



March 2016

# Alcoholics Anonymous Australia Newsletter for Professionals

## Fellowship in **FIJI**



## Inaugural National Australia Convention in Fiji

The Inaugural Australasian Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous, with Al-Anon participation, was held in Fiji at Easter and the event proved to be a huge success. The program began with a Public Information Day which ran from 9.00 am to 4.30 pm and attracted 170 local visitors, many of whom were members of the Fijian professional community. These included the Minister of Health, a representative from the Fiji Society of Medical Practitioners, the Minister of Education and a Doctor from the World Health Organisation, as well as representatives from the correctional services and other local government agencies.

Many of the professionals in attendance had little or no prior knowledge of Alcoholics Anonymous and were impressed with the information presented to them. As well as the formal presentations, the day's program allowed plenty of time for AA members to interact with the professionals and members of the public who attended. There was a sit-down lunch and catered morning and afternoon tea breaks, where everyone shared food and fellowship. Many of the locals who attended were able to do so because



of a fundraising drive held in the months leading up to the event. 'Sponsor a Fijian' was generously supported by AA members and groups in Australia and raised the money needed to pay the travel costs for Fijians from outlying villages and islands to attend the Public Information Day.

The success of the Public Information Day was evidenced in the fact that many of those who attended returned for subsequent sessions of the Convention and a lot of 12 Step work was done over coffee, or in hotel rooms. The Al-Anon message was also well received, and a group of Fijian women have committed to starting that program locally. For AA and Al-Anon members the rest of the Convention was spent in meetings and fellowship, made all the more enjoyable

by the knowledge that we had fulfilled our primary obligation to carry the AA message to *'anyone, anywhere [who] reaches out!'* The spiritual gift those in attendance got from the event was summed up by the Chairman of the Board in his closing speech when he said, 'we came to give and give we did!' There is no greater privilege in AA.

# Non Alcoholic Trustees bring wealth of experience to Board

AA has been fortunate over the years in having many competent Trustees, both AA members and Non-alcoholics, and the choice of Trustees remains one of the most important factors in ensuring AA's future. There are no hard-and-fast rules governing qualifications. In general though, there are certain things to look for.

## NON-ALCOHOLIC TRUSTEES ('Class A')

In seeking candidates for Class A Trustee positions, the Board looks for men and women with a proven track record in their own fields, with a demonstrated interest in Alcoholics Anonymous, and some experience in working with AA and its members. It would be safe to say that the busiest people have made the largest contribution and shown the greatest dedication and judgment. From time to time the Board has included members of the medical and nursing professions, accountancy, the Law, researchers, people familiar with the media, as well as those well versed in the general business world. They have all made their various contributions, not only in their own special fields but often also in the wider world of organisational management.

AA's debt to those who do not share our disease but willingly share our problems is immense, going back to the beginning. Bill W wrote: "In the days when AA was unknown, it was the nonalcoholic Trustees who held up our hands before the general public. They supplied us with ideas ... They voluntarily spent hours on end, working side by side with us and among the grubbiest of details. They gave freely of their professional and financial wisdom. Now and then they helpfully mediated our difficulties." Written in 1966, those words hold true today. Nonalcoholic Trustees remain a rich source of wisdom and perspective.

The experience of the Fellowship in North

America has shown the wisdom of selecting non- alcoholic Trustees as described in Bill's introduction to this Manual. We, in Australia, benefit similarly from their professional experience.

Since they need not maintain anonymity, Class A Trustees are also our public face, should it become necessary to put AA before the general public in any matter. They are often called upon to chair meetings and committees, to speak at Regional Forums and take formal roles at major Conventions.

The Chair of the General Service Board is traditionally a Class A Trustee, partly due to the public aspects of the role, but there have been exceptions where alcoholic Trustees have held the position. The Board will always seek to select the best person available for the task.

*AA is currently seeking Non Alcoholics to join the General Service Board. Of AA. If you feel enthusiastic about what AA does and are willing to take on a leadership role we'd be delighted to hear from you. If you know of*

*someone who has displayed professional interest in AA or indeed would be willing to donate their time and expertise in the fields of Media and Communications , Public Relations or Law, then we'd like to hear from them. In the first instance please contact the General Service Office on 02 95998866 or [gso@aa.org.au](mailto:gso@aa.org.au)*



Would you be interested in having an A.A. presentation at one of your professional gatherings? Or would you like information about recovery from alcoholism in A.A.? If so, please contact

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