



IMPORTANT NOTICE TO THE A.A. FELLOWSHIP

The 2020 Australian National Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous scheduled for 2-5 October 2020 in Toowoomba is creating history by going Virtual!

The 2020 Host Planning Committee for the 55th Australian National Convention has resolved to make this year's National Convention a virtual event, for the first time in A.A. history. The National Convention will still run between the same dates: 2nd - 5th October 2020. If you have already registered for the Convention you will automatically be registered for the Virtual Convention. If, however, you decide that this is not for you, then we will cheerfully provide you with a full refund.

We have made this decision for several reasons. Firstly, due to COVID-19 and other extenuating circumstances, we're unable to confirm that the venues we had selected will be available in October. We also cannot guarantee what social distancing laws will be in place in October, and travel restrictions are still uncertain. Rather than try to proceed with a physical convention that may have had to be cancelled at the last minute – with money paid to hire the venues etc lost, and members inconvenienced and out of pocket - we have decided to pivot to an online National Convention, where we are confident we can deliver our comprehensive program in a world-first experience for A.A.

Importantly, this Convention will be much more than a Zoom meeting weekend. The Convention website will offer many new and innovative features that will mean we will be able to reach more people and also offer you more experiences than at a physical Convention. Some of these features include:

- You'll be able to register and log on prior to the Convention to familiarise yourself with what is on offer (including keynote speakers, workshops, international guests, an archival display of A.A. history, chat rooms, exhibitors, and an A.A. Historical Tour of Toowoomba... plus some surprises!)
- You'll have the opportunity to chat and connect with friends near and far throughout the Convention. Becoming a virtual event gives us the added benefits of being able to connect to the worldwide Fellowship and showcase our Australian community.
- As well as live meetings and presentations, there will also be pre-recorded content you can access at your leisure.
- Whilst the Convention program will run over 2nd – 5th October, all elements of the program will be available from the Convention website for up to two weeks after the event, meaning you can view any session that you may have missed over the weekend.
- One of the features of the Convention is to celebrate our 75th Diamond Jubilee of A.A. in Australia. Coupled with that will be our 75th anniversary special edition Souvenir Book which will be available to purchase online.

Some of you may be disappointed about the decision to not proceed with a physical convention. We felt however that this was the proper decision to make. Our hard-working committee and local Fellowship were looking forward to showcasing Toowoomba to the rest of the Fellowship, and this is an opportunity for us to do so. As you are aware Detroit recently made the agonising decision to cancel their International Convention for identical reasons, and we didn't want to have to do the same thing.

Given how our A.A. members both young and old have quickly adapted to new technology, we are hopeful that the wider A.A. community will embrace this first-time-ever opportunity. And we would love for you to be part of this ground-breaking experience.

How much will the 2020 National Convention cost now; and what if I've already paid?

All registrants shall be informed of their right to a full refund for the programs no longer offered. Registrants shall also be offered the option to leave funds to the discretion of the HPC to be used for the following purpose:

- To be used for the organization of a virtual convention



- If the virtual convention proceeds, registrants will be automatically registered for the event

We have resolved to keep the price the same as the early bird registration fee (that was due to expire at the end of May), of \$100. It is the aim of this committee to ensure that all attendees get good value for money.

There are a small number of people who have booked onsite dormitory style accommodation at Downlands College. This will be refunded to you. For those of you who have booked accommodation elsewhere, please contact your accommodation provider directly for a refund. Similarly, if you have already made travel arrangements and paid for this, you will need to seek advice / refund directly from the supplier.

Donations / Contributions

If you are an Area, District, Group or other A.A. entity or individual that has made a contribution to the 2020 Convention, we advise that there will still be significant costs associated in undertaking a virtual Convention and we would appreciate it if you would consider allowing us to continue to use those funds at our discretion. As you would be aware, some of those funds have already been spent on planning to date. If, however, you feel that the donation was made to only support a physical National Convention and do not wish for your funds to be continued to be used by the HPC to put on a virtual National Convention, then we will happily return the funds to you.

The purpose of hosting a National Convention is for unity and as a way for us to connect, as well as being a fundraiser for the Australian Fellowship. As is always the case, any surplus made by the Convention will be forwarded to the General Service Office.

Every Host Planning Committee relies on the generosity of many to contribute to the cost of running a National Convention. We are not funded to put it on. We have to raise the money. Over the past two years that we have been fundraising for this Convention, we have received overwhelming support from near and far. We hope to do you proud and would love your continued support. If you do keep your funds with us, then this will mean that we will not have to recommence fundraising and can focus on delivering you a not-to-be-missed experience.

Next Steps

For those interested in finding out more about our National Virtual Convention: by the end of June we aim to have a landing page on the current website that will provide further details and how to register and participate.

For those who have already registered for Toowoomba: If you have already registered for the National Convention, Outback Sensation or onsite accommodation we will be writing to you via email to advise you of your options.

For AI-Anon / Alateen members, please be assured that if you wish to cancel any bookings and request a refund from the HPC, we will happily do so.

Please be patient as we make this adjustment to Virtual. More details will be published in the coming weeks.

We look forward to connecting with you as we (virtually) trudge the road of happy destiny.

Yours in service,

2020 Host Planning Committee
17/05/2020