them to attend the general service conference in Australia.

The Committee recommends to Conference that TOPIC #031/2023 be accepted and that the virtual area guideline be updated as written in the topic.

**Motion before conference** That topic #023/2023 be accepted.

Vote to endorse the Committee recommendation to accept the topic:

<b>The count</b>	YES - 30	NO -	ABS -
------------------	----------	------	-------

Topic accepted.

### COMMITTEE #3

TOPIC #008/2023: (Members who do not identify as human)

There are members who do not identify as human. We are known as otherkin. The change to the Preamble did not include us. We respectfully request any changes to A.A. literature should include us.

The committee recommends this topic be rejected. AA Australia does not have the capacity to influence changes to literature copyrighted by AAWS or The Grapevine. However, the committee does support inclusivity of all alcoholics when considering changes to Australian copyrighted literature.

**Motion before conference** That topic #008/2023 be rejected.

Vote to endorse the committee recommendation to reject the topic.

<b>The count</b>	YES - 30	NO -	ABS -
------------------	----------	------	-------

Topic rejected.

TOPIC #011/2023: (Rewrite/update the Australian Service Manual)

That the GSC implement a thorough and fearless review and rewrite the Australian Service Manual, to update correct and clarify and improve the legibility of the volume. The US AA Service Manual has greatly benefitted from this process and is providing many younger members with an interest in and avenue to involvement and engagement.

The committee recommends this topic be accepted.

**Motion before conference** That topic #011/2023 be accepted

Vote to endorse the Committee recommendation to accept the topic:

<b>The count</b>	YES - 30	NO -	ABS -
------------------	----------	------	-------

Topic accepted.

TOPIC #015/2023: (Need for secular AA leaflet)

[Got to here. Questions, comments?](#)

It is proposed that the GSB create a modern leaflet covering the inclusion of people of secular beliefs in the AA Fellowship.

The committee acknowledges the existence of the conference-approved pamphlet “The God Word” and conditionally supports this topic with the recommendation that conference request the GSB consider how we can best communicate the accessibility of AA to alcoholics of a secular nature.

**Motion before conference** That topic #015/2023 be accepted.

Vote to endorse the Committee recommendation to accept the topic:

<b>The count</b>	YES - 15	NO - 15	ABS -
------------------	----------	---------	-------

Committee recommendation rejected as no majority.

Topic discussed and voted upon. There were atheist members in the room who spoke to the topic. The minority voice also spoke.

<b>Re-vote</b>	YES - 21	NO 8	ABS 1
----------------	----------	------	-------

Topic accepted.

TOPIC #018/2023: (Using materials like the ‘Cochrane Report’)

Request that Conference provide guidance to the fellowship about the use of outside materials that are pro AA - for example, the “Cochrane report”.

The committee recommends that conference accepts this topic and assigns these questions to a GSB working group for thoughtful response.

**Motion before conference** That topic #018/2023 be accepted.

Vote for the committee recommendation to accept the topic:

<b>The count</b>	YES - 30	NO -	ABS -
------------------	----------	------	-------

Topic accepted.

TOPIC #020/2023: (Put Cochrane Report in Professionals pack)

An adoption of the Cochrane report into AA literature Professionals pack to be approved for the purposes of Public Information and working with the professional community.

The committee recommends that conference reject this topic. Whilst the report may be helpful in recommending AA, official use implies endorsement and affiliation, referring to Tradition 6.

**Motion before conference** That topic #020/2023 be rejected.

Vote to endorse the committee recommendation to reject the topic:

<b>The count</b>	YES - 22	NO - 8	ABS -
------------------	----------	--------	-------

Topic rejected.

Notes: In both topics related to the Cochrane report there was discussion about affiliation and results of discussions with IP dept at GSO in NY. It is very clear that we must avoid any implication of endorsement or affiliation. This is not to say that the report cannot be used or talked about in PI activities but affiliation must not be implied. And it was noted that previous Cochrane reviews have said different things about AA and could just as easily do another review at any time that has different results.

TOPIC #024/2023: (New PI Poster)

New Poster for PI/CPC to become conference approved. Created by member and posted on National PI/CPC WhatsApp Group.

The committee recommends that this topic be accepted, and the poster be made available for PI/CPC use.

**Motion before conference** That topic #024/2023 be accepted.

Vote to endorse the Committee recommendation to accept the topic:

<b>The count</b>	YES - 27	NO - 3	ABS -
------------------	----------	--------	-------

Topic accepted.

TOPIC #025/2023: (Proposal for a Secular Leaflet)

That the proposed leaflet (Appendix B), directed to persons who are agnostic or atheist, be considered as approved AA literature for Australia distribution to AA offices and groups. AA has listed worldwide secular AA meetings for decades. In comparison, secular AA meetings in Australia are relatively new with a steady increase in the number of meetings and attendees in recent years, both face to face and on-line. All are listed on the Australian AA website, where many discovered secular AA meetings by chance. The awareness and visibility of secular AA groups in Australia requires enhancing. This leaflet is a succinct trifold, double-sided leaflet which has been designed for this purpose.

While the committee broadly supports the efforts that have gone into producing the attached pamphlet, the committee rejects this topic and refers conference to topic 015.2023. However, during the board's deliberations on topic 015.2023, the committee recommends the board take this pamphlet into consideration

**Motion before conference** That topic #025/2023 be rejected

Vote to endorse the Committee recommendation to reject the topic:

<b>The count</b>	YES - 25	NO - 3	ABS - 2
------------------	----------	--------	---------

Committee recommended the topic be rejected considering the other topic suggesting development of a new pamphlet. In both discussions there were strong feeling about use of the word secular. The contents of the proposed pamphlet will be included as source material for the advisory action related to topic #15.

<b>Re-vote</b>	YES - 21	NO 7	ABS 2
----------------	----------	------	-------

Notes: Minority voice spoke. Revote. Topic rejected.

TOPIC #029/2023: (Dyslexic Font for Big Book)

Have copies of Alcoholics Anonymous (Big Book) printed for dyslexic people.

The committee supports this topic in principle but suggests that conference refer it to the board to seek expert advice to determine the best solution.

**Motion before conference** That topic #029/2023 be accepted.

Vote to endorse the Committee recommendation to accept the topic:

<b>The count</b>	YES - 27	NO - 3	ABS -
------------------	----------	--------	-------

Topic Notes: Mentioned Kindle – Open dyslexic font available.

## Q & A ON REPORTS

### General Service Office Report

**Q:** Re: *all insurance policies for the office and the groups are up to date.* What sort of things are registered online groups covered for under AA's national insurance policy?

**A:** All liability related to personal injury, etc. e.g., if someone did sue an AA group for trauma as a result of Zoom bombing or trolling, the group would be covered.

**Q:** Concern by not employing a GSO Manager or appointing a proxy, the Board has denied the GSO a vote at this year's conference. This is in direct conflict with Concept IV. This is not just about numbers. It is a recognition of the value of our office staff. At the US/Canada Conference, around 15 of the 100 odd office staff have a vote.

The GSO Manager role is embedded in our general service structure, our conference structure, our service manual and our conference charter.

**A:** The Board is really trying to balance the Board's roles and responsibilities for managing funds, etc with AAs Concepts and principles.

- The Board / Management group doesn't intend or want to manage the office, they are in a process and need some time.
- Not just about the right person, need to understand exactly what the role is.
- They are consulting closely with the current staff re: what they do and what's needed.
- The outgoing Board chair did draft a PD for the office roles when she started but it wasn't developed or finalised.
- There has historically been a lack of processes and procedures and knowing what the role would actually be managing. Cannot recruit until they are clear on this.
- Working out what can best be outsourced and what needs to stay in house.
- 13-15 cents in the dollar was allocated in the budget to the GSO Manager role. It's significant and must be taken very seriously and not rushed.
- The General Service Trustees are excavating many years of business as usual with no rotation
- Need some time to finalise.

### Technology and Social Media WG Report and Websites Reports

**Q:** *Analytics reports provided and no mention of the member website in the tech WG report.* What kind of development work is taking place with regards to the member website - what are the plans, is a website editor going to be recruited, are their plans for members to be able to join a committee and assist with content management, etc.

**A:** Lots happening and being refined. Any website guidelines developed would be put to Conference for approval. Content management expansion in scope but further down the track.

Members can contact Grant if interested in being part of the tech and social media committee.

## CONFERENCE STEERING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are the recommendations made by the CSC to Conference.

### DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF CONFERENCE TOPICS

The Conference Steering Committee recommends that the deadline for receipt of Conference Topics for

2024 be 4pm Sunday 9th June 2024. *Carried by show of hands.*

#### 2024 CONFERENCE DATES

The Conference Steering Committee recommends that the dates of the 2024 Annual General Service Conference be 2nd - 3rd November 2024. *Carried by show of hands.*

#### CSC MEETING

The Conference Steering Committee recommends that the 2023 CSC meet with the 2024 CSC as soon as possible after Conference to conduct a post-Conference debrief, update the CSC CSP and set dates and priorities for 2024. *Carried by show of hands.*

#### CONFERENCE TRANSCRIPTION

The Conference Steering Committee recommends that the CSC investigate the most cost-effective way for key audio recordings of the 2023 conference be transcribed to text and edited, for archive and easy reference as well as to form the basis of the Conference Report. *Carried by show of hands.*

#### LEGACY ITEMS (ADVISORY ACTIONS IN PROGRESS / CARRIED OVER FROM PRE 2023)

Previously these updates would have been provided and/or executed by the relevant Conference Committee. As those committees no longer exist under the revised committee structure, the Conference Steering Committee created a legacy items section for these.

These legacy items were voted on at Conference 2023:

**16/2019:** Draft manuscript of 'Message Stick – Personal Stories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members of AA' with cover art presented to Conference 2023 for final approval. Carried by show of hands. 3000 copies to be printed.

**2/22:** Revised section for Section 4 of the Service Manual, *The District and District Committee Member*, presented at Conference 2023, Carried by show of hands.

**4/22:** Redevelopment of proposed pamphlet of a less formal, easier to read and use type that improves a Correctional Facility engagement with Alcoholics Anonymous after they have left the facility presented to Conference 2023. Carried by show of hands.

Updates were provided for other legacy items as per the below table:

Advisory Action #	Description	Status
<b>22/2019</b>	Policy & Admissions Working Group A - That Conference undertake a review of its current voting structure, having regard to the Right of Participation, to identify options for change that would enable Area Delegates to constitute more than two-thirds of the voting members at the Australian General Service Conference.	Report to be delivered to Conference 2023 (P&A Working Group A)
<b>2020</b>	The Board resolved that the Chairman of the General Service Board would invite members of the Board of Narcotics Anonymous to meet with them at some time during the July Board meeting to discuss issues relating to dually addicted members.	This will be revisited at the February 2024 Board meeting for action
<b>26/2020</b>	To be added to group handbook - group problems should be resolved by group conscience and that the General Service Conference, the General Service Board and the General Service	Added to electronic copy, Next hard copy reprint due

	Office have no responsibility for solving group problems'	August 2024
2/2021	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.	GSB working group to report on this to Conference 2023
4/2021	Conference resolved to accept the Conference PI&CPC Committee's recommendation that a Chat Now feature on the national website be developed.	Update to Conference 2023. This is now live.
6/2021	Conference resolved to accept the proposal that radio community service announcements targeting indigenous and LGBTI+ communities be accepted.	<p>Last update 2022 - LGBT+ in progress Indigenous needs someone to champion the project.</p> <p>LGBTQI+ community contacts advise radio is not a medium they'd look to for info.</p> <p>Rolled over to a 2024 Working Group.</p> <p>First Nations contacts have not responded. - Suggest putting on hold to see if a more holistic approach to 1st nations attraction arises following the 2 topics at 2023 conference</p> <p>Rolled over to a 2024 Working Group</p>
7/2021	Conference resolved to accept the Conference PI&CPC Committee's recommendation that the proposal to produce a series of engaging videos aimed at professionals with the health, prisons and armed forces sectors be accepted.	<p>Last update 2022 - PI&amp;CPC Working Group in contact with a member experienced in this project</p> <p>Agreed to start with a corrections version - Chris and Narelle to explore content framework</p> <p>Rolled over to a 2024 Working Group</p>
8/2021	Conference resolved to accept the amended Conference Literature Committee's recommendation that a short paragraph encouraging groups to inform members as to how their contributions are distributed be included in the AA Group Handbook.	Next reprint - 2024 GST to write paragraph
12/2021	Conference resolved to accept the Conference Literature Committee's recommendation that the Australian AA Group Handbook be updated to include an extra section on how an online group may function.	<p>Next reprint - 2024</p> <p>GSB to follow up after conference depending on Topic</p>
024/2021	Conference resolved to accept the Conference PI&CPC Committee's recommendation that any future videos submitted for Conference approval should have paid actors or non AA members	Paragraph be added to Guideline 07
025/2021	Conference resolved to accept the Conference PI&CPC Committee's recommendation that the General Service Board <b>explore options</b> for co-ordinating the use of digital media as a method of PI on a national scale.	PI & PA committee found expense was prohibitive for national version. Local versions at discretion of local entities. Completed
32/2021	Conference resolved to accept the Conference Treatment Facilities & Accessibility Committee's floor action; recommendation that the General Service Board be requested to	Quotes received, next steps to be discussed at November 2023 Board Meeting



	take the steps necessary to produce an Auslan translation of Chapter 5 of the Big Book as soon as possible.	
45/2021	<i>Conference resolved to accept the following Floor Action:</i> That the Australian General Service Conference request the Australian GSB to bring the sentence: New volunteer corporate directors will ask why any paid woman staff member should also be a director and thereby have a vote as good as their own (Concept IV ,Section 12, pg 26) to the attention of the US/Canada GSB, for potential consideration for removal from the Service Manual and other AA conference approved literature.	GSB to write to GSB North America addressing this.
2021	The Board resolved that a sub-committee of young people should be set up to advise on developing strategies for encouraging young people into AA and particularly into AA Service.	This will be revisited at the February 2024 Board meeting
05/2022	Institute National Put up a AA Poster week of December 11 to recognise one of our co-Founders sobriety dated.	National PI Coordinator Rob C who has been raising awareness - efforts by all to be stepped up after Conference
6/2022	That the National AA website needs to be improved for those in search of a meeting. Currently the search function needs to be more accurate for finding meetings by location	Referred directly to Technology Team - See conference folder for Technology Report
7/2022	A search for meetings with wheelchair access on AA.org.au returns only x 4 nationally.	Referred directly to Technology Team. See conference folder for Technology Report
10/2022	Conference resolved to accept the Conference Literature Committee's recommendation that the General Service Board investigates and pursues mechanisms by which Australian members (and the worldwide Fellowship generally, can have a say in future decisions regarding changes to our key literature. *Note: The Conference Literature Committee agreed that there are references in the US/Canada Conference Charter that encourage consultation and communication between Conferences, and recommended that these channels be explored and developed, led by our World Service Delegates	To be further discussed at November 2023 Board Meeting
13/2022	That the General Service Conference (GSC) of Australia take its Inventory. The last formal Inventory of the GSC was undertaken in 1994 (28yrs ago).	Conference Inventory – set for 2024: awaiting Report from Working Group. See P&A Working Group report
23/2022	Conference resolved to accept the Conference Literature Committee's Recommendation that a limited run of an 80th Anniversary Australian Big Book be published, with the provision that a robust process is undertaken to ensure known page numbering issues and any typographical errors are reviewed and fixed as part of this process.  It was further resolved that the submitted Foreword be accepted, on the proviso that the Preface of the 50th Anniversary Edition is also included.	Proofreading entering final stages, Final versions currently being put together by the printer, then all committee members will review once more in entirety before it goes to print.
31/2022	Conference resolved to accept the Conference Policies & Admissions Committee recommendation that the submitted article 'Tradition Three and what it means for Specialised AA Groups', produced by the Trustees' Literature Committee, be made available to the Fellowship by publishing in pamphlets, AA Around Australia and other publications, websites, etc. This Advisory Action emanated from Advisory Action #023/2021. (Note - ensure that the word 'gays' is changed to match the <a href="#">updated group handbook</a> (pg 10) as per <i>Advisory Action #044/2022</i> - as the relevant section is quoted in the article.	<b>In progress.</b> Was published in AA Around Australia and the group handbook updated. Completed.  Article will be featured after Conference on the Members' website.

<b>Advisory Action #043/2022</b>	After each conference committee meeting is held in October, the draft report prepared by the committee coordinator is reviewed for accuracy and approved by the Committee Chair and/or the Trustee member of the committee before it is circulated to all Conference members or added to the Conference folder. #043/2022	Completed.
----------------------------------	---	------------

## WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND

New session for Conference, held first up on the morning of Day 2. The intention of this session was for Conference members to share any *new* information, thoughts, questions or insights on the decisions made the day before.

### What was on Conference Members' minds:

- There was a finance working group report to Conference included in a recommendation but the report had not been heard. This was raised and rectified.
- In the suite of Bridging the Gap Correctional Facilities materials that were approved there were business cards with a QR code linked to meetings list. Class A Trustee advised no phones in facilities. *It was confirmed that the cards are intended for when someone is leaving the facility.*
- Message Stick – cost to print. Could we engage with the international sponsorship fund, for example, to assist with being able to provide copies to indigenous members? *Will be explored by the GSB. It is also an opportunity for local PI committees to raise funds to get copies for local regions, etc.*

## BIDS

- The 2026 National Convention will be held on the Gold Coast.
- Areas A and B CR submitted a combined bid to host a regional 2025 Regional Forum. Bid accepted
- Area H ER bid to host a regional forum in 2024. Bid accepted.
- It was noted as a point of order that bids should be submitted 2 years in advance with evidence of full support of the Area, but that this process was not reinforced last year so a bid was accepted for next year.

## ELECTIONS

- **World Service Delegate** – 3 applications. 4 rounds of voting – went to the hat. Elected: Andrew Poad.
- **RATIFICATION OF CLASS A TRUSTEE APPOINTMENT:** Matthew Church. Passed.
- **RATIFICATION OF GENERAL SERVICE TRUSTEE APPOINTMENT:** Gabrielle Nicholson. Passed.

## FLOOR ACTIONS

1. *That a QR code for the Chat Now function be added to all reprints of PI Posters.* It was agreed to add stickers with the QR code linking directly to the national website to existing posters. To be delegated to the tech team for action.
2. **In the topic background for Proposal for a Secular Leaflet TOPIC #025/2023: it reads** re the proposed flyer that *it was accepted and displayed on the literature table at the Perth convention.*

*Floor Action:* That it be added to the National Convention Guideline (GL-15) that only conference approved literature be displayed on tables at National Conventions. Not to include event flyers or similar. The discussion raised also that the non-conference approved flyer in question had a conference approved logo on it. *A small working group will be formed to revise the Nat Con guidelines.*

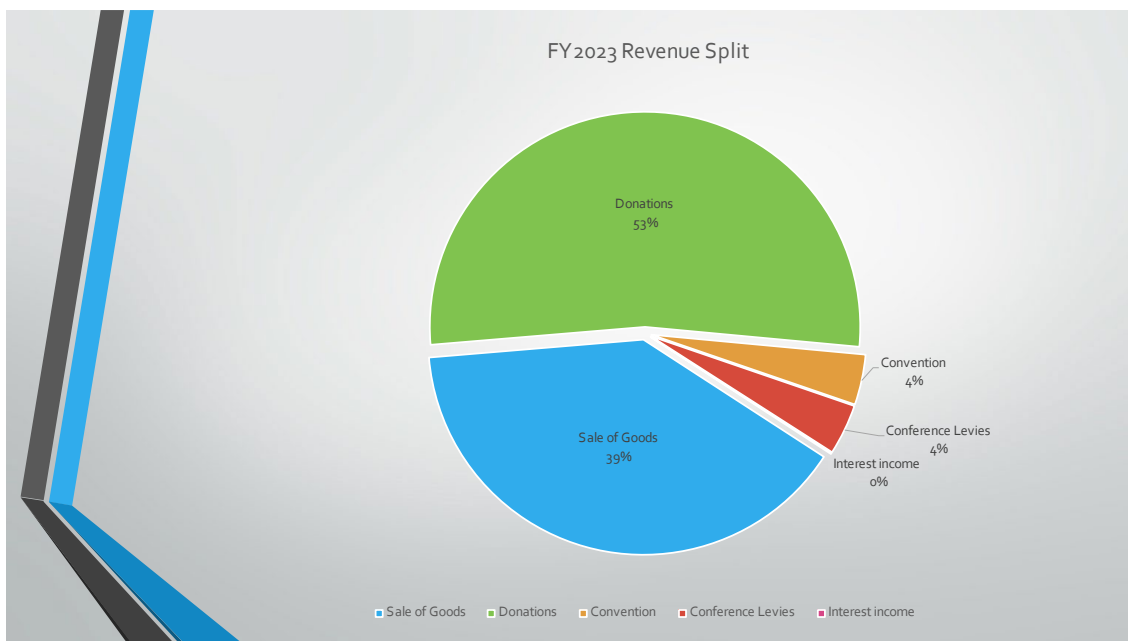
3. *Advisory Action #015/2019* resolved that a large 288cm x 233cm and giant 244cm x 415cm Concepts banner be produced for display at AA National Conventions and AA Rallies. These sizes are what are currently available from GSO for Steps and Traditions. Voting (on topic): **For: 20; Against: 9; Abstentions: 1.**

It is understood that the GSB decided not to enact this advisory action. It is further understood that there was a 2/3 majority vote for this advisory action, which is considered binding on the GSB. Following yesterday's advisory action to raise the profile of the 12 Concepts without changing any literature, it is requested that this advisory action is carried out.

*GSO staff member advised that a more cost effective way to pack and ship the banners has been identified and it was agreed earlier this year to go ahead with these banners. In progress.*

## FINANCE REPORTS

The below slides are from the auditor's presentation.

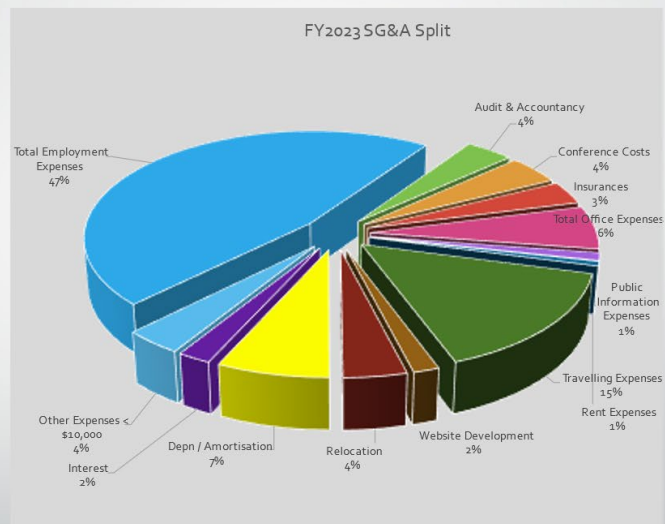




## Revenue Analysis

Category	2023	2022	Movement Favourable / (Unfavourable)	%
Sale of Goods	357,991	308,875	49,116	16%
Donations	478,446	483,368	(4,922)	(1%)
Convention	34,297	25,396	8,901	35%
Conference Levies	34,500	11,091	23,409	211%
Interest Income	897	242	655	271%
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>906,131</b>	<b>828,972</b>	<b>77,159</b>	<b>9%</b>

FY2023  
expenses  
(excluding Cost  
of Sales)



Category	2023	2022	Movement	
			Favourable / (Unfavourable)	%
Employment Expenses	298,955	283,419	(15,536)	(5%)
Audit & Accountancy	24,549	24,544	(5)	(0%)
Conference / Convention Costs	27,326	6,041	(21,285)	(352%)
Insurances	21,644	19,949	(1,695)	(8%)
Office Expenses	40,643	23,272	(17,371)	(75%)
Public Information Expenses	7,093	7,293	200	3%
Net Rent Expenses	4,097	4,273	176	4%
Add back AASB16: Lease Adj	44,115	33,723	(10,392)	(31%)
Adjusted Rent	48,212	37,996	(10,216)	(27%)
Travelling Expenses	97,125	11,272	(85,853)	(762%)
Website Development	10,159	10,166	7	(0%)
Relocation Expenses	24,791	-	(24,791)	N/A
Interest Expenses	13,024	1,056	(11,968)	(1,133%)
AASB Lease Amortisation	44,115	33,723	(10,392)	(31%)
Other Expenses < \$5,000	23,113	5,800	(17,313)	(298%)
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>636,634</b>	<b>430,808</b>	<b>(205,826)</b>	<b>(48%)</b>

## Major Operating Expenses



## FINANCIAL SUMMARY

DESCRIPTION	2023	2022
Total Revenue	906,131	828,972
Total Costs	(814,166)	(580,857)
Net Surplus / (Deficit)	91,965	248,115
Net Assets	1,226,176	1,134,211
Cash at Bank (Cash Flow Statement)	1,072,465	963,405
Total Cash held	1,169,239	1,060,082

Observations / comments -

- **Travel expenditure - \$11k (2022) - \$97k (2023).** Perth travel costs \$30k. Hobart \$15k. GSO staff went to events in Cairns \$5k. Balance – mostly board meetings and incidental travel.
- **Audit provision \$14k.** This seems very high based on my own personal, professional experience of audit costs.

Questions asked -

- **22/23 Conference Levies \$34,500.** Conference and convention costs combined shown as \$27,326. \$6k of that was deposit for the 2023 Conference venue. I asked what the projected cost is for this year's Conference. Answer from GSB is unknown at this stage as historically there

has not been a clear process for determining this. Finance committee is working on one so that Conference levies can be more accurately calculated going forward.

- Donations for year \$478,446. Operating costs after one off expenses are taken out are \$551,634. Bottom line - operating costs still being subsidised by literature sales.

The below slides are from the Chair of the Trustees Finance Committee.

## Finance Forecast for 2024

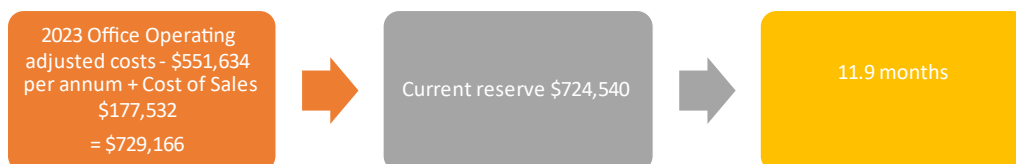
Plan for 2024 based on 2023 Audit figures

Operating Expenses for 2023 were \$36,634 per annum

The General Service Board have identified savings of approx. \$85,000 in the areas of travel, Conference and relocation expenses.

Adjusted expense figure is \$551,634 per annum, \$45,969 per month and \$10,608 per week

## Prudent Reserve status



## Contributions

Contribution goal per week \$10,608.34

Average contributions from July to present per week \$7269.24

Leaving a shortfall of \$3,339.10 per week and \$56,764.7 year to date

### Observations / comments -

- Taking steps to reduce board member travel and travel expenses overall
- Current prudent reserve status \$724,540 (11.9 months).
- Project fund current balance \$136,467. Noting Message Stick printing (approx. \$30k), Auslan project costs and other projects nearing completion will come out of this
- Average contributions since July 2023 have dropped from \$10,608 - \$7269. YTD shortfall (against operating expenses) already \$56,764.

**Increasing contributions from members and groups remains a high priority.  
Groups hold the power of the purse.**

### ASK IT BASKET

1. *How can we help ensure conference topics are coherent and not repetitious?*

The CSC is currently working on an amended topics form as well as broader criteria for where submitted topics are sent and what topics go to Conference, and better guidance for the Conference committees. We are working towards a long-term goal of topic submissions being open most of the year, with a reasonable cutoff date.

2. *How will members be able to apply to join working groups that need to be formed to carry out Conference advisory actions?*

Once the materials are ready, the details of working groups as well as the 2024 topics form will be published on the members website.

The 65<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference of AA Australia was closed at 2:03pm on Sunday 5 November 2023.