

## Submission : Investigating the Mechanisms towards a “United” Structure

The focus of this submission request is:

*“What practical mechanisms would support the unification of the two service structures?” We are not revisiting whether unification should occur but rather seeking Fellowship input on how it might be structured or implemented, should it proceed.*

To :John O Chair — Advisory Action #015/2024 Working Group

Date: By 2<sup>nd</sup> April

At: [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeqG7mxi8\\_3BuO3QCa1eQLiOSca0EjC2nuGRnGSTp7LSExdw/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeqG7mxi8_3BuO3QCa1eQLiOSca0EjC2nuGRnGSTp7LSExdw/viewform)

**FROM: The Management Committee of the Illawarra & South Coast Central Service Office Inc.**

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### SUMMARY : Service Structure Streamlining Proposal

This is a proposal to streamline the AA organization's service structure by merging the general service arm and local central service arm into one unified system, allowing service offices to function, as offices of a district, area, region (or some combination of these.)

The proposal aims to streamline functions and strengthen unity in the fellowship, by creating a more simplified and unified approach to service across Australia, while giving individual service offices flexibility in how and when to implement changes.

The feedback from the CSO National Quarterly Sharing sessions indicates that the CSOs present would welcome a much closer relationship with the General Service Arm

However, whilst the Service Representative from Area G gave extremely positive feedback about Area G's amalgamation with its Area, it is known that such a step would not be welcome by every CSOs in the immediate future.

Therefore, this proposal suggests a gradual transition approach rather than immediate amalgamation, giving a formal two-way communication channel between Areas and Service Offices. Given the importance of CSO roles in day-to-day contact with the public and AA members, this proposal recommends one vote per Service Office at Area Committee level, dependent on its situation.

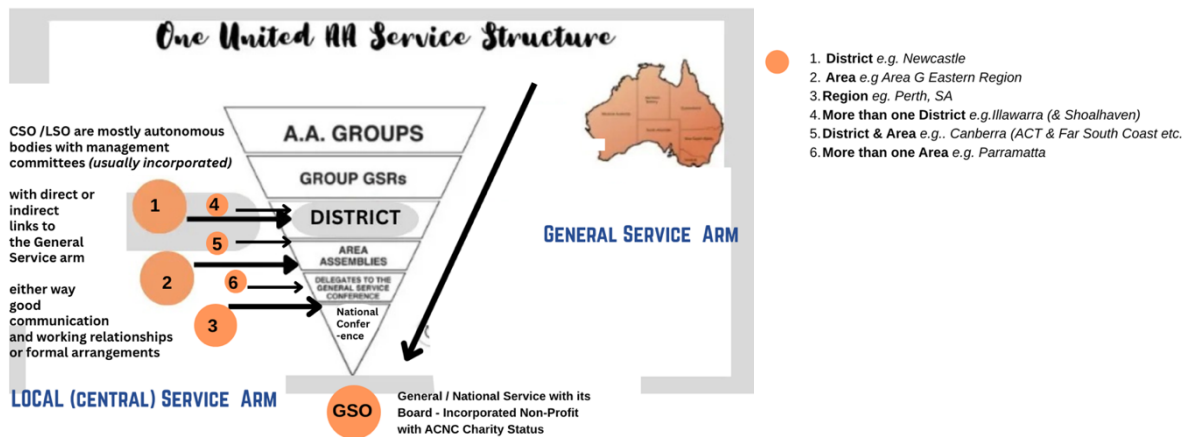
### The Illawarra & CSCSO Inc notes that

1. The current Australian Service Structure has two arms of service:



2. However, Australian AA appears to have local central service offices operating as
  - a. District offices (e.g. Central Coast, Newcastle) or
  - b. Area offices (e.g. Area E and Area G Eastern Region, NT?) or
  - c. Regional Offices (e.g. Perth and Adelaide)
  - d. and maybe some combination of the above

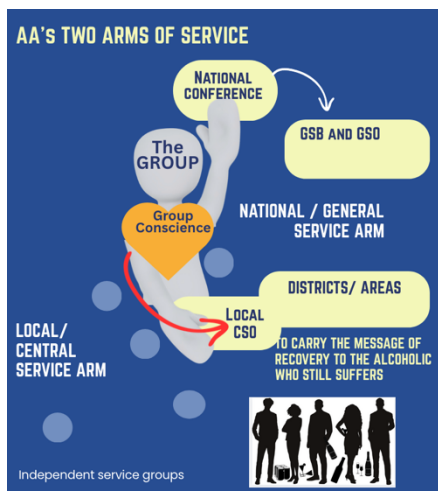
along with a Service Office nationally in the form of the GSO.



2. All these offices have many common needs, areas of overlap, and a huge amount of duplication of services, so streamlining makes sense.
3. Also, most groups are not big enough to fulfil basic group positions such as Secretary, Treasurer, Chair, Literature Person, Refreshments for the meeting to be supported and struggle to find 4 extra positions for a CSR and Alternate CSR as well as an GSR and Alternate GSR. Also having group consciences long enough for report back and discussion of issues raise is extremely difficult in our area, and we suspect elsewhere as well.

**Therefore, the Illawarra CSCSO Inc:**

1. supports a more “united” structure, though not necessarily “amalgamated” (e.g. Area G Eastern Region), in the form of one arm of service



**Note:**

The issue seems to be whether the local CSO hand joins to/ or into the General service arm at

- the “hand” level i.e. District, or
- the “forearm” level i.e. Area, or
- The “elbow” level i.e. Region, or
- some combination of the above

to create one arm of service;

and whether in the long run, that only a few or one physical service office is needed to serve Australian AA groups.

2. envisions a time when the groups will be serviced by a national distribution system of print and other non-digital products directly to groups (less duplication, handling, storage costs etc.)

3. recommends a “flexible” model that allows the current L/CSOs the ability to transition into the single arm model along common principles (*e.g. communication channels, voting rights etc* ) with Districts or Areas having their own constitutions and ABNs as un-incorporated associations, or incorporated as required by their specific needs.
4. recommends steam-lining the CSR and GSR and Alternate positions to simply to a “Group” Service Rep (GSR) and an Alternate GSR, where either could choose which service office body to interact with on behalf of the group i.e. GSR could do Area and/or District work and the Alt. GSR the Service Office work.
5. recommends that CSO/ SO functions be defined **as day-to-day contact with the public and aa groups/ members** via answering phone/ email/ website /literature etc. functions
6. recommends that, as the CSO functions and the District functions **substantially overlap**, where there is no need for a physical (local) central office function, the District or Area, dependent on the specific needs of the geographic location etc, performs those SO functions, such that
  - a. a “Service Office” (SO) Coordinator / Liaison position on the Area Committee represents the SO service day-to-day contact with the public and aa groups/ members (*e.g. answering phone/ email/ website /literature*) functions
    - i. has equal voting rights with the PIPA, T&A (H&I), Corrections Coordinator etc.
    - ii. is the formal communication channel between the two service bodies
  - b. the financial needs of those SO day-to-day contact functions are accommodated into that Area bank accounts and financial management
  - c. the Area considers Insurance, safety and other issues that could require Incorporation to protect the Area Committee from personal liability when volunteers are acting on the Area Committee’s behalf
7. recommends that **where there is or becomes a need for a physical service office:**
  - a. the service functions of SO day-to-day contact with the public and aa members/ groups and the district or area (*depends on the geographic needs*) be arranged so the SO operates as a District or Area (with the SO function) **through** the General Service arm **or as part of** the Area Committee
  - b. there is a SO Coordinator / Liaison position on the Area Committee that represents the SO committee
    - i. with equal voting rights with the PIPA, T&A(H&I), Corrections Coordinators etc.
    - ii. as the formal communication channel between the two service bodies
    - iii. the District/ Area committee considers Insurance, safety and other issues that could require Incorporation to protect the Area Committee from personal liability when volunteers are acting on the Area Committee’s behalf and thereby may need Incorporation

**NOTE:**

  - iv. Again, dependent on the specific needs of the geographic location, there are a couple of offices that operate in effect as a “regional” office.
  - v. Because the “Region” has input onto the Board in the form of Regional Trustees (and as such have “regional votes”), that type of SO would need to be connect to the **most appropriate Area in its region – either permanently or rotate its**

connection around its Region's Area. This could perhaps be in line with the term of rotation of the Area Delegate – or some other specified length of time that is long enough for stability (e.g. two or three terms of an Area Delegate) but not so long as to become stagnant.

- vi. There also maybe be the case where an office may service two or more Areas, and then the same principle would apply – **one vote in one Area, even if that means a rotation of connection** to the Areas it services and perhaps an alternate Service office Coordinator with no vote, as an extra communication channel to the other areas it services.
8. recommends that a **National Committee/Coordinator – preferably both – be established** to coordinate and support the Service Office functions (i.e. day-to-day contact with the public and aa groups/ members *such as answering phone including 1300 number/ email/ website /chat/ literature etc.*) to assist **with minimising duplication and using recommended digital software and products so costs can be minimised and training packages developed and maximised** to assist volunteers performing these service office functions.
9. recommends that AA Australia remove the use of the term “Central” together because it implies “central” “government” rather than “located centrally”, and
10. recommends that, given our Australian service offices in reality support districts or more than one district, areas or more than one area, or regions, it may be best to simply **refer to them as service offices** with whatever prefix by location or name that makes the most sense to the public and the AA members/ groups that support them by their voluntary financial and volunteer contributions.

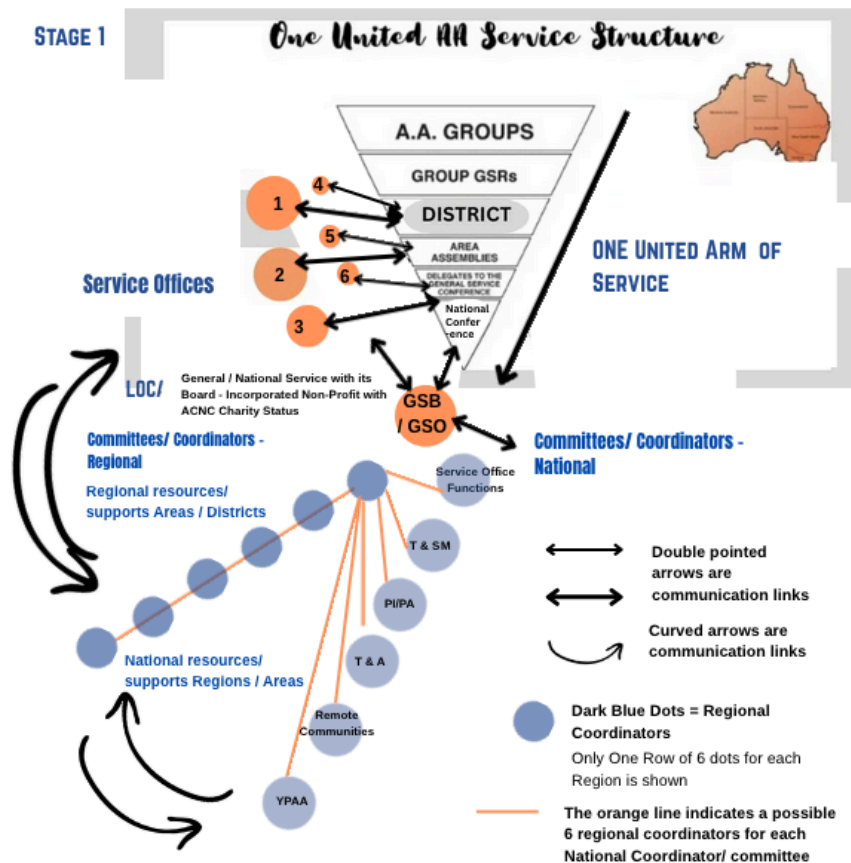
As it is not easy to encapsulate these recommendations in few pages, and because there may be aspects not clearly articulated, our Committee would recommend you speak with our Treasurer and Public Office Ro G who drafted this submission.

Ro G has been considering these issues for a long time having had a lot of service experience in central office functions in 3 geographic area as well as two and half years volunteering at a national level. Ro G can be contacted on 0419 498 768 or via our Committee email [aawollongong@gmail.com](mailto:aawollongong@gmail.com).

Yours in service  
Rhia B

Secretary  
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## Appendix 1



The Beginning Phase might look like this:

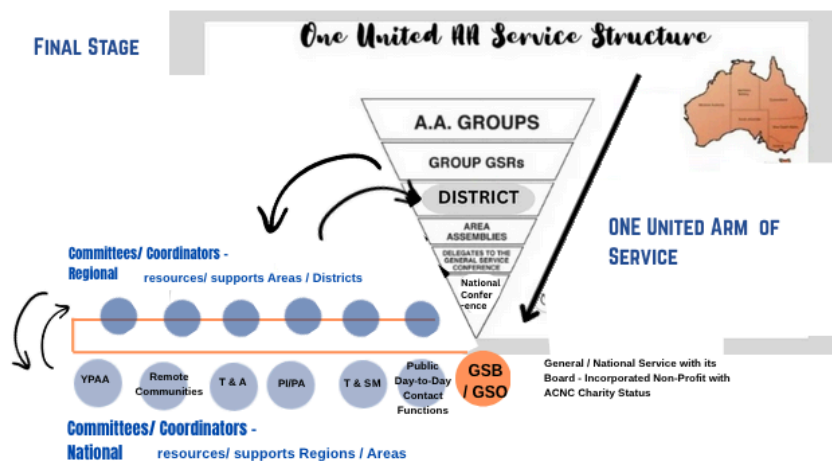
The Groups still at the top of the organisational structure. The Service Offices (orange dots) connect into the ONE Arm via a formal two-way communication channel with each having only one vote at Area Level

The light blue dots represent the National Service Committees/ Coordinators established by Conference and supported (not directed) by the GSO

The dark blue dots the Regional Coordinators who form part of the National Committees and support the districts and areas within their regions

AND It may be longer term, that the National Committees are made up of seven + Area Coordinators (there are 21 Areas) on a rotation basis rather than having one AA member try to service the whole Region - as the work load is unfair e.g. Northern Territory has only one Area where NSW has nine Areas See Appendix Three

**Appendix 2 Final Stage then could look like this:**



## Appendix 3

Currently AA Australia is divided into 6 Regions:

- Western Region - WA
- Northern Region - NT
- Central Region - SA
- Southern Region - VIC /TAS
- Eastern Region - NSW /ACT
- North-Eastern Region - QLD

All regions, except NT, are further divided into Areas, denoted by letter of the alphabet.

- Western Region (WA) and Central Region (SA) have 2 (A and B)
- North-Eastern Region - QLD has 3 (A, B and C)
- Southern Region - VIC /TAS has 4 (A to D)
- Eastern Region - NSW /ACT has 9 (A to I)
- Some Areas are further divided into Districts.