



## AA in SA

### Striving to improve communication between GSO, the Members and Groups of the Fellowship

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#### MESSAGE FROM THE GSO CHAIRMAN

The sole purpose for the structure of AA to exist is to ensure continuity of the fellowship. We have been doubly blessed in South Africa to have members who have gone over and above the normal course of duty to ensure that great things happen. While I still subscribe to principles before personalities some great achievements have been in the making from before I took over as GSO Chairman. I would like to dedicate this piece to list some of these achievements.

Our first acknowledgement is to the dedicated members who have been carrying the message through the various service arms, hospitals, prisons, schools, previously disadvantaged areas..... The list goes on. We should never forget that the success of Alcoholics Anonymous was not through a person sitting next to a phone waiting for it to ring. It was through those servants who wanted to share their sobriety and went out and carried the message to the still suffering alcoholic.

What about the structure – Conference, GSB and GSO? In May, AA South Africa hosted another successful national conference. Many have told me that after many years of service they have witnessed the “Voice of the Minority” (Concept 5) being heard. For those who were not able to be there, I am compelled to give you a synopsis of what happened.

The South African Meeting in A Pocket publication was discussed. Everybody, well, almost

everybody agreed the book would be a wonderful addition to our library. An overwhelming majority voted for the production of the book until an objection was raised. The voice of the minority was raised and the majority fought back. This went on to and fro for what seemed like 30 minutes. When all was said and done, it was then put to the vote – again; and lo and behold the majority of the votes went to the voice of the minority”. In the true spirit of the fellowship I felt honored to be present when the conscience of each delegate forming this group prevailed.

From October 7 to 11 this year, World Services Delegates from around the will be gracing the shores of Durban, KZN who will be hosting the World Services Meeting. This is a first for South Africa and for Africa. The tireless efforts of our KZN family put in the bid, were successful and are all on track to host this annual AA event. Yep, talk about over and above the normal course of duty.

The AASA Board has taken oversight responsibility of the fellowship. The shortcomings were debated and interestingly, two issues topped the agenda. Singleness of Purpose and Communication. Work is being done on the former and AASA now has a mobile APP. I was surprised to learn after three weeks when I attended a meeting a member read out communication from GSO and then followed up with “I think that this is about the AASA magazine we get. Case in point. The App is a wonderful and it offers us what we need and can afford. It will be able to do a lot more in the future and we are working on it – funds permitting.

Presently, you can find a meeting on the app, click on the location icon and it will open Google Maps and direct you to a meeting. Frequently asked questions that arise at meetings are answered. A link to the [www.aasouthafrica.org.za](http://www.aasouthafrica.org.za) website. And do you remember the old cassette tapes? Well they are being converted into a digital format and will also be available on the app. Lastly, for the geeks, the next issue of Regmaker will be available online as a subscription on the app. COST: R9.99 for Android and R14.99 for Apple – no fights about this because it was a conference decision.

Keep an eye on [www.aasouthafrica.org.za](http://www.aasouthafrica.org.za) website. Great work is being done there to make it easier to navigate. Easier and simpler to find meetings. Loads of information for people new to the fellowship.

Happy sobriety and put on your best behavior in October. The rest of the world will be visiting.

Sandil M  
GSO Chairman

## CONFERENCE DECISIONS 2018

\*Listed below is a summary of decisions of accepted proposals. The full Conference Decisions Document is available from your Area Office / Delegate or the website's Library section.

**Proposal:** that all groups at Rehabs be changed to Special purpose meetings as the rehabs send all patients regardless whether alcoholic, addict, overeater gambler whatever to these groups with the belief that an addiction is an addiction and it goes against both Traditions 5 and 6.

**Decision:** If a group which holds its meetings at a Rehab and consistently does not conduct its meetings in accordance with AA traditions that group should be deemed to be a "Special Purpose Meeting" and as such not be registered as an AA Group. The decision to re-classify a group as a Special Purposes Meeting lays in the hands of the Area Assembly.

**Proposal:** That Conference establish a service awareness week for each service arm in August before most positions rotate out.

**Decision:** It was agreed that the Conference should adopt and ratify this proposal. However, instead of having a service week August will be dedicated as a Service Month. The GSO National Secretaries of each service arm to drive this project from July. The function of the National Secretaries would be to follow up with the relevant service arm of each area to ensure that the literature, posters and guidelines that would be required for their local projects are available and in their stock. These events that are run by each area/district would present an opportunity to conduct a survey as to "Why members do not readily get involved in service?" A questionnaire will be compiled and sent out with the literature. These questionnaires are not compulsory and will be anonymous. The idea behind this is to gather information as to why there is a lack of participation in service and use this information to see what we as a fellowship as a whole can do to encourage service within the fellowship.

**Proposal:** The Board recommends to Conference that the SA Big Book project be shelved completely as it is creating animosity in the fellowship.

**Decision:** The recommendation of the Board was followed and this project was shelved by majority vote.

**Proposal:** Meetings App which includes: Meeting format/Chapter 5/Promises / Traditions / Calendar of Events

**Decision:** Conference approved the APP as demonstrated. R10-00 will be charged to download the APP and includes everything but the Regmaker subscription. The APP will contain

- "Find a Meeting" with Google maps and search functions (any area/group name/suburb typed in will get you to a meeting)
- Calendar of events
- Frequently Asked Questions (sobriety terms for service positions etc.)
- Shares by SA members (rallies, conventions etc.)
- Regmaker online (R 50-00 as per usual)

The App will be launched in June 2018.

**Proposal:** Group contributions are split (70 % to Areas & 30 % to GSO). Propose that the split after Conventions be noted in Guidelines as 70 % to GSO and 30 % to Areas.

**Decision:** Conference approved this proposal. Convention Guidelines and the Service Manual will be updated.

**Proposal:** Structure of neighboring countries joining SA to be revisited. Current structure unfavorable. As the Area is responsible for Delegate fees, we need to ensure that an Area knows this and can fund the Delegate before a new country is allocated to the said Area. A new country should not simply join with an Area or Region because it is geographically suited. For future planning we need to take into account that Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland might join the AA SA structure.

**Decision:** Delegate fees for neighbouring countries joining the SA structure, will be divided between all Areas/Regions in South Africa instead of charging one area for an extra Delegate. This effectively means that South Africa will be sponsoring the neighboring countries until they are able to afford to pay their own way. This proposal and decision will be reviewed annually at Conference to assess the affordability of neighbouring countries.

**Proposal:** Anonymity and social media is becoming an issue, with many Millennials (Generation Y) taking photos and images at Rallies and other events. Guidelines for social media use within the Fellowship should be developed and added to the Service Manual.

**Decision:** Social Media guidelines already exist and will be added to the Service Manual.

**Proposal:** Rallies need to focus on the Primary Purpose – which is to inform the public of AA. Guidelines should be developed and added to the Service Manual.

**Decision:** Rally Guidelines will be updated by the Trustee: CPC/PI and National Secretary: CPC/PI.

**Proposal:** The Service Manual should be updated to reflect specific roles for each service arms portfolio.

**Decision:** Approved. Furthermore, the entire Service Manual will be thoroughly checked and updated/edited where necessary. The Trustee:

ASA will work on this project in conjunction with the National Secretary: Archives.

**Proposal:** AA SA introducing officially recognized and pro-perly run on-line meetings for the AA-loner to attend.

**Decision:** This proposal was approved. Messages to gage interest will be placed on the website Forum, WhatsApp and Alco Solo. If there is interest, the Loners themselves should take the initiative and GSO can then perhaps investigate a technology platform. A group registration form is available from GSO.

**Proposal:** Based on Traditions 11 & 12 which state: Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities. How can we honour these traditions in the new communication age where Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram & other Social Media platforms are part of us daily communication with the world at large?

**Decision:** Members of the Finance and IT Committee will investigate the possibility of private, secure social media platforms. Social Media guidelines will be updated.

**Proposal:** As we are continually asked to remind our groups that the Fellowship requires funds, one of the younger members pointed out that the younger generation hardly ever carries cash, and don't like drawing money either. I would like for Conference to discuss the possibility of including a QR code within the IGN (or another format to be discussed) that will allow those wishing to do so to make an electronic donation each week.

**Decision:** Proposal approved. A QR code will be available soon. This will enable members to contribute to GSO via their phones. Areas who have bank accounts can also implement this system. It was further decided that the pledge project will continue for a year as it has been successful. GSO are closer to restoring prudent reserves because of the pledges coming in. The Trustee: Finance & IT will send a letter to Areas, thanking members for their pledges and requesting an extension for another year. This project will be reviewed at Conference 2019.

**Proposal:** Introduce an Afrikaans version of the Service Manual.

**Decision:** The area that submitted this proposal should do the translation. The area will be responsible for any costs involved to have linguists edit the manual. The final copy must be submitted to Conference for approval.

**Proposal:** Lack of Afrikaans versions of AA pamphlets specifically in the country areas. Could these not be translated and made available in print friendly format on our web site?

**Decision:** The area that submitted this proposal should do the translation. The area will be responsible for any costs involved to have linguists edit the leaflets. The final copy(s) must be submitted to GSO who will then submit the draft to AAWS and request licensing and approval. AAWS will have the final decision as to whether the leaflets can be placed on the website at no charge.

**Proposal:** That “Daily Reflections” be translated into Afrikaans. First draft of the translation has been completed.

**Decision:** The area that submitted this proposal should do the translation. The area will be responsible for any costs involved to have linguists edit the book. The final copy must be submitted to GSO who will then submit the draft to AAWS and request licensing and approval. AAWS will have the final decision as to whether the book can be placed on the website at no charge.

#### **Other projects:**

The Trustee for CPC/PI took on the project to co-operate/communicate with Government Departments to assist all Service arms to gain access to various entities and in doing so help carry the message to the officials within the Government that will get in contact with the still suffering alcoholic. The Trustee agreed to set up a plan of action and also the guidelines regarding the way to interact with the Government officials. A Budget of R250.00 will be requested per person. The budget will be used to obtain proper business card to be given to the Government officials. The timeline for getting the project going is 6 months (monitored monthly).

The Delegates of the CPC/PI Committee took on the project to make contact with the Doctor's Guilds within their area and ask to make a presentation during their meeting. This will ensure that a number of medical professionals be targeted at once. A budget of R1500-00 has been requested. This will be used to obtain some related pamphlets. Samples of the pamphlets will be given to each Medical Guild for their members to see what literature they may buy from AA.

The National Secretary: CPC/PI took on the project to investigate and compile literature packs for PI presentations. All free literature from AAWS will be investigated and if new free literature can be brought into SA this will be included in the packs. The aim is to send at least 5 packs to each area – as a start - to get every area going with their own PI projects. This will be monitored monthly to check if Areas need more.

## **NEW LITERATURE**

Conference has given the approval for three new leaflets/booklets to be produced. These are now available from your nearest Area Office: “Meeting in a Pocket”, “Service Sponsorship” and “Growing into Service”.

## **SERVICE IS GOOD SURVEY**

At the 2018 General Service Conference it was decided to tackle the problem of a seeming lack of commitment and interest in Service to our Fellowship. The problem was considered to be so serious that Conference adopted the Theme “Service in Action” and voted to focus on Service awareness and promotion for the entire year. To complete the SIG survey should not take more than 5 minutes. The questions asked could also make for an interesting “Topic Meeting”.

Members can either

- Complete the paper-based form or
- Complete on line by following the Survey Link:  
<http://www.aasouthafrica.org.za/Members/Service.aspx>