



THE NEW ZEALAND
SERVICE MANUAL

2017

UNITY

SERVICE

RECOVERY

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

*God grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change
courage to change the things I can
and wisdom to know the difference*

Cover Design:
Heather Main

The Kiwi in this image is the NZ national bird. New Zealanders call themselves Kiwis. This particular kiwi is a member of AA and has proudly caught a greenstone fish hook in its beak and is claiming it by standing firmly on its base. The Māori, who are the indigenous people of NZ, call this a Pounamu Hei Matau. They say that the Hei Matau signifies strength, prosperity, abundance, fertility and good luck, especially travelling over water. The kiwi who designed this image feels this shares the AA message of support, with the added symbol of the greenstone also shaping the letter L for Love.

Published on-line by AA General Service Conference of New Zealand (Version 1)

PREAMBLE OF AA

Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism.

The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for AA membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions.

AA is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organisation or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.

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Foreword

A.A.'s Legacy of Service by BILL W.

Our Twelfth Step—carrying the message—is the basic service that the A.A. Fellowship gives; this is our principal aim and the main reason for our existence. Therefore, A.A. is more than a set of principles; it is a society of alcoholics in action. We must carry the message, else we ourselves can wither and those who haven't been given the truth may die.

Hence, an A.A. service is anything whatever that helps us to reach a fellow sufferer—ranging all the way from the Twelfth Step itself to a ten-cent phone call and a cup of coffee, and to A.A.'s General Service Office for national and international action. The sum total of all these services is our Third Legacy of Service.

Services include meeting places, hospital cooperation, and intergroup offices; they mean pamphlets, books, and good publicity of almost every description. They call for committees, delegates, trustees, and conferences. And, not to be forgotten, they need voluntary money contributions from within the Fellowship.

Vital to A.A.'s Growth

These services, whether performed by individuals, groups, areas, or A.A. as a whole, are utterly vital to our existence and growth. Nor can we make A.A. more simple by abolishing such services. We would only be asking for complication and confusion.

Concerning any given service, we therefore pose but one question: "Is this service really needed?" If it is, then maintain it we must, or fail in our mission to those who need and seek A.A.

The most vital, yet least understood, group of services that A.A. has are those that enable us to function as a whole; namely, the General Service Office, A.A. World Services, Inc., the A.A. Grapevine, Inc., and our Board of Trustees, known legally as the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous. Our worldwide unity and much of our growth since early times are directly traceable to this cluster of life-giving activities. Until 1950, these overall services were the sole function of a few old-time A.A.'s, several non-alcoholic friends, Doctor Bob, and me. For all the years of A.A.'s infancy, we oldtimers had been the selfappointed trustees for Alcoholics Anonymous.

Fellowship Ready for Responsibility

At this time, we realized that A.A. had grown up, that our Fellowship was ready and able to take these responsibilities from us. There was also another urgent reason for change. Since we oldtimers couldn't live on forever, newer trustees would be virtually unknown to the A.A. groups, now spread over the whole earth. Without direct linkage to A.A., future trustees couldn't possibly function alone.

This meant that we had to form a conference representing our membership which could meet yearly with our Board of Trustees in New York, and thus assume direct responsibility for the guardianship

of A.A. tradition and the direction of our principal service affairs. Otherwise, a virtually unknown board of trustees and our too little understood service headquarters operations would someday be bound to face collapse.

Suppose that future trustees, acting quite on their own, were to make a serious blunder. Suppose that with no linkage to A.A., they tried to act for us in time of great trouble or crisis. With no direct guidance from A.A. as a whole, how could they do this? Collapse of our top services would then be inevitable. And if, under such conditions, our world services did fall apart, how could they ever be reconstructed?

These, briefly, were the conclusions that led to the formation of the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous. Later, I will outline in more detail the events that have now become A.A. history.

The deliberative body known as the Conference is made up of elected area delegates from the United States and Canada—now numbering about ninety— together with the trustees, the directors of A.A.W.S., Inc., and the A.A. Grapevine, Inc., and G.S.O. and Grapevine staff members numbering forty or more. The Conference held its first annual meeting in 1951. Since then it has met annually in April in New York. It has proved itself an immense success—establishing a record of advisory actions that have served the Fellowship well during the intervening years of growth and development.

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A brief history of AA in New Zealand

Ian MacE., was the first member of A.A. in New Zealand. He had tried every known treatment for his drinking problem without success. In the latter part of the 1945 Ian admitted himself to the Nelson Psychiatric Hospital. It was while in the reading room that he picked up a “Reader’s Digest” magazine and read an article “Maybe you can do it too!” by Edward McG., an alcoholic who had recovered with the help of a Fellowship known as ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS. Ian MacE., identified with the article in a way that he had never identified with anyone before. In a footnote to the article, it was suggested that anyone wanting help should write to Alcoholics Anonymous, PO Box 459, New York. On 3 January 1946, Ian wrote to that address and took the first step in his own recovery and A.A. in New Zealand was born . At that time A.A. was in its infancy in America, where it had originated in June 1935 when the Co-founders BILL W., a New York stockbroker, and Dr Bob S., a surgeon in Akron, Ohio, found that by sharing experiences they could stay sober.

Ian MacE., continued to correspond with New York and in August 1946, Ian received a letter from Bill W., appointing him as the representative of A.A. in New Zealand and advising that they had placed a pin in the site of RICHMOND on their office map of New Zealand and so A.A. in this country was established. Ian travelled widely throughout the country carrying the message of A.A. His first success was Alf J., of Devonport. In 1947, Alf’s brother-in-law,

Dr J Caughey, a non-alcoholic who had heard of A.A. as a result of Ian's efforts in Wellington, contacted Ian, who then forwarded his own Big Book, "ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS", and other literature for Alf to read and digest. The Book "ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS", known as the Big Book among members of the A.A. Fellowship, was first published in America in 1939 and has since been reprinted in many languages throughout the world - over 15 million copies have been sold at this time (1995) in about 145 countries and more than 1600 copies are sold annually within New Zealand.

The first recorded meeting of two or more sober alcoholics in New Zealand came about in September 1947, in Auckland, when Ian met Lillian Roth and her husband, Burt, from America and later contact Alf.

Meanwhile Alf J. had become very active in spreading the A.A. message and held meetings in his home and at his dental surgery.

The Devonport Group was the first New Zealand Group registered with G.S.O., New York, June 1948. Dunedin had in August 1948 two members, Arch F., and Howard H., who were meeting regularly. At the end of 1948 there were six members in New Zealand, Ian MacE., Richmond, AlfJ., Auckland, Arch F., Howard H., Murdock Y., Dunedin, and Bill L., Wellington. By 1951 there were six groups in New Zealand, at Auckland, Hastings, Nelson, Wellington, Dunedin and Invercargill, with a total membership of around 60. From that time on there was a slow but steady growth throughout the country. Today there are about 4,000 members in some 400 groups.

On 16 February 1964 at Massey University campus, Palmerston North, the first National Convention of A.A. New Zealand was held.

At this Convention the New Zealand General Service Conference of A.A. was formed. New Zealand was divided into four Areas, namely, Northern, Waikato-Bay of Plenty, Central and Southern with three delegates from each Area attending the General Service Conference. This was later changed to three Areas by merging the Waikato-Bay of Plenty area with Northern. The number of delegates from each remained the same. In addition to the Chairperson and Secretary, not more than four non-alcoholic members could be appointed to the General Service Conference.

The General Service Conference elects two World Service meeting delegates from nominations received from each Area. In 1969 the first World Service meeting was held in New York with two delegates from each of the participating countries in attendance. The second World Service meeting, was also held in New York in 1972. Since then the meetings are held every two years with locations alternating between New York and some other country. New Zealand, a staunch supporter of World Service, has been represented at all meetings.

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Introduction to The New Zealand AA Service Manual

The primary purpose of this manual is to provide a set of guidelines to assist members of AA in understanding the structure, roles and functions of AA service in New Zealand.

The current New Zealand Service structure is in a state of flux. Some elements of this structure operate differently across the country. This is because groups are free to adapt these elements as they see fit.

Area Assemblies, General Service Conference and New Zealand General Service Board all have their own set of guidelines. These are available on the AA members' website.

This service manual aims to help the AA member, especially the new member, understand the need for service in AA; where it begins and where it can lead. It explains the functions of the various bodies and how we need dedicated members, known as trusted servants, to carry out these functions.

AA is blessed with a membership which offers a variety of talents for use within the fellowship and there are many ways each member can contribute to service.

AA members who enter the fellowship are encouraged to attend meetings, join a home group and do service. AA members who actively become involved in service not only ensure their own continued sobriety but also that the message continues to be passed onto the still suffering alcoholic. It also ensures the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous remains alive and strong.

It must be emphasised that all servants of the fellowship are expected to carry out their responsibilities in a manner harmonious with the Twelve

Steps, Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts of AA as listed below:

The 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous

- 1** We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.
- 2** Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
- 3** Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
- 4** Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
- 5** Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
- 6** Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
- 7** Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
- 8** Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
- 9** Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
- 10** Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
- 11** Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
- 12** Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

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The 12 Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous

- 1 Each member of Alcoholics Anonymous is but a small part of a great whole. A.A. must continue to live or most of us will surely die. Hence our common welfare comes first. But individual welfare follows close afterward.
- 2 For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience.
- 3 Our membership ought to include all who suffer from alcoholism. Hence we may refuse none who wish to recover. Nor ought A.A. membership ever depend upon money or conformity. Any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an A.A. group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation.
- 4 With respect to its own affairs, each A.A. group should be responsible to no other authority than its own conscience. But when its plans concern the welfare of neighboring groups also, those groups ought to be consulted. And no group, regional committee, or individual should ever take any action that might greatly affect A.A. as a whole without conferring with the Trustees of the General Service Board. On such issues our common welfare is paramount.
- 5 Each Alcoholics Anonymous group ought to be a spiritual entity having but one primary purpose—that of carrying its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.
- 6 Problems of money, property, and authority may easily divert us from our primary spiritual aim. We think, therefore, that any considerable property of genuine use to A.A. should be separately incorporated and managed, thus dividing the material from the spiritual. An A.A. group,

as such, should never go into business. Secondary aids to A.A., such as clubs or hospitals which require much property or administration, ought to be incorporated and so set apart that, if necessary, they can be freely discarded by the groups. Hence such facilities ought not to use the A.A. name. Their management should be the sole responsibility of those people who financially support them. For clubs, A.A. managers are usually preferred. But hospitals, as well as other places of recuperation, ought to be well outside A.A. and medically supervised. While an A.A. group may cooperate with anyone, such cooperation ought never go so far as affiliation or endorsement, actual or implied. An A.A. group can bind itself to no one.

- 7 The A.A. groups themselves ought to be fully supported by the voluntary contributions of their own members. We think that each group should soon achieve this ideal; that any public solicitation of funds using the name of Alcoholics Anonymous is highly dangerous, whether by groups, clubs, hospitals, or other outside agencies; that acceptance of large gifts from any source, or of contributions carrying any obligation whatever, is unwise. Then too, we view with much concern those A.A. treasuries which continue, beyond prudent reserves, to accumulate funds for no stated A.A. purpose. Experience has often warned us that nothing can so surely destroy our spiritual heritage as futile disputes over property, money, and authority.
- 8 Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional. We define professionalism as the occupation of counselling alcoholics for fees or hire. But we may employ alcoholics where they are going to perform those services for which we may otherwise have to engage non-alcoholics. Such special services may be well recompensed.

But our usual A.A. “12th Step” work is never to be paid for.

- 9 Each A.A. group needs the least possible organization. Rotating leadership is the best. The small group may elect its secretary, the large group its rotating committee, and the groups of a large metropolitan area their central or intergroup committee, which often employs a full-time secretary. The trustees of the General Service Board are, in effect, our A.A. General Service Committee. They are the custodians of our A.A. Tradition and the receivers of voluntary A.A. contributions by which we maintain our A.A. General Service Office at New York. They are authorized by the groups to handle our overall public relations and they guarantee the integrity of our principle newspaper, the A.A. Grapevine. All such representatives are to be guided in the spirit of service, for true leaders in A.A. are but trusted and experienced servants of the whole. They derive no real authority from their titles; they do not govern. Universal respect is the key to their usefulness.
- 10 No A.A. group or member should ever, in such a way as to implicate A.A., express any opinion on outside controversial issues—particularly those of politics, alcohol reform, or sectarian religion. The Alcoholics Anonymous groups oppose no one. Concerning such matters they can express no views whatever.
- 11 Our relations with the general public should be characterized by personal anonymity. We think A.A. ought to avoid sensational advertising. Our names and pictures as A.A. members ought not be broadcast, filmed, or publicly printed. Our public relations should be guided by the principle of attraction rather than promotion. There is never need to praise ourselves. We feel it better to let our friends recommend us.

- 12 And finally, we of Alcoholics Anonymous believe that the principle of anonymity has an immense spiritual significance. It reminds us that we are to place principles before personalities; that we are actually to practice a genuine humility. This to the end that our great blessings may never spoil us; that we shall forever live in thankful contemplation of Him who presides over us all.

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The 12 Concepts for World Service

- 1 The final responsibility and the ultimate authority for AA world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole fellowship.
- 2 When, in 1955, the AA groups confirmed the permanent charter for their General Service Conference, they thereby delegated to the Conference complete authority for the active maintenance of our world services and thereby made the Conference—excepting for any change in the Twelve Traditions or in Article 12 of the Conference Charter—the actual voice and the effective conscience for our whole Society.
- 3 As a traditional means of creating and maintaining a clearly defined working relation between the groups, the Conference, the AA General Service Board and its several service corporations, staffs, committees and executives, and of thus insuring their effective leadership, it is here suggested that we endow each of these elements of world service with a traditional “Right of Decision.”
- 4 Throughout our Conference structure, we ought to maintain at all

responsible levels a traditional “Right of Participation,” taking care that each classification or group of our world servants shall be allowed a voting representation in reasonable proportion to the responsibility that each must discharge.

- 5 Throughout our world service structure, a traditional “Right of Appeal” ought to prevail, thus assuring us that minority opinion will be heard and that petitions for the redress of personal grievances will be carefully considered.
- 6 On behalf of AA as a whole, our General Service Conference has the principal responsibility for the maintenance of our world services, and it traditionally has the final decision respecting large matters of general policy and finance. But the Conference also recognises that the chief initiative and the active responsibility in most of these matters should be exercised primarily by the trustee members of the Conference when they act among themselves as the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous.
- 7 The Conference recognises that the Charter and the Bylaws of the General Service Board are legal instruments: that the trustees are thereby fully empowered to manage and conduct all of the world service affairs of Alcoholics Anonymous. It is further understood that the Conference Charter itself is not a legal document: that it relies instead upon the force of tradition and the power of the AA purse for its final effectiveness.
- 8 The trustees of the General Service Board act in two primary capacities:
(a) With respect to the larger matters of overall policy and finance, they are the principal planners and administrators. They and their primary

committees directly manage these affairs. (b) But with respect to our separately incorporated and constantly active services, the relation of the trustees is mainly that of full stock ownership and of custodial oversight which they exercise through their ability to elect all directors of these entities.

- 9** Good service leaders, together with sound and appropriate methods of choosing them, are at all levels indispensable for our future functioning and safety. The primary world service leadership once exercised by the founders of AA must necessarily be assumed by the trustees of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous.
- 10** Every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority—the scope of such authority to be always well defined whether by tradition, by resolution, by specific job description, or by appropriate charters and bylaws.
- 11** While the trustees hold final responsibility for AA's world service administration, they should always have the assistance of the best possible standing committees, corporate service directors, executives, staffs and consultants. Therefore, the composition of these underlying committees and service boards, the personal qualifications of their members, the manner of their induction into service, the systems of their rotation, the way in which they are related to each other, the special rights and duties of our executives, staffs and consultants, together with a proper basis for the financial compensation of these special workers, will always be matters for serious care and concern.
- 12** General Warranties of the Conference: In all its proceedings, the General Service Conference shall observe the spirit of the AA

Tradition, taking great care that the Conference never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds, plus an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principle; that none of the Conference members shall ever be placed in a position of unqualified authority over any of the others; that all important decisions be reached by discussion, vote, and, wherever possible, by substantial unanimity; that no Conference action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy; that, though the Conference may act for the service of Alcoholics Anonymous, it shall never perform any acts of government; and that, like the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous which it serves, the Conference itself will always remain democratic in thought and action.

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Chapter Two

[NB: (Modified Chapter) from The North American A.A. Service Manual combined with Twelve Concepts for World Service (Item ID: BM-31)]

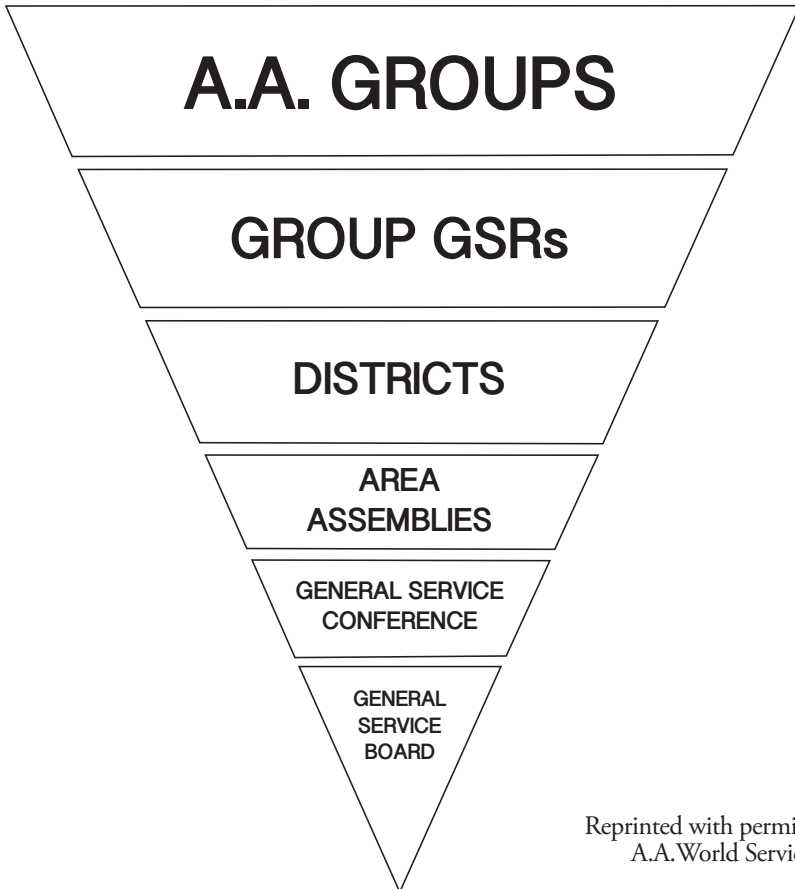
Introduction to General Service

The Twelve Traditions make clear the principle that AA as such should never be organised, that there are no bosses or government in AA. Yet the traditions recognise the need for some sort of organisation to carry the message in ways that are not possible for local groups, such as publication of literature and public information resources.

The General Service structure in New Zealand is the framework by which these general services are carried out. It enables the collective group conscience of AA to speak and be heard. The New Zealand General Service Conference (hereto known as Conference) is the elected body that ensures the full voice of AA will be heard and guarantees that the desired services will continue to function under all conditions.

An Upside-Down Organisation

Alcoholics Anonymous has been called an upside-down organisation because, as the structure chart shows, the groups are on top and the trustees at the bottom. Bill W. wrote in Concept I: “The A.A. Groups today hold ultimate responsibility and final authority for our world services...” Then, in Concept II, Bill made it clear that the groups “delegated to the Conference complete authority for the active maintenance of our world services and thereby made the Conference... the actual voice and effective conscience for our whole Society.”



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Communication Through the Structure

Keeping a balance between ultimate authority and responsibility and the active day-to-day functioning of services means there must be a constant communication between all elements of the structure.

The New Zealand Service Structure begins with the individual AA groups which elect General Service Representatives (GSRs) to represent the views of the group at District Committee and Intergroup level and the Area Assembly. The Area Assembly elects delegates to represent them at Conference keeping in mind that they must act for AA as a whole.

The Conference structure is how AA functions nationally and internationally. It is a framework whereby the collective group conscience of AA groups is able to guide our trusted servants with their primary purpose of carrying the message.

AA as a whole depends upon the participation and conscience of the individual groups. How each group conducts its affairs has a ripple effect on AA. Thus, each individual is responsible not only for their own sobriety but also for the collective of AA as a whole, therefore ensuring the AA message continues to be passed to the still suffering alcoholic who reaches out to us for help.

The Conference Charter

The Conference Charter adopted in April 2010 describes the body of principles and relationships through which AA services function as a whole. Though the Conference itself is not incorporated and its Charter is not a legal document, this informal agreement between the fellowship and its trustees provides the means by which AA can give service (see Appendix 1)

GLOSSARY

- Alternate** A service worker who supports and assists a trusted servant and is often considered “in training”, but always stands ready to step in for the primary trusted servant
- Area Assemblies** Are composed of elected General Service Representatives of all AA groups choosing to participate, within each Assembly’s designated geographical area
- Area Delegate** Refer to Delegate
- Advisory Action** When a point of discussion at Conference is put to the vote and receives a two-thirds majority, it is recorded as an Advisory Action. The Advisory Action is then forwarded to the Board which ensures the wishes of the Conference are implemented in a timely manner
- Board** The New Zealand General Service Board (NZGSB) more commonly known as ‘the Board’ meets at its Annual General Meeting each March, before each Conference and in-between by phone conference

- Board members** Also known as Trustees, Class A Trustees and Class B Trustees
- By-laws** These are the operating rules for the Board to ensure it meets its legal responsibilities
- Conference Charter** This body of principles links the Board to Conference, and outlines their relationship and the respective responsibilities of both entities
- Class A Trustee** A person who is not a recovering alcoholic (not a member of AA) who serves on the Board
- Class B Trustee** A person who is a recovering alcoholic (a member of AA) who serves on the Board
- Conference** The New Zealand General Service Conference (NZGSC) more commonly known as Conference meets bi-annually)
- Conference Members** Conference comprises Area Delegates, World Service Delegates, Trustees of the Board, Officers of Conference and staff of the GSO.
- Conference Voting Members** The Area Delegates, Class A Trustees and the Board Chairperson
- Conference Approved Literature** Pamphlets, books, videos and films produced by AA World Services or Conference, that have undergone an approval process within the Conference. To be modified they must be brought to the Conference. GSO can only stock and sell Conference approved literature

Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC) A standing committee of Conference and sometimes a committee at the District Committee and Intergruop

District Committee A geographical unit within a defined area where groups join together to identify their problems and find ways to contribute to the group's growth and well being

DCM District Committee Meeting: A meeting of the GSRs who represent the groups of their district to coordinate local services in their district

Delegate A person elected to represent the Area at Conference and to bring back to the Area the results of that meeting. Usually a three year term

District A geographical division within an Area, represented by a DCM

Group An AA group is defined in AA's 3rd tradition which states "Any two or three of alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an AA group provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation".

The main difference between groups and meetings is that groups generally continue to exist outside the prescribed meeting hours, ready to provide 12 Step help when needed

Group Conscience The collective conscience of the group membership where substantial unanimity on an issue is required before definitive action is taken

- Group Inventory** Questions, compiled from AA shared experience, may be useful in arriving at an informed group conscience. Groups will probably wish to add questions of their own
- GSO** General Service Office: This is the management arm of the Board and provides a central repository for administration and distribution of literature to AA groups
- GSR** Group Service Representative: The group representative is elected by a home group and is their home group's voting member of the Area Assembly
- Gratitude week** A week especially set aside to allow AA members to show their gratitude for their sobriety through donations
- Guidelines** A set of approved suggestions that assist Assemblies and Conference to ensure uniformity and consistency of decision making
- Intergroup** Is made up of a number of groups in a geographic area who get together to discuss local AA matters
- Meeting** A gathering of AA members at a set time and place for a meeting. The main difference between groups and meetings is that groups generally continue to exist outside the prescribed meeting hours, ready to provide 12 Step help when needed
- NZGSB** New Zealand General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous Incorporated

NZGSC New Zealand **General Service Conference**

Officers of the General Service Conference

The Conference Chair and Secretary

Policies

Board approved suggestions and guidelines to ensure uniformity and consistency of decision making and also ensures AA complies with its legal obligations

Public Information Committee (PIC) is a standing committee of Conference and sometimes a committee at the District Committee and Intergroup

Quorum

Conference: Two thirds of all Conference Members
Board: Greater than half the minimum number of members forming the Board at the time

Service Centre A co-ordinating centre for carrying the message to the alcoholic who still suffers in the area that it serves

Treatment and Correctional Facilities Committee (TCF) A standing committee of Conference and sometimes a committee at the District Committee and Intergroup

Third Legacy Procedure A special type of electoral procedure used in the election of Delegates and Trustees. It is explained in Chapter Two of The New Zealand Alcoholics Anonymous Service Manual

Trustee

The title for a member of the General Service Board.
There is a maximum of two non-alcoholic trustees (Class A)

There is a minimum of six and a maximum of eight AA member trustees (Class B)

World Service Delegate (WSD) New Zealand's representative on the world stage

Parts of this glossary are directly from The A.A Service Manual combined with Twelve Concepts for World Service (Item ID: BM-31)

Why Do We Need A Conference?

The late Bernard B. Smith, nonalcoholic, then chairperson of the Board of Trustees, and one of the architects of the Conference structure, answered that question superbly in his opening talk at the 1954 meeting:

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

“We need it because we, more than all others, are conscious of the devastating effect of the human urge for power and prestige which we must ensure can never invade A.A. We need it to ensure A.A. against government, while insulating it against anarchy; we need it to protect A.A. against disintegration while preventing overintegration. We need it so that Alcoholics Anonymous, and Alcoholics Anonymous alone, is the ultimate repository of its Twelve Steps, its Twelve Traditions, and all of its services.

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

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Third Legacy Procedure

AA's Third Legacy Procedure is a special type of electoral procedure, used primarily for the election of delegates and regional and at-large trustees. It is considered to be unique to AA, and at first glance, appears to introduce a strong element of chance into a matter that should depend solely on the judgment of the majority. In practice, however, it has proved highly successful in eliminating the influence of factions or parties that seem to thrive on most political scenes. The railroading of a candidate for election is made difficult, if not impossible, since voters have a wide selection of candidates to choose from. More importantly, a second-place candidate who may be extremely well qualified but without early popular support is encouraged to stay in the balloting, rather than withdraw.

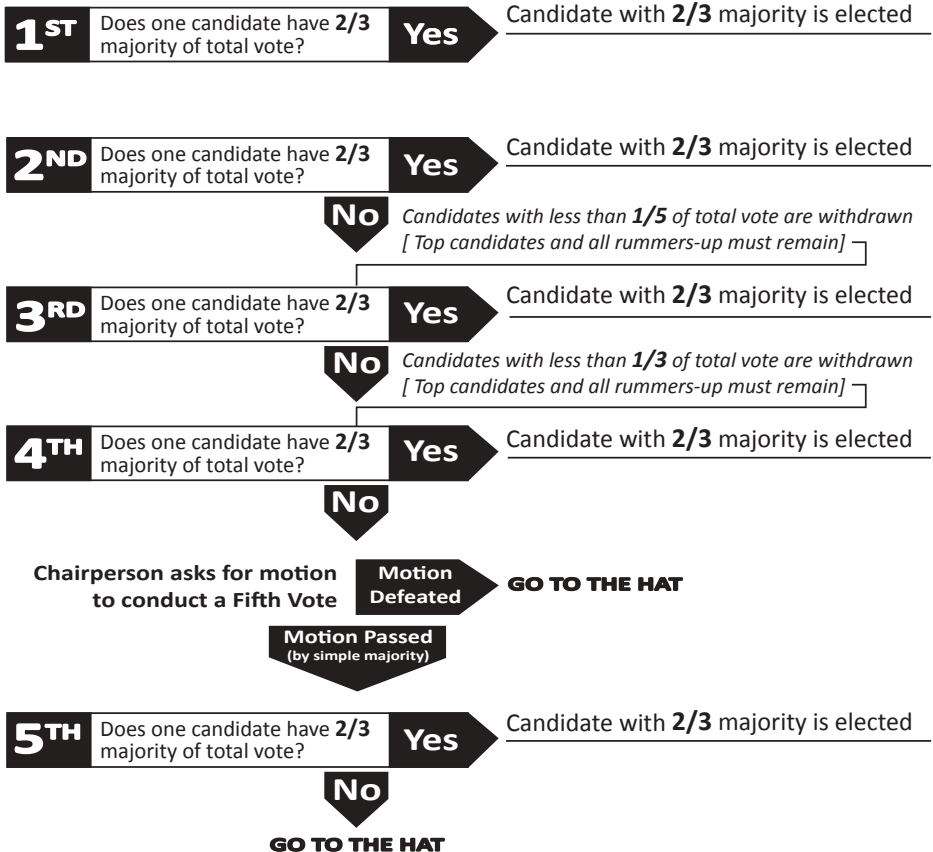
Third Legacy Procedure is as follows:

- The names of eligible candidates are posted on a board. All voting members (of the area of Conference body) cast written ballots, one choice to a ballot. The tally for each candidate is posted on the board.
- The first candidate to receive two-thirds of the total vote is elected.
- Withdrawals start after the second ballot. If any candidate has less than one-fifth of the total vote, his or her name is automatically withdrawn – except that the top two candidates must remain. (In case of ties for second place, the top candidate and all tied runners-up remain as candidates.)

- After the third ballot, candidates with less than one-third of the total vote will be withdrawn automatically, except the two top candidates remain. (In case there are ties for second place, the top candidate and all tied runners-up remain as candidates.
- After the fourth ballot, if no candidate has two-thirds of the total vote, the candidate with the smallest total is automatically withdrawn, except that the top two candidates remain. In case there are ties for second place, the top candidate and all tied second-place candidates remain. At this point the chairperson asks for a motion, second and a simple majority of hands on conducting a fifth and final ballot. If this motion is defeated, balloting is over and the choice is made by lot – “going to the hat” – immediately. If the motion carries, a fifth and final ballot is conducted.
- If after the fifth ballot no election occurs, the chairperson announces that the choice will be made by lot (from the hat). At this point, the top two candidates remain. In case there are ties for first place, all tied first place candidates remain. In case there are no ties for first place, the top candidate and any tied second place candidates remain.
- Lots are then drawn by the teller, and the first one “out of the hat” is the delegate (or trustee or other officer)

The Third Legacy Procedure

BALLOT



NB Sole Candidate

“If a sole candidate does not receive $\frac{2}{3}$ of the vote on the first ballot, Conference: will a) move the meeting into committee to discuss the suitability of the candidate for the role; and, b) hold a second ballot either while in committee or when back in open meeting. Abstentions are not useful and it is recommended that each voter properly inform themselves before the second ballot is taken. If the sole candidate does not receive $\frac{2}{3}$ of the total vote on the second ballot that is the end of the election with no candidate being appointed.”

Stimulating Interest in General Service

Most A.A. members are primarily interested in their groups, in their own sobriety, and in helping other drunks one-on-one. And that is as it should be. While the work of general service has precisely the same objective—carrying the message to the alcoholic who still suffers—the connection is not always direct or obvious. Some stimulators are usually needed to get the attention of A.A. members—to show them that service can add a rich dimension to their sober lives and Twelfth Step work, and that their participation is vital to the future of A.A.

Good communication is of vital importance. In personal Twelfth Step work, there is no end to communication. The sponsor talks with the drunk; speakers share their experience; we share with each other. But when it comes to general service work, communication has a tendency to break down. It can take hard work to get the attention of alcoholics, but with a creative approach, they can be encouraged to take time out from the nuts and bolts of recovery to think about another phase of their new lives. Once A.A. members are well informed about service, they often want to become involved and to take on their own service responsibilities.

In many areas, the delegate and area committee members make themselves available to visit groups or district meetings and talk about general service. Workshops on the Traditions, Concepts, or other aspects of service are often an effective way of spreading the word of service.

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The Principle of Rotation

Traditionally, rotation ensures that group tasks, like nearly everything else in A.A., are passed around for all to share. Many groups have alternates to each trusted servant who can step into the service positions if needed.

To step out of an A.A. office you love can be hard. If you have been doing a good job, if you honestly don't see anyone else around willing, qualified, or with the time to do it, and if your friends agree, it's especially tough. But it can be a real step forward in growth—a step into the humility that is, for some people, the spiritual essence of anonymity.

Among other things, anonymity in the Fellowship means that we forgo personal prestige for any A.A. work we do to help alcoholics. And, in the spirit of Tradition Twelve, it ever reminds us “to place principles before personalities.”

Many outgoing service position holders find it rewarding to take time to share their experience with the incoming person. Rotation helps to bring us spiritual rewards far more enduring than any fame. With no A.A. “status” at stake, we needn't compete for titles or praise—we have complete freedom to serve as we are needed.

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The AA Group

What is the AA group?

An AA group is defined in AA's 3rd tradition which states "Any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an AA group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation."

Each group is as unique as a thumbprint, acts autonomously and charts its own course as long as it does not affect AA as a whole.

What an AA group does

AA groups serve two key functions:

- 1 To carry the AA message of recovery to the alcoholic who still suffers
- 2 Be the means by which the collective voice of the AA fellowship can be heard within the New Zealand General Service Conference (Conference) structure.

AA's essential group work is done by alcoholics recovering in the fellowship and each individual (or group) is entitled to do AA service in the way they think best within the spirit of the Traditions. Each group has a group conscience where all action is approved by consensus or majority vote. No single individual may be representative for Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole.

What an AA group looks like

An AA group hold regular meetings, usually weekly. Each group decides on the format for its meeting – for example, whether it is an open discussion, sharing or based on specific literature. Meetings can also be based around

the needs of a particular group of people, such as beginners or professionals. AA meetings can be open which means that non-alcoholics can attend (although they cannot share), or closed which means only alcoholics can attend.

How to become a member of a group

“The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking” (Tradition Three). This means that group membership requires no formal application. Just as we are members of AA if we say we are, so are we members of a group if we say we are.

How an AA group functions

Home Group

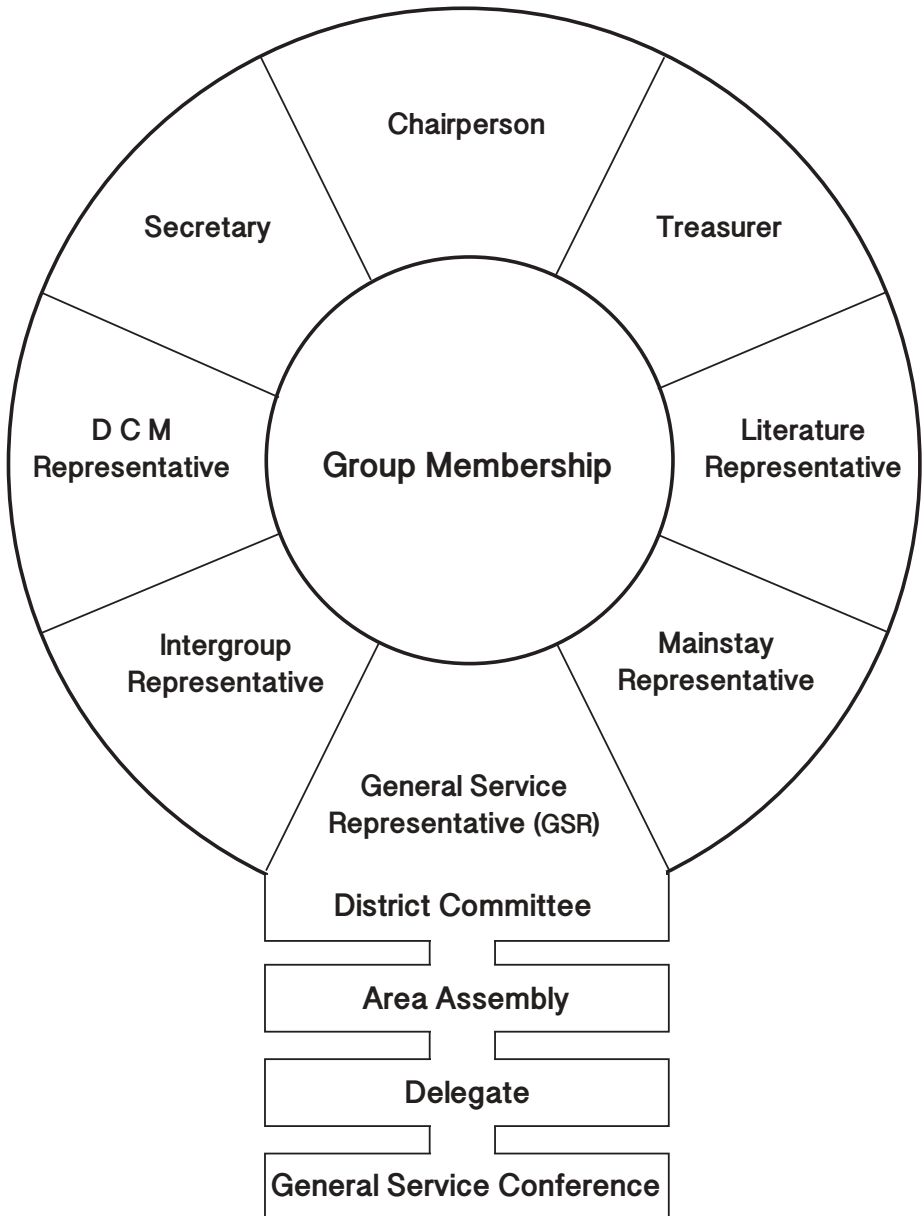
Traditionally, most AA members through the years have found it important to belong to one group which they call their “Home Group”. This is the group where they accept service responsibilities and it is through their home group they are able to have a say in decisions that affect AA as a whole. Although all AA members are usually welcome at all groups and feel at home at any of these meetings, the concept of the “Home Group” has still remained the strongest bond between the AA member and the fellowship.

Group Conscience

As in all levels of AA service, membership of the group includes the individual’s right to be involved in decision-making on issues that may affect the group and AA as a whole – a process that forms the cornerstone of AA’s service structure.

The group conscience decides how the group functions, the format of the group and service roles. Group conscience meetings are usually held monthly.

A.A. Group Service Structure



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All members of the group should take the time to be fully informed about topics for discussion at the group conscience meeting. As AA has no central authority and minimal organisation, the use of the 12 Traditions and the 12 Concepts for World Service guide us in our decision making.

Reaching Decisions

Ideally a consensus is reached within a group conscience. The minority opinion should be given time to explain their point of view, as a fully informed membership guards against rushed decisions led by forceful majorities or minorities. Decisions can be adjourned on occasion to ensure adequate thought and to reach an agreement.

Voting

Each AA member has one vote at their home group. Where matters cannot be decided by consensus in the group conscience, matters can be decided by a simple majority vote.

Service roles in a group

Service is one of the cornerstones of AA recovery and usually starts at the group level. A number of service positions (decided by the group conscience) are necessary for the effective running of a group. Examples include: tea/coffee maker, greeter, secretary, treasurer, chair, literature person, District Committee/Intergroup Representative, Group Service Representative (GSR).

The service positions in a group are dependent on the size of the group, availability of members and service structures in the area.

Ideally there should be one role for one person, although at times group membership may make it necessary to combine roles (i.e. secretary/treasurer, Intergroup/Group Service Rep). It is always up to the group conscience to

decide. However, any service position is carried out under the umbrella of the 12 Traditions and 12 Concepts for World Service. Tradition 2 reminds us: *Our leaders are but trusted servants they do not govern.*

AA Group Officers: roles and responsibilities

Group officers are elected at the group conscience meeting and ideally selection should be done in the spirit of rotation.

Certain principles apply to enable officers to function effectively. These include Concept 3 which is the *right of decision* and Concept 4 which is the *right of participation*.

Secretary

An AA group secretary opens and closes the meeting room and ensures the meeting room is ready by putting up the banners, setting out literature, and arranging seating. The secretary organises a chair or speaker for the meeting, ensures relevant AA notices are available for members and often chairs the group conscience meeting. Each group decides on the qualifications and term of office.

Treasurer

An AA group treasurer ensures the finances of the group are in order. The treasurer ensures the money is collected and banked weekly and the group's bills (rent, literature, PO Box) are paid on time. The treasurer provides a financial report to the group conscience meeting. Each group decides on the qualifications and term of office.

General Service Representative (GSR)

The General Service Representative (GSR) is elected by the group to convey

its views directly to the Area Assembly or via their District Committee or Intergroup. Area delegates from that assembly then take any issues to Conference for discussion.

The communication is a two-way street as the GSR is also responsible for reporting back to the home group on Conference activities that affect the unity, health and growth of AA in New Zealand.

Only when a GSR keeps a group informed and communicates the group conscience to delegates can the Conference truly act for AA as a whole.

Each group decides on the qualifications and term of office.

District Committee (DC) Representative

The DC representative is elected by the group to convey its views to the DC meeting. Information from this meeting is often fed through to the local Area Assembly for discussion. Matters of concern may be taken to Conference. Each group decides on the qualifications for this role.

Intergroup Representative

The Intergroup representative is elected by the group to convey its views to the local Intergroup meeting. Intergroup may have a voice at the Area Assembly. Each group decides on the qualifications for this role.

Mainstay Representative

Mainstay is a national magazine and is considered a "meeting in print" where local stories and events are presented. The representative informs and encourages the group to contribute and subscribe.

Literature Officer

The literature officer is responsible for ensuring the group has sufficient

supplies of AA literature to carry the message of recovery to the still suffering alcoholic. Each group decides on the qualifications and term of office.

AA Group Finances

As AA as a whole is self-supporting through its own contributions (7th Tradition). The group may “pass the basket” to receive contributions from AA members only.

This collection pays for rent, refreshments, literature and any other group expenses as determined by the group conscience. Groups should consider the costs that the Intergroup/DCM representative and GSR may incur when attending Intergroup, DCMs or Area Assemblies on their behalf.

Groups usually pass on surplus funds (money left following the payment of group expenses) in a formula decided by the group conscience. The money is then sent proportionally to the local Intergroup/District Committee, Area Assembly and the General Service Office. Originally this was called the “60/30/10 Plan”, however each group is autonomous and should disperse the surplus as the group conscience sees fit.

Group Registration

Groups may be registered with the General Service Office (GSO) in Wellington: New Zealand General Service Office

PO Box 6458, Wellington 6141

or email nzgso@aa.org.nz

You can also register a group online in the AA members site:

www.aamembers.org.nz

Registration of a group gives each group a specific identification number so that GSO is able to quickly identify those who purchase literature and

donate money. It also enables the group's information to be loaded on the national website so that newcomers and visitors can locate meetings. Registration also means that the group is included in AA's Public Liability Indemnity Insurance which covers accidental damage to the rental premises it occupies.

Local Service Committees

Carrying the message outside the group often involves other AA groups and outside agencies working together to carry the message of recovery. Local service committees do this by working in the community which ensures our Sixth Tradition of cooperation but not affiliation.

Local service committees are formed by the District Committee or Intergroup which decide on the requirements and roles as they see fit. Local service committees may call on their counterparts at Conference for support and assistance along with GSO.

Where possible there are three committees –Treatment and Correctional Facilities (TCF), Public Information (PI) and Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC).

Treatment and Correctional Facilities (TCF) Committee

Local TCF groups take part in local Intergroup/District Committee meetings to keep their local area and home groups informed of their activities. The primary purpose of taking AA meetings into prisons, where allowed, and to treatment centres and hospitals, is to help the alcoholic recover and prepare for sober, fulfilling lives after release.

Temporary contact is also available through the Prison Correspondence Coordinator Service which allows prisoners and AA members to correspond

with each other, and gives prisoners post-release contacts in AA. Pamphlets and workbooks to help those working in these facilities are available from GSO.

Public Information (PI) Committee

Local PI groups take part in local Intergroup/District Committee meetings to keep their local area and home groups informed of local activities. They may arrange for volunteers to speak at schools, businesses, police and other organisations interested in the AA approach to recovery from alcoholism. Most groups realise that alcoholics can't come to AA for help unless they know where it is. Suggested methods range from personal contact to public service announcements on radio and TV, always working within the framework of Tradition Eleven. Sometimes a small sign saying "AA meeting tonight" outside the meeting place door points the way. Public Information Workbooks are available from GSO.

Cooperation with The Professional Community (CPC) Committee

Local CPC representatives work in conjunction with PI groups with a focus on cooperation but not affiliation with professionals in the community. These include educators, physicians, the clergy, court officials and others who often are in contact with active alcoholics. The CPC representatives keep their local areas informed of CPC activities and, when appropriate, arrange for group volunteers to join together in carrying the AA message at professional meetings, seminars, and more. The efforts of the CPC and Public Information representatives are often combined. CPC Workbooks and the pamphlets are available from GSO.

Chapter Four

District Committee (DC)

A district is a geographical unit within a defined area where groups join together to identify their problems and find ways to contribute to their collective groups' growth and well-being. Experience has shown that groups working in unison through a well-organised DC is significantly more effective in carrying the message than groups working individually. It has also proven to be a great way to establish and maintain good relations with our friends in the community.

What is a District Committee?

The primary purpose of a DC is to provide a forum for the Area Delegate to get district feedback on matters that are to be discussed at Conference, and provide feedback on the decisions of Conference after the event. This process also takes place at Assemblies, but a District Committee Meeting provides a smaller forum where members may feel more comfortable entering into discussion (and debate) with a delegate.

What a District Committee does

In keeping with the first tradition, a DC can serve as a forum where groups have the opportunity to share experience, strength and hope so that they may more effectively solve their problems and address the needs and concerns of the area.

DC's give both the individual and local AA groups the right to be involved in decision-making on issues that may affect the AA group or AA as a whole – a process that forms the cornerstone of AA's service structure.

DC's often assume a number of responsibilities to assist those who are working with the still suffering alcoholic. This could involve the formation of committees to foster mutual understanding and cooperation between AA and those in the community. They may also organise phone and meeting lists and local advertising.

What a District Committee looks like

A DC consists of one representative from each AA group that wishes to participate at this level. It may form a number of committees to carry out specific work in a particular area – for example, Public Information, Treatment and Correctional Facilities and Cooperating with Professional Communities

The area that a DC represents is usually based on a geographic or population division. A heavily populated urban area may cover a smaller geographical region than a less populated rural one.

How a group becomes a member of a District Committee

An AA group becomes a member of a DC by sending a group representative to the DC meeting. An AA group's membership to a DC is not limited by the AA group's size, finances or geographic location.

How a District Committee functions

A DC has the elected office bearers of a chairperson, vice chairperson, secretary and treasurer. However, the secretary and treasurer roles are often combined into one if necessary.

Responsibilities and functions of the DC are dealt with at regular meetings which are usually held monthly. Decisions at these meetings are made through the collective group conscience.

Decisions on how the group functions, the format of the group, and service roles and election of officers, are made at the Annual General Meeting. The AGM is also responsible for determining the DC guidelines, including the required qualities, qualifications and responsibilities of office bearers and those services they will assume responsibility for on behalf of the groups.

Group Conscience

The mechanism by which a DC makes decisions is through the group conscience by the elected AA group representatives at each meeting.

In making decisions the group should be mindful of the necessity of an ‘informed group conscience’. This means when considering matters, all members of the group should take time to be fully informed about topics for discussion. As AA has no central authority and minimal organisation we use the 12 Traditions and the 12 Concepts for World Service to guide us in our decision making.

Reaching decisions

Ideally a consensus is reached within a group conscience. The minority opinion should be given time to explain their point of view as a fully informed membership guards against rushed decisions led by forceful majorities. Decisions can be adjourned on occasion to ensure adequate thought in the attempt to gain consensus. DC representatives are free to decide those matters which they can vote/decide upon and those matters they wish to take back to their groups for further guidance.

Voting

Where matters cannot be decided by consensus in the group conscience, they may be decided by a simple majority vote. With all group conscience matters, each DC representative has one vote.

Service roles in District Committee

The service positions depend on the size of the group and availability of members. Ideally there should be one role for one person, although at times group membership may make it necessary to combine roles (i.e. secretary/treasurer, Intergroup/DC Rep). It is always up to the group conscience to decide. Any service position is carried out under the umbrella of the 12 Traditions and 12 Concepts. Tradition 2 reminds us: *Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.*

Certain principles apply to enable officers to function effectively. These include Concept 3 which is *the right of decision* and Concept 4 which is *the right of participation*.

District Committee Officers roles and responsibilities

A chair, secretary, treasurer are required for the effective running of a DC. Officers are elected at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). Careful consideration should be given to those taking up those roles, including being mindful of the spirit of rotation.

District Committee Chairperson

A DC chairperson chairs the meetings of the District Committee. Each DC decides on the qualifications and term of office.

District Committee Secretary

A DC secretary keeps accurate records of decisions made at District Committee meetings and distributes the records of the meetings to all groups. Each DC decides on the qualifications and term of office.

District Committee Treasurer

The DC treasurer keeps the financial records and reports to the meeting and

to all the groups in the area. Each DC decides on the qualifications and term of office.

District Committee Finances

AA as a whole is self-supporting through its own contributions (7th Tradition). The DC is funded by contributions from AA groups. This pays the rent, any printing or publishing costs, and any other group expenses as determined by the group conscience.

At the regular monthly DC meetings, any surplus money left following payment of group expenses is divided according to a formula decided by the group. A portion is set aside for a prudent reserve with the remainder going to Area Assembly and/or GSO.

Chapter Five

Intergroup

What is an Intergroup?

An Intergroup is made up of a number of groups in a geographic area who get together to discuss AA matters in their local area.

What an Intergroup does

Intergroups help to coordinate 12 step work in their area, support local AA groups, and help facilitate connections in their communities. Many AA's have found that serving at Intergroup, answering calls from alcoholics and doing what else needs to be done, greatly enriches their sobriety and broadens their circle of friends.

What an Intergroup looks like

Intergroup is representative of those AA groups in the community interested in passing on the message of AA. Local Intergroups are a vital part of the fellowship.

How a group becomes a member of an Intergroup

An AA group becomes a member of a Intergroup by sending a group representative to the Intergroup meeting. An AA group's membership to a Intergroup is not limited by the AA group's size, finances or geographic location.

How an Intergroup functions

Groups may nominate an Intergroup representative, or make it a part of the GSR role. The Intergroup can be structured as the participating groups see fit. Intergroups may or may not link into an Area Assembly. In some areas the representative has a vote at the Assembly; in others a voice but no vote.

An Intergroup is comprised of representatives of a number of AA groups in a defined geographical area. It has the elected office bearers of a chairperson, vice chairperson, secretary and treasurer. However, the secretary and treasurer roles are often combined into one if necessary.

Responsibilities and functions of an Intergroup are dealt with at regular meetings which are usually held monthly. Decisions at these meetings are made through the collective group conscience. Decisions on how the group functions, the format of the group, and service roles and election of officers, are made at the Annual General Meeting. The AGM is also responsible for determining the Intergroup guidelines, including the required qualities, qualifications and responsibilities of office bearers and those services they will assume responsibility for on behalf of the groups.

Group Conscience

The mechanism by which an Intergroup makes decisions is through the group conscience by the elected AA group representatives at each meeting. In making decisions the group should be mindful of the necessity of an 'informed group conscience'. This means when considering matters, all members of the group should take time to be fully informed about topics for discussion. As AA has no central authority and minimal organisation we use the 12 Traditions and the 12 Concepts for World Service to guide us in our decision making.

Reaching Decisions

Ideally a consensus is reached within a group conscience. The minority opinion should be given time to explain their point of view as a fully informed membership guards against rushed decisions led by forceful majorities. Decisions can be adjourned on occasion to ensure adequate thought in the attempt to gain consensus.

Intergroup representatives are free to decide those matters which they can vote/decide upon and those matters they wish to take back to their groups for further guidance.

Voting

Where matters cannot be decided by consensus in the group conscience, they may be decided by a simple majority vote. With all group conscience matters, each Intergroup representative has one vote.

Service roles in a Intergroup Committee

The service positions depend on the size of the group and availability of members. Ideally there should be one role for one person, although at times group membership may make it necessary to combine roles (i.e. secretary/

treasurer, Intergroup/District Committee Representative). It is always up to the group conscience to decide. Any service position is carried out under the umbrella of the 12 Traditions and 12 Concepts of World Service. A chair, secretary, treasurer are required for the effective running of an Intergroup.

Tradition 2 reminds us: *Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.*

Certain principles apply to enable officers to function effectively. These include Concept 3 which is the *right of decision* and Concept 4 which is the *right of participation*.

Intergroup Officers: Roles and Responsibilities.

Each Intergroup has a chairperson, secretary and treasurer and their job descriptions are set out in their guidelines. Intergroup officers are elected at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). Careful consideration should be given to those taking up those roles, including being mindful of the spirit of rotation. Each Intergroup decides on the qualifications and terms of office.

Chairperson

An Intergroup chairperson chairs the Intergroup meetings.

Secretary

An Intergroup secretary keeps accurate records of decisions made at Intergroup meetings and distributes the records of the meetings to all groups.

Treasurer

The Intergroup treasurer keeps the financial records and reports to the meeting and to all the groups in the area.

Intergroup Finances

AA as a whole is self-supporting through its own contributions (7th Tradition). The Intergroup is funded by contributions from AA groups. This pays the rent, any printing or publishing costs, and any other group expenses as determined by the group conscience.

At the regular monthly Intergroup meetings, any surplus money left following payment of group expenses is divided according to a formula decided by the group. A portion is set aside for a prudent reserve with the remainder going to GSO.

Chapter Six

Service Centres

There are two Service Centres in New Zealand, one in Auckland and one in Christchurch. They are autonomous and responsible only to the groups they serve.

What is a Service Centre?

A Service Centre is a co-ordinating centre for carrying the message to the alcoholic who still suffers in the area that it serves.

What a Service Centre does

The Service Centre is a central point of contact for local AA groups in its area. It handles local enquiries regarding AA and its programme and provides information on where local AA meetings are held. It also keeps

the local groups supplied with up-to-date information through meeting lists, coordinates requests for 12 Step calls, provides Service Centre Reports and newsletters, and receives group and personal contributions. It also distributes AA Literature, carries out Service Centre administration, including accounting and reconciliation of all financial transactions, ensures its local Service Centre magazine is produced and provides regular reports to its governing body.

What a Service Centre looks like

A service centre generally has a central office in the city it serves.

How a Service Centre functions

Each Service Centre employs a manager who is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Service Centre. Volunteers may also assist on an as required basis.

Service Centre Officers roles and responsibilities

These are set out in their Job Descriptions.

Chapter Seven

The Area Assembly

What is an Area Assembly?

The Area Assembly provides a vital link in the New Zealand General Service Conference (Conference) structure between the individual AA groups and Conference. This communication channel provides a voice through which the fellowship can be heard locally, regionally and nationally on

all matters relating to AA.

Delegates are elected by the assembled GSR's which ensures the link between the Conference structure and the groups is strong. It also enables groups in the area to participate in AA worldwide.

In New Zealand we have three Area Assemblies (Northern, Central and Southern). They usually meet three times per year.

What an Area Assembly does

An Area Assembly meets regularly so groups can consider a variety of matters collectively. This includes matters arising from Conference business to area problems and solutions, and financial affairs.

Assemblies are able to aid their member groups in their common purpose of carrying the AA message. They also allow participating groups within an area to collectively share their experiences with, and knowledge of, the AA Steps and Traditions, and share their strength, experience and unity.

The Area Assembly can also provide an opportunity for wider fellowship in a region by hosting sharing sessions, which helps to keep AA strong. It encourages participation in AA service, through holding workshops, sharing sessions, and panel discussions on a variety of AA related matters.

Area Assemblies may form special committees to address specific issues for the Area. Some areas may have sub committees representing Public Information, Treatment and Correctional Facilities, Cooperating with Professional Communities or other committees in their local area.

What an Area Assembly looks like

An Area Assembly consists of one representative (GSR) from each group who wishes to participate, elected office holders who serve the Assembly

and three area elected delegates to Conference. At some Area Assemblies, Intergroup/District Committee Representatives may participate.

An Assembly will elect a delegate to the Conference at its Annual General Meeting (AGM).

Other than the AGM, assemblies may be held at any interval the area chooses.

Each Area Assembly has its own guidelines available on the AA website.

www.aamembers.org.nz

How a group becomes a member of an Area Assembly

AA groups (including Intergroups/District Committees when invited by the Area) may elect a General Service Representative (GSR) to represent their group at an Area Assembly.

The GSR is a trusted servant of both the AA Group they represent and the Area Assembly they attend. They are charged with carrying the views and feeling of the group to the area and keeping the group informed on matters that arise as a result of the Area Assembly's discussions.

As a member of the Area Assembly and a trusted servant, the GSR is entrusted by the AA group they represent with the authority to make decisions, as dictated by their own conscience.

The elected GSR should attend all Area Assemblies and all group conscience meetings, reporting back to the group all the debates, decisions and activities of the Area Assembly.

How an Area Assembly functions

An Area Assembly is comprised of GSR's in a defined geographical area. It has the elected office bearers of a chairperson, vice chairperson,

secretary and treasurer.

An Area may form a steering committee of area officers and delegates to assist the management of the Area's business meetings. This could include activities such as setting the agenda and managing correspondence between meetings. A steering committee has proved effective in ensuring the smooth running of an Assembly. Before each Assembly, it compiles and distributes relevant information to GSR's which means the Assembly is fully informed on matters that it will be required to make decisions on.

Each Area Assembly elects three delegates to the Conference. Each delegate serves a term of three years with one delegate retiring each year.

Group Conscience

Area Assembly makes decisions through the group conscience often made up of elected GSRs and officers of the Area in attendance at each meeting.

In making decisions the Assembly should be mindful of the necessity of an informed group conscience. This means when considering matters, all members of the group should take time to be fully informed about topics for discussion. As AA has no central authority and minimal organisation we use the 12 Traditions and the 12 Concepts for World Service to guide us in our decision making.

Reaching decisions

Relatively few decisions in the AA structure need to be taken by means of a formal vote. In most matters a consensus should be reached (which is not always demonstrated through a majority vote).

In most cases a "sense of meeting" decision is made after a discussion in the item of business. Usually a clear course of action is often apparent. In some

cases, a more formal vote will have to be taken.

If matters are contentious or difficult, it may be wise for the Assembly to delay making a decision and refer the issue back to the groups in order to get clarification from them.

Each Area has its own guidelines which define the requirements for voting. The guidelines of each Assembly may be accessed via the AA Members website: www.aamembers.org.nz

Voting

An Area Assembly is free to decide who may vote at an Area Assembly.

In making that decision, Concept 4, *right of participation* should guide the area's voting decisions. As a right, all GSR's present at the meeting may vote. An area's guidelines may specify that others may vote including officers of the area, area Conference delegates, and Intergroup/District Committee Representative(s).

However, the AA principle of one group/one vote should be maintained.

Service roles in Area Assembly

For the effective running of an Area Assembly, a chair, secretary, treasurer are required.

Any service position is carried out under the umbrella of the 12 Traditions and 12 Concepts for World Service.

Tradition 2 reminds us: *Our leaders are but trusted servants they do not govern.*

Certain principles apply to enable officers to function effectively. These include Concept 3 which is the *right of decision* and Concept 4 which is the *right of participation*.

Area Assembly Officers; roles and responsibilities

Each Area Assembly is free to decide its own qualifications for office holders. In general, it is suggested that area officers should preferably have 3 years' continuous sobriety in AA and have at least 1 year's experience as an active GSR. The nominee should have a record of dedicated service in AA.

Area Assembly Chairperson

The chairperson of an Area Assembly is required to chair the business meetings of the Assembly to enable the voice and the views of the member groups of the assembly to be heard and linked through to Conference.

As a trusted servant the chairperson will work closely with officers of the Assembly, attending member groups and Conference delegates. The chair helps to set the area meeting agenda and will work with the area secretary to ensure correspondence is received, responded to and managed appropriately, and with the area treasurer to ensure the financial matters of the area are managed and communicated appropriately.

Area Assembly Secretary

The secretary of the Area Assembly is responsible for recording and disseminating the business of the Area Assembly. This includes taking all minutes, assisting the chair to set and distribute the agenda, liaising with the host committee for the next Area Assembly and ensuring officers' reports are filed (GSRs, Conference delegates, Financial reports). The secretary also responds to Area Assembly correspondence.

The secretary is also responsible for keeping the Area Assembly informed of all relevant communications, keeping up-to-date mailing lists and distributing minutes in a timely fashion.

Area Assembly Treasurer

The treasurer is responsible for ensuring the appropriate management and guardianship of the AA funds for the Area. The treasurer is responsible for providing an accurate financial report to each Area Assembly and ensuring the distribution of financial accounts in a timely fashion.

Conference Delegate

The delegate attends the Conference as a voting member.

They will report to Conference the deliberations, experiences and viewpoints of their areas. The delegate will also report back to the Area Assembly activities that affect the unity, health and growth of AA in New Zealand.

Area Assembly Finances

Sufficient operating funds, plus a prudent reserve, should be an Area Assembly's prudent financial principle. Surplus funds should be forwarded to the General Service Office (GSO) with the agreement of the Assembly.

It is preferable that the area funds are kept in a bank account with two of three officers of the Assembly as signatories to the account and two of three of the officers able to sign funds out. One of the signatories should be the treasurer with the other two signatories being either the chairperson, deputy chair, or secretary.

Any expenses incurred by a GSR or officer in attending an Area Assembly will, if required, be borne by the GSR's AA group. Any expenses incurred by an Area Assembly officer should, if required, be borne by the Area Assembly they serve.

Area Assemblies contribute to their delegates' attendance at Conference

through an annual amount of money paid to GSO. This payment is referred to as 'equalisation'. The payment is designed so all three areas make an equal contribution to ensure all delegates from all areas can attend the Conference.

Chapter Eight

New Zealand General Service Conference

(NZ Conference or more commonly known as Conference)

What is Conference?

Conference is the voice of the collective group conscience of Alcoholics Anonymous New Zealand. It is the way that AA members can express their views upon all matters of vital AA policy and any breaches from AA Traditions at a local and international level.

Though Conference comes closer to government than anything else in AA, Bill W. in the first North American Service Manual said, "Of course it cannot be too often said that while Conference can issue orders to the General Service Office, it can never mandate or govern the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous which it serves. The Conference represents us but cannot rule us."

What Conference does

The primary purpose of Conference is to serve the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. It is the vehicle by which the fellowship can express its views on all matters affecting AA and as such is required to perform such functions as may be directed by the groups through the Area Assemblies.

What Conference looks like

The Conference is comprised of nine delegates – three each from Northern (from the tip of the North Island to Taupo), Central (from Taranaki to Bay of Plenty to Wellington) and Southern (the whole of the South Island) Areas, two World Service delegates, trustees from the New Zealand General Service Board (the Board), Officers of the Conference (chairperson and secretary) and staff of the General Service Office (GSO). It does not have a treasurer, as money goes straight to the GSO which is accountable to the Board.

How to become a member of Conference

- Get a home group
- Get involved in service at group level
- Get elected as a GSR to represent the views of the group at District Committee and Intergroup level and the Area Assembly
- The Area Assembly elects Delegates to represent them at Conference

The Conference members comprise delegates, Board members, Conference Officers (chair and secretary) and staff of GSO.

Delegates are elected from the Area Assemblies. Board members are approved by Conference. Officers (chair and secretary) are selected from applications put forward to Conference. Nominations for officers are usually supported by the Area Assembly. All Board members and delegates are expected to attend every Conference.

How General Service Conference functions

Matters that have arisen at Area Assembly are taken by delegates to Conference for discussion. Conference members are free to vote as their conscience dictates; they are also free to decide what issues should be taken

back to group level, whether for information, discussion or the group's own direct instruction.

The Conference will hear the financial and policy reports of the Board and its related corporate services. The Conference will then advise the Board Trustees about all matters which affect AA as a whole, engage in debate, appoint necessary committees and pass relevant resolutions for the advice or direction of the Board and its related services.

Conference may also discuss and recommend appropriate action with respect to serious deviations from AA Tradition or harmful misuse of the name "Alcoholics Anonymous" and may draft any necessary bylaws and will name its own officers and committees by any method of its own choosing.

At the close of each session Conference will draft a full report of its proceedings, to be supplied free of charge to all Conference members and made available, on request, to any AA member or group. A summary of its activities is also provided to all AA groups through their delegates.

Group Conscience

The mechanism by which the Conference makes decisions is through the group conscience, consisting of those delegates in attendance who have been elected by their Area Assemblies, the two Board non-alcoholic trustees and the Board chair.

In making decisions the Conference should be mindful of the necessity of an 'informed group conscience'. This means that when considering matters, all members of the Conference should be fully informed about topics for discussion. As AA has no central authority and minimal organisation we use the 12 Traditions and the 12 Concepts for World Service to guide us in our decision-making.

Reaching decisions

Most decisions are made by substantial agreement after full consideration of the matter at hand. Those abstaining or against any motion are given the ability to present their point of view. If necessary, another vote may be taken.

Voting

A vote may be taken when a majority of Conference members are present by a show of hands. When a point of discussion is put to the vote and receives a two-thirds majority then it becomes known as an Advisory Action. This Advisory Action is then forwarded to the Board which ensures the wishes of Conference are implemented in a timely manner.

A two-thirds majority vote of Conference is considered binding. A simple majority is considered a suggestion. When implementing Advisory Actions, the Board must comply with its obligations under NZ law.

Only the nine delegates, the Board chair and two Class A (non-alcoholic) trustees are able to vote. Although the remainder of the Board has no voting rights at Conference, they have a responsibility to attend in order to hear the voice of the fellowship.

Service roles at Conference

For the effective running of Conference a chair and a secretary are required. Three delegates from each area and the Board trustees also attend.

General Service Conference: roles and responsibilities

Chairperson

The chair of Conference chairs the business meetings to enable the voice and the views of the delegates to be heard.

The chair facilitates the dissemination of information brought forward by the delegates and also works with the Conference secretary to ensure the correspondence is received, responded to and managed appropriately. The chair will ensure the agenda is set and minutes are recorded and dispersed.

Secretary

The Conference secretary is responsible for taking and disseminating accurate records which includes taking all minutes and assisting the chair to set and distribute the agenda for meetings. The secretary also manages and coordinates responses to Conference correspondence.

Delegates

The delegate is the conduit between the Area Assembly and Conference. Their role is to bring forward any motions and other concerns from the groups via the Assembly to Conference for discussion and or action. They are then responsible to take any responses from Conference back to the Assembly.

There are three delegates from each Area Assembly elected to the Conference making 9 in total.

Board Trustees

Trustees are responsible for ensuring compliance with the legal obligations of the Incorporated Society of AA and also completes Advisory Actions requested of it by Conference.

Can Conference Act For AA As Whole?

Here is what co-founder Bill W. has to say about that in Concept III of *Twelve Concepts for World Service*

“Excepting for its Charter Provisions to the contrary, the Conference should always be able to decide which matters it will fully dispose of on its own responsibility, and which questions it will refer to the AA groups (or more usually, to their Committee Members or GSR’s) for opinion or for definite guidance.

“Therefore it ought to be clearly understood and agreed that our Conference Delegates are primarily the world servants of AA as a whole, that only in a secondary sense do they represent their respective areas. Consequently they should, on final decisions, be entitled to cast their votes in the General Service Conference according to the best dictates of their own judgement and conscience at that time.”

“Similarly, the Trustees of the General Service Board (operating of course within the provisions of their own Charter and Bylaws) should be able at all times to decide when they will act fully on their own responsibility and when they will ask the Conference for its guidance, its approval of a recommendation, or for its actual decision and direction.”

“Within the scope of their defined or implied responsibilities, all Headquarters service corporations, committees, staff or executives should also be possessed of the right to decide when they will act wholly on their own and when they will refer their problems to the next higher authority.

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Leadership in AA: Ever a Vital Need

No society can function well without able leadership in all its levels, and AA can be no exception. It must be said, though, that we AAs sometimes cherish the thought that we can do without any leadership at all. We are apt to warp the traditional idea of “principles before personalities” around to such a point that there would be no “personality” in leadership whatever. This would imply rather faceless automatons trying to please everybody, regardless.

At other times we are quite as apt to demand that AA’s leaders must necessarily be people of the most sterling judgment, morals, and inspiration - big doers, prime examples to all, and practically infallible.

Real leadership, of course, has to function in between these entirely imaginary poles of hoped-for excellence. In AA, certainly, no leader is faceless and neither is any leader perfect. Fortunately our Society is blessed with any amount of real leadership - the active people of today and the potential leaders for tomorrow as each new generation of able members swarms in. We have an abundance of men and women whose dedication, stability, vision, and special skills make them capable of dealing with every possible service assignment. We have only to seek these folks out and trust them to serve us.

Somewhere in our literature there is a statement to this effect: “Our leaders do not drive by mandate, they lead by example.” In effect we are saying to them, “Act for us, but don’t boss us.”

A leader in AA service is therefore a man (or a woman) who can personally put principles, plans, and policies into such dedicated and effective action that the rest of us want to back him up and help him with his job. When a leader power-drives us badly, we rebel; but when he too meekly becomes an order-taker and he exercises no judgment of his own - well, he really isn't a leader at all.

Good leadership originates plans, policies, and ideas for the improvement of our Fellowship and its services. But in new and important matters, it will nevertheless consult widely before taking decisions and actions. Good leadership will also remember that a fine plan or idea can come from anybody, anywhere. Consequently, good leadership will often discard its own cherished plans for others that are better, and it will give credit to the source.

Good leadership never passes the buck. Once assured that it has, or can obtain, sufficient general backing, it freely takes decisions and puts them into action forthwith, provided of course that such actions be within the framework of its defined authority and responsibility.

A "politico" is an individual who is forever trying to "get the people what they want." A statesman is an individual who can carefully discriminate when, and when not to do this. He recognizes that even large majorities, when badly disturbed or uninformed, can, once in a while, be dead wrong. When such an occasional situation arises, and something very vital is at stake, it is always the duty of leadership, even when in a small minority, to take a stand against

the storm - using its every ability of authority and persuasion to effect a change.

Nothing, however, can be more fatal to leadership than opposition for opposition's sake. It never can be, "Let's have it our way or no way at all." This sort of opposition is often powered by a visionless pride or a gripe that makes us want to block something or somebody. Then there is the opposition that casts its vote saying, "No, we don't like it." No real reasons are ever given. This won't do. When called upon, leadership must always give its reasons, and good ones.

Then too a leader must realize that even very prideful or angry people can sometimes be dead right, when the calm and the more humble are quite mistaken.

These points are practical illustrations of the kinds of careful discrimination and soul-searching that true leadership must always try to exercise.

Another qualification for leadership is "give and take" - the ability to compromise cheerfully whenever a proper compromise can cause a situation to progress in what appears to be the right direction. Compromise comes hard to us "all-or-nothing drunks." Nevertheless, we must never lose sight of the fact that progress is nearly always characterized by a series of improving compromises. We cannot, however, compromise always. Now and then it is truly necessary to stick flatfooted to one's conviction about an issue until it is settled. These are situations for keen timing and a most careful discrimination as to which course to take.

Leadership is often called upon to face heavy and sometimes long-continued criticism. This is an acid test. There are always the constructive critics, our friends indeed. We ought never fail to give them a careful hearing. We should be willing to let them modify our opinions or change them completely. Often, too, we shall have to disagree and then stand fast without losing their friendship. Then we have those who we like to call our “destructive” critics. They power-drive, they are “politickers,” they make accusations. Maybe they are violent, malicious. They pitch gobs of rumors, gossip, and general scuttlebutt to gain their ends - all for the good of AA, of course! Well, in AA at least, we have at last learned that these folks, who may be a trifle sicker than the rest of us, need not be really destructive at all, depending entirely on how we relate ourselves to them.

To begin with, we ought to listen very carefully to what they say. Sometimes they are telling the whole truth; at other times, a little truth. More often, though, they are just rationalizing themselves into nonsense. If we are within range, the whole truth, the half-truth, or even no truth at all can equally hurt us. That is why we have to listen so carefully. If they've got the whole truth, or even a little truth, then we'd better thank them and get on with our respective inventories, admitting we were wrong, regardless. If it's nonsense, we can ignore them. Or we can lay all the cards on the table and try to persuade them. Failing this, we can be sorry they are too sick to listen and we can try to forget the whole business. We can think of few better means of self-survey, of developing genuine patience,

than these usually well-meaning but erratic brother members can afford us. This is always a large order and we shall sometimes fail to make good on it ourselves. But we must needs keep trying.

Now comes that all-important attribute of vision. Vision is, I think, the ability to make good estimates, both for the immediate and for the more distant future. Some might feel this sort of striving to be a son of heresy because we AAs are constantly telling ourselves, "One day at a time." But that valued maxim really refers to our emotional lives and means only that we are not to repine over the past nor wishfully fantasy or daydream about our future.

As individuals and as a Fellowship, we shall surely suffer if we cast the whole job of planning for tomorrow onto a kind Providence. God has endowed us human beings with considerable capability for foresight and he evidently expects us to use it. Therefore we must needs distinguish between wishful dreaming for a happy tomorrow and today's use of our powers of thoughtful estimate - estimate of the kind which we trust will bring future progress rather than unforeseen woe.

Vision is therefore the very essence of prudence - a sound virtue if ever there was one. Of course we shall often miscalculate the future in whole or in part. But even so, this will be far better than to refuse to think at all.

The making of estimates has several aspects. We look at past and present experience to see what we think it means. From this, we derive a tentative idea or policy. Looking first at the nearby future,

we ask how our idea or policy might work. Following this estimate we ask how our policies and ideas might work under the several differing conditions that could arise in the longer future. If an idea looks like a good bet, we try it on - always experimentally, when that is possible. Somewhat later, we revalue the situation and ask whether our estimate is, or may soon be, working out.

At about this stage, we may have to take a critical decision. Maybe we have a policy or plan that still looks fine and is apparently doing well. Nevertheless we ought to ponder very carefully what its longtime effect will be. Will today's nearby advantages boomerang into large liabilities for tomorrow? The temptation will almost always be to seize the nearby benefits and quite forget about the harmful precedents or consequences that we may be setting in motion.

These are no fancy theories. We have found that we must use these principles of estimate constantly, especially at world service levels where the stakes are high. In public relations, for example, we must estimate the reaction both of AA groups and the general public, both short-term and long-term. The same thing goes for our literature. Our finances have to be estimated and budgeted. We must think about our service needs as they relate to general economic conditions, group capability, and willingness to contribute. On many such problems we must very often try to think many months and even years ahead.

As a matter of fact, all of AA's Twelve Traditions were at first questions of estimate and vision for the future. Years ago we slowly

evolved an idea about AA being self-supporting. There had been trouble here and there about outside gifts. Then still more trouble developed. Consequently we began to devise a policy of no outside gifts. We began to suspect that large sums would tend to make us irresponsible and could divert us from our primary aim. Finally we saw that for the long pull, outside money could ruin us utterly. At this point, what had been just an idea or general policy hardened firmly down into an AA Tradition. We saw that we must sacrifice the quick, nearby advantage for long-term safety.

We went through this same process on anonymity. A few public breaks had looked good. But finally the vision came that many such breaks could raise havoc among us. So it went - first a gleam in the eye, then an experimental policy, then a firm policy, and finally a deep conviction - a vision for tomorrow. Such is our process of estimating the future. Our responsible world leadership must be especially and constantly proficient in this vital activity. This is an ability much to be desired, especially among our trustees, and I think most of them should be chosen on the basis that they have already proved their aptness for foresight in business or professional careers.

We shall continually need many of these same attributes, insofar as they can be had, among our leaders of AA services at all levels. The principles of leadership will be just about the same, no matter what the size of the operation.

This discussion on leadership may look, at first glance, like an

attempt to stake out a specially privileged and superior type of AA member. But this is not really so. We are simply recognizing that our talents vary greatly. The conductor of an orchestra is not necessarily good at finance or foresight. And it is even less likely that a fine banker could be much of a musical success. When, therefore, we talk about AA leadership, we only declare that we ought select that leadership on the basis of obtaining the best talent we can find, making sure that we land that talent, whatever it is, in the spot where it will do us the most good.

While this article was first thought of in connection with our world service leadership, it is quite possible that many of its suggestions can be useful to everyone who takes an active part in our Society.

Nowhere could this be more true than in the area of Twelfth Step work itself - something at which nearly all of us most eagerly work. Every sponsor is necessarily a leader. The stakes are huge. A human life, and usually the happiness of a whole family, hangs in the balance. What the sponsor does and says, how well he estimates the reactions of his prospects, how well he times and makes his presentation, how well he handles criticisms, and how well he leads his prospect on by personal spiritual example - well, these attributes of leadership can make all the difference, often the difference between life and death.

Thank God that Alcoholics Anonymous is blessed with so much leadership in each and all of its great affairs!

“Leadership in A.A: Ever a Vital Need” by Bill, April 1959 is reprinted from the A.A. Grapevine magazine with permission

Standing Committees of Conference

The purpose of a Standing Committee is to work on national initiatives that fulfil the primary purpose of AA which is to carry the message to the still suffering alcoholic. Ideas for initiatives come from the fellowship and are presented to Conference for discussion and any action.

Funding for any initiative is from the Initiative Fund administered by the Board and allows the Committees to plan ahead for projects.

Treatment and Correctional Facilities (TCF) Committee

The TCF Committee facilitates requests from members and groups who are interested in carrying the message of recovery to alcoholics in treatment centres and correctional facilities. The TCF Committee is always seeking suggestions for initiatives from local TCF Committees and Area Assemblies.

The Prison Correspondence Coordinator sits under this committee. The primary function is to be a national point of contact between AA and inmates and to facilitate the carrying of the message into Correctional Facilities by correspondence.

Public Information (PIC) Committee

PIC coordinates the Public Awareness week and liaises with national media organisations to ensure AA gets maximum value for media placements.

PIC is always seeking input and initiatives from local PIC and Area Assemblies.

Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC)

The role of CPC is to foster relationships with the professional community which includes health care professionals, educators, members of the clergy,

lawyers, social workers, union leaders and those working in the field of alcoholism.

AA is considered by many professionals to be a valuable resource for alcoholics who want help. AA is not in competition with these professionals and these relationships are important to foster the message of recovery for alcoholics.

Agenda Committee

To ensure that the Conference time is used as efficiently as possible, an Agenda Committee ensures that Agenda items meet established minimum requirements for inclusion on the Agenda.

The Conference chair is responsible for convening the Committee, which is made up of the Conference chair, Board chair, Conference secretary and the three third-year delegates.

Items submitted to the Committee must include the name of the originator i.e. Individual, Group, DCM/Intergroup or Area Assembly, the level of ratification within the service structure received at time of the submission, a brief explanation of the rationale behind the proposal and name of contact person.

Items will be considered by the Committee and either; 1) included for discussion at Conference in Standing Committee Agendas or Recommendations to Conference for inclusion in General Business, 2) returned to the originator, requesting ratification by Area Assembly and resubmission or 3) rejected as a local matter and returned to the originator with explanation of decision.

The Committee then formats the item for inclusion in the Agenda, and

provides a discussion paper with bullet points of interest as they relate to the item. This is then forwarded to all members of Conference, along with discussion documents, three weeks prior to Conference. This allows participants sufficient time to become informed about the item so they can participate in the useful discussion.

Any items rejected by the Committee are included in briefing notes to Conference, explaining what action was taken, and why.

International Committee

The International committee comprises Board and Conference chairs, Conference secretary, GSO manager and the current World Service delegates. The committee makes decisions about the level of funding NZ provides to the International Literature Fund for translation of AA literature into new languages. It also agrees on the level of funding toward AOSM.

Chapter Nine

World Service Meeting (WSM)

What is the World Service Meeting?

The primary purpose of the World Service Meeting is the same as that of all AA activity – to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers, wherever in the world they may be, whatever the language they speak.

What World Service does

The World Service Meeting seeks ways and means of accomplishing this

goal by serving as a forum for sharing the experience, strength and hope of delegates from all corners of the world.

What World Service looks like

Two delegates are elected every two years for a four-year term to represent New Zealand at World Service Meetings which are held bi-annually alternating between USA and another country in even years. The World Service delegates also attend the Asia Oceania Service Meeting which is held every alternate year in odd years.

How to become a member of World Service

Past Conference delegates who wish to become a World Service delegate will put their name forward to Conference for ratification via the Area Assembly.

How World Service functions

The World Service delegates liaise with members from other countries in order to fulfil the purpose of finding ways and means of carrying the AA message to those parts of the world that require assistance. This support includes helping countries plan sound service structures and expanding AA services with internal communications, literature distribution, sponsorship, public information, community relations and institutions work.

Asia Oceania Service Meeting (AOSM)

AOSM is a zonal meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous. The AOSM meeting was created to share experience, strength and hope among the participating countries, by helping them to establish, grow and unify AA in the Asia and Pacific area. Sponsorship of developing countries by more established countries helps AA to reach out to help others to achieve sobriety.

The New Zealand General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous Incorporated (NZGSB or more commonly known as the Board)

What is the Board?

The Board operates under a statutory legal framework as an Incorporated Society, the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions of AA, and the Board Constitution. It is the legal arm of the fellowship and has the ability to contract on behalf of AA. The Board produces policies and guidelines to allow AA to comply with its legal obligations. The Board carries out all instructions from Conference to enable it to achieve its objectives.

What the Board does

The Board is an incorporated society whose primary function is to serve the General Service Conference.

It provides a vehicle for selling AA literature, and holds the licences, leases, trademarks, patents, and other property interests, if any (whether intellectual or not), in the name of Alcoholics Anonymous.

It promotes awareness activities in relation to Alcoholics Anonymous, controls the management and operation of the General Service Office (GSO); and carries out all instructions from Conference to enable it to achieve its objectives.

What the Board looks like

The Board membership consists of a maximum of two non-alcoholic (Class A) trustees and a minimum of six alcoholic (Class B) trustees, a chairperson, secretary and treasurer.

The Board can have up to 15 persons serving at any one time. The terms of continuous service on the Board is limited to three years unless General Service Conference determines otherwise.

How to become a Trustee

Potential trustees are normally approached by current trustees to assess their level of interest in serving and invited to apply for a position on the Board. The Board will then ratify the nomination after considering it at its next Board meeting. There are usually three conference-experienced trustees and three specialist trustees such as people with legal, public relations and financial expertise. Specialist trustees are not required to have conference experience.

How the Board functions

The Board meets before each Conference. It holds its AGM each March to enable the Auditor's Report to be discussed and filed with the Charities Commission in order to comply with its legal obligations. Telephone conferences between each Conference ensure Advisory Actions are on track.

Group Conscience

The mechanism with which a Board makes decisions is through the group conscience of its members at each Board meeting.

Reaching Decisions

In making decisions the Board should be mindful of the necessity of an informed group conscience. When considering matters, all members should take the time to be fully informed about topics for discussion. AA has no central authority and minimal organisation therefore the 12 Traditions and the 12 Concepts for World Service are the guide to decision making.

Voting

Each board member has one vote.

General Service Board Officers: roles and responsibilities

Chairperson

The Board chairperson chairs the meetings of the General Service Board.

Secretary

The Board secretary keeps accurate records of decisions including advisory actions made at Board meetings and distributes the records of the meetings to all trustees.

Treasurer

The Board treasurer has a watchdog role over all aspects of GSO's financial management, working closely with other members of the Board to safeguard the organisation's finances.

Although it's the treasurer's role to ensure that these responsibilities are met, much of the work may be delegated to paid staff or a finance sub-committee.

In summary, the treasurer is responsible for:

- 1 General financial oversight
- 2 Financial planning and budgeting
- 3 Financial reporting
- 4 Banking, book keeping and record keeping
- 5 Development and review of financial policies and procedures

Given these responsibilities, the treasurer typically acts as an information and reference point for the chair and other committee members: clarifying financial implications of proposals and outlining the current financial status.

Board Trustees

Board members are appointed according to their specialist experience to provide the Board with the necessary skills to carry out its functions and complete the Advisory Actions requested of them by Conference.

Class A Trustees

Typically, the non-alcoholic Class A trustee will have experience in one of the following fields: treatment of alcoholism in the community, legal, treatment, justice, police, publicity, and spiritual. This incomplete list is offered as a guide.

Class B Trustees

Alcoholic Class B trustees are sought in the area of finance, media, PR and legal. Conference experience is preferred.

Subcommittees of the Board

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee, which consists of the Board chairperson, treasurer and one other trustee, ensures the Board complies with its legal obligations.

Archives

The Board appoints an archivist who catalogues the historical information relating to AA. This includes but is not limited to minutes of all service meetings; articles, campaigns and other information of interest to AA.

Mainstay

Mainstay is New Zealand's AA meeting in print; a bi-monthly publication that mirrors the fellowship by providing stories of AA recovery.

Bill W wrote in Grapevine “it is the vehicle for your thoughts, your feelings, your experiences and your aspirations - if you care to make it that. While we can only publish a fraction of the material that will come to hand you may be sure that we shall do our fairest and best in making the selections. Always wishing to reflect AA and nothing but AA, it will be the ideal... to always serve, never to dictate or command.”

The Steps, Traditions and Concepts are Mainstay’s guidelines and the articles articulate these unchanging principles through the current experiences and informed opinions of our individual writers.

It is distributed via GSO, on a subscription basis, to groups and individuals. It is a part of the responsibility of the Board to oversee the publication of Mainstay. An assigned Board Trustee has final sign-off of every issue prior to publication. It is self-supporting through subscriptions.

Mainstay is also a communication tool for both loners and housebound members, however it should always be a magazine relevant to the entire fellowship. Mainstay can also be used as a 12th step tool within institutions and for newcomers.

National Convention

A National Convention is held each January for the purpose of encouraging the fellowship in NZ and overseas to meet and share their experience and hope.

The three Area Assemblies share hosting duties on a rotational basis. Conference guidelines assist the Assemblies to comply with their obligations.

Communications and External Relations

This Committee responds to approaches from outside media and

communications organisations, writes press releases for media and assists local PI committees to carry the message to the still suffering alcoholic.

Chapter Eleven

General Service Office (GSO)

What is GSO?

This is the management arm of General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous New Zealand Incorporated (Board).

What GSO does

GSO provides a central repository for administration and distribution of literature to AA groups, and supports the activities of the Board by carrying out the recommendations of the Conference.

What GSO looks like

GSO is responsible for the distribution of AA literature, administration including accounting and reconciliation of all financial transactions, and ensuring Mainstay is produced bi-monthly and the AA website is updated. It is also responsible for ensuring all arrangements for Board and Conference meetings are carried out in a timely manner, and liaises with the National Convention Committee.

GSO runs from an office in Wellington.

How GSO functions

The Board employs a manager who is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the General Service Office and a part-time office assistant.

Group Conscience

There is no group conscience as this is a paid position of the Board.

Reaching decisions

GSO staff are provided with Board approved policy documents which clearly state their level of authority to operate the office. These include policies regarding financial, literature sale and purchases, travel expenses for delegates, and legal compliance with the charities commission and provision of audited accounts.

Voting

GSO staff do not have any voting rights although their opinions are highly respected and sought.

GSO Officers: roles and responsibilities

These are as set out in their Job Descriptions.

Finances

GSO is responsible for receiving money from the groups, providing regular financial reports to Conference and the Board and weekly reconciliation of the AA finances.

Appendices

The Three Guiding Documents of Alcoholics Anonymous New Zealand

I Conference Charter

The current Conference Charter, adopted in April 2010, describes the body of principles and relationships through which AA services function as a whole. Though the Conference itself is not incorporated and its Charter is not a legal instrument, this informal agreement between the fellowship and its trustees provides the means by which AA can give service.

II Board Bylaws

Bylaws set out the internal Board procedures and were adopted in October 2017. They are not a legal instrument under NZ law.

III Incorporated Society (Constitution)

New Zealand Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous Incorporated is a legal instrument that is filed with the NZ Companies Office and fulfils the charitable status of the Incorporated Society. It is equivalent to the Constitution (Trust Agreement) of The Alcoholic Foundation USA, 1938, filed in the New York Court. The New Zealand Society was incorporated in 1991 along with Rules which have been updated with relevant changes.

The Final Voice of the Fellowship

“Alcoholics Anonymous has been called an upside down organization because “the ultimate responsibility and final authority for world services resides with the groups—rather than with the trustees, the General Service Board or the General Service Office in New York.”

Twelve Concepts For World Service Illustrated

