



ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS AUSTRALIA
CENTRAL SERVICE OFFICE SHARING SESSION
Central Service Office, 214/38 Gawler Place ADELAIDE

Saturday 7th February 2026

MINUTES

**This we owe to A. A's future: to keep our Fellowship united.
For on AA unity, depends our lives and the lives of those to come.**

1. Open meeting 10:00am

- **Attendance** – Sarah R (Adelaide) (left 10:30am), Sarah M (Paramatta), Natalie (Paramatta), Christiane (NSCSO), Don (Paramatta), Kylie (Cairns), John H (Area G), Jessica C (Richmond), Lena (Richmond), Brooke W (BMWS), Jenny Mc (Northern Sydney) (arrived 10:30), Mary H (Service Structure Working Group) (left 11:27), Bill S (ChatNow Chair), Anne (2026 Services Forum Canberra), Susan H (Area C Eastern Region Alt Delegate, with Delegate) (left 10:45), Teresa (Brisbane), Jane (Brisbane), Tiani (GSO), Ric (Brisbane), Danielle (Brisbane), Adnan (Richmond)
- **Apologies** – John O'Leary, Garry Scott (Eastern Region Trustee), Peter & Haylee (Gosford), Jackie M (NE QLD), Ro (Illawarra & South Coast)

2. Audio Recording of Meeting (Vote Required)

Permission to share the audio recording after meeting with other CSOs - terms/scope TBD.
Discussion: Are the minutes enough? Some people don't want to have the recording shared.
Transcripts only, audio only, video too?

Meeting is being recorded so we can take thorough, accurate minutes using the recording.
If there's one person uncomfortable having the recording shared, it shouldn't be shared.
The recording is only being distributed to the CSOs and we are trusted servants so there shouldn't be any issues.

Motion: To distribute the voice recording to CSOs (Sarah M) Seconded: Anne L

Vote: For: II Against: IIIII Motion not passed.

3. AA Guidelines Review - Garry Scott (Eastern Region Trustee) - Local Central Service Offices *Guideline 12* – Mary H read report

Guidelines and Service Manual Rewrite ongoing.

Guidelines now considered a working document, separate from the service manual.

Updates will now come through National Coordinators and go through Trustee committees.

Will still require 2/3 agreement.

CSO Guidelines will be updated later in the year.

That section will be brought to this sharing session when the first draft is ready.

Mary unable to answer questions – she is not part of the working group, only reading Gary's report.

Comments: CSOs have not been approached for any comments/consultation.

Response: Please direct all inquiries/questions to Garry via email.

4. Current Structure Working Group Committee – Mary H (Working Group)

Assessed appetite for the unification of the service structure through survey.

907 responses

Yes 549, No 353, Non-response 47

308 responses had not had a service position

Top themes:



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- Resource and service delivery
 - Service duplication
 - Need for better coordination and access
 - Volunteer shortages
- Confusion about current structure and called for clearer communication and education
- Efficiency and streamlining support for reducing duplication, simplifying processes and improving cost effectiveness
- Concerns about preserving group autonomy, adherence to AA traditions and avoiding centralisation
- Fears of disunity, loss of local representation and potential negative impacts on service delivery

That report was taken to Conference in 2025. Conference voted, sense of the room taken, and decided to undertake next steps as presented in working group report. Investigate the *mechanisms*. Unanimous support for investigating the mechanisms at conference.

Working group has moved to this stage, open to feedback from fellowship on next steps. Would appreciate if these responses were documented. Please provide reasonings. Chair of working group (John) has created a letter to go out to CSOs.
Letter attached to Minutes.

Comments: Many CSOs have not received this letter.

Response: Contacts were taken from aa.org.au CSO list.

PLEASE CHECK YOU ARE CORRECTLY LISTED THERE.

5. 1800 Number Update – Tiani R

Idea went to conference and Conference approved for us to look at new technology. Moving away from manually diverting phones - to a rostered system on a mobile phone app. Ensure we have coverage across country, not losing calls by voicemail/no answer. Decision made at Conference in November – Tiani wants to work closely with CSOs re; implementation plan.

Tiani has shared and will share report again with CSOs. Each CSO will have a chance to review, take to committee, opportunity to brainstorm, consider pitfalls, any issues with implementations. Happy to answer any questions or concerns.

This will apply only to the 1300 222 222 number.

Geolocating within region/state, rather than as specifically as before.

Many CSOs have their own numbers. That number is yours, up to each CSO to decide what happens there. The 1300 number will be app-based.

GSO hasn't chosen an app yet. Would be piloting something at 1 CSO first probably. Roster coordinators for each CSO would be responsible for maintaining the roster. Would still be maintained by the CSOs but with GSO support (overarching). Developing standardised induction tools and processes. Also looking to have collatable info to make referrals etc.

Can generate heatmaps of calls, so can roster according to heatmaps and adjust as needed. Also account for data privacy issues – volunteers wouldn't see incoming numbers, and callers wouldn't see volunteer numbers for call back.

Considering using ConnectTeam software for scheduling like ChatNow.



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Q: How will the app work with the landline?

A: In all likelihood it won't work with a landline. One provider has a hybrid service that works with a landline, but what happens if no one answers? Less preferred option.

Q: Is there any idea for timing?

A: Ideally it would be piloted before next conference, probably wouldn't be fully rolled out before then.

Please discuss with your committee if you are on board, interested in pilot program, not interested at all, etc.

6. Chat Now Response Service – Bill S

ChatNow is now quite a mature service! Started in November 2023.

So far 62,000 chats taken. 19,000 newcomers. 75% from Australia.

Averaging 70-80 chats per day. Roughly 20-23 from newcomers.

Steering committee, and responder committee. Meet every 6 weeks.

28 current responders from around Australia. 10am – 10pm. 6 2-hour shifts per day. Each responder has 2-year service commitment of 2 x 2-hr shifts per week.

Positions: rostering, secretary, chair, training, live chat coordinator.

Have had challenges with recruiting. Most of initial committee have rotated off.

Training offered on app and chat is significant and takes a while. For every 10 people that put up their hand, training is completed for 3-4, and only 1 or 2 are actually onboarded as a responder.

Currently using LiveChat service. Contract up for renewal in March. Looking at alternative platforms, doing some testing, etc. New platform is significantly cheaper.

ConnectTeam app used for rostering. Very user friendly.

Feedback about calls, mentoring, availability, training, communication available in app.

Highly recommend that platform for telephone system.

Comment: Discount rates available for software as we are ACNC registered. Current service we are looking at is free.

Q: Where do you recruit volunteers from?

A: AA Around Australia, flyers in newsletters, etc. Mostly word of mouth. Flyer attached to minutes.

Q: How can the CSOs help you?

A: Having flyers up on websites, in brochures, etc would help. Make sure your meeting listings are updated. Bill's phone number + email: 0412400020 chatnowchair@aa.org.au

Q: Any plans to expand the hours?

A: Not at the moment, with challenges already present. Roster is already difficult to maintain. 10-10 is the best coverage based on the heat map. Chat started to charge for a ticketing system for call backs or replies from next available, but may re-look at that system. 10am-12pm shift hardest to get filled. Open shifts viewable in app.



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Comment: Website committee investigated overseas visitors to site and found that they are specifically looking up Australia due to time difference. May be useful for Chat responders to know this.

A: Responders can see if someone is coming in from another country, which is useful.

7. Non-Conference Approved Literature – Discussion (Led by John H)

1972: It be suggested that when a local A.A. facility (central office, intergroup, group, etc.) sells non-Conference-approved literature, it be clearly designated as such.

1977: It was suggested that A.A. *groups* be discouraged from selling literature not distributed by the General Service Office and the Grapevine.

In 1978 the AA General Service Office described what “Conference Approved” means in their Box 4-5-9 newsletter (Volume 23, No 4). Here the General Service Office said: It (Conference Approved) does not mean the Conference disapproves of any other publications. Many local A.A. central offices publish their own meeting lists. A.A. as a whole does not oppose these, any more than A.A. disapproves of the Bible or any other publications from any source that A.A.’s find useful.

The term has no relation to material not published by G.S.O. It does not imply Conference disapproval of other material about A.A. A great deal of literature helpful to alcoholics is published by others, and A.A. does not try to tell any individual member what he or she may or may not read.

Every CSO is autonomous, we just want to know, what is everyone doing?
Is there a happy medium? What do other offices do?

Paramatta sells non-C.A. lit. Refer to 4th tradition – not disapproved by Conference. Noted that conference-approved literature is always more affordable.

NSCSO is not selling NCA but will stock medallions, cards, 12 promises banners. Only things in high demand.

Richmond sells all recovery-orientated literature. Brings income, which we need to pass the message (and pay the bills). aa.org website discusses this matter – USGSO doesn’t have issues with CSOs selling NCA literature for the same reasons.

Brisbane sells chips and Slogans banner from AIAAnon. NCA literature members can source themselves, otherwise gets too expensive. Storage space too limited for stocking NCA.

Cairns sells only conference-approved AND chips. Aka only things sold from GSO.

BMWS used to sell until Hazelden got onto amazon and now no longer financially viable.

The purchasing, on-selling, etc was taking time away from the key functions of the CSO.

Guidelines around CA and NCA only apply at National Conventions. Doesn’t apply to CSOs. Conference resolution that GSO cannot sell NCA, but they direct to the closest CSO, because they know that we do.

Technically, Grapevine books are not conference approved, but the GSO has taken them to be assumed conference approved. Only exception to the rule.

Every committee can make their own decision about it. Conference has no opinion on it.



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8. Reports - Around the room

- **Area G/Sydney City CSO** – John H –
Starting in 2017, the idea was put forward that the area and the office could amalgamate to share ideas and funding. 2 year trial period undertaken to integrate the office into the area. Financially viable. 18-20 volunteers – 4 per day – 2 per shift. 10-12:30 + 12:30-3. 10-2 shift on Saturdays. GSR still remains in place. Area G encompasses about 90 groups. Allows the office to focus on 12 step work – answer phone, sell literature, opportunities for service. Clearing house for service opportunities. Brought in a freshness and singleness of purpose to refresh CSO work. Trial period is over and going from strength to strength. Any questions about integrating a CSO into Area please do not hesitate to call me. John H Area G AA Office.
- **Brisbane** – Teresa and Jane –
Great pool of volunteers with roster. Financially good position, but declining. Thank you to Pat from GSO for surviving being snowed under with orders. Brisbane was too upon reopening.
- **Richmond** – Adnan, Jessica, Lena –
Overhaul of the website last year. Committee also agreed to create a mobile app. App reflects website. Overflow of calls from national number. App in development. Reach out to Adnan for more info.
- **Cairns** – Kylie –
14 meeting in the office each week. Burden for volunteers for cleaning. Show of hands, no one pays for cleaners in the office.
- **Northern Sydney** – Jenny -
Area E and NSCSO have setup a committee to evaluate merging and that committee meets fortnightly and is making progress. All positions are filled except one trustee. 24/7 helpline comprehensively. M-F 9-5 hard to find reliable volunteers. Phones get diverted to committee members but means that office is not always open. Finances are fine. Area E has come with proposals to how to help groups in the area. Willing to be part of trial for 1300 number. Hard to keep volunteers inspired when only receiving a couple of calls. John H happy to come along and share his experience.
- **Blue Mountains/Western Sydney** – Brooke –
Wednesday committee meeting called, with 12 groups present, motion to close the office and unify the current resources into the other offices in the area. BMWS will continue to report back to area and GSO about closing the physical office.
- **Canberra** – Anne –
Sufficient funds to help fund the combined services forum. Hoping that other groups are receiving emails on the committee's behalf. Hoping to get tickets on sale by end of the month.
[AA National Combined Service 2026 Forum on 2-4 October 2026](http://aa.nationalcombinedservice2026.org.au)
aancsf2026.org.au coord@aancsf2026.org.au 0409 453 799
- **Paramatta** – Sarah M, Don –
All positions filled, volunteers ebb and flow. Last volunteer returned to uni, so no regular volunteers. Finances are stable. Will be supporting BMWS with coordinating the phone roster.

9. Next Committee Meeting –

Next meeting 10am AEST (Sydney time), Saturday 9th May 2026.

***Note - Postponed 1 week due to National Convention*.**

10. Meeting Closed with Serenity Prayer at 12:03pm.