



New Zealand General Service Conference Newsletter

August 2015



Please pass this on - email it to your AA contacts, print it out and take it to your meeting to make sure that all your group members are informed.

From the Conference Chair

I have had the privilege of being the Chair of the General Service Conference for just over a year now. I would like to take this opportunity to inform the AA Fellowship of just how well your General Service Delegates, World Service Delegates and General Service Board Trustees are working together at Conference. All members of Conference are a great example of treating each other with respect and everyone gets a say uninterrupted. This respect for all and great listening skills make my job as Chair much easier. Service at this level is hard work but it is also a rewarding experience when you see the principles of AA and the traditions and Concepts being utilised so well. It is a wonderful experience seeing a truly effective group Conscience in action.

At our last Conference we noticed that the Conference in October this year will be New Zealand's 100th. I have done a bit of looking to see when the first Conference was held. Thanks to Mike Quayle at GSO NZ I have now seen the first minutes detailing how this was organised.

So a bit of history of AA NZ.

A Service Council was set up in 1961 and from there a Steering Committee worked on our structure and the idea of General Service nationally. A meeting was held at Massey in February 1964 to approve a General Service Conference. Open to all AA members and it had

approximately 120 people present. The first Conference with General Service Delegates from the three Areas was in August 1964 in Marton.

One part of Conference is the Four Conference Standing Committees structure –

- 1) CPC - Co-operation with the Professional Community – currently working with attendance at Cutting Edge Conference to form links with those health professionals, Oversight of the Police Initiative continuing nationally is held by this standing committee.
- 2) PI - Public Information- currently working on National PI week, also a communications and Media strategy to better focus carrying the AA message.
- 3) TCF - Treatment and Correctional Facilities- currently working on Letters to Inmates NZ Prison booklet, aiming for a National Treatments initiative next year.
- 4) International - Covers World Service and Asia Oceania area matters. An International Newsletter has circulated electronically earlier this year.

These committees meet on the Friday evening and then bring their reports and proposals back to the full Conference on Sunday morning. Following further discussion by the full Conference, voting takes place on accepting and approving actions from the standing committees.

In 2013 the NZ General Service Board (GSB) allocated an Initiatives Fund in the yearly budget. The aim is to have a set amount of money available for each Conference Standing Committee to utilise for long term planning and development of projects. Previously the approval process could take up to two years which made getting a project up and running quite difficult for all concerned. This was discussed and endorsed by Conference. A policy document was then drawn up and this is reviewed and approved annually at the Board AGM. The NZ GS Board is the legal entity for AA and all Board policies are reviewed at an AGM. The Area Delegates do depend on ideas from the Fellowship in their regions to help them develop national projects so keep in touch with your General Service Delegates through the Area Assemblies and District Committees (if applicable for your region).

A reminder that although this level of Service is a National level, we are still operating with the same Primary Purpose “that of carrying the message to the still suffering Alcoholic”. Best wishes to all and hope you have a sober year ODAAT of course.

Christine H, GSC Chair

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From the Board Chair

I am at the halfway point of my role as Board chair and thought it opportune to present a review the projects in hand and a forecast of progress. Please note that nearly all the actions of the Board are at the direction of Conference, which is in turn driven by the Assemblies, which are in turn directed by the Groups.

Service Manual.

One of the first tasks the new Board was faced with was the long running discussion about the By Laws. After discussion and consultation with Conference, it was agreed that we would park the idea of By Laws, and focus on a Service Manual specifically written for AA New Zealand. The Goal is to have a completed Draft to present to Conference in October 2016.

Tradition 7 Pay App.

The company we are working with continues to develop its platform, and the technology is improving so fast it is difficult to know when to jump aboard. Costs are reducing as time

goes on. We are waiting for the new version to be finalised and we will lock in costs so we can proceed. The project looks significantly different to a year ago, with reduced cost to the fellowship as apps become more readily available. At the outset we were looking at building our own app, and now we are able to piggy back on the work of others.

Board Rotation.

We have seen the departure of Ian Hastings, our Class A Trustee, at the end of 2014. Ian was instrumental in setting up the Police Initiative, and has kindly agreed to remain available as a consultant and “door opener” if and when required. Helen Moriarty also finishes this year, so we are in the process of finding 2 new Class A Trustees. We are also looking to replace Daniel F in 2016, in the Treasurer role, as well as placing a new Conference Experienced Trustee at the same time.

We are pleased that we have applications to fill all these roles, and the nominations are proceeding through the process of review, before the proposals are discussed at Conference in October. The successful candidates will begin their terms in February 2016.

Leases and AA

Viv D has put together a very comprehensive document outlining the legal position of AA groups should they need to enter into a formal lease agreement for premises with a landlord. The document will be available through GSO.

Survey

It has been some years since a membership survey has been undertaken. A small committee is working on this. It is likely that it will be online.

In Conclusion

The Board and Conference are working well together. The Board is responsible for the financial security of AA and implementing the wishes of Conference as directed. The Initiatives Fund has been an effective tool in ensuring that we only spend what is available and if income drops we are not overcommitted. GSO continues to be well managed by Mike and Steph, who are working hard on our online presence as well as serving the needs of the Fellowship.

Regards

Steve H, Board Chair.

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