Does AA in Australia need an inventory of its current Service Structure?

Suggested reading before commencement of Workshop : Traditions One, Two and Four

Guidance text for slides : Points to address in slides:

**Slide 1**

Topic 001/2017 is an initiative of the Australian General Service Conference. The presentation has been created by the Area E Committee to assist members with their understanding of the Topic information distributed to their group secretaries.

**Slide 2**

Reading from the slide.

**Slide 3**

In 2015, an AA member expressed concerns about the benefits our current service structure has for the fellowship, stating that it ‘may not be the best system for the Fellowship of AA in Australia’ and that it threatens unity.

The member completed a Topic Form and submitted it to the home group. The group conscience unanimously agreed to present a perceived problem and a solution as a proposal for a Conference Topic. The Group’s GSR (general service representative) took it to the Area Assembly for discussion with other groups.

It was reviewed favourably by the Area Assembly and was passed through to the Conference where it became Topic 008/2015.

Conference formed a Structure Review Committee to investigate the information contained in the background of the Topic and to formulate a plan on how to conduct an inventory.

The resulting report has been approved by Conference in 2016 for distribution to all members of AA in Australia.

The call to read the material and to vote on the proposed 4 options became Topic 001/2017.

The handouts have been distributed to groups in Area E, and some copies are still available here (there are spare copies for members, which can be pointed out during the presentation of this and the next slide).

In July / early August, it is suggested each group hold a group conscience, discuss the proposal, vote and, should they wish to, bring the results of their group conscience to an Area Assembly which will take place on the weekend of 12-13 August.

Then Area E Delegate, John B., will advise the Conference in November this year about the vote from our area.

The decision reached by the Conference will be passed on by Area Delegates to the groups by their GSRs.

This slide demonstrates how the General Service Structure arm of service works and how it is serving the Fellowship as a whole.

**Slides 4, 5, 6, 7**

Reading from the slides

**Slide 8**

Progressively since the first AA group established in Australia in 1945, groups held regular meetings until 1970. AA in Australia had been evolving organically.

The groups met as Intergroups to discuss local needs.

By 1968 there were State Service Councils in all states running 12th Step service offices.

State Service Councils were formed by delegates from geographical zones within a state.

Delegates from the State Service Councils met yearly at the Australian Conference. The decisions from Conference were implemented through the State Service Councils.

Red arrow; demonstrates the structure essential for the flow of the group conscience, for the Fellowship to live by the Twelve Traditions.

Green arrow; represents flow of 12th Step action.

**Slide 9**

Reading from the slide

**Slide 10**

The Australian General Service Structure adopted the North American Conference Charter. This meant change as the North American General Service Structure was superimposed onto the existing Australian structure.

* It involved separation of service into two separate service arms.
* The Introduction of Districts and Areas in place of Intergroups.
* Not recognising State Service Councils, just State Central Service Offices, with a right to vote at Conference.
* Introduction of the General Service Office and General Service Board (subsequently incorporated in 1979) for implementation of Conference's decisions with member representatives of these two structures having a right to vote.

**Slide 11**

Black arrows point to vulnerable areas:

1. Two top arrows: Illustrates the complexity of the structure and this might affect members’ enthusiasm and participation in either of the service arms.

2. Satisfactory cooperation and communication may be lacking between Area Committees and Central Service Offices. There is an overlapping in roles; for example, in the Public Information sector.

3. At the level of Conference: to represent the Fellowship; Area Delegates should ideally constitute more than two-thirds of the voting members. This is unlikely to take place because of the limited number of Areas in Australia, with some being inactive.

4. The NSW and Victoria State Service Councils remain in existence. The NSW State Service Council ran a service office in Croydon until last year when the building was sold, the Victorian State Service Council still runs a service office in Richmond.  Both councils have support from a number of loyal groups and members. This situation challenges unity within the Fellowship.

**Slide 12**

This slide provides example of the functions of the two service arms.

Reading from the slide

**Slide 13**

Statistics from the document:

- number of active Areas in Australia, 18 out of 21, does not provide a two-thirds majority of voting delegates at Conference

- approx. 15% of all groups support the current general service structure

Additionally, at the central service level within Area E:

- there are not enough volunteers to occupy all the daily shifts at the central service office in St Ives or to fill service positions e.g. the office still does not have a manager

**Slide 14**

Scenario 2 focuses on providing a clear definition of roles through the writing of a service manual for our local structure based on the Twelve Concepts.

Reading from the slide.

**Slide 15**

Reading from the slide

**Slide 16**

This slide includes a recently identified problem point with the identification of two Independent Intergroups.

Pointing at the extended green arrow, Scenario 3 shows the proposed flow of votes from representatives of central service offices.

This scenario would address voting imbalance at Conference, but it would not contribute to the simplification of the structure.

**Slide 17**

Reading from the slide

**Slide 18**

Scenario 4 is about one stream of service and simplification of structure.

If representatives from the NSW and Victorian State Service Councils and Independent Intergroups decided to participate in the process of Inventory, and potentially in restructure, we could hope for moving towards greater unity within the Fellowship.

**Slides 19, 20, 21**

Reading from the slide