

Investigations

into Information Contained in Topic #008/2015



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Introduction

2015 Conference formed a Structure Review Committee to, amongst other things, investigate information contained in the background of Topic #008/2015 (see ATTACHMENT A). To summarise, the Topic asserted that:

- the Australian structure was based on the US model but that may not be the 'best system' for Australia;
- NZ, the Netherlands and the UK use structures that differ from the US model and these work better for them.

This paper assesses these claims by:

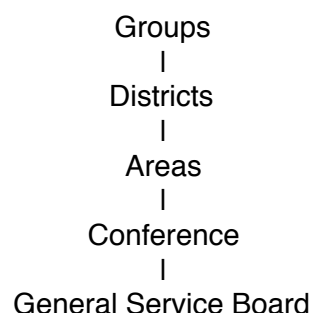
- 1) Outlining the North American structure shared by the USA and Canada;
- 2) Summarising the Australian General Service Structure;
- 3) Listing Central Service functions (as set out in General Service literature);
- 4) Listing similarities and differences between the Australian and North American models;
- 5) Recording the structures in use in some other countries (also see ATTACHMENT B); and,
- 6) Taking inventory and offering some ideas of interest from overseas.

North America

USA Groups =	60,698
USA Population Density =	34.8 /km ²
Canada Groups =	5,043
Canada Population Density =	3.9 /km ²

Structure Snapshot

1. The classic North American model for AA structure is an inverted hierarchy as follows:



2. 93 Delegates, Trustees, Directors, G.S.O. and Grapevine staffs attend the North American Conference (Total = 132) which runs for six days. Delegates must have at least a two-thirds majority
3. In North America there are 2 additional not-for-profit Boards reporting through the GSB: an AA Grapevine Board (and Office); and, the AA World Services Board. Finally, the GSB is responsible for the General Service Office
4. The North American Board is composed of 7 Non-Alcoholic Trustees plus 8 Regional Trustees; 4 General Service Trustees (from World Services Board and Grapevine Board); and 2 Trustees-at-Large (Total = 21)

Australia: History of the Structures

In 1952, the NSW Service Council was established and Victoria followed two years later; 1954 was also the year NSW proposed that the States get together for a national forum which eventuated in Melbourne in 1959.

That gathering established an Australian Conference subject to the confirmation of the State service bodies. They agreed, and the first gathering, held in 1961, declared that Conference 'exists to further our collective Twelfth Step work at the nation-wide level.'

In 1968, the year the final State Council was established in Tasmania, Conference amended its Constitution to admit 'State' Central Service Offices to Conference with full voting rights.

In March 1970, the tenth anniversary Convention resolved that Australia had come of age and would assume responsibility for the Three Legacies of AA. Australia formally adopted the North American General Service structure in March 1970.

From the late 1970s, Conference thrice sought greater unity with the NSW Service Council, including participation at Conference by its Chair. However, Conference eventually broke off discussions in 1982 because the NSW Service Council continued to refer to Conference as a 'bogus body'.

1986 Conference again adopted 'as nearly as possible' the North American structure. It had considered extending Conference membership to all CSOs but stuck with representation by State Central Service Offices for the 'foreseeable' future.

In 1988, Conference formed a select committee on Third Legacy Structure (comprising members from the Board, Conference and Central Service Office Delegates) to consider greater interaction between Conference, the Board, General and Central Service systems. The next year, Conference asked the Committee to consider the participation at Conference of the increasing number of Central Service Offices that were being set up around Australia.

In 1991, the Structure Committee recommended to Conference that existing service bodies (CSOs) merge into the Australian General Service Conference structure as Regional Committees with voting rights. The following year, Conference stuck with inviting one CSO from each Region, preferably represented by the Chairperson, to represent all the CSOs in that Region at conference with full voting rights.

1993 Conference again confirmed this decision but also referred a Topic to the Committee that proposed a singular stream of service rather than having General Service and Central Service. However, 1995 Conference rejected this call for a single service structure. The 1996 Conference encouraged Areas and CSOs to liaise over service matters to avoid demarcation disputes.

In 1997, in view of the growth of the General Service Structure since the days when Central Service Offices were the major provider of AA services, Conference removed the vote from Central Service Offices attending Conference. CSOs could still attend as observers.

In 2009, Conference rejected a Topic calling for a meeting of Conference and all Central Service Offices to consider unity.

Australia: General Service

Meetings = 2,062

Population Density = 2.9 /km²

1. Groups are aggregated in 21 geographic Areas of which 18 are active enough to send 1 Delegate to Annual Conference
2. 15 Areas have geographical or service type District structures within them
3. In parallel, Groups support 25 geographically based Central Service Offices
4. Voting members of Conference include Area Delegates, Trustees, World Service Delegates and one GSO representative (Total votes ≤ 34)
5. Members of the General Service Board with voting rights at Conference include up to 4 Non-Alcoholic Trustees, 6 Regional Trustees; and, 2 General Service Trustees. 2 World Service Delegates also attend Board Meetings (Total = 14)
6. A GSO employs 3 full-time staff.

Size of the Current Australian Structures

Region	Meetings	Active Areas	Groups Active in Area	CSOs
Northern	23	1 of 1	50%	3
North-Eastern	427	3 of 3	20%	7
Eastern	863	7 of 8	1 – 36%	9
Southern	457	3 of 5	0 – 25%	4
Central	102	2 of 2	10 – 20%	1
Western	190	2 of 2	21%	1
Australia	2,062	18 of 21	Av ≈ 15%	25

Australia: Central Service

If Conference chooses to proceed further with a review of the Australian AA structure, CSOs should be invited to offer their view of their structures and processes. For this investigation, an overview of AA documents¹ indicates the functions of a CSO or suggests how a CSO should run.

Guideline GL-12 defines a CSO as follows:

A Central Service Office (CSO) is an AA service office that involves partnership among Groups in a community, just as AA Groups themselves are partnerships of individuals. It is established to carry out certain functions common to all the Groups, functions which are best handled by a centralised office, and it is usually maintained, supervised and supported by these Groups in their own general interest. It exists to aid the Groups in their common primary purpose of carrying the AA message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

The General Service AA literature suggests nine functional areas of a CSO:

- 1 • Handle requests for help
 - Listing in the local telephone directory
 - Receiving, distributing and following up Twelfth Step calls
 - Answering enquiries about AAA
- 2 • Maintain a conveniently located office
 - Maintain a PO Box
- 3 • Ordering, selling and distributing AA Conference-Approved literature
- 4 • Accepting Group donations and redirecting to GSO and Areas
- 5 • Information Exchange
 - Share local news
 - Providing a newsletter about local AA events
 - Prepare and publish periodicals such as meeting lists and contacts
 - Produce a Regional bulletin or magazine
- 6 • Manage the details of local AA events
- 7 • Maintain information about local hospitals and recovery facilities for alcoholics
 - Make [Hospitalisation] arrangements
- 8 • Local Committees on PI&CPC
 - Make arrangements for AA speakers
 - Assist the press and other public media
 - Cooperation with other community agencies
- 9 • Maintain contact with Groups in Correctional Facilities and Treatment Centres
 - Have at least one member of the CSO Committee on the T&CF team

Some of these suggested functions duplicate ones that some Areas currently perform. There are good examples of the two arms of service working together in such cases as well as unfortunate instances of competition between arms of the Australian AA structure. Note that the *Service Manual* suggests:

¹ AA Australian Service Manual, including Guideline GL-12 on Central Service Offices; Australian AA Group Handbook; as well as the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts.

In Areas where there are CSOs providing the necessary services, General Service committees should not duplicate those services; however, in those Areas where there is little or no CSO activity, the General Service committee has frequently undertaken to provide many of these services. (Section M-05 Page 15)

Further, *Guideline GL-12* notes:

CSOs and Area Committees are complementary rather than competitive AA operations. Both exist to help ensure AA unity and to fulfil AA's primary purpose of carrying the message, but they do it through separate structures.

Finally, the *Australian Guideline*, published a quarter century ago, makes the following observation about the functions of a CSO:

AA's experience has clearly demonstrated that central offices are essential, particularly in populous areas, and there are close to 500 of them functioning around the world, performing vital AA services. Needless to say, these constitute a network of service outlets and AA contacts for which we should be very grateful.

Sometimes, however, CSO ventures have bogged down in disputes over money, authority and like matters and have thus become less effective in carrying the AA message. It is not always clear why these troubles have arisen, but often it has been because the proper functions of a CSO were not clearly explained or understood, or because there was some disregard of the principles inherent in AA's Twelve Traditions.

There are 25 Central Service Offices across Australia:

Australian Capital Territory

Canberra

New South Wales

Ballina
Blue Mountains & Western Sydney
Bondi Junction / Sydney City
Central Coast
Newcastle
Northern Sydney
Southern Highlands
Wollongong & South Coast

Northern Territory

Darwin
Alice Springs
Katherine

Queensland

Brisbane
Gold Coast – Southport
Sunshine Coast
Cairns
Mackay
Toowoomba
Townsville

South Australia

Adelaide

Tasmania

Hobart
Launceston

Victoria

Prahan
Richmond

Western Australia

Perth

Similarities & Differences

On paper, the Australian inverted hierarchy approximates the North American structure. However, there are differences.

From the perspective of **still-suffering alcoholics**:

- 1) Websites and helplines compete for public attention
- 2) Listings of AA meetings can differ possibly causing inconvenience for newcomers
- 3) As a result of Conference deferring to the traditional role of CSOs, there is no online Australian outlet for AA literature (although the GSB is now looking at the idea)

From the position of **members**:

- 4) The Australian structure is hard to understand; it is even harder to explain
- 5) North America synchronises rotation of General Service roles to permit smooth progression through service positions

From the viewpoint of **Groups**:

- 6) North American Areas are mostly based on population or language clusters (rather than lines on a map as in Australia)
- 7) The Australian General Service and Central Service structures sometimes overlap in their functions. Some Groups seem to accommodate this ambiguity while other Groups restrict themselves to supporting one arm of service only. The disappointing number of Groups participating in CSOs and Areas may partly be explained by the parallel and sometimes competing structures causing some Groups to disengage from any involvement beyond the Group—*anecdotal evidence is that these Groups want nothing to do with it apart from donating surplus funds*

From the standpoint of **CSOs**:

- 8) Some Central Service Offices pre-date the introduction of the General Service Structure and independently maintain their historical service roles

From the vantage point of **Conference**:

- 9) The small number of Areas in Australia means that Delegates do not have a two-thirds majority over the Trustees at Conference as the Service Manual stipulates
- 10) In Australia, Topics go directly to the Conference Agenda Committee. In North America, the GSO checks them against previous Conference decisions before passing them to the appropriate Committee to determine how the matter will be presented to Conference: a presentation or a workshop or a Topic for Committee consideration.
- 11) Strong and enduring loyalty of a sizeable number of Groups to the original Australian Central Service structures challenges the confidence with which the Australian General Service Conference can claim to represent the Australian Fellowship as a whole and legitimately perform the function of being the Group Conscience of AA Australia

From the outlook of the **GSB**:

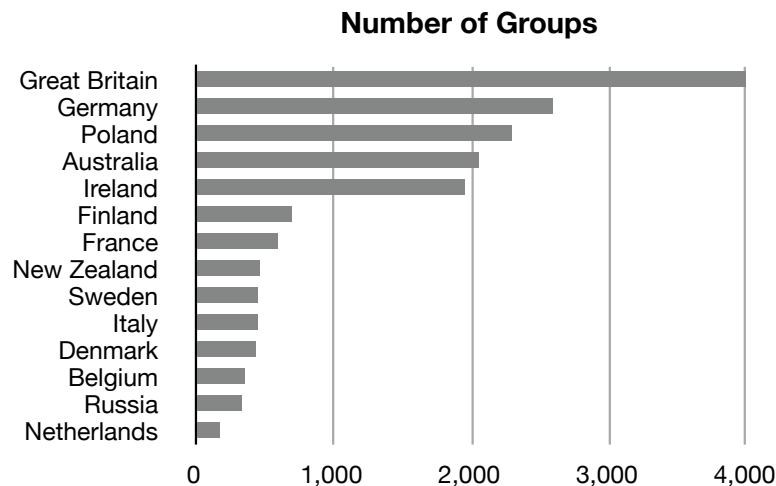
- 12) Australia retains copyright of two AA registered trademark logos while the USA relinquished those rights in 1993
- 13) North American World Service Delegates are chosen from amongst Trustees (rather than all members as in Australia)
- 14) 'Regional' and National Coordinators, who report to the Australian Board, exist outside the classic North American Structure
- 15) Although the GSB is formally responsible for supplying AA literature in Australia, some AA literature is sourced direct from overseas thus reducing the profits available to General Service to carry the message

Other Countries

While it was difficult to get consistent, complete and current information from other countries, ATTACHMENT B gives known details of some alternative AA structures in 14 other countries. The following table shows the relative sizes of the investigated Fellowships:

Country	Groups	Number at Conference	Board Size
North America	65,741	132	21
Mexico	14,000		
Great Britain	4,000	126	24
Germany	2,600	72	30
Poland	2,300	60	19
Australia	2,062	34	14
Ireland	1,959	30	7
Finland	700		6
France	596	50	13
New Zealand	475	19	8
Sweden	465	33	7
Italy	460		11
Denmark	436	64	17
Belgium	363	14	4
Russia	350	40	
Netherlands	176	52	23

The following chart ranks Fellowships by the number of Groups. (North America and Mexico are not shown because their vastly greater size distorts the chart.) It reveals that Australia sits in a band of similar sized Fellowships with Germany, Poland and Ireland. Although it has twice as many Groups as Australia, Great Britain's structure may also be relevant. Some useful ideas are included in the next section with further details of the 14 overseas structures at ATTACHMENT B.



Taking Inventory

The Structural Review Committee concludes that the Australian General Service Structure is nominally based on the North American model but functions differently because:

- a) there are far fewer Groups in Australia (2,062 vs 65,741); and,
- b) a Central Service structure had evolved organically in Australia in the decades before the General Service structure was introduced in 1970.

The most obvious consequence of the first point is that Groups in many parts of Australia are unable to sustain Districts in any consistent way while some Areas function with the involvement of just a handful of Groups—and a few Areas can't even manage that and are inactive. The number of Groups actively involved with many CSOs seems to be similarly lacking. Another measure of the thinness of Groups across Australia is that there are not enough Areas to give Delegates a two-thirds majority at Conference as stipulated in the Service Manual.

The most significant consequence of the second point is that CSOs are not adequately accommodated in the Australian structure. Some members go so far as to believe that the literal imposition of the 'North American' model may have been unfair to CSOs.

The Big Book uses the metaphor that any business needs to take regular inventory as a 'fact-finding and fact-facing process' (p64). The fact is that no inventory of the Australian structure has been taken in nearly half a century.

The last time Conference took inventory, in 2011, the discussion was focused on internal processes. The only inventory before that, in 1994, was mostly about involving the Groups and carrying the message more effectively. Therefore, the Structure Review Committee suggests that—as we approach half a century of using the North American structure—Conference is well overdue to review the issue of structure in Australia.

If we are to collectively face facts as the Big Book encourages, it would be useful to first acknowledge that there has been some ongoing history of unproductive confrontation. That an uneasy situation persists after 46 years should alert us that grafting the North American General Service structure on to the existing Australian Central Service structure has not worked as well as our sober forebears must have hoped in the late 1960s when they set up the Australian Conference.

In some parts of Australia, the legacy is that scarce Group resources (members doing service and excess funds) are pulled in different directions. There are also unfortunate gaps and overlaps in carrying the message. There have even been examples of competition between Central and General Service which must bewilder the professional community. Both Conference and the GSB have been repeatedly distracted by such situations for too long. Finally, and most importantly, members are confused and some even say the situation discourages them from service.

The broad message from the overseas evidence is that other countries can uphold the general framework of the North American model while adapting it to their situation.

Australia may similarly be able to adjust the model to the size and history of our local Fellowship. Bill W wrote in Concept II: *'The power of the groups and members to alter their world service structure and to criticise its operation is virtually supreme.'*

Therefore, to productively focus any calm consideration, the Structure Review Committee captures some relevant ideas of interest from overseas in the following four scenarios. These are only offered as starting points: prayer, meditation and quiet discussion could improve them.

Scenario 1: Status Quo

As the Concepts remind us, AA always needs to consider the 'do nothing' option.

Scenario 2: Fine Tune the Existing Model

Groups might support the adoption of some ideas from overseas. For example:

- a) A separate **Australian Structure Manual** could tailor the Twelve Concepts for the local structure (as Great Britain did) and describe:
 - how the Australian structure works, including for online Groups
 - which entity or tier carries out what function
 - what happens at the interfaces
 - how AA money is to be managed
 - b) Improve communications within the Fellowship, particularly online
 - c) Allow Groups to vote directly on Topics online
 - d) All Conference, Board and finance documents could be put on a member website (provided anonymity was protected)
 - e) Conference could re-confirm Board membership annually
 - f) Allow volunteers to work, as required, in the GSO or for Conference or the Board.
-

Scenario 3: Add CSOs to Conference

Reconsider the 1991 recommendation of the then Third Legacy Structure Committee that all CSOs should be added to Conference as voting members.

- a) Including CSOs in Conference means that Delegates gain a two-thirds majority
 - b) This structure should open the way for a national online shop for AA literature.
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Scenario 4: A European Model

- a) This scenario has as its guiding principle that each Group should only work through a single channel of service. In some places, an existing CSO could invite Area(s) to join with them as a joint 'Intergroup' Steering Committee; in other locations, especially where there is no CSO, an Area would assume the role
- b) 'Intergroups' would be the primary providers of Twelfth Step services. These could align with Government Health or Social Service regions
- c) Group (sic) Service Representatives are pivotal to this structure. This would hopefully increase Group participation in service
- d) Intergroups send Delegates to Conference. Assuming some CSOs and Areas combine, the total number of Delegates would be less than 46 (25 CSOs + 21 Areas) but more than a two-thirds majority
- e) Alcoholic Trustees responsible for portfolios (such as, for example, PI & New Media; Literature; Finance & Admin; Justice; Remote) could replace Regional Trustees on the Board. Conference would need to be mindful to ensure a spread of Trustees from across Australia.
- f) A centrally located 'Australian Service Office', reporting to the Board, would administer national functions such as Literature; Information; & Communications. There may be a few satellite contact offices for Groups and members hosted by existing CSOs
- g) Conference secretariat support would be independent of GSO
- h) There would only be a single website for the public and a single national Helpline number that is answered locally.

Attachments

A: Topic 008/2015

B: Structures in 14 Other Overseas Fellowships

TOPIC 008/2015**That the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous Australia takes its Inventory on how our AA Structure works in AA Australia.****WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND OR REASON FOR THE TOPIC?**

We have a Structure in AA that was based on the Structure used in the United States that while it may work well in the USA may not be the best system for the Fellowship of AA in Australia. I have personally been to New Zealand, Netherlands, UK and all these countries have adopted a system that works best for them rather than the US model. A Quote from the Big Book "A business which takes no regular Inventory usually goes broke. Taking a commercial inventory is a fact finding and fact facing process." Page 64.

Bill Wilson also wrote in the 12 & 12 on page 129.

"The unity of A.A. is the most cherished quality our Society has. Our lives, the lives of all to come, depend squarely upon it. Without unity, the heart of A.A. would cease to beat; our world arteries would no longer carry the life-giving grace of God."

DO YOU HAVE A SUGGESTED SOLUTION?

Have a Service Inventory separate from the Annual Service Conference with all the current Conference members, at least 20 past delegates and a representative from every CSO in Australia with an AA facilitator with solid AA Recovery, excellent knowledge of the Traditions & Concepts and a solid business background. (We do have current & past members from the Judiciary or current or past board members of large corporations in the fellowship) or even an outside facilitator.

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

We need to seriously look at the AA structure to streamline a system that works well for Australia and is more inclusive of the general membership & fellowship in Australia. This will build some enthusiasm to get people into Service to help in their own personal recovery.

Bring the CSO's and the General Service Structure together and come up with a way forward to help the still suffering alcoholic rather than fighting each other and wasting resources and energy.

WHAT ARE THE ESTIMATED COSTS OF IMPLEMENTING THIS SUGGESTION?

There will be a substantial cost to bring together all those participating but we need to change for the benefit of Alcoholics Anonymous Australia to make our fellowship more attractive to the still suffering Alcoholic. We need to look with a vision to the future and embrace a better way of doing AA in Australia that fits in with the Steps, Traditions & Concepts.

I'm certain that if the fellowship of AA Australia was informed in a good manner of what this was about it would embrace the idea and extra money would come from the groups to finance this endeavour, it is in the interest of every member to have a better structure for our fellowship, a structure that brings about Unity for all.

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

The Group have had an informed group conscience and a unanimous decision to submit this Topic to Area for approval to go as a Topic for conference was made.

Belgium (Flanders)

Groups = 363

Population Density = 370.7 /km²

Structure Snapshot

1. Groups form 5 provincial 'Workgroups'
2. 10 Provincial Delegates and 4 Non-Alcoholic Trustees attend a General Meeting of an AA non-profit legal entity (Total = 14)
3. The entity also has a Board of 2 Non-Alcoholic Trustees; 1 member Trustee; plus the Secretary/Treasurer (Total = 4)
4. GSO provides services to Groups, Provincial Workgroups and 'coordinates the Central Offices'
5. A single distribution centre provides AA literature and a monthly magazine

Denmark

Groups = 436

Population Density = 132.9 /km²

Structure Snapshot

1. Groups send representatives to 6 Regions
2. Each Region appoints Delegates to Conference in proportion to the number of Groups in the Region
3. Conference includes Delegates; Chair; representatives of the standing committees; Trustees; International Delegates; and, a GSO representative
4. Regional Delegates have two-thirds majority at Conference (Total = 64)
5. Each Region sends two Trustees to the General Service Board of up to 17 including: Chair; Vice-Chair; Treasurer and Secretary (elected by the Conference for a 4 year term). There are no current Non-Alcoholic Trustees (Total ≤ 17)
6. GSO has no paid workers

Finland

Groups = 700 (including 50 abroad)

Population Density = 18 /km²

Structure Snapshot

1. Groups form 17 Regions that send Delegates to AA Service Finland which meets about 6 times a year. Regions also form standing committees
2. In addition, all Groups hold an Annual Great Meeting where any Group can vote or promote an initiative
3. Groups in a Region organise the Annual Great Meeting as part of the spring Convention which the Groups also organise

4. Finnish AA Publishing Inc has board of 6 Trustees serving for three years and is responsible for copyright and printing, legal affairs, contracts, finance, PR, and, the GSO (which has 2.5 employees)
5. There is no GSB: the AA publishing entity performs those functions
6. There are no Non-Alcoholic Trustees; instead, AA cooperates closely with professionals

Known Issues

- Reports suggest that competing structures exist but no further information was available in time for this report.

France

Groups = 596 including Groups from overseas French dominions

Population Density = 119 /km²

Structure Snapshot

1. Groups form 22 Regions [N.B. Other reference says 6 Regional Committees]
2. 50 Regional Delegates attend Annual Conference
3. General Service Council is made up of 4 Non-Alcoholics; 3 General Service Trustees; 5 Regional Trustees; and, 1 International Trustee (Total = 13)
4. GSO with 3 paid employees deals with National Health; Justice; National Hotline and Website; Literature; and, Co-operation with not-for-profit organisations
5. Intergroups, Districts or Regions manage volunteers for the national hotline number

Germany

Groups = 2,600 in German-speaking countries (of which 2,500 are in Germany)

Population Density = 232 /km²

Structure Snapshot

1. Groups hold regular Regional Service meetings and also form 12 larger Intergroups which each meet 4 times a year.
2. Intergroups are bound together by a legal entity
3. Conference includes 12 Intergroup Representatives; 30 from GSB; World Service Delegates; plus, Invited Guests (Total ≤ 72)
4. General Service Board includes Chair; 2 Vice-Chairs; 4 Non-Alcoholic Trustees; Non-Alcoholic Chair of the Intergroup legal entity; 12 Intergroup Reps; 4 Referees (Finance; PI; Literature; and, New Media); Magazine Editor; Speaker of the Editorial Staff; Speaker of the Board; General Manager and Secretary of GSO; World Service Delegates (Total ≤ 30)
5. Single General Service Office
6. AA Contact Offices exist in 40 larger cities
7. 30 online meetings function like real Groups

Great Britain

Meetings = over 4,000

Population Density = 266.6 /km²

Structure Snapshot

1. Great Britain started off with the North American model but over time different arrangements arose, partly dictated by changes to the UK law
2. Resulting structure is simple with its elements and organisation made easy to understand in a Structure Manual (separate to the Service Handbook) which describes how the structure works, who carries out what function and what happens at the interfaces. It shows clear separation between the tiers and sets out how AA money is to be managed
3. The Structure Manual includes *The Concepts for Service in Great Britain* after they applied for and were granted permission to modify the Twelve Concepts for World Service.
4. Groups still underpin the structure and Group Service Representatives (GSRs) are pivotal to how the structure functions
5. Groups form 118 Intergroups (plus 1 for the 496 English-Speaking Groups on the Continent) that try to reflect local government and health district boundaries. Most Twelfth Step work is done at Intergroup level. Intergroups that overlap liaise with each other to avoid duplication or gaps in service
6. Intergroups send 3 representatives each to 16 Regional Assemblies (including 1 for English-speaking Groups in Europe)
7. Regions have responsibility of supporting isolated or remote members, including 'loners' in places such as the Scottish Highlands and islands, but the two national magazines really serve as the main link with these members
8. Each Region sends 6 Delegates to Conference (= 96) along with 21 from the Board plus a Conference Chair; Editor; General Secretary; 5 GSO staff; and 1 from the Northern Service Office (Total attending = 126)
9. Board consists of 4 Non-Alcoholic Trustees; Trustees from 16 Regions; Chair; Vice Chair; Treasurer; Manager of GSO (Total = 24)
10. Board holds an annual workshop to reflect on personal and collective effectiveness
11. GSO functions are clearly set out in the Structure Manual
12. GSO is centrally located in York with satellite offices in Glasgow and London
13. Electronic communications are encouraged. For example, AAGB hosts local AA websites for free on a single website

Ireland

Meetings = 1,959

Population Density = 73.4 /km²

Structure Snapshot

1. Each Group sends 2 GSRs to form Area Committees
2. 4 members from each Area form 4 Provincial Intergroup Committees
3. Each Province sends 4 Delegates to Conference plus their Provincial Secretaries

4. Conference is made up of 16 Delegates; 4 Intergroup Secretaries; 7 Trustees; 2 World Service Delegates; 1 Board Secretary (Total = 30)
5. The General Service Board is comprised on 3 Non-Alcoholic Trustees and 4 Trustees (Total = 7)
6. A single GSO in Dublin is responsible for Communication; Service; Information; and, Literature.

Known Issues

- Some 'turbulence' within the Fellowship caused postponement of 2013 Conference. No update became available in time for this report.

Italy

Groups = 460

Population Density = 208.5 /km²

Structure Snapshot

1. Groups form Zones of 5–15 Groups
2. Zones aggregate into 19 geographical Areas
3. Each Area can send up to 3 Delegates to Conference
4. GSB comprised of 1 Non-Alcoholic Trustee; 4 macro-Region Trustees; 5 Chairs of Committees (Internal; External; Literature; Admin; International); and, the National Secretary (Total = 11)

Mexico

Meetings = over 14,000

Population Density = 64.5 /km²

Structure Snapshot

1. Mexican structure officially follows the North American model of Districts, Areas, Conference and Board
2. The General Service structure performs Central Service functions (Central Mexicana de Servicios Generales de Alcohólicos Anónimos: www.aamexico.org.mx)

Known Issues

- Many Groups are outside the official AA structure, the majority of which are part of two alternative structures:
 - a) 24 Horas (24 Hours) & Jóvenes 24 Horas (24 Hours for Young People); and,
 - b) Sección México (Section Mexico)
- In addition, there are a few other small-scale non-official structures
- Many of these Groups in the alternative structures consider punishment and guilt as key components for recovery while some of these Groups do not subscribe to the Twelve AA Traditions
- Further, there are also some Groups named 'Island Groups' that do not let people from other Groups share; some members consider that they are breaking the Traditions

Netherlands

Meetings = 176 [An additional 42 English-speaking Groups affiliate with the UK]

Population Density = 500.5 /km²

Structure Snapshot

1. Groups form 6 Regions
2. Regional Secretaries act as 'Regional Service Officers' who respond to public enquires and communicate with Groups. This arrangement, combined with Regional representation on the Board, ensures clear channels of communication and service responsibilities and prevents any doubling up or ambiguity
3. Each Region sends 5 Delegates to Conference which is also attended by the Board (Total ≤ 52 votes). It uses anonymous voting for appointments
4. The Board is composed of up to 6 Non-Alcoholic Trustees; 6 Regional Chairs; 6 coordinators of various committees and services; 2 European Service Meeting representatives; 2 World Service Meeting representatives; and, the Chair of the GSO (Total ≤ 23). It meets quarterly
5. Three Foundations are responsible for the Big Book; the magazine; and, the Groups
6. Literature is sold through the GSO which is staffed by volunteers. It reports to the Board. There are no CSOs

New Zealand

Meetings = 475

Population Density = 17.1 /km²

Structure Snapshot

1. Groups form 3 Areas
2. Each Area sends 3 Delegates to Conference for three-year terms so there is overlap of 1st, 2nd and 3rd year Delegates within each Area
3. Conference is also attended by a Chairperson and Secretary plus the Board and World Service Delegates (Total = 19)
4. A Board includes 2 Class A Trustees, 3 Regional Trustees, a Chair, Secretary and Treasurer (Total = 8). The Executive Officer attends without a vote. The Board meets twice a year plus holds two teleconferences
5. All Trustees are expected to resign each year and stand for re-election. In addition, Conference may, with 75% vote, re-organise the Board or request resignations and nominate new Trustees
6. A General Service Office in Wellington employs 2 staff to look after Literature, Conference, Board matters, Group services and Public Information
7. There are Service Centres in Auckland and Christchurch. These are set up by local committees to serve their local Groups
8. Both the Board and Conference send out newsletters. In addition, all Board, finance and Conference documents are put on a website for any member to inspect.

Poland

Meetings = 2,300

Population Density = 124 /km²

Structure Snapshot

1. Groups send representatives to 70 Intergroups. Groups can choose which Region they wish to join
2. 14 Regions (including 1 for Polish-language meetings outside Poland) run contact offices, Helplines and 'online service' for interactive websites
3. GSO maintains the official AA website and national Helpline (for which Regions organise members to answer calls)
4. Conference comprises 4 Delegates from 13 Polish Regions; 2 from the external Region; GSO Manager; Magazine Editor; and, GSO staff who work with the four standing Conference Committees (Total = 60)
5. Board comprises 4 Non-Alcoholic Trustees; 2 National Delegates; and, 13 Alcoholics who are chosen by a Board Committee from nominations by the Regions (Total = 19)

Russia

Groups = 350

Population Density = 8.8 /km²

Structure Snapshot

1. Some Groups form Service Committees that send Delegates to Conference; where there are no Service Committees, the Groups send Delegates direct to Conference
2. Conference of Delegates, Trustees and World Service Delegates meets annually for 3 days (Total ≤ 40)
3. Conference elects the GSB
4. Service Foundation is a not-for-profit entity with rights to publish AA literature

Known Issues

- Division arose in 2012 because the Board of the Service Foundation did not include all members of the General Service Board (as the Service Manual envisaged).
- One third of participants, including the Service Foundation, refused to participate in the annual Conference and held an alternative event. The split is ongoing with the smaller structure having rights to literature publishing
- No update was available in time for this report

Sweden

Groups = 465 plus other meetings in six foreign languages

Population Density = 23.8 /km²

Structure Snapshot

1. Groups form 31 local Information Committees
2. Conference is comprised of 21 Delegates; 7 Trustees; GSO representative; 1 representative of the AA legal entity; representative of the magazine; 2 International Delegates (Total = 33)
3. Conference elects Trustees and World Service Delegates
4. Board comprised of 2 Non-Alcoholic 'Friends' and 5 Regional Trustees. World Service Delegates attend (Total votes = 7)
5. An AA legal entity runs the publishing business and is responsible for the GSO with 2 staff
6. 75% of literature orders come through the online shop

Known Issues

- In 2012, Sweden decided to review its structure and a final report was expected at Conference in 2015
- No update was available in time for this report