

Quarterly Report from the Board



AN UPDATE FROM THE GENERAL SERVICE BOARD TO AREA DELEGATES

This is a confidential bulletin, for use only within A.A.

May 2020

Trustees' Message

Since the February GSB newsletter, there has been a lot happen! COVID-19 has impacted A.A. and we have seen the Fellowship adjust to online meetings in the absence of face-to-face meetings due to social distancing restrictions. The GSB has held Board meetings during this period to monitor the impacts - financial and otherwise - on the Fellowship. The most recent Board meeting was held on 28th April to discuss matters as things are moving so fast. We do hope everyone is safe and well and we are astounded at how quickly the Fellowship has adapted.

Finances

In our February newsletter we reported that our 'prudent reserve' was quite tight, hovering around the recommended minimum of 8 months. The situation has not improved - nor has it worsened - just yet! Financial reports to the end of April highlighted the serious decline in literature sales. This is expected to continue which will likely cause our prudent reserve to decline.

Sponsorship fund to be used for other purposes, if necessary. It was explained that, as donations had been made for a stated purpose, Conference did not have the authority to change this. Permission would have to be sought from each donor.

The GSB has applied for JobKeeper as the initial deadline to do so was end of April. Pursuant to Advisory Action #21/1999, the Board believes it is able to do so as it is a wage subsidy available to all qualifying organisations and not a benefit to A.A. only, which we would of course have to refuse.

A letter to the Fellowship encouraging groups and members to donate in these times when passing the basket has been made harder by virtue of the lack of face-to-face meetings.

Donations can be made by clicking on *Donations* under the *Members* page of www.aa.org.au.

Online Literature Sales

Given the decline in literature sales, it was agreed that it was now essential that an online bookshop be established to try to increase literature sales by making it easier for members to purchase literature. Some concern was expressed about the effect on local entities, such as Central Service Offices.

It was pointed out that it was necessary to make every attempt to get literature sales back to a reasonable level, to avoid having to increase prices (which could have GST ramifications) or to decrease the discount to CSOs. It was explained that a notice would be placed in the Bookshop encouraging groups and members to purchase direct from local entities, explaining why this income was important to these entities.

Face-to-Face A.A. Meetings

It was agreed that given circumstances had changed since the previous letter to the Fellowship, it was necessary to change the letter, encouraging groups to check regularly with their local government to ascertain any changes to regulations.

	28 Apr 20	28 Mar 20	28 Feb 20	28 Jan 20
Income				
Action Club	140	155	175	145
Bequests [49001]	-	400	-	-
Birthday Club	50	-	196	238
Central Region	1,355	100	1,779	-
Conference Levies [49051]	12,822	820	-	-
Eastern Region	9,154	9,448	5,150	9,390
Freight Charged on Sales [49080]	327	2,251	1,055	1,962
Literature Sales	6,676	29,795	20,920	37,211
Northeastern Region	4,404	5,056	4,297	3,386
Northern Region	273	586	178	-
Personal	4,742	5,757	661	838
Southern Region	5,028	1,290	1,912	2,328
Western Region	3,197	395	680	270
Total Income	48,167	56,053	37,002	55,768

It was also noted that there were significant liabilities, including long service leave and donations to the AOSM and Remote Communities Funds, both of which are stated purpose funds. It was further noted that income showing in the Profit & Loss Report included Conference Levies. These were not donations and would possibly have to be returned to Areas should the General Service Conference 2020 not go ahead.

A query was raised regarding requesting Conference to give permission for the International

National Convention

The Host Planning Committee (HPC) has been in limbo whilst COVID-19 was unfolding. It is currently contingency planning and hopes to be able to make an announcement in the not too distant future. People are disappointed that the International Convention has been cancelled, which was due to take place in Detroit in July, and the HPC aims to make a decision this month.



You can read the full article here:
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/11/upshot/alcoholics-anonymous-new-evidence.html>.

Founders Day

Just a reminder that AA will celebrate its 85th year and 75th Year in Australia this founders day.

Joke of the Day



National Treatment & Accessibility Co-ordinator

We are pleased to announce that Mike R has been appointed to this role for a term of four years. He has professional experience in the area and will be keen to take up the role.

General Service Trustee Role

We are pleased to announce the appointment of Cheryn P as a General Service Trustee effective from 1 April 2020. Cheryn is the Treasurer and active member of a Curl Curl group, and has previously spent 6 years working in the Northern Sydney CSO. Welcome Cheryn!

General Service Conference

The possibility of the General Service Conference not being able to be held - either physically or at all - due to COVID-19 was discussed. This will be discussed by the Conference Agenda Committee, who would make a recommendation to Conference, if necessary. The decision to hold an online Conference would be made by all Conference members via an online vote.

A.A. vs Other Approaches: The Evidence Is Now In

The *New York Times* recently published an article following the release of updated research by the Cochrane Collaboration that found that A.A. "leads to increased rates and lengths of abstinence compared with other common treatments."

The review's lead author, John F. Kelly, is a professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School and director of the Recovery Research Institute at Massachusetts General Hospital. He wrote: "*These results demonstrate A.A.'s effectiveness in helping people not only initiate but sustain abstinence and remission over the long term. The fact that A.A. is free and so widely available is also good news... It's the closest thing in public health we have to a free lunch.*"

Chairman's Report

It has been great to see how adaptable and flexible A.A. is in times such as these. The way our meetings have moved online has been extraordinary and we know that many of you are enjoying logging in to meetings all around the world and having visitors attend your online meetings.

However, spare a thought for those who are struggling to get online for various reasons. These people may be slipping through the cracks and feel unsupported and alone. This may include those new to A.A. or members who have been around many years.

What can we do for the person who still suffers? If you have a member's number who has not been online, give them a ring, see how they are going. Perhaps set up a phone roster among your Group members. It only takes two to have a meeting.

Some members, who may not been comfortable with the online platforms, may be able to dial in to a meeting. Make sure that phone dial in details are also available and encourage them to give that a go.

Please encourage these members to also contact A.A. via 1300 222 222. This phone line is open not only people contacting A.A. for the first time but to all members who would like a member to talk to.

Yours in service,
Andy P. Chairman, General Service Board