

# CONFERENCE CHARTER

## New Zealand

April 2010

### **1. Purpose:**

The New Zealand General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous is a guardian of the World Services and of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous. The Conference shall be a service body only; never a government for Alcoholics Anonymous.

### **2. Composition:**

The Conference members shall be composed of Area Delegates, World Service Delegates, Trustees from the New Zealand General Service Board, Officers of the General Service Conference and Staff of the General Service Office.

### **3. Conference Relation to AA:**

The Conference will act for AA New Zealand in the perpetuation and guidance of its services in New Zealand. The General Service Conference of New Zealand is the voice of the group conscience of AA New Zealand. It is the vehicle by which the AA movement in New Zealand can express its views upon all matters of vital AA policy and all hazardous deviations from AA Tradition at a local and international level.

New Zealand supports the consultation between countries and therefore attends the World Service Meeting of delegates from the various Conferences held every two years and the Asia Oceania Service Meeting held every alternate year.

Only matters seriously affecting AA's worldwide needs shall be the subject of joint consideration.

Conference Members should be free to vote as their conscience dictates; they should also be free to decide what questions should be taken to the Group level, whether for information, discussion or their own direct instruction.

But no change in Article 12 of this Charter nor in the Twelve Traditions of AA or in the Twelve Steps of AA may be made with less than the written consent of three-quarters of the AA Groups worldwide, as described in the resolution adopted by the 1955 Conference and Convention, North America as described in the AA Service Manual.

#### **4. Conference Relation to the General Service Board and its Corporate Services:**

The Conference will function as guides and advisers to the General Service Board and its related service corporations. The Conference will be expected to afford a reliable cross-section of AA opinion for this purpose.

A quorum shall consist of two-thirds of all the Conference members registered.

It will be understood, as a matter of tradition, that a two-thirds vote of Conference Members voting shall be considered binding upon the General Service Board and its related corporate services, provided the total vote constitutes at least a Conference quorum. But no such vote ought to impair the legal rights of the General Service Board and the service corporations to conduct routine business and make ordinary contracts relating thereto.

It will be further understood, regardless of the legal prerogatives of the General Service Board, as a matter of tradition, that a three-quarters vote of all Conference Members may bring about a re-organisation of the General Service Board and the Directors and staff members of its corporate services, if or when such re-organisation is deemed essential. Under such a proceeding, the Conference may request resignations, may nominate new Trustees, and may make all other necessary arrangements regardless of the legal prerogatives of the General Service Board.

#### **5. Area Assemblies: Composition of:**

Assemblies, designated as Area Assemblies, are composed of the elected General Service Representatives of all the AA Groups desiring to participate, within a designated geographical area.

Generally speaking, each area will be entitled to one assembly. But areas of large AA populations and/or whose geography presents communication problems will be entitled to additional assemblies, as provided by The AA Service Manual, or by any further amendment thereto.

#### **6. Area Assemblies: Purpose of:**

Area Assemblies convene for the election of Area Committee Members (i.e. office bearers) and the election of Conference Delegates to the New Zealand General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Such Area Assemblies are concerned only with the general service affairs of Alcoholics Anonymous.

#### **7. Area Assemblies: Method of Electing Area Committee Members and Delegates:**

Whenever practicable, Area Committee Members (i.e. office bearers) are elected by written ballot without personal nomination. Conference Delegates are selected from eligible members of the area assembly by a two-thirds written ballot or by *Third Legacy Procedure*, as provided in "The AA Service Manual".

## **8. Area Assemblies: Terms of Office for Group General Service Representatives, Area Committee Members and Delegates:**

- General Service Representatives shall serve for two years.
- Area Committee Members serve at the pleasure of their area and in accordance with the "The AA Service Manual".
- Conference Delegate terms are for three years.

## **9. The New Zealand General Service Conference Meeting:**

The Conference will meet at least yearly at a place of the Conference's choosing. Special meetings may be called should there be a grave emergency. The Conference may also render advisory opinions at any time by a mail or telephone poll in aid of the General Service Board or its related services.

## **10. The General Service Board: Composition, Jurisdiction, Responsibilities:**

The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous New Zealand is an incorporated body composed of alcoholics and non-alcoholics. It shall consist of (no less than) ten members. Eighty-percent (currently eight) alcoholic trustees (Class B) and twenty-percent (currently two) non-alcoholic (Class A) who elect their own successors, these choices being subject however to the approval of Conference by majority vote.

The Trustees all bring varying talents and backgrounds to their service responsibilities.

There is a balance on the Board between Class B Trustees who are elected primarily to bring AA service experience to the Board and those selected primarily for business or other professional backgrounds.

Class A Trustees are usually elected by the Board in September, and attend their first Board meetings the following March. They may serve for three consecutive years with the option of serving a further three-year period subject to Conference approval followed by Board election.

In Class B Trustees the Conference term of office is three years. In special circumstances a Class B Trustee may serve an additional term not exceeding two years subject to Conference approval. Class B rotation occurs on the last day of March and the new Trustee takes up the position on 1st April, with the first Board meeting attended being in March.

Interim appointments are for three years from the date of appointment.

While a new Trustee does not usually attend Board meetings until his or her predecessor has rotated out of the job, both the incumbent and the Trustee elect may attend the March Board meeting to preserve continuity.

Where possible, but at the Board's discretion, interim appointments are avoided, and casual vacancies left until the following Conference. The Board has the right to act to keep its numbers at an appropriate level.

Each of the three New Zealand regions may provide nominations for alcoholic and non-alcoholic members through their respective areas, the Board may select nominees themselves or Conference may provide nominees according to the method prescribed from time to time in the AA Service Manual.

Conference has the opportunity to disapprove endorsement of any nominees or candidates chosen by a nominating session as above, by a majority vote of all Conference Members. Once Conference approval for a nominee is obtained the Board then elects the new Board member by a simple majority of remaining Board Members. By tradition, the Board shall accept the nominee of Conference.

Where considered essential, interim appointments may be made at its discretion by the Board requiring a two-thirds vote of all Board Members present or the Third Legacy Procedure for more than one candidate. Such appointments are subject to Conference approval.

A Trustee who resigns or completes a term of office shall not be eligible for reappointment until a period of three years has elapsed from date of resignation or rotation off.

The General Service Board is the chief service arm of the Conference, and is essentially custodial in its character. Excepting for decisions upon matters of policy, finance, or AA Tradition, liable to seriously affect AA as a whole, the General Service Board has entire freedom of action in the routine conduct of the policy and business affairs of the AA service corporations and may name suitable committees and elect Directors to its subsidiary corporate service entities in pursuance of this purpose.

The General Service Board is primarily responsible for the financial and policy integrity of its subsidiary services; the General Service Office of New Zealand and Mainstay.

The Charter and Memorandum and Articles or Bylaws of the General Service Board, or any amendments thereto, should always be subject to the approval of the New Zealand General Service Conference by a three-quarters (3/4) vote of all its members. Except in a great emergency, neither the General Service Board nor any of its related services shall take any action liable to greatly affect AA as a whole, without first consulting the Conference. It is nevertheless understood that the Board shall at all times reserve the right to decide which of its actions or decisions may require the approval of the Conference.

## **11. The New Zealand General Service Conference: Its General Procedures:**

The Conference will hear the financial and policy reports of the General Service Board and its related corporate services.

The Conference will advise with Board Trustees and directly with staff members upon all matters presented as affecting AA as a whole, engage in debate, appoint necessary committees and pass suitable resolutions for the advice or direction of the General Service Board and its related services.

The Conference may also discuss and recommend appropriate action respecting serious

deviations from AA Tradition or harmful misuse of the name "Alcoholics Anonymous". The Conference may draft any needed bylaws and will name its own officers and committees by any method of its own choosing.

The Conference at the close of each session 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. Also a condensation of its activities will be published and will reach all AA Groups throughout New Zealand through their Delegates.

## **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 whenever 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.