



THE GENERAL SERVICE BOARD OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS AUSTRALIA

A.C.N:001 417 125

ABN: 77 001 417 125

POSTAL ADDRESS: 48 Firth Street, Arncliffe, NSW 2205

TELEPHONE: (02) 9599 8866 FACSIMILE: (02) 9599 8844

e-mail gso@aa.org.au

Web Site address: www.aa.org.au

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IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO ALL MEMBERS

FURTHER UPDATE AND CLARIFICATION RE CORONAVIRUS IMPLICATIONS FOR AA AUSTRALIA

Thank you to all the Groups that have closed their venues and have moved on-line. Our AA community is able, through all the fantastic technology, to stay connected and continue to carry the message to alcoholics that still suffer. Many Areas and CSO are setting up on-line platform accounts for Groups to use and the unity displayed is indeed a wonderful example of our First Tradition.

However, some groups are using a statement contained on the Department of Health website to justify keeping Groups open or even reopening Groups that had previously been closed.

This statement says

"Domestic and family violence and drug and alcohol support groups are able to continue as they are part of the health portfolio and considered essential"

<https://www.health.gov.au/news/australian-health-protection-principal-committee-ahppc-advice-to-national-cabinet-about-social-distancing-0>

It is clear that Alcoholics Anonymous is not part of any Commonwealth or State or Territory health portfolio and are therefore not considered essential by them. The support groups referred to are those meeting in Government subsidised areas and organised treatment facilities where records are kept of attendees.

AA does not keep records of attendance and our members are anonymous. Therefore to trace attendees at meetings, in event that a member who subsequently tests positive to Covid 19 after attendance, would be impossible. Those people in contact with that member and hence Covid 19 would be greatly at risk and also at risk of unknowingly passing it to others.

In addition we have all been advised to stay home. It is irresponsible to continue to offer meetings and put others at risk. It is our responsibility to protect our AA members, our families and our wider community, especially vulnerable people and many of our members are in that category.

Groups and members who continue to ignore the guidelines may be contravening Tradition Four as this is an action that affects AA as a whole.

Tradition Four states:

'With respect to its own affairs, each A.A. group should be responsible to no other authority than its own conscience. But when its plans concern the welfare of neighboring groups also, those groups ought to be consulted. And no group, regional committee, or individual should ever take any action that might greatly affect A.A. as a whole without conferring with the trustees of the General Service Board. On such issues our common welfare is paramount.'

So please, we urge you to close your meetings, connect via the great technology available to us and support and care for all of us in the spirit of our "Common Welfare"

Yours in Service

The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous Australia