

SECTION 8

ASK IT BASKET/CONFERENCE INVENTORY SESSION

**GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 2016
ASK IT BASKET SESSION**

The following questions were submitted to the Ask It Basket anonymously:

1. What is the effect of the 2016/17 budget result likely to have on the level of prudent reserves? Does Conference need to consider actions to address the level of prudent reserves?

Answer/s

Prudent Reserve recommended by Conference is between 6-12 months. In simple terms this means has the General Service Board/General Service Office got enough money in the bank to continue to provide services to the Fellowship for a certain period, if no income at all is received. The last prudent reserve calculation was 8.6 months, which is between recommended levels. The prudent reserve is monitored monthly by the Management Group and, should there be any concerns, the Fellowship would be alerted through the Delegates. Groups should always be encouraged to provide financial support to their vital services. There is no debt. Income from surplus funds raised by National Conventions vary from year to year and this can affect the prudent reserve level.

2. Can we get a sense about inserting the recommendations from the International Committee about bids of national conventions into Guideline 15?

Answer/s

There was no discussion or comment on this.

3. Is it more accurate for a Delegate to report to members that the Cost Equalisation contribution supports the funding of the Australian General Service Conference?

Answer/s

A previous Conference Advisory Action stated that levies should cover the cost of Conference and Board meetings. Board currently subsidises the cost.

This has now been changed. Levies will only go towards the cost of Conference.

4. Could the General Service Board please explain why all tapes and records except for resolutions of Board meetings are being destroyed? Surely this important background material is worth keeping. By destroying records we destroy our archives and, if there is any litigation, most companies keep their records too they can show their intent behind decisions. If parliament is not frightened to have Hansard, why should we be?

Answer/s

Speakers in parliament cannot be litigated against. Recording Board meetings is a fairly recent practice and was initiated purely to assist in the preparation of Minutes. Most companies do not keep recordings of Board meetings.

5. Is the committee co-ordinator a service position or a paid role/job?

Answer/s

A paid position.

6. To address the shortfall of delegates on some Conference Committees (for example, some have no chairperson or the same chairperson next year) could all delegates be invited to sit on four committees. Most now only sit on three committees.

Answer/s

Only delegates sitting on the Conference Agenda Committee sit on four committees. The Agenda Committee meets at a time when no other committees are meeting. All other committees meet concurrently. It is difficult to have a balance of experience and location of delegates on committees, even more so when resignations occur. Three committees is manageable, four would not be.

7. Should Conference trial employing a typist on the Saturday and Sunday of Conference to type up the days events, taking pressure off existing members and staff trying to record things.

Answer/s

Committee Chairpersons can assist by taking notes during their committees. Staff did not feel it was necessary.

8. When a topic is received by GSO and it is obvious that it will be rejected by the Agenda Committee because of the wording or because it expresses an opinion, e.g. rejected Topic 022/2016, would it be possible to provide feedback to the submitter so that they have an opportunity to re-word the topic in a more appropriate form, so that it is less likely the topic will be rejected.

Answer/s

This already happens. If it is obvious that a topic will be rejected (over the word limit or the topic is unclear), the committee co-ordinator will contact the submitter. If it is not obvious that a topic will be rejected, no action is taken. It is the responsibility of the Agenda Committee to determine whether a topic breaches Traditions or is outside the scope of Conference.

9. Please explain the General Service Office mechanism for reducing deficits, formula for maintaining Prudent Reserve and financial sustainability.

Answer/s

It was the feeling of Conference that these questions had already been addressed during financial reports.

10. If a member submits a topic and it is accepted for review in a delegates committee, can that member also be a delegate in that committee and review and vote on their own topic? Should a delegate vote on their own topic?

Answer/s

Yes. Once a topic comes to Conference it is the property of Conference. Conference is not a political body.

11. Each year Conference calls for topics and then asks Groups and Areas to devote precious time considering those topics selected by the Conference Agenda Committee. In view of the widespread dissatisfaction with topics as they are currently presented, and taking into account the Warranties contained in Concept XII – in particular Warranties 3 and 6 – should the General Service Conference consider a thorough review of the Composition, Scope & Procedures of this pivotal Conference Committee?

Answer/s

Guideline 28 states that the Conference Agenda Committee may reject certain topics or rearrange or group them together. Clarification was needed on what was meant by widespread dissatisfaction. Was this referring to the fellowship or the Conference itself. The Conference Agenda Committee will sometimes split a topic into several sub topics (i.e. when more than one subject is included in the same topic). It is the role of the Conference Committees to group topics if they so wish. The Agenda Committee is careful to respect the authorship and wording of each topic. Sometimes it is very difficult to ascertain what the submitter of a topic is seeking to achieve. The Conference Agenda Committee is not responsible for the quality of topics. This is the responsibility of the authors.

12. Could the Agenda Committee highlight “opinion that was expressed” in the International Committees submitted topic. Why wasn’t that topic sent back to the International Committee Chair for a second chance to redraft as with other topic submitters?

Answer/s

The problem was that the Agenda Committee was dealing with two topics of a similar nature that both appeared to have come from the Conference International Committee. The Agenda Committee selected the one which they believed was closer to what Conference 2015 had requested. It was suggested that the use of the words ‘should not’ in the rejected topic inferred an opinion. There were varying opinions about whether or not this topic contained an opinion. The Chair of the Agenda Committee apologised for any offence that might have been caused.

13. The Aboriginal Convention? Does that mean that white people can’t attend! So much for being inclusive!

Answer/s

The convention is open to all.

14. If there is no legal matter pending, why is the Board being advised by Mark Gardiner?

Answer/s

Mark Gardiner has guided the Board on the legal responsibilities of the Trustees. He had not been invited to the February 2016 Board meeting in Darwin to give legal advice, but rather an educational session for new and existing directors. A new Trustee reported that he had found this information session very helpful. The Board will be including this as a regular session on their February agenda.

15. Can delegates who chair committees please be sent a list of emails of everyone who will be on their committee so we can communicate, especially with first year delegates?

Answer/s

Has already been covered in previous discussion.

16. Where would we subscribe to the upcoming e-magazine?

Answer/s

All delegates will be given this information when it is up and running. Information will also be posted on the national and service websites and in AA Around Australia.

17. What are the possible outcomes of the four hour structure review session at Conference 2017?

Answer/s

Not known. It will either be adopted as written, amended and adopted, or not adopted. Discussion will raise awareness of how things are done in AA.