



# AUSTRALIAN SERVICE HANDBOOK

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For Al-Anon  
and  
Alateen Groups

2017

Al-Anon Family Groups (Australia) Pty. Ltd.  
Melbourne, Australia.

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*Approved by:*  
**AUSTRALIAN SERVICE CONFERENCE**  
**AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS**

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For Al-Anon and  
Alateen Groups  
in AUSTRALIA  
2017

*This is your*

## **Australian Service Handbook**

It is for every member of our fellowship who has found the personal benefits and satisfactions that come from taking an active part in Al-Anon's growth.

The opportunities to serve described here can take us far beyond the boundaries of the Group and our personal problems. While our Ninth Tradition provides that Al-Anon, as such, shall remain unorganised, it does suggest that an orderly structure and logical procedures will make it possible for Al-Anon to carry its message with maximum effectiveness.

This *Australian Service Handbook*, adapted from the *World Service Handbook*, explains how Al-Anon is held together Australia-wide, how it is structured, and how each member who is elected or appointed to a particular responsibility can best function in it.

**The *Australian Service Handbook* should be referred to rather than the *World Service Handbook* section of the *Al-Anon Alateen Service Manual*.**

Since our growth depends on how well we serve the fellowship, this book can be helpful as a guide. It gives the methods that have long been standard practice in service work worldwide. All these procedures have been drawn from trial-and-error experience and should be changed *only when an Area Assembly is fully agreed that such changes will better adapt these guidelines to their needs.*\*

The suggestions offered here differ in some details from those in earlier versions of the *Australian Service Handbook*. This came about because of the comprehensive further experience with the procedures as well as updates of the *World Service Handbook*.

\* If and when the Area Assembly is agreed on alterations in the procedures recommended, it is vital that all Groups in the Area be informed of the changes and why they were necessary.

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## Abbreviations

AA	Alcoholics Anonymous
ADR	Alternate District Representative
AGR	Alternate Group Representative
AGSO	Australian General Service Office
ASC	Australian Service Conference
CAL	Conference Approved Literature
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CMA	Current Mailing Address
CPC	Co-operating With the Professional Community
DR	District Representative
GR	Group Representative
GSB	General Service Board
IAGSM	International Al-Anon General Services Meeting
LDC	Literature Distribution Centre
P.I.	Public Information
WSC	World Service Conference
WSO	World Service Office

# TERMS USED IN AL-ANON

*The term “Al-Anon” is always understood to include Alateen. To keep it simple, the pronoun “he” is used throughout.*

<b>Area Australian Service Committee</b>	This Committee consists of the Delegate, the Officers of the Assembly, District Representatives (DRs), Co-ordinators and liaison members, who meet between Assemblies to discuss Area and District matters, plan the agenda for the Assembly, initiate projects, and make recommendations to the Assembly. All committee members may vote at the meetings of the Area Australian Service Committee.
<b>Area Co-ordinator</b>	An Al-Anon/Alateen member, not necessarily a Group Representative (GR), appointed by the Australian Service Delegate or Assembly Chairperson, or elected or appointed according to Area autonomy. The Co-ordinator usually serves for a three-year term and votes at the Area Australian Service Committee meetings, but not at the Assembly unless he is a GR. An Area Co-ordinator unifies one of the Al-Anon special services for an Area (such as Alateen, Archives, Group records, Newsletter Editor, Literature, Public Information, Co-operating with the Professional Community and Institutions).
<b>Area Office</b>	The office administered by the Area Australian Service Committee where the functioning and activities of the Assembly are handled and co-ordinated (e.g. provision of Conference Approved Literature (CAL) for distribution to Groups and individuals, answering services, etc.) An Information Service may also be provided.
<b>Assembly</b>	A meeting of Group Representatives (GRs) for the purpose of electing a Delegate to the annual Australian Service Conference, an Alternate Delegate and Assembly Officers. The Assembly also meets between elections to receive and distribute reports on Area and Australian service affairs. It reviews and approves interim reports of the Area Australian Service Committee. If a District Representative has not been previously elected by the GRs of a District, his election may take place at the Assembly (see Caucus).
<b>Assembly Area</b>	A State or portion thereof represented at our Australian Service Conference by a Delegate. Some States which are large or populous have been divided into two or more Areas, each with its own Delegate. (See “Conference Structure” section.)
<b>Assembly Centre</b>	The location where the Assembly meets.
<b>Area Association Committee</b>	The legal entity (incorporated association) of an Assembly Area.

<b>Australian General Service Office Administrative Staff</b>	AGSO's Administrative Staff is made up of the General Secretary, the Deputy General Secretary, the Literature Officer, the Australia-Link Editor and any additional members as approved by the Conference or the Board. They are paid employees of AGSO. All must be AI-Anon members. Each has oversight of their department, and all attend the Australian Service Conference. The General Secretary, known to outside organizations as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), has oversight responsibility for all functions of the AGSO.
<b>Australian General Services</b>	Services rendered to AI-Anon Groups and individuals Australia-wide by our Australian General Service Office (AGSO), also known as AI-Anon Family Groups (Australia) Pty. Ltd. These services are channelled through the Area Australian Service Committees.
<b>Australian Service Conference (ASC)</b>	AI-Anon's annual meeting attended by all Australian Service Delegates from their respective Areas, members of the General Service Board (GSB), the Executive Committee (which includes Chairpersons of all Selected Committees) and members of the AGSO Administrative Staff. The Conference provides guidance to the AGSO in service matters brought to its attention.
<b>Australian Service Delegate</b>	A District Representative who has been elected Australian Service Delegate for a three-year term by the GRs at an Assembly. The Delegate shares Area experience at three annual Conferences which serve AI-Anon Australia-wide. He brings the views and the spirit of Australian AI-Anon back to his Area.
<b>Australian Service Delegate's Alternate</b>	A DR elected to work closely with the Australian Service Delegate, to participate in Area Australian service activities and to replace the Delegate if the latter cannot fulfil his three-year term.
<b>Australian Service Seminar</b>	An Australian Service Seminar is held periodically to stimulate interest in service and encourage two-way communication between AGSO and the Areas. It is hosted by an Area with Conference approval.
<b>Caucus</b>	A meeting, at the Assembly, of GRs from a given District, convened for the purpose of electing a District Representative if none has been elected in his home District prior to the Assembly.
<b>Districts</b>	Convenient segments into which an Area is divided by the Area Australian Service Committee, with the approval of the Assembly.
<b>District Meetings</b>	A meeting of GRs held as necessary in a convenient location within a District to elect a District Representative, to hear his reports and to discuss District matters.
<b>District Representative (DR)</b>	An incoming, outgoing, or active past GR who is elected by the GRs in his District, either in his home District or at an Assembly. He assists the Delegate in passing on information about Australian General Service Office activities and Conference decisions to the GRs in his District. He is a member of the Area Australian Service Committee

<b>General Service Office (GSO)</b>	A service structure of one or more nations outside the US and Canada with a Board of Trustees and other elected Al-Anon members responsible for Al-Anon service-related activities in their respective structure.
<b>Group Representative (GR)</b>	A member, preferably with a basic understanding of the Al-Anon program, who is elected, subject to the dual member policy, for a three-year term by his Group (Al-Anon or Alateen). He attends Assembly and District meetings and acts as contact between the Group and the DR, and between the Group and the Area Australian Service Committee.
<b>Liaison Member</b>	A member appointed or elected by the Area Committee to handle specific services not covered by Co-ordinators, (e.g. Chairperson of the Planning Committee for Al-Anon's participation in an AA Convention). He provides a link between this Service and the Area Australian Service Committee and encourages the exchange of information between the two. His term of office lasts until the special service is wound up. He votes at the Area Australian Service Committee but not at the Assembly unless he is a GR.
<b>Panel</b>	A Panel ideally consists of one-third of the Delegates attending the Australian Service Conference. A Panel is elected every year for a three-year term. The elections of the three Panels are staggered so that a Conference always includes one Panel of Delegates with two years' experience. A non-Panel Area is one that has not yet joined the Conference.
<b>Selected Committee</b>	An AGSO committee with permanent status, consisting of Al-Anon/Alateen members with a broad understanding of our program, who concentrate on one of the elements of our fellowship such as Alateen, Literature, etc. (See "Australian General Service Office, How It Is Structured" section, and Concept 11.)
<b>World Service Conference (WSC)</b>	Al-Anon's annual meeting attended by all World Service Delegates from the United States, Canada and their territorial areas; representatives from overseas countries; members of the Board of Trustees and Executive Committee; Chairpersons of Selected Committees; and the WSO administrative staff and other office personnel. The Conference provides guidance to the WSO in service matters brought to its attention.
<b>WSO Administrative Staff</b>	Paid employees of the World Service Office who coordinate activities and projects for the service functions of the department to which they are assigned. The Directors (with the exception of the Director of Business Services) and Associate Directors must be Al-Anon members and are voting members of the World Service Conference.
<b>World Services</b>	Services rendered to Groups all over the world by our World Service Office (WSO), also known as Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., and by General Service Offices (GSOs) outside the World Service Conference structure. These services are channelled through Area World Service Committees and General Service Committees in other countries. To keep communication open between the WSO and GSOs, an International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) has become part of our structure.

# THE AUSTRALIAN GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE

Al-Anon Family Groups (Australia) Pty. Ltd., better known to most members as the Australian General Service Office or AGSO, is the headquarters of the fellowship in Australia. It is located in Melbourne.

## What It Does

The Australian General Service Office:

- acts as the clearing house, Australia-wide, for inquiries from those who need help or want information about Al-Anon or Alateen
- registers new Groups, Lone Members, Information Service Offices and Literature Distribution Centres, and provides them with literature, information and help
- advises the Delegates of the formation or disbanding of Groups in their Areas
- maintains Group data, using this to publish up-to-date meeting lists on the Web site and to produce *Contacting Al-Anon in Australia*
- maintains the AGSO Website
- guides Al-Anon's public information efforts Australia-wide
- generates cooperation between Al-Anon and the professional community
- imports, reprints and distributes Conference Approved Literature (CAL) in English and foreign languages
- publishes and distributes *Austra-Link* and other Al-Anon materials to individuals and Groups throughout Australia
- plans and co-ordinates the annual Australian Service Conference
- gives an annual report of its activities and those of the Australian Service Conference in a *Conference Summary*
- carries the Al-Anon message to institutions, and encourages the formation of Institutions Groups to help those affected by someone else's alcoholism
- stimulates interest in service through Australian or Area-based Service Seminars
- co-operates with AA's National Office in all matters affecting both fellowships in Australia
- is responsible for services to Al-Anon Groups in Australia
- maintains correspondence with its Australia-wide membership
- keeps in constant touch with our World Service Office
- sends two Delegates to the biennial International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM)
- reports its activities quarterly to the General Service Board and annually to the Australian Service Conference
- organises and preserves Australian historical Al-Anon/Alateen material.

### **How It Is Structured**

The Australian General Service Office is headed by a General Secretary with assistance provided by Administrative Staff, volunteer Chairpersons of Selected Committees, other staff and volunteers. There is also a Lone Members Co-ordinator and an Archivist. These assistants handle the many and varied tasks associated with efficient operation of our services.

The General Secretary and assistants handle correspondence from within Australia and a growing number of overseas sources to make sure that current information is disseminated to those concerned.

**The Selected Committees** that take care of the various elements of our program are Alateen, Conference, Literature and Public Information. Each Committee has a volunteer Chairperson and several AI-Anon/Alateen members who live within commuting distance to attend regularly scheduled Committee meetings. Additional members may be included via electronic media, for example, audio/video conferencing methods. Each also has Delegate members, drawn from the three panels, who work closely with their Committee by means of correspondence, and meet with them annually at the Conference.

One example of how the Committees work is the procedure followed by the Literature Committee:

With permission of our World Service Office, some items of Conference-Approved Literature (CAL), including a number of hardcover books, are produced in Australia. Other CAL (including literature in translation) is imported from our World Service Office (WSO). All literature is stored in and despatched from the Australian General Service Office (AGSO) Melbourne. Stock records, accounts and dispatch are all handled by the Literature Officer who is a member of the Literature Committee and a Staff member. Volunteers assist with these tasks.

**The Budget Committee**, also a Selected Committee, requires a different composition, as does the Conference Committee. The Chairperson of the Budget Committee is the Treasurer of the corporation and is assisted by the General Secretary, the Deputy General Secretary, the Financial Records Manager, the Literature Officer and other volunteer members.

**The Conference Committee** consists of a volunteer Chairperson, the General Secretary, the Conference Secretary and other volunteers. The Conference Committee includes the Admissions/Handbook subcommittee. There are 3 Delegate members allocated to the Conference Committee whose attendance is required only at meetings at the Conference. They may be consulted throughout the year by the AGSO Conference Committee on any related matter and may also submit suggestions at any time.

**The Archives Advisory Committee** includes the AGSO Archivist.

Ad hoc Committees may be established for specific purposes when the need arises.

**The Executive Committee**, which meets monthly, is the administrator of the Australian General Service Office, with legal authority granted by the General Service Board to conduct its daily affairs. Its members, who are appointed by the General Service Board, include the General Secretary,

the Deputy General Secretary, the Treasurer, the Editor of *Austra-Link*, the Chairpersons of the Selected Committees and possibly two other volunteers who are preferably not members of the General Service Board. One member of the Executive Committee is appointed as its Chairperson.

**The Nominating Committee** consists of all members of the General Service Board, one of whom is named as its Chairperson. It seeks out candidates to fill vacant positions, meeting a minimum of three times a year.

**The General Service Board** is composed of five to twelve Trustees of the following classifications: In-Town Trustee, Out-of-Town Trustee and Sustaining Trustee. The Sustaining Trustees are the General Secretary and the Deputy General Secretary. The term of office for In-Town Trustees is three years; they may serve two consecutive terms. At least a year must elapse before the individual may serve again. An Out-of-Town Trustee may serve one three-year term only. Nominations are called for by the Board before the end of the term. Two Trustees are elected each year at the annual meeting of the Board. The Conference approves the slate of Trustee nominations.

The General Service Board, together with the members of the Executive Committee, directs the business operations of the Australian General Service Office, observing the By-Laws of Al-Anon Family Groups (Australia) Pty. Ltd. under which we operate in Australia. Subject to copyright and other legal and traditional rights of our world headquarters vested in the World Service Office in U.S.A., the Board is concerned with guarding the legal rights of the Al-Anon fellowship in Australia against those who may try to profit from our ever-growing public acceptance, protecting our principles from distortion and dilution and, in general, acting as the chief service arm of the Australian General Service Office. The Board serves as guardian in Australia of our Twelve Traditions, our Twelve Concepts of Service and the Conference Charter.

The purposes for which the Corporation was formed, as set forth in its Certificate of Incorporation, are: "To encourage, assist and serve the families and friends of alcoholics in dealing with the problems concerning and attendant upon alcoholism; to reinforce their efforts to understand the alcoholic and to foster his or her restoration to normal life; to disseminate information in relation thereto and to conduct and participate in any other classes of service to assist families and friends of alcoholics in dealing with their problems."

To serve these purposes, it is the responsibility of the Board to review all operations of the Australian General Service Office.

In managing the affairs of the corporation, the Board is authorised to:

- control its property and finances
- make long-range plans
- authorise expenditures
- appoint the Executive Committee and other Committees
- appoint a General Secretary for the Australian General Service Office, the Deputy General Secretary, the Editor of *Austra-Link* and other staff
- take whatever measures are prudent and effective in carrying out the purpose of our fellowship
- approve the final agenda for the Australian Service Conference

- apply and maintain the policies of the World Service Office as established from time to time.

Any Board member who has a substantial financial interest in any contract or transaction requiring authorisation by the Board may not vote on the matter.

Three-quarters of all authorised participants registered at the Australian Service Conference may bring about a reorganisation of the Australian General Service Office if or when it is deemed essential. They may request the resignation of the entire General Service Board and nominate their successors. Prior to resignation, it is the responsibility of the outgoing Board members to vote on the list of their successors presented by the Conference. For this purpose only (that is, for the purpose of bringing about a reorganisation of the Australian General Service Office), the number of Australian General Service Office participants voting shall be limited to one-quarter of the total Conference vote.

The final decision-making body is the Australian Service Conference, which should always take into consideration the policies and decisions of the senior World Service Conference held annually in the U.S.A.

*(Further details of the Board's composition, jurisdiction and responsibilities will be found on page 35 of this Handbook.)*

## **OUR AUSTRALIAN SERVICE CONFERENCE**

### **Purposes**

Al-Anon's Tradition Two states that: "For our Group purpose there is but one authority – a loving God as he may express Himself in our Group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants – they do not govern."

The Australian Service Conference makes the Group conscience available and effective for all Al-Anon in Australia. It is the practical means by which the Group conscience can speak; it is the voice of Al-Anon, Australia, and the guarantee that our Australian services shall continue to carry on under all conditions.

The Conference protects Al-Anon and Alateen against a service breakdown; it makes for unity and enables our fellowship to act as a whole upon important matters. This makes it the principal guarantor of Al-Anon and Alateen's harmony and survival.

### **Historical Background**

The earliest listing of an Australian Al-Anon Family Group appears in the first *World Directory of Al-Anon Family Groups* 1952.

As the number of Groups grew in the capital cities and some country towns, some of the Groups sent representatives to participate in, and form Central Service Councils and Committees. These CSCs helped foster unity and were a service arm of the Groups they served. They opened offices with answering services and distributed literature from the World Service Office.

Later two of these CSCs were granted permission by the World Service Office to reprint a number of pieces of Conference-Approved Literature.

However, whenever Al-Anon members throughout Australia met during the annual AA National Conventions, their discussions revealed variations in policies and services from state to state. Concern was also felt for Groups in distant parts of the country who were unable to participate in the service structures in the capital cities. This meant that there was not an effective voice of group conscience linking the whole of Australian Al-Anon.

In 1969 a workshop to discuss these issues was held in Adelaide, South Australia, with representatives from state service centres and observers present, resulting in our first Australian Trial Conference in Sydney, in 1970.

Through constant contact by CSCs with the World Service Office, the idea of an Australian Al-Anon Service Structure along the guidelines of the "*World Service Handbook*" came into being. Development of Districts and Areas was slow because of our already established state service bodies, but this was eventually resolved by following the guide of the "*World Service Handbook*".

In 1974 the Trial Conference initiated the formation of an Australian General Service Committee to work toward the aims suggested by the World Service Office *Guidelines for General Service Offices*.

During 1975 a member of the General Service Committee represented Australia at a World Service Conference and in 1977 visited WSO, U.K. & Ire General Service Office, and Al-Anon in Canada. Valuable first-hand information helped further the structuring of Australian Al-Anon and Alateen.

In 1977, after seven Trial Conferences, the Australian Service Conference became permanent, meeting annually in Melbourne. Our Australian General Service Office was opened in that year also, and it took over the responsibility of reprinting Conference-Approved Literature in Australia. Much support was given by state CSCs in the initial funding, and state printed Conference-Approved Literature was also donated. The state Service Offices were phased out and Areas were established.

A General Service Board and Executive Committee were formed in 1978 and the Board eventually established incorporation in 1980, a lengthy procedure in Australia.

Each step of our growth came about as the result of decisions made at Trial Conferences and the Australian Service Conference which is now the effective voice of Australian Al-Anon and Alateen.

### **The Al-Anon-Alateen Relationship**

Alateen is an integral part of our fellowship. Area Australian Service Committees are urged to encourage Alateen participation at District and Assembly levels.

An Alateen Group Representative (GR) has both voice and vote in the District and Area Assembly and may hold office (if elected by Al-Anon and Alateen GRs) at all Area Australian Service levels: District Representative, Delegate or Assembly Officer.

## CONFERENCE STRUCTURE

The Al-Anon/Alateen fellowship is represented annually at an Australian Service Conference (ASC). This Conference is held in Melbourne in May. It is attended by one elected Delegate from each Assembly Area in Australia, the General Service Board, members of the Executive Committee, and the Australian General Service Office Administrative Staff. Representatives from non-panel Areas (those not yet electing a Delegate) may attend with voice but no vote.

The Group Representative is the first link in the chain which leads to the Australian Service Conference. Each GR is chosen by the members of his own Group and may serve as GR in no more than one Group at a time.

The District Representative is the next link. The Area is divided into Districts, where practicable, each with one representative, the DR, who is chosen by the GRs in his District to serve on the Area Australian Service Committee. (See "Conference Procedures" section, *At the District Level.*)

When a GR becomes a DR, he fulfils both functions unless the Area Assembly chooses to have its Groups elect new GRs to replace those who have taken on the duties of DR.

If the DR does not continue to be his Group's representative, he relinquishes his vote at the Assembly to his GR replacement. This follows the long-standing principle of one vote per Group which was reaffirmed by the 1975 World Service Conference and applies as well to the officers of the Area Australian Service Committee. They retain their vote at the Assembly only if they have been re-elected GR.

The Delegate and new Assembly Officers are elected by the GRs at an Election Assembly which is held after Conference but prior to 31st December, at a convenient location in the Area every three years. The Assembly is attended by all GRs in addition to members of the Area Australian Service Committee. Al-Anon members are encouraged to attend their Area Assemblies.

If all terms of office were to begin on January 1, only the outgoing GRs would be voting for an incoming Delegate and other Officers – from among the outgoing DRs only. Under this procedure, the new GRs would be deprived of the right to vote for the Delegate and other Officers with whom they will be working for the next three years.

An Assembly may prefer to have the incoming GRs elect the Delegate and other Officers. Under this method both the incoming and outgoing DRs are eligible to stand for office of Delegate.

Before making the important decision as to whether the incoming or outgoing GR has the vote, all the elements of its particular situation should be carefully weighed by the Assembly.

Once the Delegate has been elected, he is no longer either a GR or a DR, so his Group would elect a new GR and his District a new DR. The Delegate votes at Area Australian Service Committee meetings but not at the Assembly.

## Composition of the Conference

The Australian Service Conference (ASC) is composed of one elected Delegate from each Assembly Area in Australia, the General Service Board, members of the Executive Committee and the Australian General Service Office Administrative Staff. The voting ratio is set at two thirds elected Delegates to one third AGSO staff and volunteers.

If growth warrants it, Areas may petition the Conference to divide and send an additional Delegate to the Conference. (see Article 6.b. of the Al-Anon Australian Service Conference Charter). In that case, a non-Panel Area may ask the Conference for permission to send a representative to the Conference. Such representation is limited to two years, under the following stipulations:

- the representative's expenses are to be paid by the Area
- the Australian General Service Office is to be notified of his attendance no later than February 1st
- the representative is to have voice but no vote at the Conference.

Unlike elected government officials, our Delegates do not represent local interests. They may reflect Area opinion, and contribute Area ideas, but they are not bound by directives from their Groups. The Delegates as well as all other Conference members are the trusted servants of Australia-wide Al-Anon.

## Suggested Procedures

While the procedures outlined in the *Australian Service Handbook* are suggestions, they have been found by Al-Anon and Alateen members who have followed them to be a simple and direct method of selecting Delegates for the Conference, and for conducting Assembly and Conference affairs free of political friction.

Al-Anon experience suggests that we follow these procedures *before deciding on changes*, and to make changes only when they clearly become necessary. Using the same structural plan makes it simple for all of us to understand each other's Assembly procedures. In addition, such uniformity does much to lessen the Conference workload at our Australian General Service Office. The help of *every* Assembly is needed in forming the best possible framework and to make our future secure. However, if by majority agreement an Assembly decides to alter one or more of these guidelines, the changes should be a matter of record so that all members of the Area Assembly can clearly understand them.

## How It Works

A majority vote of the Conference constitutes only a suggestion to the General Service Board and our Australian General Service Office; a two thirds vote is binding upon them subject to the provisions of Concept Seven ("The Trustees have legal rights while the rights of the Conference are traditional").

On overall policy matters the Conference makes final decisions. The General Service Board and the Australian General Service Office are service arms of the Conference, a part of the whole fellowship.

The Conference is empowered to pass resolutions, make recommendations to the Australian General Service Office, direct committees to further study, or refuse to act at all in a given situation. It cannot, however, mandate or govern the Al-Anon fellowship which it serves. The Conference *represents* the Al-Anon membership but does not rule it.

Prior to their first Conference, all newly elected Delegates are assigned to one of the AGSO Selected Committees.

Upon arrival at the Conference, newly elected Delegates become acquainted with second- and third-year Delegates, as well as with members of the General Service Board and Staff. They are invited to visit their Australian General Service Office.

The following are typical Conference activities:

- The Conference members are greeted by the Conference Chairperson who introduces the Chairperson of the General Service Board, who then gives a report of the year's work.
- The General Secretary (CEO) summarises the activities of AGSO for the year.
- The Editor of *Austra-Link* reports on the publication's activities.
- The volunteer chairpersons of committees report on their activities of the year.
- The Treasurer gives a detailed financial accounting, audited or certified, and presents a clear picture of our situation.
- The Conference discusses these reports and may name committees for further study if necessary.
- If such committees are appointed, they make recommendations and appropriate action is taken.
- Delegates report on Area matters.
- Other items on the Agenda are taken up.

### **Conference Agenda**

The Agenda is developed over the previous months by the Conference Committee. Suggestions of all Conference members and the membership-at-large are carefully considered.

A typical Agenda might include:

- any action proposed by the General Service Board affecting Al-Anon in Australia as a whole, to be presented for Conference debate and approval
- deviations from Al-Anon Traditions affecting Al-Anon in Australia as a whole
- consideration of proposed new literature
- questions and decisions in the field of over-all public information
- state of voluntary contributions – how non-contributing Groups can be better informed

- consideration of local problems, provided they do or may affect Al-Anon in Australia as a whole
- special requests for guidance from the General Service Board or members of the Australian General Service Office
- workshops on service functions
- how returning Delegates can best serve their Areas
- matters concerning Conference procedure, structure and function.

### **How the Conference is Financed**

*General Conference Expenses* – The cost of the Conference, as well as that of other Australian Al-Anon services, is covered by the Australian General Service Office General Fund. It is the responsibility of the Australian General Service Office to ask all members to respond generously to three appeals sent annually (in March, July and November) for support of these services. All members reap the benefits of the Conference.

The general Conference expenses include preparation of a Conference folder, correspondence and reports to the Delegates and Groups; the cost of holding the Conference sessions; the cost of AGSO members' attendance at the Conference; and expenses involved in producing and distributing the Conference Summary.

*Delegates' Equalised Expenses* – Because costs of travel to the Australian Service Conference (ASC) are different for each Delegate, a formula was developed to provide a fair equalisation of expenses. The Delegate's equalised cost is calculated by dividing the total travelling, accommodation, meal and incidental expenses for the Delegate body by the number of Delegates. This cost is reported to the General Service Board. A substantial portion of this cost, as determined by the General Service Board, is the equalised expense and is paid by the Areas. The Conference Committee informs each Area of the amount to be sent by the Area Treasurer to the Australian General Service Office before January 31st.

The Delegates' expenses are then defrayed from these funds, regardless of travelling distance. Each Area contributes the same amount to the cost of sending a Delegate to Conference. However, any Area may choose to contribute additional funds, up to and including the entire cost of sending a Delegate to the ASC.

# CONFERENCE PROCEDURES

## Area Procedures for Joining the Conference

The Area must first submit a request for admission to the Australian Service Conference. The Admissions/Handbook Committee will review the request and will make a decision based on policies previously accepted by the Conference. If permission is granted, the Area may proceed as follows:

Our AGSO suggests, as an Assembly Centre, the city with the largest number of Groups. The most active registered Group in this Assembly centre is then invited to elect a Temporary Chairperson. (See "Duties of Assembly Members, Temporary Chairperson" section.) The Temporary Chairperson notifies our Australian General Service Office of his election.

AGSO sends each registered Group in the Area the name and address of the temporary Chairperson and a copy of this *Australian Service Handbook* for the GRs to study prior to the Election Assembly.

Well in advance of the Assembly, the Temporary Chairperson calls a planning meeting of all Groups in the Assembly Centre to

- select a date and meeting place for the Area Election Assembly (if this designated Assembly Centre is not convenient, another site may be chosen for the Election Assembly)
- notify all Groups in the Area of the time and place of the Assembly where the election will be held to elect a DR from each District, a Delegate to the annual Australian Service Conference, an Alternate Delegate and Assembly Officers.

## At the Group Level

*Election of a Group Representative (GR) and an Alternate.* The GR is elected by his Group for a three-year term using any election procedure it chooses. An AI-Anon/Alateen member who is also a member of AA is not eligible to serve as a GR. Since the newly elected GR may be attending the Election Assembly, the Group's elections should precede the date of the Assembly. To emphasise the need for selecting informed GRs, a special election meeting may be called by the Group, with time devoted to the role of the GR in our service structure and his work in the District and Area. A Group may re-elect its GR for another term.

Since the GR may be unable to attend all District Meetings and Area Assemblies, an Alternate GR is needed and is elected at the same time. The Alternate may be the runner-up in the elections. The Alternate GR's duties may include serving as the Group's Public Information contact, Newsletter reporter and official greeter of newcomers and visitors.

If the GR resigns or proves to be inactive, the Alternate completes the term and may then be elected for a three-year term of his own. Another Alternate may then be elected. No one who is also an AA member may serve as Alternate GR.

### ***When the GR has been Elected.***

He immediately sends his name and address to the Area Secretary or Office/Group Records Co-ordinator, so he can be informed of the time and place of the next Assembly. In a new Area the GR informs the Temporary Chairperson.

The GR attends the Assembly, bringing this *Australian Service Handbook*.

He makes himself thoroughly familiar with his duties. (See "Duties of Assembly Members" section.)

### ***Finances.***

The Assembly appeals to each Group in the Area for contributions to be sent to the Area Treasurer. The Treasurer sends the equalised cost of the Delegate's attendance at Conference to the Australian General Service Office (AGSO), reimburses the Delegate and Area Committee for expenses in the Area and pays all Assembly overhead.

Each Group provides its GR with sufficient funds to fulfil the GR duties including participation in the Assembly. Expenses may include meals, transport and accommodation.

Overhead expenses of the Assembly and the cost of sending the Delegate to the Australian Service Conference are paid by the Assembly with contributions from the Groups within the Assembly Area. If every Group makes an effort to raise funds throughout the year, the expense burden will be fairly shared by all Groups in the Area.

Each Group supports the District in the purchase of Public Information and Institutions material, and in financing such activities as literature displays, mailings of special announcements, rent for District Meetings, etc.

### **At the District Level**

#### ***Election of a District Representative (DR) and Alternate (ADR).***

The election of the DR and Alternate DR from among the incoming, outgoing or active past GRs, none of whom are members of AA, takes place shortly after the election of the GRs and before the election of the Area Officers. This is often done at a District meeting unless geographical distances make this impractical. In the latter case, the DR is elected by a caucus of GRs at the Assembly. His term of office is three years, coinciding with those of the Delegate and other Area Officers. Each District may choose its own method of election.

The DR who is completing his term calls the Election Meeting in his District and notifies each Group of the meeting, inviting the incoming, outgoing and active past GRs and others who wish to attend. In keeping with the principle of one vote per Group, only the current GRs vote.

If the DR resigns, proves to be inactive in his District, or for any reason is unable to serve, the Alternate DR completes the term. If the GRs of a District are not aware of the DR's failure to attend Area Australian Service Committee meetings, the Area Australian Service Committee may request a replacement.

Duties of the Alternate DR may include serving as Treasurer or Secretary of the District, as P.I. contact from District to Area and serving as Chairperson of meetings on the service structure, Traditions and Concepts.

***When the DR has been Elected.***

He notifies the Area Secretary or Office/Group Records Co-ordinator of his election and that of his Alternate. He acquaints himself thoroughly with the duties of a DR. (See “Duties of Assembly Members” section.)

***Finances.***

The DR’s expenses to attend Assemblies and Area Australian Service Committee meetings are shared by the Groups within the District. When the DR is also a GR, the Assembly expenses are normally paid by the Group he represents. Money for this purpose may also be raised by special events such as District workshops, potluck suppers, rummage sales and other co-operative ventures. The DR’s expenses may be paid directly from such funds, or may be reimbursed by the Area Treasurer. Co-ordinators’ expenses may also be covered from funds supplied by the District and sent to the Area Treasurer.

**At the Assembly Level**

***The Election Assembly.*** This is held once every three years, after Conference and before December 31st. The Area Australian Service Committee may also schedule interim Assemblies which are called by the Chairperson at such other times as are deemed necessary. One such Assembly could be held to hear the Delegate’s post-Conference report. Some Delegates prefer to give their reports at combined District meetings arranged by two or more DRs.

***Preparing for the Election Assembly.*** Before the Assembly is to convene, the Chairperson (or Temporary Chairperson) prepares for the meeting by making sure that:

- Al-Anon and Alateen members who are not GRs are invited to attend the Assembly to serve as tellers
- a book is provided in which each GR is to register, giving his name, address and Group name
- a map of the Area, with District boundaries indicated, is hung in the Assembly room
- a whiteboard is at hand
- pencils and slips of paper are available for the voting
- all GRs have this *Australian Service Handbook*.

# ELECTION ASSEMBLY PROCEDURE

If and when the Area Assembly is agreed on alterations in the procedures recommended, it is vital that all Groups in the Area be informed of the changes and why they were necessary.

## **At the Assembly: Preparation**

The Chairperson (see “Duties of Assembly Members” section)

1. calls the meeting to order. (If this is the Area’s first Assembly, the Temporary Chairperson conducts the meeting, but only until a three-year Chairperson is elected.)
2. asks for a moment of silence followed by the Serenity Prayer.
3. reviews the procedures in this *Australian Service Handbook* or any other preferred method for the election of the District Representative, the Delegate and an Alternate. It is important that everyone also understands the method agreed upon for the election of Area Officers.
4. asks for a vote of acceptance of the proposed method of election. Years of experience have shown the method described in this *Australian Service Handbook* to be fair and trouble free. If another method is considered, it should be clearly understood and agreed upon by a two-thirds vote of the Assembly.

In keeping with the principle of one vote per Group, the Chairperson has a vote only if he is still a GR.

## **Elections**

### *Election of District Representative*

In many Areas, it is practical to elect DRs in their home District prior to the Election Assembly. Where this is not possible, the election takes place at the Assembly.

#### The Chairperson

1. points out on the Area map the division of the Area into Districts. If questions arise about the division or number of Districts, the Chairperson asks for discussion and vote on changes of District boundaries. An advantage of dividing into smaller Districts is that they can be covered more conveniently by the DRs.
2. asks the GRs from each District that has not yet elected a DR to gather in groups to caucus. If the caucus is small, only informal discussion and agreement may be needed. Otherwise, written ballots should be cast and the same procedure followed as for electing Area Officers. A DR may repeat his term, provided that the GRs in his District re-elect him.

### *Election of Australian Service Delegate*

The Chairperson asks the GRs who have the right to vote to elect a Delegate who is not also a member of AA.\* A Delegate may not succeed himself, but

may be re-elected after an interim three-year term provided he has remained active in service at the Area level. Each Group has one vote only.

1. The Chairperson asks each DR and others eligible, if any (See "General Information for Assemblies", Items 12 & 13), whether he is prepared to serve as Delegate for three years. If so, he becomes a candidate.
2. Names of all candidates for the post of Delegate are listed on the board by the Secretary.
3. The Secretary calls the roll of voting members.
4. Paper and pencils are distributed for written ballots.
5. Non-voting members are selected to serve as tellers, collectors of ballots, and to record and tally votes on the board.
6. Written ballots are cast, collected and given to the tellers to count.
7. Votes will be written on the board alongside the names of the candidates.
8. The first candidate to receive a two-thirds vote is elected.
9. If no-one has the required two-thirds vote after several ballots have been taken, and if two candidates each have 40% or more of the total vote, the Chairperson may suggest that the two candidates stay and the others withdraw.
10. Whether or not any names are withdrawn, another ballot is taken.
11. If still no election occurs, the Chairperson asks for a motion to close the balloting and that the choice be made by lot between the two high candidates. The first one drawn becomes the Delegate. Instead of this, many Assemblies prefer to have a final ballot taken. Then the candidate with the most votes becomes the Delegate.

When a DR becomes Delegate, he is no longer a DR and his District elects a new DR. He has a vote at the Area Australian Service Committee but not at the Assembly as this would mean more than one vote per Group.

#### ***Election of Australian Service Delegate's Alternate***

The Chairperson then calls for the election of an Alternate Delegate who is not also a member of AA, following the same procedure as for Delegate.

If the Delegate cannot complete his three-year term, the Alternate automatically becomes the Delegate for the balance of the Delegate's term. Another Alternate should be elected as soon as possible from among the DRs and Officers. Since a Delegate should never be long without the assistance of an Alternate, the Delegate who has taken over may ask the Chairperson to appoint an interim Alternate until a special meeting of the Assembly can be called.

*\*At the 1977 World Service Conference, it was voted that our policy is clearly defined, that Al-Anon/Alateens holding dual membership are not eligible for the office of Group Representative; therefore the Admissions/Handbook Committee of the Conference would refuse admission of a Delegate who holds dual membership in Al-Anon/Alateen and AA.*

### *Election of Officers*

The Chairperson then calls for the election of the Assembly Officers, usually the Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer, from among the DRs. Each Officer serves for a three-year term. He asks tellers to pass ballot papers to all GRs and to place all DRs' names on the board.

1. GRs vote for a Chairperson by written ballot. In addition to the DRs, the outgoing Delegate may be included on the slate for this office. If the outgoing Delegate is elected Chairperson, he has no vote at the Assembly.
2. Tellers count ballots and check the names on the board.
3. Balloting continues until one name receives the majority of the votes. This elects the new Chairperson.
4. A Secretary and a Treasurer are elected from among the DRs by the same method.
5. Assembly Officers, other than the Delegate but including the Alternate Delegate, may continue to serve as DRs.
6. If a vacancy occurs among the Assembly Officers between meetings, or an Officer is unable to attend meetings, another DR may be appointed by the Chairperson to replace the officer until another can be elected. The Assembly Area should never be long without a full quota of Officers.

### **Post-Election Activities**

The Chairperson directs the Secretary to send a report of the Election Assembly to the Conference Secretary at the Australian General Service Office with a duplicate to the newly elected Area Secretary, giving names and addresses of the Delegate, the Alternate, Officers, DRs and Area Coordinators.

### **Finances**

The Chairperson then introduces the matter of financing. He explains that Delegates' expenses to and from the Australian Service Conference in Melbourne are equalised so that each Area pays the same amount. The Conference Secretary at the Australian General Service Office finds out the cost of transportation from each Area to Melbourne and back. Dividing the sum of these fares by the number of Delegates and adding the cost of the Delegates' stay in Melbourne, gives the average amount needed to cover a Delegate's trip to and from the Conference. The portion of the Delegates' expenses not covered by the equalised expense contributions is paid by AGSO.

Delegates' interim expenses include telephone, postage and the cost of visiting the Groups in the Area. These will be met from the Area treasury. Finally, there will be overhead expenses of the Assembly, rent, newsletter, incidental expenses and others incurred by the Area Australian Service Committee.

The Chairperson then presents a budget developed by the Area Australian Service Committee for the approval of the Assembly. The anticipated expenses will be shared by each Group in the Area. The GRs attending the Assembly should come prepared to discuss, approve and act upon methods of raising funds.

The Chairperson directs the Assembly Treasurer to collect these funds and to issue receipts to the GRs so the GRs can account for the outlay to their respective Group treasurers. The Assembly Treasurer disburses the collected funds to the appropriate people.

Absent GRs should be asked to have their Groups' share of costs remitted to the Assembly Treasurer.

If GRs are not prepared for the full outlay, the Chairperson asks that Group donations for the Delegate's expenses be sent to the Treasurer before January 1st.

A cheque to cover equalised expenses for the Delegate is sent by the Assembly Treasurer to the Conference Secretary at the Australian General Service Office before January 31st.

By February 1st the Conference Secretary at the Australian General Service Office sends each Delegate a cheque for transportation and incidental expenses. This amount may be more or less than the equalised amount sent in by the Assembly Treasurer.

If there is no other business, the Assembly is then adjourned.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION FOR ASSEMBLIES**

1. Upon receiving the results of an election, our Australian General Service Office sends a letter of welcome to each new Delegate with the date of the next Conference.
2. The Delegate, not the Alternate, receives all communications from our Australian General Service Office, even if the Delegate was not able to attend the Conference.
3. The Chairperson, elected for a three-year term, calls and conducts all subsequent Assemblies and Area Committee meetings.
4. A full Assembly is comprised of the Delegate, Assembly Officers, DRs and GRs.
5. Assemblies are usually held at regularly scheduled intervals. The Area AI-Anon and Alateen Groups are notified of each Assembly by the Chairperson either through the Secretary, the Area Newsletter, or any other effective method.
6. If the Alternate Delegate resigns, a new Alternate should be elected as soon as possible. If lack of time before the date of Conference makes this impossible, and the Delegate has also resigned, the Chairperson may attend the Conference in the Delegate's place. If the Chairperson is unable to attend, next in line would be a past Delegate beginning with the most recent one.
7. If an Officer other than the Delegate resigns or for any reason is unable

to serve, a DR may be appointed by the Chairperson to replace the Officer until another can be elected to complete the term. He may then be elected for a three-year term of his own. If the Delegate resigns, the Alternate finishes the Delegate's term and then may be elected for a three-year term as Delegate.

8. After the Delegate's third Conference, an Assembly is called to elect a Delegate and other Officers whose terms begin the following January 1st
9. Some Areas may elect the outgoing Delegate as Chairperson of the Assembly. Where this occurs, he does not vote. Other Areas use the Delegate's Conference experience by electing or appointing him an Area Co-ordinator of a special service (e.g., Alateen, P.I., Institutions, Literature, etc.).
10. The Area Australian Service Committee meets whenever need arises to develop the Assembly Agenda and to discuss Area affairs.
11. In Areas that have not as yet formed Districts, the Delegate and other Officers are elected from among the GRs.
12. A DR who has resigned to take a current Assembly assignment (e.g., Newsletter Editor, Assembly Officer or Co-ordinator of a special service) may stand for the office of Delegate.
13. In order to draw on experience gained in service, an Area may choose to permit anyone who has served a three-year term as DR, has remained active at their Area level (as Newsletter Editor, Co-ordinator, etc.), and regularly attends Al-Anon meetings, to stand for the office of Delegate.
14. One may hold an Assembly Office in only one Area at a time.

## DUTIES OF ASSEMBLY MEMBERS

### Group Representative (GR)

A GR is a vital link in the continuing function, growth and unity of Al-Anon, Australia. He is a member elected by his Group for a three-year term. He attends Assemblies, maintains contact between the Group and the District, and the Group and the Area Australian Service Committee. He should also make himself thoroughly familiar with this *Australian Service Handbook* and the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* which includes *Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work*, *Al-Anon's Twelve Concepts of Service* and the *Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies*.

GRs should be members with experience, stability and an understanding of the Traditions and how they work, as applied in the *Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies*. It can be a challenging job. Ample time is needed for GRs to perform their many duties.

If a Group also has an Alternate GR, the following duties may be shared:

### *The GR and Australian Service*

Through the contacts he makes with other GRs and the Area Australian Service Committee, the GR can gain knowledge of Al-Anon Australian Service and the purpose and work of the Conference. This will enable him to

explain these to the Group. The GR should be allowed regular time at Group meetings to convey information concerning Al-Anon Australian Service affairs.

### ***The GR and District Meetings***

The GR attends all meetings of his District.

### ***The GR and the Area Assembly***

In addition to attending the Election Assembly, the GR is expected to attend all scheduled Assemblies (and any Interim Assembly which the Chairperson or Delegate considers necessary) and report back to the Group. The GR or the Alternate GR, in the GR's absence, votes at the Assembly. Each Group has *one* vote only.

### ***Mailing Address at the Australian General Service Office***

The GR has the responsibility of seeing that mail from the Australian General Service Office is reaching his Group. If mail is not being brought to meetings by the person who is listed as the Current Mailing Address (CMA), the GR consults first with that person, and, if a change is warranted, contacts the District Representative and AGSO to provide an up-to-date Current Mailing Address (possibly his own), a telephone listing, and other pertinent Group information agreed to by the Group.

If the Group has a P.O. Box, or if for any other reason the GR is not the Group's mailing address, all mail should be referred to him. Although he does not replace the Group Secretary, he can explain communications in light of his understanding of the Australian Al-Anon picture.

### ***The GR and Austra-Link***

The GR is also the Austra-Link representative. He sees that the Group's free copy is shared among the members, acquaints members with its value and urges them to subscribe. He also suggests that stories of interest be sent to its Editor at the Australian General Service Office.

### ***The GR as a Pipeline***

Communicating at District meetings, the GR can bring his Group's viewpoint on any situation or problem concerning Al-Anon to the attention of the DR. In turn, he informs his Group of the outcome of the meetings.

### ***Australian Service Delegate's Report***

If the DR or the Delegate cannot personally give the Conference report to the Group, the GR may do so and explain the functions and purposes of the Area Assembly and the Conference.

### ***Public Information and Institutions***

Local Public Information and Institutions activities in the immediate community may be spearheaded by the GR, who may recommend forming a Committee within the District, using material available from our AGSO.

If there is an Information Service, then Public Information and any Institutions work affecting all the Groups within its area of activity may be

its responsibility. Liaison and co-operation should be maintained between the Information Service, the Districts and the Area P.I. and Institutions Co-ordinators.

### ***Finances***

The GR should be mindful of Al-Anon and Alateen's traditional insistence on being self-supporting. He makes sure the appeals for support of our Australian General Service Office, sent three times a year (March, July and November), are read to the Group. He may personally present to his Group the appeals sent by the Area Treasurer for support of the Assembly and give the Group Treasurer the name and address of the Area Treasurer.

### ***Conference-Approved Literature (CAL)***

The GR, recognising the importance of CAL, makes sure that the pamphlet *Why Conference-Approved Literature?* (P-35) is always available at the meeting. He calls the attention of all members to this valuable tool. He encourages the use of a variety of CAL for meeting topics.

### ***District Representative (DR)***

The DR is elected from among the incoming, outgoing, or active past GRs in his home District prior to the Assembly or by caucus at the Assembly. Each DR represents one District within the Area, helping the Groups in the District to understand their relationship and responsibility to Australian Al-Anon, and beyond that to the worldwide fellowship.

The duties of the DR are:

- to call and chair District Meetings at regular intervals
- to help the Delegate in every way possible in disseminating Conference information and reports
- to keep in touch with the GRs of his District to learn the views of the Groups and their problems, which, in turn, he may report to the Area Australian Service Committee or the Delegate
- to visit all the Groups in his District particularly new Groups to make sure they are getting necessary information and help
- to help the Groups understand and apply the Traditions, which guide us in our fellowship activities
- to prepare and update a mailing list of the GRs in his District for the Area Australian Service Committee
- to check with each GR in the District that their Group's Current Mailing Address (CMA), phone contacts and meeting details (day, time, venue), filed with the Area Office and the Australian General Service Office, are up-to-date and correct. Accuracy of website meeting lists depends on this.
- to make sure that mail from the Australian General Service Office is reaching the Groups and being shared with the members
- to attend Area Australian Service Committee meetings and report to the Area Australian Service Committee on activities within his District
- to inform groups in the District of matters discussed at Area Australian Service Committee meetings

- to notify the Area Australian Service Committee and the Australian General Service Office of Groups that have disbanded.

### **Temporary Chairperson**

This office is necessary only in an Area preparing for its first Assembly. The Temporary Chairperson immediately notifies the Australian General Service Office of his election. He sees that the time and place for a pre-Assembly meeting are chosen and that all Groups in the Assembly Centre are invited to help with the planning. He chairs this meeting where all preparations for the Election Assembly are made including notifying all Groups in the Area. He serves as Chairperson of the Assembly until a full-term Chairperson is elected; the latter then takes over the balance of the meeting.

### **Chairperson**

A Chairperson should have leadership and organisational ability, serving rather than dictating. It is essential to be able to plan an agenda and to conduct meetings in an orderly manner. Communication and cooperation with others are key elements of being a good Chairperson.

- The Chairperson conducts all Assemblies and Area Australian Service Committee meetings during his three-year term of office.
- He asks the Secretary to send out notices of all meetings to the Delegate, the Alternate, other Area officers and all voting members.
- If any officer other than the Delegate resigns before the end of his term, the Chairperson appoints another DR to fill the office temporarily. As soon as convenient, an Assembly should be called to elect a successor for the unexpired term. If the Chairperson resigns the Area Australian Service Committee names a Chairperson pro tem or the Delegate may serve as Chairperson until an election can be held.
- The Chairperson, after consulting with the Delegate, calls an Assembly soon after the Delegate's return from the Conference to hear the report of Australian Service Conference proceedings and decisions. He may also call an Assembly at other times deemed necessary by the Delegate or the Area Australian Service Committee.
- He calls meetings of the Area Australian Service Committee, preferably at regular intervals, to discuss Area matters.
- Before the end of the Delegate's three-year term of office, and allowing ample time for a new Delegate to take office by January 1st, the Chairperson calls the Assembly for the election of a Delegate and Assembly Officers.

### **Secretary**

- The Secretary or Office/Group Records Co-ordinator compiles a complete mailing list of all GRs, DRs, Officers and Co-ordinators and keeps it up to date.
- He sends out all notices of Assembly and Area Australian Service Committee meetings. He attends to all regular secretarial work and takes minutes of all meetings. These should be sent to the Area Australian Service Committee members soon after the meeting and be recorded in a permanent minute book to be passed on to his successor.

- At Election Assemblies, he calls the roll of all voting members and lists on the board candidates for office.
- He sends the names and addresses of the Area Australian Service Committee members and reports of all Assemblies to the Australian General Service Office.

#### **Treasurer**

- The Treasurer handles all Assembly collections and funds.
- At least once a year he prepares a special appeal letter to be sent to all Groups asking them to contribute to the Area Treasury to cover Assembly expenses, including contributions to the Delegate's equalised expense to attend the Australian Service Conference.
- He forwards to the Australian General Service Office, before February 1st, the Delegate's equalised expense amount.
- He issues receipts to GRs for any contributions they make on behalf of their Groups for the Assembly.
- He pays all bills for expenditures approved by the Area Australian Service Committee. It is sound business practice to have four members authorised to sign cheques; of these, two signatures should be required on every cheque.
- He makes quarterly written financial reports to the Area Australian Service Committee and periodic reports to the Assembly.

#### **Australian Service Delegate**

The Delegate is a channel through which information flows. The conscience of Al-Anon can work effectively only if it is informed. Much depends on the Delegate being thoroughly familiar with all the Service Manuals before he ever attends a Conference and throughout his term of service.

- He brings to the Conference the viewpoint of his Area on matters affecting the entire fellowship and returns to his Area with a broader perspective of Al-Anon Australia-wide.
- He is the bridge of understanding which links the Groups in his Area with Australian Al-Anon/Alateen to help them continue to function in unity.
- He is the servant of Al-Anon as a whole.

#### ***At the Conference***

- The Delegate attends all sessions of the Conference so that he may consider carefully the issues brought up, vote intelligently on them and thus help to guide the General Service Board in making their decisions.
- He tries to get a clear and comprehensive picture of our Australia-wide fellowship to bring back to his home Groups.
- He learns facts and figures; even more important, he gains a vision of a great movement in action.
- He learns what our Australian General Service Office has meant to Al-Anon/Alateen in the past and what it, with the guidance of the Conference, will mean to the future welfare of the fellowship.

- In order to broaden the scope of certain Selected Committees at the AGSO, Delegates are appointed to them as members-in-the-field. They are kept informed of interim committee meetings at the AGSO. They can only attend special meetings of these committees at the Conference. They may later be consulted, by correspondence, on any related matter.
- He brings issues of concern to him to the attention of the Conference either through the Conference Committee or directly from the floor in open Conference session.

#### *In His Area*

- The Delegate gives his Conference report to the Area Australian Service Committee and GRs, to carry back to their Groups. As often as possible, he makes his report in person at Group or District meetings; nothing is more impressive than an eye-witness account.
- He meets with the Area Australian Service Committee often, to learn and evaluate the Groups' reaction to his report and to hear their ideas on other pertinent matters. He can thus be better prepared to present his Area's views at the next Conference.
- If between Conferences the Australian General Service Office needs over-all Group opinion on some urgent matter, the Delegate can get a cross-section of his Groups' ideas through his DRs and GRs and report his findings. Thus, through the guidance of the Delegates it becomes possible for the Australian General Service Office to take any necessary action during the year.
- The Delegate may serve as a contact for public enquiries within the Area if the Co-ordinator is unavailable.
- Before December 1st, the Delegate sends to the Conference Committee, items to be considered for the Conference Agenda as suggested by his Groups.

#### **Australian Service Delegate's Alternate**

The Alternate Delegate works with the Delegate as much as possible in communicating with the Groups. He acquaints himself with all the Delegate's duties so that, if the Delegate is unable to finish his three-year term, the Alternate can step in to complete it.

If the Alternate must complete the term, a temporary Alternate is at once appointed by the Chairperson from among the DRs to act until a special Assembly can be called to select a new Alternate.

Many Areas have assigned or appointed the Alternate Delegate to serve as one or more of the following:

- Area Newsletter Editor
- Group Records Co-ordinator
- Chairperson of Area Convention Planning Committee
- Chairperson of Area Budget Committee
- Alternate Area Chairperson

The Alternate Delegate can also provide valuable service to the Area by

- visiting Area Groups and Districts
- assisting Area Committees
- developing Alateen Groups, encouraging Al-Anon members to sponsor them, and setting up Alateen workshops
- briefing the Assembly on Al-Anon structure

## **AREA AUSTRALIAN SERVICE COMMITTEE**

The primary function of the Area Australian Service Committee is to plan for the general improvement of both the Assembly and the Groups. Voting members of this committee are usually the Delegate, officers of the Assembly, the DRs, Co-ordinators of special services (such as Alateen, Archives, P.I., CPC, Institutions, Literature or Newsletter) and Liaison Members from the Association Committee. The Chairperson of Al-Anon/Alateen activities at an AA Convention or Chairpersons of Area Al-Anon and Alateen Conventions should also participate in Area Australian Service Committee Meetings.

These meetings, called and chaired by the Area Chairperson, may be held at stated intervals to hear and discuss the Delegate's Report, to consider Area matters, to suggest items of interest for the Area Newsletter, all with the purpose of informing and unifying the Groups in the Area. To equalise travel expenses, successive meetings may be held in various localities within the Area.

Throughout the year, the Area Australian Service Committee is responsible for submitting questions which cannot be resolved at the District or Assembly level to the Conference Committee at our Australian General Service Office. It also plans the Assembly Agenda, prepares the Area Budget, and studies the need for alternatives to these *Australian Service Handbook* suggestions and presents its findings to the Area Assembly.

When advisable the Area Australian Service Committee suggests revisions of boundaries of existing Districts to be approved at the Area Assembly.

When Al-Anon and Alateen Groups are to participate in an AA or Al-Anon Convention, a separate Convention Planning Committee may be formed, using the talents of the membership as a whole. To assure liaison with the Convention Planning Committee, a Convention Chairperson may be appointed or elected by the Area Australian Service Committee. He has a voice and may have a vote on the Area Committee. He is responsible to the Area and submits reports to the Area Chairperson.

All Al-Anon/Alateen members, except those who are also members of AA, are eligible to serve as an Area Co-ordinator. Guidelines for Area Co-ordinators and for Information Services are available from the Australian General Service Office or on the AGSO Members' Web site, and should be used as a guide in developing these special services in Australia. They are not detailed here because they are constantly being updated to include new experience and developments.

## INTERIM ASSEMBLIES

The purpose of the Interim Assembly is to assure adequate inter-change of information and ideas about service activities, not only in the immediate Area, but where Australian and worldwide Al-Anon is concerned.

*(A typical Election Assembly is outlined elsewhere in this Australian Service Handbook.)*

Topics the agenda might include are:

- approval of Assembly minutes
- Chairperson's report on Area Australian Service Committee since previous Assembly
- Delegate's report on Conference and/or recent communications from Australian General Service Office
- Secretary's report
- Treasurer's report
- District reports from DRs on progress and problems
- GR time for ideas, opinions and questions
- application of the Twelve Traditions of Al-Anon
- interpretation of the Twelve Concepts of Service
- workshops – intensive discussion in small groups
- theme meeting led by panel with all GRs participating
- films and videos – (for a list of currently available films contact AGSO)
- report on Area Newsletter
- reports from Co-ordinators of other special services: Alateen, Archives, CPC, Institutions, Literature, Public Information
- reports from other committees, such as Convention and special purpose committees
- brief information session on AGSO services – conducted by the Delegate
- reports from Area Association Committee (the legal entity of the Area).

## DISTRICT MEETINGS

Various types of meetings may be held within a District to unite and inform local Groups: meetings to hear progress reports of the Area Australian Service Committee, sharing sessions for discussion of District matters, round robins or social evenings. At regular intervals, meetings scheduled and chaired by the DR are held to talk over such matters as:

- the need for local service committees such as Public Information, Institutions, Co-operating with the Professional Community, Alateen, a telephone answering service, or an Information Service (attention should be called to the respective guidelines available from the Australian General Service Office)
- ways to familiarise Groups and local service committees in the vicinity with Conference Approved Literature (CAL), with emphasis on specialised items available for teenagers, parents, men, and Public Information

- sharing with the fellowship Australia-wide by submitting to *Austra-Link* articles or items of general interest
- encouraging members to subscribe to *Austra-Link* either singly or through bulk Group orders
- the value of Inside Al-Anon section of the Forum as a sharing vehicle from the World Service Office to the Groups
- the value of *Spread the Word*, *Alateen Link-Up*, and other newsletters sharing news from AGSO to the groups
- raising money to support a telephone answering service or expanding an existing one
- means of stimulating contributions from the Groups in the District to Al-Anon's Australian General Service Office (our AGSO informs the Delegate of all contributions from the Groups in his Area; this information can be relayed by each DR so that GRs will know whether their Groups have contributed)
- problems that arise when Al-Anon Traditions are disregarded or other concerns that Groups and committees have presented for consideration
- workshops on Alateen, Institutions, Public Information, Cooperating with the Professional Community, Literature or any other Al-Anon Service.

Collections at District meetings are a practical way to raise money.

*NB: Not only Group Representatives, but all Al-Anon and Alateen members are invited to attend District Meetings.*

# **AL-ANON AUSTRALIAN SERVICE CONFERENCE CHARTER**

**(As amended by 1983 and 2010 ASC)**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Al-Anon Australian Service Conference Charter is a body of principles and relationships through which Al-Anon as a whole can function. The provisions of the document are not legal, but traditional, since the Conference is not incorporated. This charter is an informal agreement between all Al-Anon in Australia and its Australian General Service Office.

The World Service Conference, USA, is the Senior Conference.

## **CHARTER**

### **1. Purpose**

- a.* To be the guardian of both Al-Anon's Australian Services and its Twelve Traditions.
- b.* To be a service body, not a government.

### **2. Composition**

Delegates from Australian Areas and Australian General Service Office members, the latter including the General Service Board of Al-Anon Family Groups (Australia) Pty. Ltd., the Executive Committee and Administrative Staff.

### **3. Relation to Al-Anon**

- a.* The Conference acts for Al-Anon in Australia in perpetuation and guidance of its Australian General Service Office services.
- b.* The Conference is a vehicle by which Al-Anon in Australia can express its views on policy and note deviations from Traditions.
- c.* Delegates are free to vote as their conscience dictates and not necessarily as instructed by their Areas.
- d.* No changes are to be made in the General Warranties of the Conference Charter (Item 12) without written consent of three-fourths of Australian Al-Anon Family Groups.
- e.* No changes are to be made in the Al-Anon or Alateen Traditions, the Steps or the Concepts of Service (except the descriptive text), without written consent of three-fourths of the world Al-Anon Family Groups.
- f.* Wording in the Charter may be changed (with the exception of items 3d, 3e, and 12) by the vote of three-fourths of the Conference members;

however, the protections afforded the Al-Anon and Alateen Traditions, the Steps, the Concepts of Service, and the General Warranties in item 3d and 3e may not be taken away or lessened by Conference vote.

#### **4. Relation to the Australian General Service Office**

- a. Two-thirds vote of Conference members in attendance is binding upon the General Service Board and any related corporate service.
- b. The above does not affect legal obligations of the Australian General Service Office in conducting business.
- c. In accordance with the provisions of the By-Laws of Al-Anon Family Groups (Australia) Pty. Ltd., three-fourths of all members registered at the Conference may bring about a reorganisation of the Australian General Service Office (AGSO) if or when it is deemed essential and may request the resignation of the whole General Service Board and nominate new members to the Board. For this purpose only, the number of AGSO members voting shall be limited to one-quarter of the total Conference vote.

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

- a. Assemblies convene at least every three years and as often in between as is deemed necessary for the purpose of electing District Representatives (if not elected in their own Districts), Assembly Officers, a Delegate to the Australian Service Conference, and an Alternate.
- b. Assemblies are concerned primarily with Australian Service affairs of Al-Anon in Australia.

#### **6. Assemblies: Composition of**

- a. In each Area elected representatives of all Al-Anon Family Groups desiring participation meet together in a central location.
- b. Areas with large Al-Anon populations may petition the Conference to divide and send an additional Delegate to the Conference, as provided for in the *Australian Service Handbook* for Al-Anon and Alateen Groups.

#### **7. Assemblies: Preferred Method of Election**

- a. District Representatives are elected from Group Representatives by the District's preferred method of election.
- b. Delegates are chosen from District Representatives by a two-third written ballot or by lot.
- c. Alternates are elected at the same time and for the same term of office.
- d. It is strongly advised that the term of office of the Chairperson, other Assembly Officers and District Representatives follow the same pattern.

## **8. Panels and Delegates' Terms of Office**

A third of the Delegates, called a Panel, are elected every three years for a three-year term. The election of each of the three Panels is held on each of three consecutive years. This staggered election and tenure of office is provided so that a Conference shall always include a Panel of Delegates with two years' experience. (This method was adopted because some AA's found that their two-year plan resulted in too fast a turnover and the valuable experience of two-year Delegates was lost to the Conference.)

## **9. Conference Meetings**

The Conference meets annually in Melbourne unless otherwise agreed upon. In grave emergency, special meetings may be called. Conference members may also be asked by the Australian General Service Office to render advisory opinions at any time by mail or telephone.

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

- a.* The General Service Board of Al-Anon Family Groups (Australia) Pty. Ltd. is composed of qualified members of Al-Anon Groups in Australia. The Board elects its own successors, with nominees subject to the approval of the Conference, or a Committee thereof.
- b.* The Board is the chief service arm of the Conference, which is the guardian of Al-Anon's Twelve Traditions in Australia. Subject to e, below, the Board has responsibility to apply policies as determined by the World Service Office, and manage the business affairs of the Australian General Service Office. It may appoint suitable committees and elect members to its Executive Committee.
- c.* If any subsidiary services are later formed, the General Service Board will be primarily responsible for their activities and financial integrity.
- d.* The By-laws of Al-Anon Family Groups (Australia) Pty. Ltd. and any amendments thereto are subject to alteration by a two-thirds vote of Conference. All By-law amendments will be presented to the first Conference to be held after their adoption by the General Service Board.
- e.* Except in great emergency the General Service Board ought never to take action liable to greatly affect Al-Anon in Australia as a whole, without consulting the Conference. However, it is understood that the Board shall reserve the right to decide which of its decisions may require referral to the Conference.

## **11. Conference Procedure**

- a.* The Conference hears reports on the financial and business affairs of the General Service Board and Australian General Service Office.
- b.* Delegates and Australian General Service Office members take under

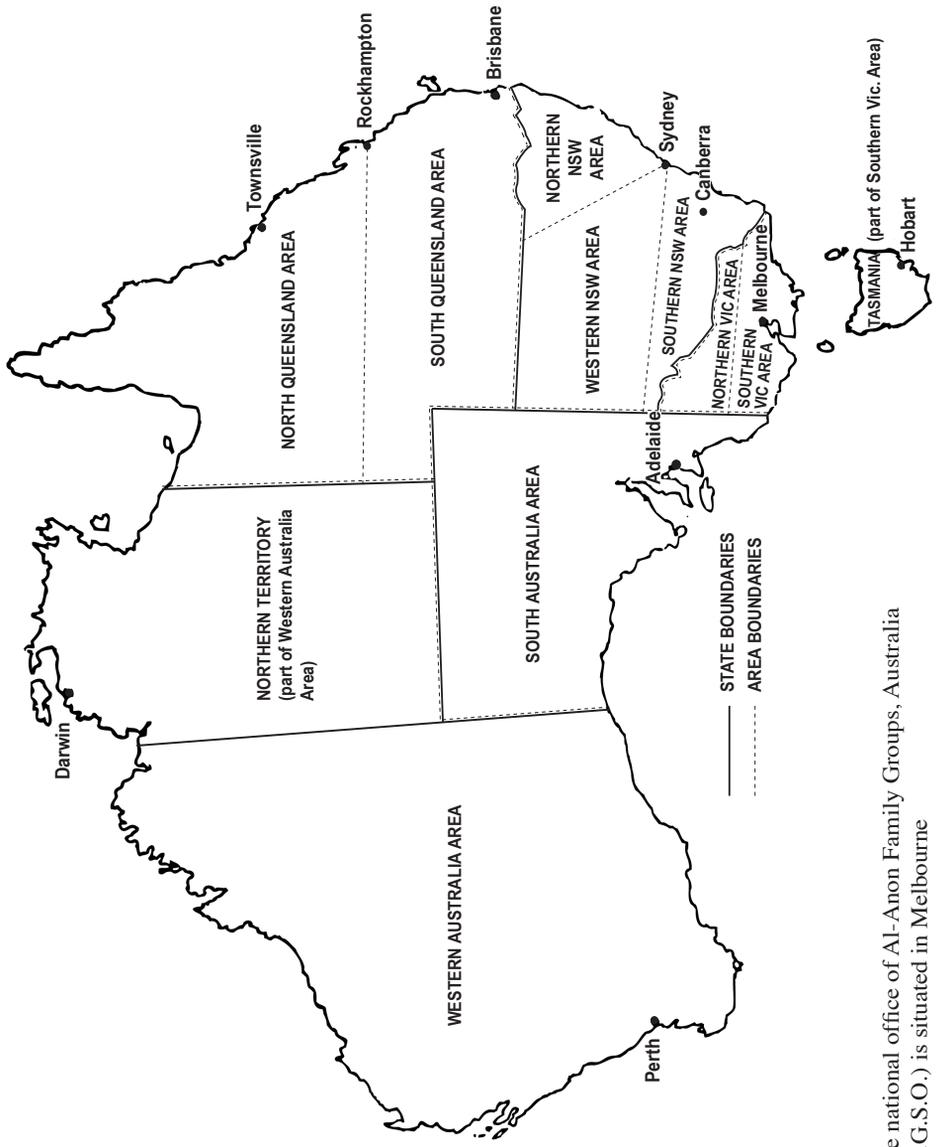
advisement all matters affecting Al-Anon in Australia as a whole, engage in debate, appoint necessary committees and pass suitable motions for the direction of the General Service Board and the Australian General Service Office.

- c. The Conference may recommend action respecting serious deviation, in Australia, from Al-Anon Traditions and Concepts of Service.
- d. The Conference may adopt procedures and elect any needed officers by a method of its choosing.
- e. A quorum shall consist of two-thirds of the members registered at the Conference.
- f. At the close of each yearly session, the Conference will send a full report of its proceedings to all Australian Service Conference members, Area Australian Service Committees, Al-Anon Family Groups throughout Australia, and to the World Service Office, U.S.A.

## **12. General Warranties of the Conference**

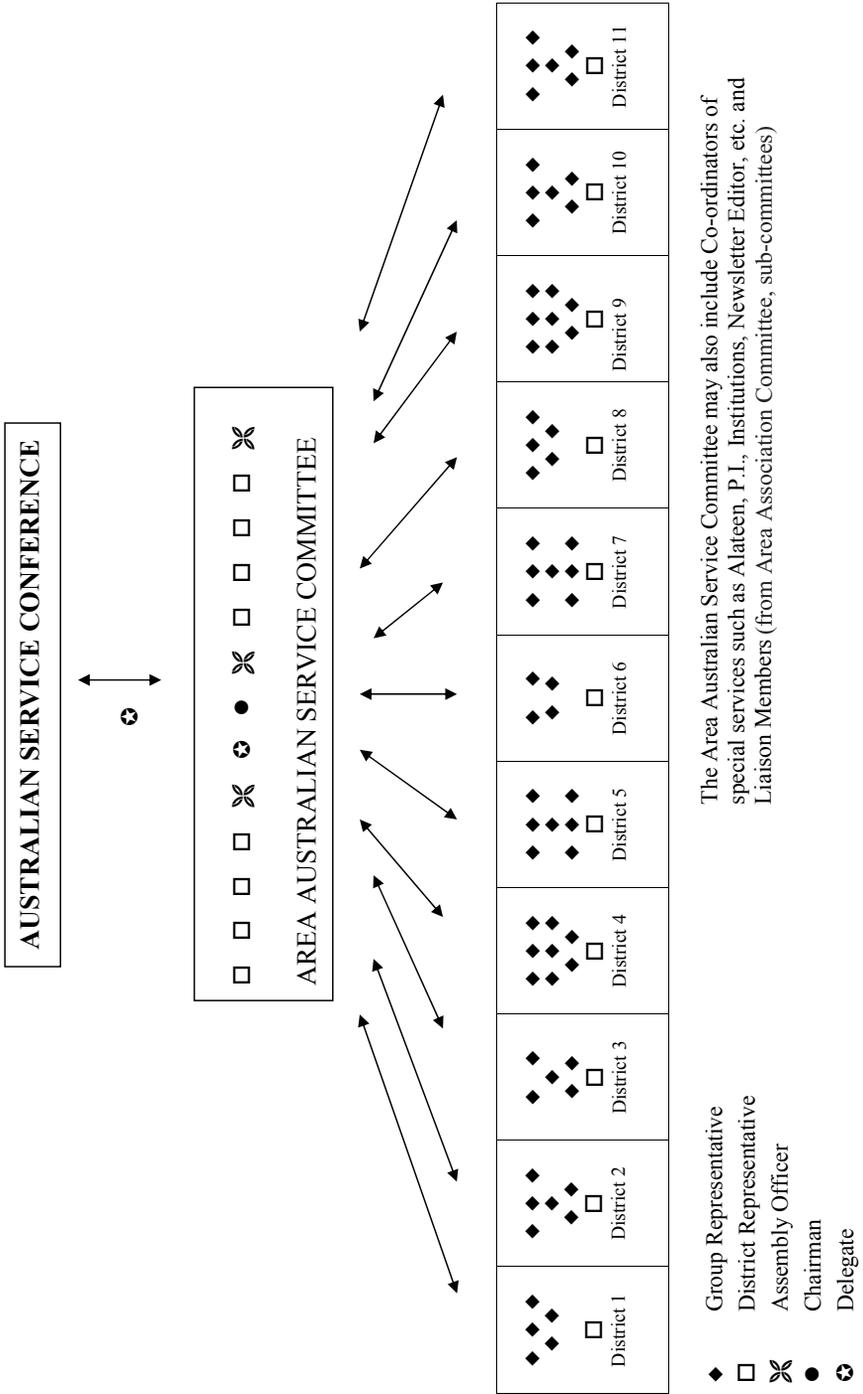
In all its proceedings the Australian Service Conference of Al-Anon Family Groups, Australia, shall observe the spirit of the Traditions: that only sufficient operating funds, including an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principle; that no Conference member shall be placed in unqualified authority over other members; that all decisions be reached by discussion, vote, and whenever possible by unanimity, that no Conference action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy; that though the Conference serves Al-Anon in Australia it shall never perform any action of government; and that like the fellowship of Al-Anon Family Groups, Australia, which it serves, it shall always remain democratic in thought and action.

*NOTE: The term Al-Anon includes Alateen. Therefore, the above Charter applies to all registered Groups in Australia, including Alateen.*



The national office of Al-Anon Family Groups, Australia (A.G.S.O.) is situated in Melbourne

AUSTRALIAN SERVICE CONFERENCE (AREA COMMITTEE STRUCTURE)





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