

**THE AUSTRALIAN AA
SERVICE MANUAL**

SECTION EIGHT

**AA'S
INTERNATIONAL
ACTIVITIES**



**Overview of the International Service Structure
Election of Australian World Service Delegates
Relationship to the General Service Structure
Activities – WSM, AOSM and AOSM Zone
Qualifications, Roles & Responsibilities
The International Sponsorship Fund**

OVERVIEW OF THE INTERNATIONAL SERVICE STRUCTURE

HISTORY

An appreciation of international relations began in AA almost as early as the movement itself. The first *World Service Office* opened in Vesey Street, New York, in February 1940. The first *International Convention* was held in Cleveland in 1950, at which meeting the *Twelve Traditions* were adopted, (the first *General Service Conference* was held in 1951). "The Twelve Concepts for World Service" was published in 1962. The international service structure, centred on the *World Service Meeting* is facilitated by the General Service Office in New York. In Australia the National Office performs a similar function for the General Service Conference at national scale.

The first World Service Meeting was held in New York in 1969, with biennial meetings from 1972 onwards. Delegates from 14 countries attended that first meeting, including two delegates from Australia. We have been sending delegates ever since. While Australian delegates have attended World Service Meetings now for several decades, the formal, International Committee system in our own country is more recent.

The *Trustees' International Committee* was first activated in 1995 and its *Composition, Scope & Procedure* document ratified by Conference. A parallel *Conference International Committee* was established in 1998. *International Delegates* had earlier been appointed by the Board, and had not been voting members of Conference, but in 1999 they were granted voting rights at Conference conditional upon their being elected by Conference and becoming *Members of Conference*. Delegates are elected specially for this purpose by Conference, but report to the General Service Board and to Conference. Before that, in Australia and in some other countries, delegates to international service meetings have sometimes been Board members, non-alcoholic Trustees, General Service Office staff or in the USA and Canada, special Trustees on the Board, known as '*Trustees-at-large*'.

The first ('zonal') *Asia-Oceania Service Meeting* was held in Japan in 1995. Australia did not send any delegates due to financial constraints.

THE AUSTRALIAN DELEGATES TODAY

Two World Service Delegates travel to each international Service Meeting to represent AA Australia, bring back their knowledge and experience to share with the Fellowship . and carry out their *international 12th Step work*.

Until 2002 there were two *World Service Meeting Delegates* (first & second term), two *Alternate WSM Delegates*, two *Asia-Oceania Service Meeting Delegates* (again, first & second term), and two *Alternate AOSM Delegates* (total eight people). Conference 2002 decided to reduce the numbers to two International Delegates and two Alternates. Both International Delegates now attend both World and Asia-Oceania Service Meetings. The Alternate steps in when the Delegate is not available to attend a meeting due to unavoidable circumstances, may help with big projects, or may fill a gap brought on by resignation or death, doing the work but not actually filling the position. This keeps the rotation at four years, unlike Area Delegates, who serve for three years from the date of commencement.

Most other countries have only two delegates, called '*World Service Delegates*' (WSD), who also attend their own zonal service meetings. In Australia, Conference decided in 2000 that *Alternate International Delegate* positions should have elections separate from other International Delegates. We had so many types of Delegate that the collective term 'International' emerged. In 2003 Conference decided that after a transition period of attrition, AA Australia would have two International Delegates who attended both World and Asia-Oceania (zonal) Service Meetings. In 2004 it was agreed that the title would change to '*World Service Delegate*', and that the Alternate position should be offered to the runner-up in the WSD election.

ELECTION OF AUSTRALIAN WORLD SERVICE DELEGATES

Nominations are sent to National Office by the end of June; they are usually submitted through Area Assemblies. The nominations are included in the July Board meeting folder for information and are included in the Conference folder. They are not allocated to any particular Committee, except that the Conference Committee on Trustees will review the applications and make recommendations to Conference as to the suitability of the candidates. The whole of Conference elects the Delegate by *Third Legacy Procedure*.

National Office notifies the Fellowship of impending delegate elections and brings attention to the closure date for nominations from the Areas around Australia.

For continuity, the elections alternate two-yearly, for one Delegate plus a concurrent Alternative Delegate, then the other, with each term lasting four years. The term of service starts from the January following election, and does not normally exceed the four years.

RELATIONSHIP OF INTERNATIONAL DELEGATES TO THE AA GENERAL SERVICE STRUCTURE

WORLD SERVICE DELEGATES AT CONFERENCE

Both World Service Delegates are present at Conference in November, and are voting members. They present Reports on their activities to the Conference.

World Service Delegates attend Conference International Committee meetings as non-voting *ex-officio* members, while the Chairman of the *Trustees' International Committee* acts as liaison to the Conference Committee.

Although elected by Conference, the World Service Delegates are 'answerable' to the Board, ie they remain engaged with the Board and National Office and deliver Reports on their activities to the Board throughout the year. They are also required to report to the annual Conference.

RELATIONSHIP OF DELEGATES TO THE BOARD

In Australia, the World Service Delegates are not Trustees, however they need to be familiar with the proceedings of the Board in order to explain Australian activities to their overseas contacts and Service Meetings. They have therefore been given the right to attend Board meetings. At least one Delegate is funded from general revenue to attend, and they do so in an advisory capacity only. Their particular role is with the *Trustees' International Committee*, where they may vote. When they attend Board meetings they have also been included as non-voting members on other Board committees to take advantage of their presence as a human resource. As considerable AA experience is required for a candidate to be considered for election in the first place, World Service Delegates are potentially a rich source of AA know-how and wisdom.

The international activities are overviewed by the Trustees' International Committee, in liaison with the Conference International Committee. As with other Committees, the Chairman of the Trustees' Committee keeps in touch with the Chairman of the Conference Committee.

WORLD SERVICE DELEGATE ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITIES WITHIN AUSTRALIA

World Service Delegates spend their time in Australia preparing for meetings overseas, and collecting and delivering information around the country in the performance of their international 12th Step work. For this they are provided with a small budget from Fellowship funds. World Service Delegates are also included in the Conference-Approved Guideline List of office-bearers who may attend Regional Forums at Board expense (up to one from the following list to each Forum).

- National Office staff member
- World Service Delegate
- Non-alcoholic Trustee
- Other Regional or General Service Trustee.

The World Service Delegates involve their Alternates in the quarterly production of *International Corner* in "AA Around Australia", rotating the responsibility.

WORLD SERVICE MEETINGS

World Service Meetings are held every two years, in locations alternating between New York City and cities in other countries. The World Service Meeting serves as a forum for sharing the experience, strength and hope of delegates from all parts of the world. It seeks ways and means of carrying the AA message to the alcoholic who still suffers, in any nation and any language. It can also represent an expression of the Group Conscience worldwide. It encourages the planning of sound service structures and exploration of expanding AA services to reach the alcoholic through internal communication, literature distribution, sponsorship, public information, community relations and work with institutions.

These meetings in many ways resemble the Australian Conference, and they have a very busy Committee system. General Service Office New York encourages countries each to send two Delegates, to facilitate the assignment of work and to cover as many as possible of the many meetings.

Ideally the World Service Meeting itself should be self-supporting financially, but at this stage (2002) it is not.

Each participating country forwards a nominal fee per Delegate to General Service Office New York, which then takes the responsibility for the remainder of the expenses incurred. This arrangement is similar to that between the Areas and Conference in Australia, where the Board underwrites from 'general revenue', shortfalls from *Area Levies* to fund Conference.

Participating countries fund the fares and accommodation of their Delegates. Australian Delegates are funded out of membership donations through the normal surplus funds *Donation Plan* from the Groups, so our ability to send Delegates depends on a healthy donation level to National Office.

ASIA-OCEANIA SERVICE MEETINGS

Figure 7 Asia-Oceania Service Meeting Zone

WHERE DO ZONAL DELEGATES COME FROM?

Asia-Oceania Service Meeting Zone Delegates come from countries within the Zone illustrated above. Here there are probably more languages spoken, religions practised and more alcoholics needing to hear our message than in the rest of the world. As AA grows all over the world, new Zones are sure to emerge. Membership of the Zone is a fluid matter, similar to the situation with individuals and the selection of the Groups they might attend. Wherever a country anywhere in or near our zone reaches out for help, AAs in the the AOSM structure do their best to extend the hand of AA. At present,

- The southern boundary runs from South of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean East of South Africa, running eastwards South of Australia and New Zealand, but also potentially including part of Antarctica, to the Pacific Ocean, well to the East of our neighbours in New Zealand.
- From the South-East corner, the boundary extends North through Oceania, including many small island states as far East as French Polynesia (Tahiti), running North past China, Korea and Japan to Eastern Russia, which provides the northern and western boundaries.
- The western boundary runs down through the Russian Federation, East of the Ural Mountains and the Caspian Sea in the South, to include countries such as Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India; it then moves South to Diego Garcia. The designation of Middle Eastern countries to a Zone is presently uncertain.
- These boundaries include Papua-New Guinea, Indonesia, South-East Asia, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Mongolia and all of China.

Within this Zone, better established countries take solo or shared responsibility for those with less developed structures. Australia looks after Papua-New Guinea, Indonesia and many countries in South-East Asia such as Burma, Thailand, Viet Nam and Cambodia. New Zealand responds to the vast Area of Oceania, with its thousands of tiny island communities.

THE ASIA-OCEANIA SERVICE MEETING

The *Asia-Oceania Service Meeting* is Australia's Zonal AA meeting, and is held every two years, alternating with the *World Service Meeting*. The primary purpose of the Asia Oceania Service Meeting is to carry the message of Alcoholics Anonymous to the alcoholic who still suffers, by providing a forum for Delegates from all parts of Asia and Oceania. The Asia-Oceania Service Meeting has no authority over any AA service or group.

It can also represent an expression of the Group Conscience throughout the Region and provide a link to the World Service Meeting for countries unable to be represented there.

Experience has shown that a sound service structure enables the message to be delivered more effectively. The Asia Oceania Service Meeting encourages the planning of sound service structures suited to the needs of the individual countries and the expansion of AA services to reach the alcoholic through the spoken word, literature and institutions work.

The Asia-Oceania Service Meeting is self-supporting through the voluntary contributions of its members, service entities and Groups within each country represented.

The Asia-Oceania Service Meeting has its own Secretariat. The Australian General Service Conference normally contributes a donation towards its funding each year and hosts the meeting itself from time to time. The Secretariat produces a quarterly Newsletter, the *Asia-Oceania Service Meeting Directory*, and plays a major role in organising the biennial Meetings.

INTERNATIONAL SERVICE: QUALITIES RECOMMENDED FOR DELEGATES

1. Experience in Service at national level & advanced knowledge of AA traditions, structure & literature; at least five years current unbroken sobriety in AA.
2. Citizenship of Australia; Legal residence in Australia.
3. Absence of past criminal convictions of the type that would impede ability to travel (especially to USA).
4. Good communication skills. Speak & write fluent English.

ROLE & RESPONSIBILITIES OF WORLD SERVICE DELEGATES

THESE INCLUDE IN AUSTRALIA:

1. To set up a cooperative email 'loop' of World Service *trusted servants*, including both Delegates and Alternates and key members (eg Chairs) of Trustees' and Conference International Committees so as to keep everyone abreast of activities throughout the year and seek help where needed eg for Newsletter preparation or literature-related activities.
2. Membership of International Committees (Board and Conference). Attendance at Board meetings with voting rights only at Committee level, or studying Board proceedings if unable to attend. Full participation at Conference.
3. To assist in making the Fellowship aware of forthcoming World Service Meeting Delegate vacancies and encourage suitable members to nominate to fill the vacancies

4. After the World Service Meeting to present to the Australian General Service Board a succinct Report which should contain the following:
 - a) Information regarding any recommendations the World Service Meeting may have made
 - b) Information on the meetings and workshops
 - c) Other information of general interest.
5. Present a similar Report to the Australian General Service Conference in November.
6. Share experiences gained at the World Service Meeting with Australian members via bulletins, "AA Around Australia", attending Regional Forums, Conventions etc, whenever possible.

FOR THE WORLD SERVICE MEETING:

1. To send a *Report* to General Service Office New York six months before the World Service Meeting; the report to contain the following information:
 - a) General information regarding AA activities in Australia, eg *Public Information and Co-operation with the Professional Community, Treatment and Correctional Facilities*, literature, finances and the like.
 - b) General description of General Service structure and the various committees it comprises.
 - c) Statistics on AA in Australia, eg number of groups, percentage of men and women members, Central Service Offices, average length of sobriety etc.
 - d) Information about the principle aspects of AA in Australia, eg Regional Forums, National Conventions, growth.
2. To study the material dispatched by General Service Office New York referring to the forthcoming World Service Meeting. This will enable the Delegates to participate constructively in the various committees and workshops.
3. To maintain good communications with other World Service Delegates internationally and with General Service Office New York.
4. To attend and fully participate in the World Service Meeting.

FOR THE ASIA-OCEANIA SERVICE MEETING:

1. To report to the Asia/Oceania Service Meeting on activities in this country regarding Service Structure growth, *Public Information, Treatment Facilities*, literature, finances and the general status of AA.
2. Actively participate in sponsoring neighbouring Countries. This includes communication, encouragement and assistance with literature, banners and public information. Some member countries have special funds allocated to finance this inter-national 12th Step work.
3. Keep fully informed of international matters such as literature translation procedures and copyright. Study Reports from the *World Service Meeting, European Service Meeting* and the *Meeting of the Americas*, so as to be informed of trends in the worldwide Fellowship.
4. Encourage interest and participation in Asia-Oceania Service Meeting activities at Group, District and Area levels. This includes reporting back as broadly as possible to the Fellowship following AOS Meetings.
5. Actively participate in planning and implementation of the Asia-Oceania Service Meeting itself when it is Australia's turn to host the meeting.

THE INTERNATIONAL SPONSORSHIP FUND (ISF)

The *International Sponsorship Fund* (formerly known as the '*International Literature Fund*') supports the translation, printing and distribution of literature to help establish AA in developing countries. In 1995 Conference recommended that all AA Groups in Australia be encouraged to contribute any surplus funds from one meeting each year during Founders Day Week (June 10th) to be forwarded to National Office to be consolidated and sent on to New York for this purpose. It is the role of the Trustees' International Committee to encourage AA in Australia to support this fund, and presently a 'brown paper bag' donation system, is organised by the International Service Delegates and others.

The following year, Conference endorsed the proposal that a portion of the International Literature Fund collection be used to help Australia's efforts to carry the message into the Asia/Oceania zone. Following this, several developing country Delegates have been supported financially to attend the AOSM. For legal reasons, the name of the fund therefore had to be changed in 2002 to make it accurate to the purpose for which the money was collected. In 2003 Conference specified that the proportion of the collection earmarked for our own Zone be 75% of the ISF collection: "(to) ... be used to sponsor literature and PI&CPC activities in the Asia/Oceania zone ...", the remainder to be sent to New York for the International Literature Fund.

The 75% Asia-Oceania Zone portion of the fund is administered jointly by the Chair and Coordinator of the Trustees' International Committee together with the World Service Delegates. The Chairperson of the Trustees' International Committee is expected at all times to have a complete record of all expenditure from this fund.

In 2009, Conference resolved that when proposed expenditure from the International Sponsorship Fund exceeds \$5,000.00, approval should be sought from the Conference International Committee on behalf of Conference.