

## A note from the editor

Well, we made it through a whole year and here we are at Volume 2—2011!

The featured article this week is the report from the Area Delegate following on from the Annual Conference. The report also includes news of other activities in the Area.

It would be good to get some feedback from readers:

- ◆ are we hitting the spot and being informative?

- ◆ What other topics (within the Newsletter Guidelines - see the Area website) would you like to read about?

- ◆ Are you interested in news from other Areas?

- ◆ Would you like to hear from others in service?

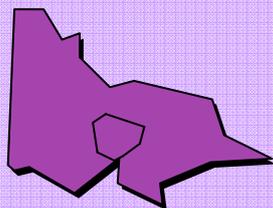
Get in touch with the editor at [areadnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:areadnewsletter@gmail.com)

Remember that any member can subscribe, at the above

email) to the Newsletter, not just GSRs. Remember to include a phone number so that we can contact you if your email changes and you forget to notify us.

To save on costs, we don't send out hard copies, we only send out electronic copies.

The deadline for any articles/ reports for the April 2011 edition is 16th March.



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## 'Extravagant Promises? We Think Not'

The collection of promises outlined on pages 83-84 of the Big Book has come, for some in recovery, quite nearly to represent an alcoholic's "Bill of Rights," a set of expectations or rewards for sobriety. And what alcoholic wouldn't want such a sterling collection of rewards, from knowing "a new freedom and a new happiness" to realizing that "God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves"?

Some would even go so far as to number these promises and elevate them to the same status as the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions. Yet, powerful and practical as they are, there is not much evidence to support the notion that they were ever intended as a "stand-alone" set of expectations. In fact, embedded as they are in the text of Step Nine, they seem particularly related to a specific set of actions rather than standing as a general set of promises for sobriety itself. In fact, these promises are introduced with the statement (*italics added*), "If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are half way through," referring to Step Nine, the phase of recovery in which we make amends.

The question of the promises and their status in A.A. (are they "official" or not?) has intrigued members and groups for some time and earlier this year the General Service Office received an inquiry from a group in Dawson Creek, British Columbia, about that very question.

After doing a little research and talking with G.S.O.'s Archivist, a staff member responded to the group's question in this way: "Alcoholics Anonymous has never attempted to codify promises or create an 'official' list of promises. Spanning many decades since Bill W. wrote the Big Book, several A.A.s have found many promises throughout the Big Book (in addition to the ones Bill wrote about on pages 83-84).... We have no record or knowledge to substantiate that Bill's intention was to present 'twelve promises' as the Steps and Traditions were outlined. We are aware that some groups and members make reference to 'twelve promises'—however, that did not originate from the collective group conscience of A.A. as a whole."

Additionally, in response to a similar question posed by an A.A. member, G.S.O.'s assistant archivist suggested, "It could have been initiated by some local group during A.A.'s formative years and since then a number of groups have developed various versions of the promises; we simply do not have any information in our files documenting this facet of our history."

Further, she wrote, "We can share with you that many times when certain sections of the Big Book are quoted separately the full meaning of the section is not always clear. Our Big Book describes how our program evolved and the words preceding the promises are equally important as the words following the promises."

And, about that suggestion that there are a lot of other promises in the Big Book beyond the ones Bill wrote about on pages 83-84? One enthusiastic A.A. member sent in a list to G.S.O. in which he had compiled 238!

Not found on that list, however, was one of A.A.'s fundamental promises—once heard in meetings around the world: "If you don't pick up the first drink, you won't get drunk."

Reprinted from *Box 4-5-9* (Holiday Issue 2008, page number 6) with permission of A.A. World Services Inc.

# Area Delegate Report

## General Service Conference Topics Meeting – 23<sup>rd</sup> October

An Area D Conference Topics Meeting was held on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> October. Although it had been widely advertised to our GSRs there was only a small number of Groups represented. Those that did participate did so fully and I am very much appreciative of their input which was passed on, wherever appropriate, to the Conference as a whole.



## National General Service Conference – 4<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> November

The National Conference was, as usual, a very busy four day event. For me the outstanding feature was the cohesion among the participants and thorough scrutiny applied to all matters that were dealt with.

The rights of a minority voice are given particular attention at Conference and for one item roughly 80% of participants changed their vote after hearing the minority voice.

I have circulated my notes of Conference topics outcomes to all Delegates. The 'official' version will be provided in 'AA Around Australia' which is due out in the next few days. The results will also be posted on the National AA Member's website very soon.

## The Melbourne General Practitioners Convention and Exhibition - 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> November

On the Tuesday after our return from the National Conference the Victorian Conference Delegates received a message from NOAA that we had been offered a booth at the Melbourne General Practitioners Convention and

Exhibition (GPCE). The message indicated that there would be several thousand GPs and nurses attending this event over a three day weekend – 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> November.

This was a wonderful opportunity to bring information about AA directly to a large body of medical practitioners. The challenge that faced us was that the event was to commence on the Friday of the same week. We would need to organise a roster of volunteers, obtain an adequate supply of relevant AA literature, and organise furniture and posters for the booth – all required within a target of less than three days.

NOAA acted very promptly by sending a large box of literature to Melbourne by express post. We purchased a hire package of furniture which was delivered directly to the booth. We got our posters and banners printed up with urgent courier deliveries to members home addresses. The booth was fully set up by the Thursday night.

The highlight of organising for this event was the great response from members volunteering to work at the event. A total of fifteen volunteers from Areas C and D in Southern Region took part in manning the booth throughout full three days. All of them volunteered at very short notice.



We did not keep detailed statistics but we estimated that we had 120+ conversations with GPs about AA's role. Several hundred others picked up AA literature, which was freely available from our counter, but did not seek to enter into a conversation. Twenty GPs left their contact details for further follow ups such as delivery of additional AA information to their surgeries.

From my own perspective this was one of the most challenging, enjoyable and productive events I have been involved with since joining AA. The response of volunteer help from other AA members in our Region was just outstanding.

## The Area D Annual Spiritual Concept Weekend – 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> January 2011

The Area D Annual Spiritual Concept weekend at Daylesford will be on 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> January.

Members who have been to this event in previous years know how enjoyable a weekend this is. I encourage those that haven't been before to come



along this time.

The event goes from lunch time on the Saturday to lunchtime Sunday. There are plenty of meetings and plenty of time for relaxation. Get a copy of the flyer - and book as soon as you can - this event gets booked out each year.

Yours in service,

Barry H.  
Delegate Area D,  
Southern Region



## District News...

An AA District is a geographical unit within an Area containing a number of AA Groups, the number being dependent on the ability of the General Service Representatives (GSRs) to communicate between each other and to meet regularly together with comparative ease.

A metropolitan District may cover a small area but contain hundreds of Groups, while a rural District may cover many square kilometres but include as few as 3 or 4 Groups. As the number of Groups in an Area increases more Districts are formed, each new one then electing another District

Each District has a Committee Member (DCM) on the Area Committee.

Experience has shown that the answer to growth rests in the setting up of more Districts to meet the Fellowship's expansion in size and activities.

Extract from *Australian AA Service Manual 7th Edition 2007 ~ Section 4 The District &*

*"Because of the closer communication links within the District, the Groups are able to share together and to carry their message more effectively."*

## Ballarat District

Ballarat District has been very busy over the past few months. Our 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary preparations are progressing well with a working party of 8-9 persons.

Little Di continues to reach out to the local police stations, hospitals, law courts, halfway houses and local psychiatric services with public information and now has the help of Julian, who has moved from Melbourne to Ballarat recently.

Sue has given the District the latest telephone report and what a busy period we've had; in the last three months we have seen 45 people contact the telephone service with a 50/50 ratio of men and women. Calls included people seeking information on alcoholism for themselves, family members and meeting times and locations. Spanning the three month period, 4 members have shared the telephone service duties and we thank them for their continual dedication in this area.

Our prison fellowship members continue each week to 'trudge the road to happy destiny' to Langi Kal Kal prison, and have been added to the Ararat prison roster, which has been organised by Alan H of Heywood.

Inmates of both prisons have taken responsibility of setting the meetings up and members are greeted with the kettle boiling and biscuits.

Many Ararat inmates will progress onto Langi Kal Kal, so God willing, they will still continue to attend meetings there.

When inmates are released, they receive a list of meetings in their new locality and contact numbers of members to assist them. So far, there has been several past inmates continue contact with a catch up of how their lives are going; some have continued with the AA program of recovery and are still sober.

Our web page is again up and running after some computer issues.

Meeting lists updated and notices sent to AATimes, national office etc of new meetings and closed meetings. Meeting numbers continue to fluctuate as is normal after many 'hibernating' during winter and some coming for a look-see and others who still need to continue their 'road to misery' experience for a while longer.

The District is hoping to have their new DCM announced at the January meeting. Thanks to David A and Kylie W for filling in during this change over. The District is seeing more GSR's committing to attendance of District meetings, which is encouraging; as this is the 'groups' District office.

We pray you all have a safe and sober festive period and look forward to more communication next year.

**Ballarat District Committee.**

<http://sites.google.com/site/ballarataadistrict/>

## Calder District

The Calder District is going very well right now thanks to greater participation from groups in the District attending our quarterly meetings. At our last meeting we had 13 members present this is up from around 4 members attending this time last year. I understand that there have been quite a few groups from the Calder District making new registrations with the National Office in recent times so it would be wonderful if the GSR's from these groups would come to the District meetings and thus help carry the AA message to those who may need it. Come along to the next District

meeting and make a difference.

The annual Calder BBQ was held on December 12th and was as usual poorly attended but for the 13 of us there we had a lovely time avoiding the rain, wind and cold but had more than enough to eat!

Frank O'L is presently doing the roster for DePaul House and has been able to attract 6 new members thus having at least three members attend each Monday night.

The Calder District continues to offer to have members of the District committee come to Groups to explain the purpose of the District, what is,

what it does and how individual groups might be able to make a difference within their own locality in carrying the AA message through Public Information. If your group would like a visit from the District committee then please let us know.

Yours in service

Kevin H.

**Next Calder District Meeting:  
Thursday 3rd February 8:00pm  
Flemington Neighbourhood House  
28 Farnham Street, Flemington.  
All GSRs in the District are  
encouraged to attend.**

## Geelong District

Well, the Geelong Anniversary is now over having ran really well. Numbers were down partly due to disappointing weather, but those who attended really had a great time and we managed to break even thanks to fundraising efforts of some groups. Workshops – PI, Jails and Traditions – were run, great meals enjoyed and Saturday night's entertainment, all courtesy of members of our Fellowship, was fantastic. It's always amazing how skilled and talented so many of our members are – what a great bunch of people to be associated with, we are so blessed. The committee of two really extraordinary members who battled on through the year are to be highly congratulated on their efforts, and guess what – they are both raring to go again next year!!! Like all areas of

service each of us grew through being involved in this event. We also very much appreciated support from our SR Trustee, Area Delegate and Area Chairperson each contributing to the special meeting held on service structure.

Our last District meeting was reasonably well attended with reports from all portfolios – most of which are functioning well, although as always requiring more members to help bear the load. Unfortunately the District is without a treasurer and secretary who both resigned due to personal difficulties, so we need to focus on recruiting members to those positions and also encouraging groups to fill all their positions especially GSRs. A few members are working together

to resurrect a group in an outlying Geelong suburb, Norlane – an area struggling with alcohol issues, and another group have successfully resurrected the Bellarine group which is currently well attended. Their efforts are very much appreciated, a great example to us all of our primary purpose – carrying the message.

Yours in service

**Sue T**

**Geelong District DCM**

**Next Geelong District Meetings:  
Saturday 8th January & March  
5th 2:00pm**

**Open Doors Meeting Place,  
Church of Christ Hall  
cnr Little Myer Street & Latrobe  
Tce, Geelong**

**Further information available  
from Sue T. on 0417 562604**

## Western Suburbs District

Our last meeting was held on 29<sup>th</sup> November. There were 16 in attendance with newcomers coming on board.

Our rotation took place, having a new start for 2011.

It was an enthusiastic meeting as members step forward and want to continue 12 Step Work within the District.

The new positions are as follows:

Pam (Sunshine Day)	DCM
Jenny (Bacchus Marsh)	Secretary
Paul (Williamstown)	Treasurer
Leigh (WGH)	PI Co-ordinator

Danny (Laverton Sunday)

Alternate PI Co-ordinator  
Jenny (Bacchus Marsh) Co-signatory  
for Treasurer

I got the feeling that there will be things happening in 2011 within the District thus within the Area. One thing which we agreed was that money was no good sitting in the bank. So the Committee will be looking for ideas in which to place the message out in the public.

As outgoing DCM I feel quite confident that 12 Step work is alive and well within the District. Werribee Friday night has decided not to

continue.

These doesn't seem to be any change regards to meetings with a few needing more support.

At this stage I would like to thank everyone who has helped me with my position as DCM. As I said in my report to District, sometimes it hasn't been easy but every part of it has been worthwhile.

**Barry D DCM**

**Next Western Suburbs District  
Meeting:**

**Tuesday February 15th 7:00pm  
Spotswood Community House  
598 Williamstown Rd, Spotswood**

## Keeping track of your group's money

When members donate money to your group's collection, they are entrusting you to make sure it is used to help carry the message to the suffering alcoholic. They expect every bit of it will be spent on providing literature, paying for the hall and refreshments and any excess passed on to National Office, your local CSO, Area or District.

Making sure this money is used properly is an important responsibility. Experience shows that if money isn't properly recorded and reported on it tends to get lost or wasted. This is not to suggest anyone is being dishonest. It's just the way money moves: if you don't watch it, you lose it. There are many ways of managing a group's money.

Listed below are three methods you might like to use. If you have other ways of keeping group accounts please tell us about them.

### **Printed treasurer's account book.**

Print this out, staple it and keep it filled in. It will help you keep proper records of your groups cash and help you to give regular reports at your group conscience meetings.

**Spreadsheet.** This lets you record your group's money transactions and, printed out, provides a useful report for your group conscience meetings.

**Meeting sheet.** This is just a way of keeping a record of how much money was collected at each meeting, how much was spent on supper, and who took the money home.

It also is a nice way to keep track of who chaired your meetings and who spoke. Print out a heap of copies, punch holes and keep them in a ring binder along with documents like *The Preamble, How it Works, The Promises*, etc.

Copies of these documents are available from the AA Service Website (see below) or call or email NOAA.

Source: <http://aaservice.org.au/members/node/376>

*The item above was developed as a suggestion for Groups/Districts and Area from our General Service Conference 2010*

## Corrections Committee News

On behalf of Area D I attended The second National Correctional Forum was held in Brisbane from the 8th to the 10<sup>th</sup> October 2010. Over 80 members attended from all the States and Territories including 8 from New Zealand and 2 from Scotland. I was the only Victorian representative.

The forum was an experience of how the collective minds and experience of AA members sharing together can produce positive action.

The members at the Conference agreed to our Correctional Facility Teams having a go at developing a program to attract more members to jail service. The idea is that we report back to the 2012 Forum but we don't necessarily need to take that long if we come up with good ideas sooner. Area D will be part of that process.

To start the ball rolling, Ken from Eastern Region suggested that we ask those already going into jails why they got involved. We could also ask them what things they would say to attract other members now that they have had experience of going into jails. He suggested can also check what the literature says to attract members into jail service.

After this research phase, perhaps we can have a discussion about what actions, if any, the Fellowship might need to take to make jail service more attractive. It would be good if we could get through that phase in the next six months or so.

Of course, Ken said that this was only suggestion of how we might start on this project and we could end up doing it completely differently. AA is like that so all ideas are welcome.

The hope is we can motivate our Teams to make some sort of breakthrough to the members who often tell us that they would love to do service if only someone could tell them what to do.

A number of questions were given to the participants prior to the forum and below is a summary of their answers:

As advised at our previous Assembly, currently AA members are attending the following facilities: Barwon Maximum Security Prison (recently 2 members received green passes); Marngoneet Correctional Centre; (both in the Geelong Area) ; Dame Phyllis Frost Centre; Melbourne Assessment Prison; Metropolitan Remand Centre; Ararat Prison; Langikal Kal Prison; Loddon Prison; Tarrengower Prison; Beechworth Correctional Centre; Fulham Correctional Centre.

Nick L has also received agreement in principle (subject to the prison approval process) from Barwon Prison management to allow women AA members to attend the prison. Prison authorities have indicated to Nick that Al-Anon members would also be welcome and this information will be passed on to Al-Anon.

We are hopeful of an AA presence in the future in the following: Dhurringile(Shepparton);Judy Lazarus Transition Centre; Port Phillip Prison.

The fund established to provide literature to inmates and support for any members carrying the AA message into correctional facilities has been maintained through Area D with the agreement of Area C. Literature is available to all members who work in this area of service as long as the funds are available. Donations in support of the Prison Work can be made through Area D and you can contact me through the Area D website for details. It is essential to maintain the fund and receive support from Members, Groups, Districts and Areas.

We need members to be willing to go on rosters to visit and establish meetings within correctional facilities. If you are at least 2 years sober and are willing to have a go please contact me via the Area D website.

On the AA Service website [www.aaservice.org.au](http://www.aaservice.org.au) you can also view some helpful "Suggestions for Members Wishing to Visit Correctional Centres.

Yours in Service

Peter Martin

Chairman

Area D Corrections Committee

## Public Information News...

From the recent PI Activity it appears that AA is needed more than ever before!

AA members manned a stall for the Mental Health Forum held in Williamstown during September. 150 people attended and we received a number of enquiries about Alcoholics Anonymous. At the August Assembly, I sought guidance from the Area about placing an ad in the booklet for the Prevocational Medical Forum. Unfortunately I missed the closing date. However the higher power had a different agenda, and we were fortunate enough to have a booth for the entire weekend at the Forum.

(See Delegates Report)

The Professionals we met indicated that a PI Dinner would be well received.

Some of the follow-ups have been passed onto the appropriate Areas & Districts.

Well done to all who participated at such short notice.

The Area now has a large banner, an A3 banner & a few other very professional banners. These are all suitable for PI work.

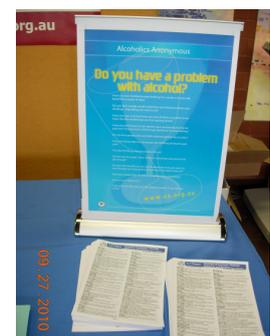
If any group or District wishes to utilise these banners for PI work, please contact me. The artwork is also available for Groups & Districts who wish to purchase their own

material.

The photos from both events, can be viewed on the Area D website, as well as the AA Service website.

In love & service

Sharon R



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We're on the web!

See us at  
[www.aread.org.au](http://www.aread.org.au)

**Disclaimer:**

Except for material identified as being taken directly from AA Conference Approved Literature, articles published in this Newsletter are the experience and opinion of the author, and are not necessarily the opinion of AA.

## Coming Events ... dates to put in your calendar

- Next Area D Assembly: Sunday 6th March, Kyneton**
- Area D Annual Daylesford Spiritual Concept Weekend SATURDAY 8th & SUNDAY 9th JANUARY 2011 AA WITH AL-ANON PARTICIPATION**  
For details, see Delegate's Report p.2 or [Download flyer](#)
- Williamstown 51st Anniversary**  
**Wednesday 12TH January**  
St Andrew's Hall 91 Cecil Street (near cnr Thompson Street)  
Please bring a plate  
[Download flyer](#)
- Geelong Into Action 25th Anniversary**  
**Sunday 16th January 7:00pm**  
Cold meat and salad tea 5:00pm  
Senior Citizens Club, Cnr Autumn & Pakington Sts Geelong West  
[Download flyer](#)
- Committee meeting organising the 2012 National Convention in Melbourne**  
**Monday 17th January 7:30pm**  
Gahan Centre Corner Greville & Grattan St Prahran
- AA Traditions Presentation**  
**Monday 31st January 7:00 PM**  
Presented by Steps in Seddon Group'  
Seddon Uniting Church Hall, 70 Gamon St, Seddon, (Melways Ref 42 A7)  
[Download flyer](#)
- Geelong Into Action Steps & Traditions 8th Anniversary** (Cold meat and salad tea)  
**Saturday 5th February**  
**Food 5:00pm ; Presentation 7:00pm**  
Senior Citizens Club Cnr Autumn & Pakington Sts Geelong West  
*With David & Christine doing their Traditions PowerPoint Presentation*
- Ballarat AA 60th ANNIVERSARY WEEKEND**  
*With Al-Anon Participation*  
**12th - 13th February 2011**  
AA Ballarat District Phone Line (03) 5364 2915 or [Download flyer](#) for details

## About Area D

Area D Southern Region is a part of the Alcoholics Anonymous General Service Conference Structure of Australia.

As such we fully participate in the Australian General Service Conference.

We also support the AA National Office in any way we are able.

Bordered by the Yarra river, the Area includes the Western and Northern suburbs of Melbourne and extends to include other major cities such as Geelong and Ballarat, and regional

centres such as Daylesford and Kyneton.

