

HOW A CONFERENCE TOPIC IS DEVELOPED

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Purpose of this Guideline

This guideline is intended to assist members, groups, and service entities of Alcoholics Anonymous in Australia to submit topics for consideration by the General Service Conference. A topic is a formal proposal intended to benefit AA in Australia as a whole and contributes to the democratic decision-making process that informs Conference Advisory Actions.

What is a Topic?

A topic is a formal motion submitted to the General Service Conference for discussion and possible action. Topics can be submitted by any AA member or service entity, including:

- Individuals
- Groups
- Districts
- Areas
- Other service entities

Topics can be submitted anonymously if preferred.

Formulating a Topic

To maximise the clarity and usefulness of your topic, please consider the following:

- Present a single clear, concise issue, opportunity, or idea.
- Clearly state what you are asking the Conference to do.
- Do not include names of members.
- Consider discussing the topic with your Group, District, or Area before submitting.
- Ensure the issue raised affects the AA Fellowship as a whole, rather than a single District or Area.
- Avoid derogatory or disrespectful content.
- Only one attachment may be included per topic (e.g., image, diagram, leaflet example, map, historical information).

For examples of successful topics, refer to previous years' Conference reports.

Submitting a Topic

Topics can be submitted in one of three ways:

- Email: Send the completed form to gso@aa.org.au
- Post: Mail the completed form to 1/1 Garnet St, Rockdale NSW 2216

- Online: Complete the Online Topic Submission Form (available at www.members.aa.org.au)

While contact information is optional, it is strongly recommended so the General Service Office (GSO) can contact you if clarification is needed. All contact details are kept confidential.

Closing date for submissions:

By 1 May each year

Topics received after this deadline will be held over for consideration at the 2026 General Service Conference.

After Submission: What happens Next?

Review Process

Once received, topics are de-identified and forwarded to the Conference Steering Committee (CSC). The CSC reviews each topic's suitability for Conference using the rationale outlined below. The CSC does not assess the merits of the content, but rather whether the topic is appropriate for Conference consideration.

Rationale for Acceptance or Rejection

R01 Topics accepted as suitable for Conference.

R02 Topics accepted as suitable, subject to minor drafting or textual amendments suggested by the CSC and, where practicable, agreed by the author.

R03 Topics not accepted as suitable, except by consolidation with questions of a similar nature, ensuring that the spirit of the original question is retained (e.g. combining similar Topics into one).

R04 Topics acceptable through referral by previous Conference recommendation (e.g. pieces of work for review from Working Groups).

R05 Topics not accepted because they have been discussed at Conference within the previous two years. Note: Before not accepting under the 'two year rule' any Topic which had a Conference recommendation for Board action, the CSC will confirm with Board members that action was taken, or is planned.

R06 Topics not accepted due to the lack of sufficient background material pertinent to the Topic (e.g. too little information for clarity - maybe returned to the author to request additional information / clarity).

R07 Topic not accepted as it is covered by existing Conference approved literature (e.g. there is already an answer somewhere).

R08 Topic not accepted but referred to the General Service Board or General Service Board Sub-Committee for consideration.

R09 Topic not accepted as Conference upholds the autonomy of Groups and Intergroups and Districts and Areas through the conscience of those they serve (e.g. topics telling people what to do in their own affairs).

R10 Topic not accepted as the CSC considers that the Topic is based on an assertion or proposition which it considers to be false (e.g. incorrect information).

R11 Topic not accepted as it is considered to be contrary to the Traditions. R12 Topics not accepted for reasons other than the above.

R13 Any emerging topics/questions generated during these discussions and considered as suitable for Conference (if not already submitted) may be submitted by the CSC members.

Accepted Topics

Topics deemed suitable are distributed to the Fellowship for group conscience discussion. Group Service Representatives (GSRs) bring the views of their groups to Area Assemblies. Area Delegates attend the General Service Conference informed by the conscience of their Area.

Accepted topics that are adopted by Conference become Advisory Actions and are allocated to the relevant AA service entity for implementation, such as:

- The General Service Board
- The General Service Office staff
- An existing committee or working group
- A newly formed working group

Rejected Topics

If a topic is rejected, and the author is identifiable, a brief explanation will be provided. A record of all rejected topics is provided in conjunction with the Conference Report made available to the Fellowship each year.

Appeals Process

If your topic is rejected, you have the right to appeal. An appeals form is provided in Appendix B of this guideline. Appeals are reviewed by the CSC using the same rationale and process as the original topic.

If an appeal is not upheld, a rationale for the rejection will be provided to the author.

Appendices

Appendix A: Topic Submission Form Appendix B: Topic Appeal Form

Appendix B: Topic Appeal Form

General Service Conference Topic Submission Form

Important information

- A Topic is a **formal motion** submitted by the A.A. Fellowship to Conference intended to benefit A.A. in Australia as a whole.
- Submissions can be made by individuals, groups, districts, areas or other service entities.
- Closing date for submissions is **11:59pm AEST, 1 May** each year. Proposals received after this will be considered for inclusion for Conference the following calendar year.
- [Guideline-28](#) provides more information about topic submissions, approvals, and progression through Conference.
- For examples of successful topic submissions refer to previous [Conference reports](#).

Contact details

Please provide a contact method as the Conference Steering Committee (CSC) may need to follow up regarding this submission.

- Name:
- Email:
- Phone:
- Contact method if anonymous:

Working group participation

Should this topic result in an Advisory Action, indicate if you would like to be part of the working group.

- Yes or No:

What is the title of this submission?

Use a concise phrase, e.g. 'Safety guidelines in the Group Handbook'.

What is this proposal asking Conference to do?

Submit a clear, concise and actionable **formal motion** that Conference can vote YES or NO on.

What issue does this address?

Explain the concern, gap or opportunity this proposal is addressing.

What background information is relevant to this proposal?

Including specific Traditions, Concepts, information from the service literature, and previous advisory actions.

How will this proposal benefit the still suffering alcoholic and/or Fellowship?

What are the intended/expected outcomes?

What are the estimated costs of implementing this proposal?

Please estimate any costs you think may be involved.

At what level of group conscience was this proposal discussed (if any)?

I.e. Group, district, or area? What was the outcome?

Does this submission include an appendix?

Only attach new or specific supporting material, e.g. draft pamphlets, proposed guideline wording, design mock-ups, or content to be approved (banners, animations, etc.).

- Yes or No:

Pre-submission checklist

The topic:

- Addresses a single issue only.
- Is of national relevance to A.A. in Australia (not just a local concern).
- Is something Conference can do (not the responsibility of groups, districts or areas).
- Is concise: avoids excessive background, editorialising, or over-informing.
- Hasn't been discussed at Conference within the previous two years.

How to submit a topic

- **Email:** gso@aa.org.au
- **Post:** 1/1 Garnet St Rockdale, NSW 2216
- Topics can also be submitted using the [online form](#).

Please note that this submission may be subject to minor drafting or textual amendments by the CSC, consolidated with other submissions of a similar nature, and/or referred directly to the General Service Board for actioning.