

GUIDELINE NO GL-15

THE NATIONAL CONVENTION

The Australian National Convention is under the direct sponsorship of the General Service Board (GSB) of Alcoholics Anonymous, Australia. The GSB is ultimately responsible for all aspects of any Australian Convention, including finance. It underwrites the Conventions and with that responsibility carries ultimate authority.

THE HOST PLANNING COMMITTEE (HPC)

Although Conference now approves Convention bids five years in advance, there is no need to form the HPC more than two years prior to the event. Even then it may only be necessary to form an interim committee (eg Chairperson, Deputy Chair, and Treasurer) for the purpose of securing a venue.

An Area intending to host a National Convention ought to be responsible for consulting with other Areas in their Region prior to submitting a bid. Bids to host National Conventions are to be submitted as Conference Topics, by the usual Topic submission deadline, to give the Fellowship an opportunity to participate in the decision for approval.

Eighteen months to two years ahead is generally ample time to form the full Committee, prepare a budget to obtain seed funding from the General Service Board and appoint an auditor. Retiring HPCs now send a Report to General Service Office with positive and negative experience and recommendations for the national database. This information is passed on to HPCs of future Conventions as they become available. This way no-one need waste time reinventing the wheel.

The Host Planning Committee has responsibility for the timing, however consideration should be given for the time of year in which it is held, and the duration of the Convention to cater for domestic and international travellers.

Lead times are, of course, optional – different conditions will apply to each host city. Nevertheless, experience has shown that an excessive lead time can result in a large turnover of committee members due to burn-out and unforeseen circumstances.

All National Convention Committees are sub-committees of the GSB which requests that the HPC include:

- The Regional Trustee;
- The local Area Delegate(s)
- Experienced AA members to fill the essential portfolios.

It should also be borne in mind that AI-Anon has a valuable contribution to make to any AA Convention; it is strongly suggested that AI-Anon should be invited to provide at least one member to serve on the HPC.

The Chairperson of the General Service Board (GSB) is an *ex officio* member of the HPC. Local conditions will determine the final structure. Depending on the availability of volunteers and the size of the task, most functional positions may need to be assisted by small committees. For a suggested structure of the HPC, see Appendix No I.

In seeking volunteers to be of service as members of the Host Planning Committee and its sub committees, it is recommended that an application form, similar to that attached as Appendix V of this guideline, to help ensure that suitably qualified members can be placed in available positions.

A job description for each position should also be made available.

CONVENTION CHAIRPERSON

The first function of the HPC is to appoint a Convention Chairperson; it is suggested that the Regional Trustee fill this position. A deputy should also be elected to cover any absence of the Chair. These two officers will establish and maintain close contact throughout the duration of the committee; between them, they coordinate the work of the sub-committees. They should not forget, however, that there is a committee to assist them in this task. Experience has also shown that the majority of policy decisions throughout the planning stages are best made and implemented through the group conscience process, that is, consensus of opinion, but it must always be borne in mind that the Chairperson is responsible to the GSB for all aspects of the Convention.

In the event that the Regional Trustee rotates off the Board prior to the Convention, the Deputy Chairperson will be invaluable to the new Trustee stepping in.

CONVENTION AUDITOR

An early function of the HPC should be to appoint a qualified Public Auditor *who is independent of the Fellowship* and who should be directly responsible to the HPC. All correspondence from the auditor should be directed to the Secretary.

Seed money (see also heading "Fund Raising", below) will not be advanced to National Convention Committees until a letter of appointment from an appropriately qualified auditor has been sighted by the General Service Office Management Group.

It is important to note, as the Convention Audit forms part of the audited accounts of the General Service Board, that the Convention Audit must be completed and in the hands of the General Service Office by the end of July to ensure that the General Service Board accounts are ready for the National Audit.

CONVENTION SECRETARY

The Convention Secretary is required to:

- keep all written records of the HPC;
- distribute notices and minutes of committee meetings to committee members and to the Chairperson of the GSB and the Trustee's Coordination & Review Committee at General Service Office;
- control all inwards and outwards correspondence. All outward correspondence from the Committee should be from the Secretary except in specific circumstances, as required by the Committee or Chairperson. Similarly, all inward correspondence from any source should be directed to the Convention Secretary who will distribute it to the appropriate officer or portfolio for action. (The various sub-committees should be responsible for their own correspondence, but they should direct copies to the Secretary and inform the Committee of their correspondence at the first opportunity).

CONVENTION TREASURER

Experience suggests that the Convention Treasurer be a person of considerable business experience with several years of sobriety; indeed, there is much to be said for the appointment of a professional accountant as Treasurer. Such an expense may be justified by the ease, speed and accuracy with which such a person could provide service and information to the HPC, which often has our well-meaning amateurs struggling. The Treasurer is Chairperson of the Finance Sub-Committee and is responsible for providing up-to-date and accurate financial records to the HPC and the GSB at all times, and ultimately the Convention Auditor. He/she also makes arrangements for a Convention bank accounts, for which there should be at least two signatories. It is suggested that these comprise the Host Committee Chairperson or Treasurer and one of two others.

The Treasurer should remind all concerned that when raising funds for National Conventions, AA cannot accept any monies from outside agencies or persons.

The Treasurer monitors the amounts expended against budgets and provides an up-to-date set of accounts for each committee meeting. He/she is also responsible for ensuring that adequate public risk, accident and money-in-transit insurance is arranged and that the Convention is protected from all liability.

The Treasurer ensures that adequate credit card facilities, cash registers, bank accounts and night safe facilities are available for banking purposes during the Convention.

All Convention proceeds should be forwarded to General Service Office after the final audit of the Convention accounts.

Once the officers have been elected, next comes the formation of the various sub-committees to execute the many tasks essential to bring a Convention into being.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

The Finance Committee (FC), chaired by the Treasurer, is responsible, with the sub-committees, for setting the budgets for each portfolio and for assisting each portfolio to stay within its budget; alternatively, each sub-committee may be required to prepare its own budget, which must be approved by the HPC. The FC will thereafter monitor financial performance with respect to the relevant budgets. The FC is also responsible for setting a realistic Registration Fee, remembering that this is a fee to cover services offered - it is not collected to pay for AA meetings.

Members of the Finance Committee form the nucleus of the finance team at the Convention and are responsible for all on-site money transactions. The FC also ensures that all money collected is accounted for and banked each day in a night safe deposit and that no cash is left on site overnight. During the period of the Convention it keeps a daily cash up-date and daily advises the Chairperson of the financial situation.

It has been found most advantageous to use a laptop computer to store all financial data, including registrations. The computer can be taken to the Registration Desk at the Convention and on-the-spot registrations added to the data; thus all financial information is readily available. It also eliminates a lot of time-wasting hassle when Members forget or mislay their registration documents.

The Finance Committee, with the Treasurer, is responsible to the General Service Board for the on time audit of the Convention accounts and must ensure that the audit is forwarded to the General Service Office Manager before the end of July to ensure compliance with the audit of the General Service Board accounts.

FUND RAISING

The Region that intends to bid for the Convention should realise, prior to making a bid that they are responsible for the funding of the Convention. The underwriting by the GSB should be regarded as an emergency recourse only. All National Conventions involve large sums of money and the Committee needs to have a clear appreciation of what the financial situation is going to be before the Convention opens for business. The Committee needs to take a business-like approach to finance to ensure that expenditure is kept within a conservative estimate of anticipated revenues. Wishful thinking is no substitute for a well-developed plan for fund raising and a sound strategy for carrying out that plan.

A plan often adopted in Australia is the Groups in the Region getting together with the Committee to develop a fund-raising 'barometer' so that they can see clearly what is happening financially on a month-by-month basis. What this means in practical terms is that the Groups, through their GSRs, agree to raise and underwrite the complete costs of the event, under the ægis of the General Service Office and the Board. The Board is responsible for all debts incurred in staging National Conventions including an overall deficit, should there be one.

The Board has resolved that, at its discretion, a refundable amount of \$10,000 seed money be provided to National Convention Committees, which is returned after the accounts are settled after the Convention. A detailed provisional budget must be submitted and approved by the Coordination & Review Committee of the General Service Board before this funding will be released.

Seed money **will not be advanced** to National Convention Committees until a letter of appointment of an appropriately qualified author have been sighted by the Coordination and & Review Committee of the General Service Board.

A thought to be borne in mind: if the fund-raising activities are too vigorous in the opening stages of the Convention campaign, it will inevitably come to pass that as the date of the Convention draws near, enthusiasm for subscribing money will falter. It has been found better to run a campaign that leads up to a climax a few months before the Convention.

Groups and Districts should be careful not to neglect their Groups/Districts/Area/ Local/ Central Service Office and GSO financial donations in order to support Conventions.

COMMUNICATION

It may be deemed unnecessary to form a separate sub-committee to perform this function. For example, decisions regarding what letters/flyers to issue can be made by the HPC and the flyers can then be designed by the Printing sub-committee. Letters can properly be described as part of the Secretary's duties and anyway, the Secretary is responsible for distributing all communications.

The HPC should make every effort to contact all the Groups in the Region individually and acquaint them with details of the forthcoming Convention as soon as possible once the project is under way. All Groups should be sent letters announcing the Convention, enclosing registration forms for early registration. An excellent way of gaining Group support is to actually show the members what they will receive as 'early birds'. It should be possible to set up a Convention website, giving details of the Convention, together with an email link. It is also important that all Groups be aware that the Convention is financed as a special effort on the Groups' part and that it should be kept separate from their normal fund-raising activities. It is hoped that as our Fellowship grows, future Conventions can be financed from an overall

National Convention Fund contributed to by Groups on a regular basis - not achieved as yet, but a commendable goal at which to aim.

No information/promotion concerning International/National Conventions should be distributed outside the host region until the previous Convention commences.

VENUE AND CATERING

Nothing ensures the success of a Convention more than early attention to this portfolio. Whenever a discount or subsidy is partly or in total offered because we are Alcoholic Anonymous, it must be declined.

- **IMPORTANT:** Since GSB underwrites the Convention, the venue **MUST** be approved by the GSB before any contract is agreed.
- **Dining Facilities:** Many members attending will want to stay all day, which means that they will be looking for adequate luncheon or dinner facilities within the Convention complex or close by. An on-site cafeteria is ideal.
- **Coffee:** Non-members find it difficult to deal with the idea that we can consume up to 20,000 cups of coffee at a Convention. Experience indicates that where possible, provision of coffee is placed in the hands of the venue staff (or a caterer) at an agreed price. It is to the benefit of all if AA sells tickets for coffee, which are tendered to the staff at the urns; staff do not then have to handle money and give change and can concentrate on serving only. **[NOTE: The cash tendered for some 3-4000 cups per day cannot be held in a till; as the day proceeds, money will have to be removed from the till to some storage facility.]** It is also important to make sure that the venue (or caterer) is responsible for all supplies of consumables and utensils and for cleaning up.
- **Dinner Dance:** If a Dinner Dance is to be held, a hall capable of accommodating the anticipated number of people will be required, together with facilities for supper preparation and presentation. It must also be borne in mind that “a capacity of 600” generally means that the dance floor will accommodate only 300, it being assumed by hoteliers that only half of those present will want to dance at any one time. Past events have shown that at AA dinner-dances, everybody wants to dance!
- **All in together:** Experience suggests that all facilities should be housed under one roof. It helps people to familiarise themselves with the Convention layout, especially if good directions are provided regarding the locations of the various functions and facilities.
- **Childcare/Childminding:** Each Convention needs to consider this in the light of both State and Federal legislation regarding the question of qualified staff, insurance, public liability and possible alliances with political causes or points of view. Any childminding needs to be contracted out to professionals.
- **Meditation Room:** Many members find a need for a quiet time away from the crowd for personal prayer and meditation. A peaceful candle-lit room is ideal for this purpose.
- **Sharing Corners:** Last, but by no means least important, is having coffee lounges and quiet places available for members to sit and share experience with each other as well as catch up with old friends. Having places available ‘just to talk’ is an important requirement of any venue.

TRANSPORT AND ACCOMMODATION

This sub-committee is responsible for providing as much information as possible on accommodation and transport to and from the site. The local tourist bureau/authority can supply such information, which should be sent to all Local/Central Service Office and the General Service Office for dissemination. Don't assume that all members will require high-priced motels and hotels - make sure that information on caravan parks, hostels and other low-priced accommodation is included. It is also likely that some members may like to offer private accommodation for visiting members and that visiting members may well like to avail themselves of such an offer.

A member of the T&A sub-committee could be tasked with the job of Billeting Coordinator. During the Convention it may be possible to organise a transport pool, with members placing their vehicles at the disposal of the committee to transport out-of-towners and VIPs.

Consideration may be given to hiring a mini-bus to collect visitors from the airport or other terminals, but experience again has shown that visitors like to be picked up by members in their own cars. This not only gives them a feeling of welcome, but also involves a lot of local members in the Convention and after all, it is their Convention.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

This sub-committee has the task of providing as many people as possible inside and outside the Fellowship with as much information as possible while remaining within AA's principle of "attraction rather than promotion". Practical experience suggests the following:

- **Flyers:** Regular flyers and registration forms should be sent to all Groups within the Region and to all Local/Central Service Office interstate for forwarding to their respective Groups. Each flyer should contain the dates and location of the Convention with a mailing address for posting registrations or enquiries.
- **Media Outlets:** A mailing list of all media outlets within the region should be drawn up together with contacts if possible; it should cover press, radio and television. Convention publicity material should be sent to each from time to time and especially as the Convention date approaches. The "Public Information Workbook" gives very helpful advice on approaching the media.
- **Mailing Lists:** A list of names and addresses of all relevant people in State and Local Government, industry, religion, treatment centres and agencies, education, trade unions and employer organisations should be prepared and a standard letter extending a general invitation to the Convention but specifically to the Public Meeting. These should be posted out about six weeks prior to the Convention. Invitations to dignitaries such as Governors, State Premiers, Archbishops and the like need to be sent out some nine months prior to the Convention date. It is also essential to nominate a telephone number for responses.
- **Video Tapes/Radio Spots:** Video tapes for use in community service slots on TV networks are available from General Service Office together with appropriate 30-second radio spots.
- **Live Interviews:** The media may make a request for a member to take part in a live interview on radio or television. It is usually wise to approach individual members to obtain their permission to have the names put forward should this request be made. The PI Workbook can be of invaluable assistance here. Remember that an important role of

Class A Trustees is to provide a public face for AA. This is one area where that role can be put to good use.

- **Advertising:** In line with Tradition 11, if you are using social media groups to provide information on your event, ensure that any pages are set up as secret pages, that anonymity is not compromised and is accessible only by members who have elected to join the group. Members should not be added without their prior permission.

PROGRAMME

This is a complex job that requires dedication, tolerance, appreciation of other people's views and infinite patience with an eye to detail. (Only experienced saints need apply). Careful and imaginative thought well in advance of the Convention date is the key to success in this portfolio. Areas and/or Regions may propose the Convention's planned dates and duration when submitting bids for the National Convention.

Formally Opening and Closing the Convention:

It is traditional and recommended that the Chairman of the General Service Board be invited to formally open and close the National Convention.

Meetings:

It is usual to have a main Public Meeting with a guest or feature speaker (often one of our non-alcoholic Trustees) and a Spiritual Concept Meeting on the Sunday morning if possible. Large open meetings, arranged around various themes, bring a sense of unity to the Convention. Too many separate meetings can be tiresome and as a general rule, three or four theme meetings over a Convention weekend are sufficient. A continuous meeting, say 10am till 11pm, can provide maximum participation for conventioners.

Non-English Speaking Meetings:

Our Conventions are progressively attracting more Members from overseas and from Australia who are not fluent in English. It is recommended that meetings in other languages be provided whenever needed. A Member or Members capable of communicating with these groups could coordinate these meetings.

Deaf, Disabled & Other Special Needs Groups:

It is recommended that the consideration be given to facilitating the comfort, assistance, inclusion and relevant meetings that such Members may need or appreciate, including considering whether signing may be provided at the main events. See GL-18: *"Carrying the Message to the Hearing Impaired Alcoholic"*.

Australian National Conventions commonly include broadly-titled theme and special interest meetings such as *"Old Timers"*, *"Men"*, *"Women"*, *"LGBTQI"*, *"Young People"*, *"Indigenous"*, *"Steps"*, *"Traditions"*, *"Loners"*, *"Relationships"* etc. Some of these meetings may be closed.

Panels and Workshops:

These provide one of the most rewarding activities and can take a variety of forms. A panel arrangement might comprise three speakers and a chairperson, with each person speaking on a number of Steps, Traditions or Concepts for World Service; the panel session can be followed by a short question-and-answer session.

It is strongly recommended that National Conventions incorporate a Service component in their programmes. Those attending National Conventions would gain from the opportunity to

hear of the experience, strength and hope of members who are doing great service in AA and the community.

Experience shows, however, that workshops or panels on such topics as "How the General Service Office Works" or "Why Have a GSR" or "What Does the Secretary Do?" attract only small audiences in a Convention setting. These subjects are better presented at specialised Service events, and in that case can be better handled by using General Service Office staff, utilising their familiarity with AA Australia-wide, while any of our Trustees would be delighted to speak on such topics as "How the General Service Board Works" or similar themes.

An effective way to ensure maximum interest, involvement and participation in a Convention is to give various Groups or Areas the responsibility of running a series of panels, workshops, meetings or discussion sessions. It is of great importance that the Groups or members then work closely with the Programme Co-ordinator to assure a good balance of speakers and participants in the overall planning. Topics and formats should always be the responsibility of the Convention Committee.

Practical hints:

Finally, the Programme Committee may do well to consider the following matters to give balance and flow to the meetings and the Convention overall:

- A copy of the "*Big Book*" should be available for use by chairpersons at all meetings.
- A range of speakers, old and young in both years and sobriety, should be included on the list for the chairperson. There should also be an equitable balance between men and women speakers as well as participation by interstate and overseas visitors and various ethnic groups.
- As far as possible, speakers should be requested to be on hand prior to the commencement of the meeting.
- Meetings should start and finish on time.
- Allow time during the Convention for feedback sessions from the workshops.
- If sightseeing excursions are planned for members, ensure that they do not clash with the principal meetings at the Convention.
- Make sure that the Steps and Traditions banners are in place. ***[Large banners can be hired from the General Service Office]***

Videos:

The videos "*Bill's Own Story*", "*Bill Discusses the Twelve Traditions*", "*Young people*", "*Inside AA Australia*", "*AA – An Inside View*", "*Hope – Alcoholics Anonymous*", "*AA – Rap With Us*" and "*One Day at a Time*" are all AA Conference-Approved and available from General Service Office. There is also a wealth of good material available on the subject of alcoholism that can be helpful in widening our own and our visitors' awareness of alcoholism. Prudence suggests that we use a disclaimer when showing any film which is not Conference-Approved. For an example of a suitable disclaimer see Appendix II. Suitable projection equipment is a necessity.

Guests and Invited Speakers:

Most Conventions have a number of guest speakers. These may be members from interstate or one or more of our Trustees, or they may be others with a special interest or expertise within the field of alcoholism. Programme Co-ordinators have a responsibility when they book special "keynote" speakers to ensure the following:

- **Expenses:** Unless it is otherwise specified, the speakers need to know that their travel, meals and accommodation for the entire trip will be the responsibility of the Convention Committee. If it is intended to accommodate them as guests in private homes they should be informed of this at the outset.
- **Attendance:** They should be made aware that they will be expected to be at the Convention at required times, when rest times will be available to them, and how they will be transported to and from their accommodation. They should also be informed whether or not they will be expected to attend and possibly participate in other meetings. Most speakers will want to know something about the venue, e.g. whether there is a podium, a public address system and the length of time they should speak.
- **Keynote Speakers** should be requested to supply an abstract of their speech or better, a full transcript, at least one week before the Convention, while being assured that this is not an attempt to exercise any form of censorship. It allows copies to be duplicated and sent to the usual press outlets with requests that it not be published until after delivery (embargo). Keynote speakers should be well versed in both the value and the limitations of AA in the community.
- **On line Speakers:** The Convention Committee may consider inviting speakers, particularly from overseas to share via on-line technology. This reduces costs and widens the number of members available to be a key note speaker. It is wise for Convention Committee to carefully access these speakers to ensure they have a good understanding of AA Traditions and their talk aligns to AA singleness of purpose.
- **Anonymity Breaks:** Conventions are usually covered by members of the press and it is customary to begin all meetings and workshops at a convention by asking the press, indeed, everyone's co-operation in protecting members' anonymity. For announcement see Appendix III.

The Host Planning Committee is encouraged, in consultation with our World Service Meeting delegates, to consider inviting an indigenous member from a developing country within the Asia/Oceania zone, to attend our National Convention.

Funding for such an initiative would come from the International Sponsorship Fund, so there would be no financial burden on the Host Planning Committee.

LITERATURE

Previously part of the Programme sub-committee, this portfolio has been shown to work best as a separate entity. On the understanding that some items such as bulletins, magazines etc published by AA bodies cannot all be Conference-Approved, it is recommended that with the exception of these items, National Conventions sell only Conference-Approved literature. Most Areas are served by a Local/Central Service Office, and a simple way to organise literature for smaller events is to order from the local Local/Central Service Office (providing they approve), on a sale or return basis. Some form of discounting policy should be negotiable that is acceptable to both parties. Australian National Conventions normally invite the General Service Office to provide and manage the sales of literature, the HPC providing an estimate of needed supplies in good time to ensure stocks can be ordered if necessary. See note below on "Staff Participation".

Other types of literature needing sales locations at Conventions include World Service and Al-Anon.

As a suggestion a table should be made available, for Flyers advertising upcoming Rallies, Roundups, Tag-A-Longs or AA events. Only material relating to AA events should be displayed.

PRINTING

Communication is the basis of all understanding and nobody needs to keep this in mind more than the sub-committee responsible for this portfolio. One of the first tasks to be considered will be a Convention logo. Once it has been approved by the GSB it can then be used on all letterheads and literature. Some important hints from previous experience:

- Settle on logo artwork as soon as possible.
- Try not to outdo previous Conventions in relation to quality, quantity or range of literature printed. Imaginative local input is the ideal.
- Try and keep the price and quality within the 'medium' price range and avoid ostentation.
- Remember, a Convention poster has limited use and usually can only be displayed at Service Offices.
- The programme should be clear and concise, and don't forget that all copy, design and artwork needs to be submitted to the Trustees' Coordination & Review Committee prior to printing. Nowhere does "keep it simple" seem more appropriate than this portfolio.

HOSPITALITY COORDINATOR

Nothing sets the atmosphere of a convention so much as the warmth of a personal greeting and individual service to visiting Members that can be provided by a hospitality team. Their role is to welcome everyone arriving and give them all necessary information regarding meeting locations and available convention facilities. These 'hosts', through their coordinator, are thoroughly briefed on their roles beforehand and are rostered so that a sufficient number are always present whenever the Convention is operating. It is well to have some distinguishing mark (sash, uniform, blazer) provided for them and all Committee members.

GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE STAFF PARTICIPATION

1. If the Convention Committee wish General Service Office staff to participate in the Convention, a written invitation should be issued to General Service Office as soon as possible.
2. The Committee should provide an adequate sized table for General Service Office to display material, which should be situated in a reasonably prominent position. General Service Office staff should not be expected to find their own location and equipment. A venue floor plan of space available (after allocation of space for registration desks) should be submitted to General Service Office to allow the Office to indicate its preference for the proposed location of General Service Office and International Desk displays.
3. It should not be expected that the General Service Office stand will be manned in the evenings.
4. Should the Committee wish General Service Office staff to speak at meetings or participate in panels, adequate notice of times and topics should be given.
5. Advertising: Should the committee wish flyers/registration forms to be distributed via AAAA, an adequate quantity (approximately 2000) should be despatched to arrive at General Service Office no later than 1st November, to be sent out with the December issue.

LOCAL/CENTRAL SERVICE OFFICE LIAISON

As Local/Central Service Offices are frequently the first and sometimes the only known contact for members enquiring about events within the Fellowship, it is important that all Local/Central Service Office in the Region are kept fully informed on Convention activities. The cooperation of the Local/Central Service Office is essential to the success of any Convention; a Local/Central Service Office Liaison Officer has proved to be an important member of the HPC.

NATIONAL ARCHIVIST

Convention Committees should consider inviting the National Archivist to participate at the National Convention, to be available to provide information about the National Archives.

FILLING COMMITTEE VACANCIES

Practical experience has shown that committee members are sometimes unable to give as much time and effort as their portfolios require. It is suggested that where any such member misses three consecutive committee meetings, someone else is invited to fill that position. This vacancy is usually filled from within that committee. If the previous member is later able to return, so much the better.

NON AFFILIATION

Our independence should be protected at all times. We are not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organisation or institution, we neither endorse nor oppose any causes. Because of this, the HPC should ensure that any religious services held for any group of conventioners should not be conducted or seen to be conducted as part of the Convention programme. A community notice board, where notices may be displayed for those who are interested in such services, may be placed in a prominent location.

AL-ANON LIAISON

Experience has shown that co-operation between AA, Al-Anon and Alateen has greatly enriched the work of these Fellowships and an invitation to participate may be forwarded to Al-Anon via its local Area Office at the outset of planning. Usually two members, one from Al-Anon and one from Alateen, are invited to join the Host Committee and provision is usually made for Al-Anon and Alateen speakers at our main Public Meeting. It should be clearly stated at this meeting that Al-Anon is a separate Fellowship and not affiliated to Alcoholics Anonymous.

In accordance with the principle of non-affiliation, the Convention is run as an AA Convention with Al-Anon participation. Al-Anon is invited to participate by planning its own meetings and programme and the Host Committee organises the facilities for both Fellowships. In accordance with Tradition Seven, it is suggested that AA not make gifts to Al-Anon and vice-

versa. Registration monies should be kept separate and handled only by the respective Fellowships. AI-Anon will then take care of its own expenses from its separate income.

ON-SITE MANAGEMENT

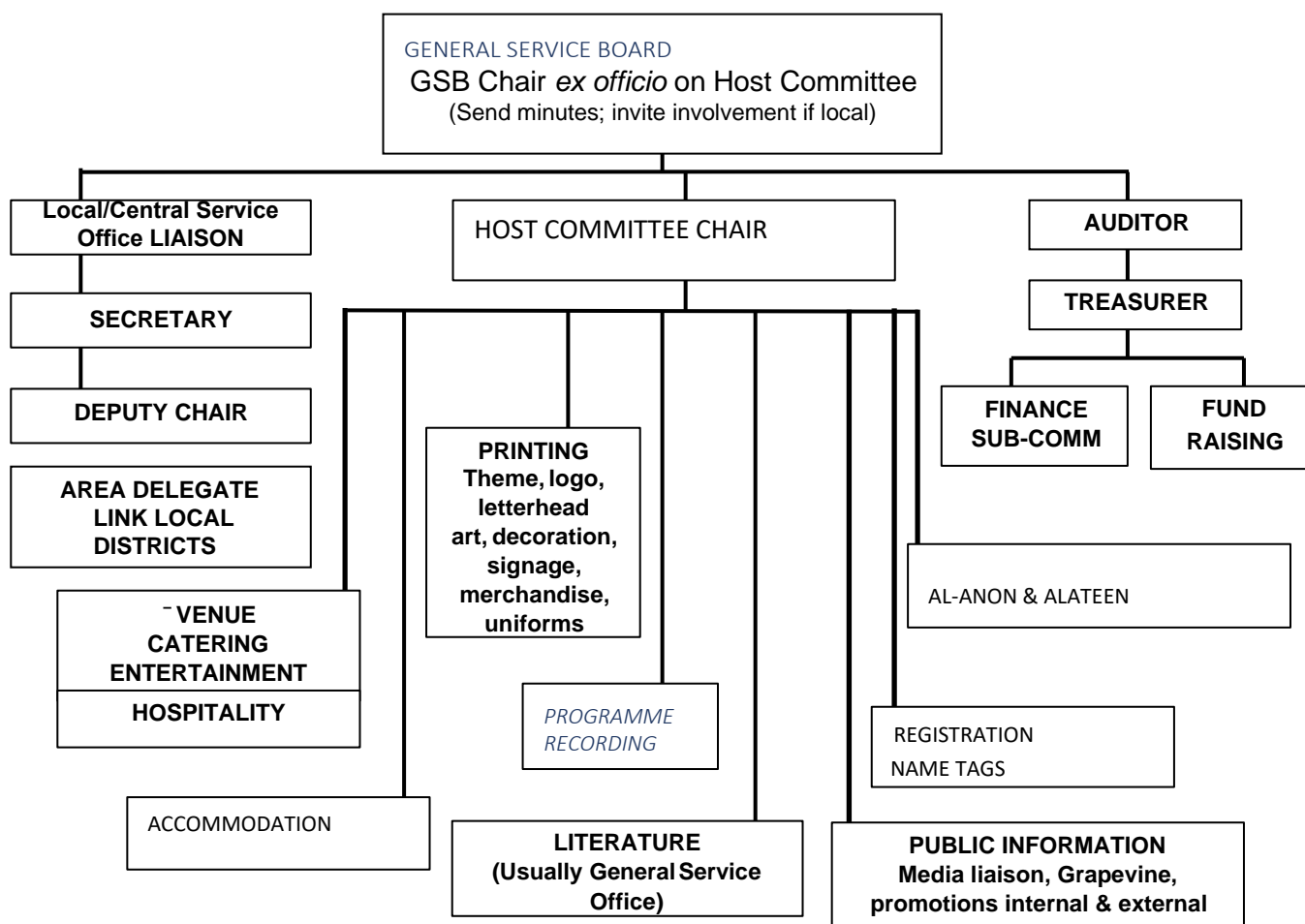
Once a Convention becomes a reality, it has been found that the most practical way of keeping it organised is to form a smaller committee for "on-site management" throughout the Convention. This committee, often comprising the sub-committee Chairpersons, meets early each morning to discuss the previous day and any potential problems looming in the current day. It should have the right to co-opt help when necessary, and to call a meeting of the Committee should the need arise. An alternative is to hold review meetings once or twice during the day, attended by as many members of the HPC as may be available.

WIND UP MEETING

The last and very necessary meeting of the Host Committee should convene as soon as possible after all accounts have been paid and the audit completed, preferably within a month of the Convention. It is imperative that some members of the Convention Host Committee are charged with the responsibility of preparing the final Convention Report which is forwarded to General Service Office with for printing and distribution. It cannot be stressed too highly that the report on a National Convention be given the widest possible dissemination, to the AA membership as a whole, because, as has been stated before, "communication is the basis of all understanding."

APPENDICES

GL-APPENDIX I: SUGGESTED HOST COMMITTEE STRUCTURE



GL-15 APPENDIX II: DISCLAIMER:

(NON AA CONFERENCE-APPROVED FILMS AND VIDEOS):

Some of the items depicted in these films and videos may be, but not necessarily are, contrary to AA philosophy. The showing of them does not mean that AA either endorses or opposes them, just that we have no opinion on them. They are offered solely for your enjoyment and information.

GL-15 APPENDIX III: ANONYMITY:

There may be some here who are not familiar with our tradition of personal anonymity at the media level. Our public relations policy is based on attraction, not promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films. Therefore, we respectfully ask that no AA member be identified directly or indirectly by full name, public position or photograph in published or broadcast reports of this meeting.

GL-15 APPENDIX IV: TAXATION REQUIREMENTS AND REPORTING A GUIDE FOR NATIONAL CONVENTION TREASURERS

In the case of charitable institutions, registration for Goods & Services Tax (GST) is optional if your annual turnover is less than \$150,000. You must be registered to be able to claim back any GST you have paid to suppliers.

For services such as venue hire and related costs GST paid can be a substantial amount, so, historically, most Convention Committees have opted to register for GST. However, if the Convention makes a surplus, which the General Service Board would expect, it is financially better not to register – this is because the Convention will also pay GST on the surplus. Not registering also avoids the administrative workload associated with GST.

To register for GST and claim input tax credits you must apply for an Australian Business Number (ABN). You can do this electronically on website www.abr.gov.au/ or on a paper form available by ringing the Australian Tax Office (ATO) on 1300 130 248.

Once registered for GST, you will need to do the following:

- Show your name, address and ABN on your letterhead. When issuing invoices (including invoices for registrations) for an amount greater than \$50.00 you also need to clearly show that this is a Tax Invoice. An example of a tax invoice is attached.
- Provide suppliers with your ABN.
- Keep Cash Book records of daily receipts and payments - these should include invoice numbers and supplier names for purchases and cheque numbers for payments.
- Keep a good filing system of records in case you have to substantiate a particular transaction. Records can be kept manually or electronically and must be kept for five years after completion of a transaction.
- Submit a Business Activity Statement (BAS). The BAS can be lodged monthly or quarterly - when registering you can elect to make monthly or quarterly lodgements. The Australian Taxation Office will send you this form prior to the required date of lodgement.

When purchasing goods and services you must obtain a tax invoice showing GST paid. Invoices of more than \$50.00 must show your supplier ABN, name and address, otherwise you need to withhold 48.5% from your payment. Any amounts withheld are noted and remitted with the next BAS.

Tax invoices are not required for purchases of less than \$50.00 you can still claim back the GST paid on these purchases, but you must have documentary evidence to support all GST credits claimed.

On the BAS you will need to show

- Total Sales
- Total Purchases
- GST collected on sales
- GST paid on purchases

If the GST on your sales is more than the amount on your purchases a refund of the difference is due to ATO from you.

If the GST on your sales is less than the amount on your purchases a refund will be due to you from the ATO.

Remember - don't close your bank account until you have received your final BAS refund. The ATO will not issue a cheque to another entity so, if you have closed your bank account, you will have to re-open it to receive a refund cheque.

You do not need to charge GST on

- Sales of donated 2nd hand goods or raffles
- If you are selling merchandise at less than 50% of market value or less than 75% of what you paid for them.

If you have decided to register for GST you do need to charge it on Convention registrations. You should calculate your registration fees accordingly and ensure that GST paid is shown clearly on all receipts issued. This is quite simple: GST is calculated as 1/11th of the total price, including GST.

EXAMPLE OF TAX INVOICE

TAX INVOICE

INVOICE NO:

Mr. J. Smith
12 Smith Street
Smithtown, 3000.

NATIONAL CONVENTION

ABN 00 123 456 789
PO BOX 123, SYDNEY. NSW 2000

DATE: 1 August 2004

QTY	DESCRIPTION OF GOODS OR SERVICE	AMOUNT	TOTAL
10	Registration Tickets	\$50	\$500.00
	GST		\$ 50.00
		TOTAL INCLUDING GST	\$550.00

Paid: (details, date, initials)

APPENDIX V

APPLICATION TO BE OF SERVICE TO THE NATIONAL CONVENTION (YEAR) TO BE HELD IN (xxx)

NAME:

ADDRESS:

EMAIL ADDRESS:

TELEPHONE:

YEARS SOBER

OCCUPATION:

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE:

OTHER SKILLS THAT MAY BE OF USEFUL SERVICE:

Please send application to: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Or phone xxxxxx for further information.