

Two Arms of Service – Current Service Structure

📅 September 30, 2025 👤 Members Coordinator (Administrator -non-tech)

There are three ways service is provided in Alcoholics Anonymous in Australia:

- The Central Service Structure for LOCAL 12th Step work
- The General Service Structure for NATIONAL 12th Step work
- Independent Service groups

The two main structures are described as The TWO Arms of Service

It is suggested that to be fully self-supporting, each group needs to have two service arms::

One reaching out to the local community where the group is centred via a **Centrally (Located) Service Office – CSO**, – **servicing its local groups** and

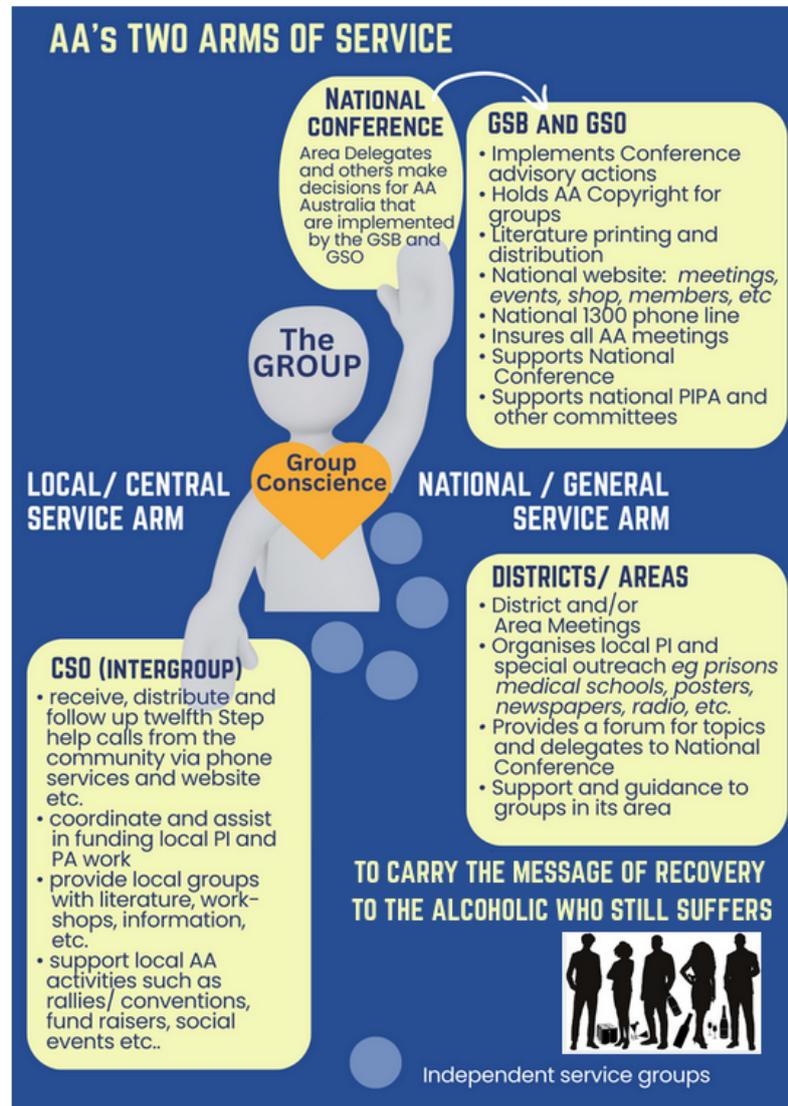
The other reaching up through a local District/ Area and through to the **National Conference of AA** which in turn directs the national **General Service Board** and staff of the **General Service Office (GSO)** servicing all AA groups in **Australia**

This can be visualised as – see opposite:

Note: There are some inconsistencies in the terminology for these local service bodies. For example, sometimes Central Service Offices are called Intergroup Offices or District/ Area Offices.

Independent service groups

From time to time, AA members join together for a specific purpose either for other AA members such as workshops, recovery weekends or for community outreach such as talks to doctors, putting up posters in community libraries and so on. Provided the only requirement to be a member of such a group is to be an AA member, and the group is not affiliated with any other organisation or body, the meetings (not events) of such groups would be covered by the AA Australia Public Liability Insurance.



Usually it is suggested that such groups operate under the auspices of a Central Service Office/ Intergroup or District/Area/Region so that the group's operations are transparent, open to AA wisdom of others working in AA's more defined service structures and especially if sales of products or events are involved, able to financially transparent and accountable by using the banking facilities of these usually incorporated non-profit service structures

If only donations are collected, then such groups are operating autonomously in the same ways as AA meetings and/or groups.

What was the Suggested Group Contribution Plan (known as the 60:30:10)?

After contributions cover each group's rent and other expenses, it was suggested that each group decide what it needs to keep as a prudent service to ensure the group can continue to meet for a reasonable time as donations can fluctuate.

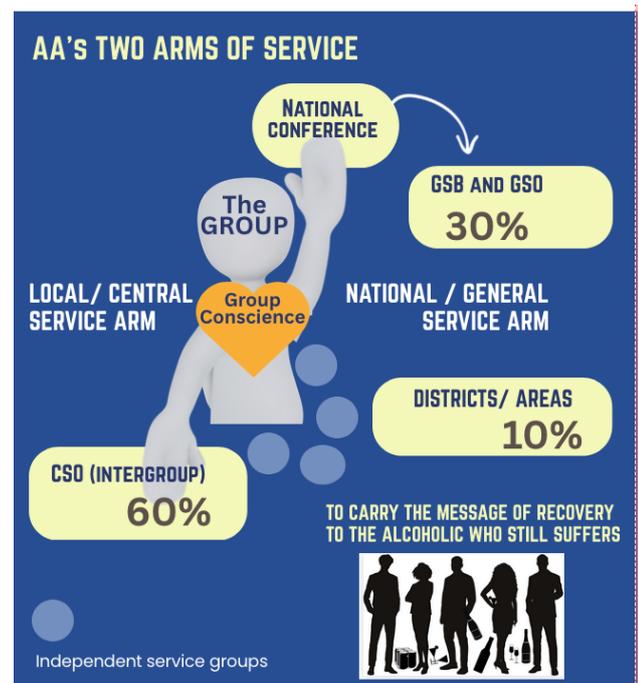
When the group's funds were more than this prudent reserve (by say \$100), it was **suggested** that the Group donate:

- **60% to its LOCAL Central Service Office CSO (e.g. \$60)**
Because this group is usually paying rent and doing a lot of local PI work
- **30% to the NATIONAL General Service Office GSO (e.g. \$30)**
Because the GSO publishing literature such as the Big Book (as it owns the copyright), the Public Liability Insurance for all AA group meetings, runs the National 1300 number, National Websites for the public, members, meetings and literature etc., organises the National Conference and services its decisions – all things a group cannot do on its own.

Therefore, a contribution to the GSO ensures **the group is self-supporting by always contributing to this national work.**

- **10% to its LOCAL Area/ District (e.g. \$10)**
Because funds are needed to send the group's Area Delegate to the National Conference each year. Only 10% because expense is shared across the country under a **Cost Equalisation Scheme.**

Cost equalisation means no group is disadvantaged by being a long way from where the National Conference is being held. Also in some circumstances, an Area can apply for some funding assistance if needed.



As always each group is autonomous, the group conscience may decide to donate in different proportions, especially if there is no local CSO servicing their group.

With changing times, it may be important for the group to reconsider its contribution plan.

If there is no CSO, it may be that the group decides to donate its excess funds as 60% to its District instead, especially if that service groups is doing service work such as PI or PA, Treatment or Corrections work, making its plan:

60% District, 30% GSO and 10% Area [60:30:10].

If no District and no CSO, then the plan may be **70% Area and 30% GSO. [70:30].**

There are also special AA projects

These are the Remote Communities project, the International Brown Paper Bag Appeal, The National Convention, a local Rally or the work of an Independent Service Groups e.g. running an AA Recovery Weekend on the Steps.

So the Group's contribution plan may look like this:

30% District, 30% Remote Communities, 30% GSO and 10% Area [30:30:30:10]

or

30% Remote Communities, 60% GSO and 10% Area [30:60:10]

The most important aspects of this are that

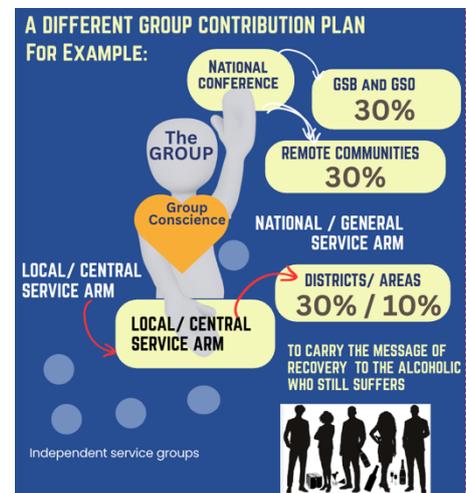
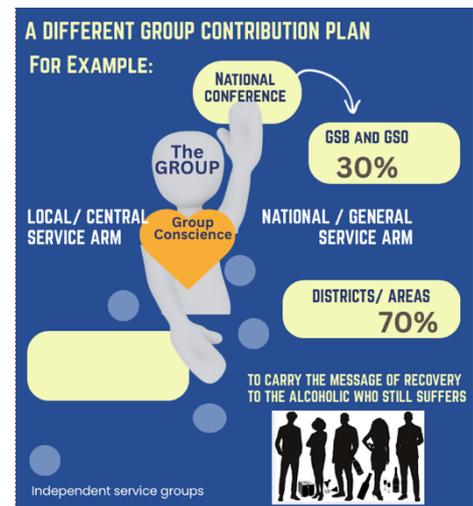
1. It is a Group Conscience Decision so the Treasurer can transfer money regularly when the group's prudent reserve is exceeded without having to get the group's permission every time

2. AA funds not be sitting unused in personal or group bank accounts or in paper bags in members home.

The more funds groups are moved on to other AA service activities, the more suffering alcoholics can be reached — the stronger AA can grow!

The Seventh Tradition is essential at every level of A.A. service

It is both a privilege and a responsibility for groups and members to ensure that not only their group, but also their intergroup/ central offices, local services, districts, areas and the General Service Office remain self-supporting.



This keeps A.A. free of outside influences that might divert us from our primary purpose — to help the alcoholic who still suffers. The amount of our contribution is secondary to the spiritual connection that unites all groups around the world.

In light of this, Alcoholics Anonymous Australia does not accept any contributions from non-AA members.

Prepared by our Members Team for information purposes