

# THE MIXER

THE AUSTRALIAN MAGAZINE OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

## FROM THE MERRY-GO-ROUND TO THE ROLLERCOASTER

My name is Nathan and I am an Alcoholic.

My life was like a merry-go-round, now it is just a roller coaster! Life was just a constant struggle in my mind, trying to work out how to fit in, how to impress people and trying to please everyone. Underlying all this, was just that ongoing and nagging fear.

I just thought that was the way life was, and then when I turned a teenager, I found a solution. Although I resisted it for some time, I eventually gave in and trialled alcohol with my mates. I got the buzz straight away.

From that point, I spent the whole week thinking about the weekend ahead to drink, and then it was remorsefulness for what I did or didn't do, asking questions to fill the gaps, remorseful again, then this feeling passing and looking forward to the weekend ahead, and on and on and on. You get the picture.

It was OK for my teenage years, but as I got into my twenties, I just felt I couldn't sustain this way of life. Something was going to have to give, and when I knew my ability to keep playing team sport was going to end, I feared what might happen with my drinking and life without that distraction.

And then the big one happened, the night where I woke up out of a blackout and totally baffled. I will not repeat the details of the events that night, but I walked out of the situation feeling like I had sobered up and it was time to stop drinking. I went to a meeting the next day and wanted what they had, but not the program, and I didn't want to deal with that God thing. I was still shaking and full of fear four days later, so I knew something was happening, and I didn't like it.

So I made that big decision and told my higher power, my Mum, that I was going to put the drink down for good. Even she said, wow this a big thing but I will support you. That started my two years of white-knuckling sobriety, using everything to distract me from the drink.

Although I was physically fit and enjoying coaching sport and trying to make a business career, plus a new girlfriend, life was getting harder and harder. What I learnt was that, emotionally, I hadn't matured and alcohol had stopped this happening. I had no tools or design for living that could help me enjoy and contribute to life despite the ups and downs that come into everyone's day. [Continued on next page]

TO CONTACT THE ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS HELPLINE  
ANYWHERE IN AUSTRALIA PHONE 1300222222.

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After a little comment from my girlfriend which pretty much spelled out that I behaved like a child, and I knew it, I came running back to the rooms. Little did I know this program would transform my whole life. All I had to do was stop making my own decisions and let the program and my sponsor reprogram my way of life. I learnt very quickly that alcohol was not the problem, it was only the solution. For me to stay away from the drink and the many 'yets' I have in front of me, I needed to clean house and be willing to do actions that seemed totally foreign. The key precepts I lived by, including determination, pride, being liked (still working on this one), needing to know everything and being right, all had to go.

Doing the Steps is what it took, and then being willing to talk with God, take inventory, be teachable, regular calls with my sponsor, sponsoring others and being of service.

So what's the roller coaster like now? It is slowing down as the days pass. Life will ensure that there is always going to ups and downs, but now I have a program of action which helps me pass through these and be part of life.

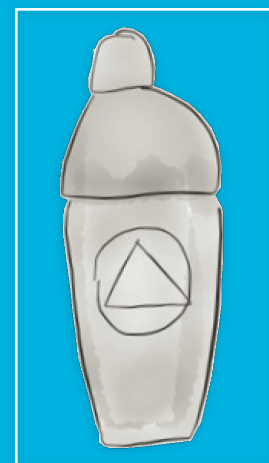
Nathan, Big Book Lunch Williamstown

*The Mixer can be accessed online at our website, [www.aamixer.com](http://www.aamixer.com). You can subscribe by contacting us by email: [editor@aamixer.com](mailto:editor@aamixer.com).*

## The Mixer Statement of Purpose

*The Mixer*, for "people who normally would not mix" (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, p. 17), is a forum for AA members in Australia to share their experience, strength and hope with each other, that they may stay sober and help others to recover from alcoholism.

Stories are collected by a volunteer Editor in each Area, thus ensuring a voice for all AA members around Australia; and these Area Editors form an editorial group conscience for the magazine, together with the General Editor and technical and design team. We, the editors and other volunteers contributing service to *The Mixer*, try to practice the AA principles in our work, being guided by the 12 Steps, 12 Traditions and 12 Concepts. All contributions present the views of the contributors, and do not represent the AA Fellowship as a whole.



## TWO STORIES FROM A WOMEN'S GROUP

I have been a sober woman in recovery since 1 May, 1996, and a grateful, home group member of a Wollongong-area women's meeting for nearly four years. My first experiences of women's meetings in early sobriety were very different to how I experience women's meetings today. I had attended a meeting with approximately 40 women of different backgrounds, ages and lengths of sobriety. I didn't feel comfortable to participate in the meeting, which had nothing to do with the particular women, who beautifully carried a message of hope and recovery, but more to do with where I was at in my sobriety. At the time I was full of anxiety of what others may think of me. However, I did have a strong desire to stay sober, and eventually followed the suggestions of more experienced sober members through working the steps with a sponsor and participating in meetings despite my pride and fear. As a result I gained clarity, inner peace, a connection to a Higher Power and meaningful relationships with the best girlfriends (a totally unexpected gift of regularly showing up to meetings). I learned to embrace the unity I've found in women's meetings through both listening and sharing. I now believe that I benefit from participating in any meeting. The success of the variety of meeting types - women's, men's, young people's, etc. - complements my belief that the program embraces diversity and we are all connected by our common desire to stay sober and carry the message of hope in recovery.

(Hayley, Corrimal Women's Group)

My first sponsor took me through the steps in the Big Book in my first year of sobriety. I was desperate for a different way of life, to stop drinking, and needed a road map for living. I didn't realise I needed a personality change that would transform my life. I was 9 months sober when a lady asked me to take her through the steps in the Big Book, and we did.

My second sponsor gave me a better understanding of Steps 6 and 7 and how my defects were a problem, and that I needed to ask a Higher Power to remove them, as I couldn't. She also encouraged me to complete my Step 8 list and helped me continue making amends. As I was so newly sober I had difficulty with relationships, working, and making decisions. She started teaching me how to live sober and how to solve my own problems.

When I was three years sober I went overseas for 4 months to USA, and had a temporary sponsor so I could talk about any issues that came up in recovery. After I returned to Australia I asked a lady to sponsor me who had what I wanted. She was sober longer than I have been alive. She had so much experience, was married, and was a mother. She taught me how to behave in a committed relationship and consider my partner when making decisions. We went through the Traditions in a Relationships Workshop (run by Dave and Polly) over 12 months (one for each month). I still try to practise what they suggest. I learned so much from her about how to sponsor women in AA. She was my sponsor for 7 years.

I changed sponsors when I was 10 years sober, I was married and my son was 10 months old. I was suffering from severe post-natal depression and was on leave without pay from work. I felt that I didn't have a Higher Power and was struggling to care for my son. The Women's Group I was a member of and my female sponsor helped me get through... sober. My sponsor and I went through the Big Book. Very slowly over the next few years I began to experience a connection with a Higher Power. She spent a lot of time with me and supported me through a really tough time in sobriety.

My current sponsor is also an oldie but a goodie and she got sober when I was 1 years old. She teaches me to face ALL my problems by turning to my Higher Power. She helps me to be a better wife, employee and a friend. My recovery today is about combining Steps 10, 11 and 12 and putting the program into my life.

Today I trust my Higher Power and regularly get on my knees saying the 3rd Step prayer (and meaning it). I am living in the 4th dimension of existence that Bill W. wrote about.

The constant things in my sobriety have been honesty, sponsors, a home group (attending every week), friendships with women, seeking a relationship with a HP, and Girl Talk Sydney (an annual Women's weekend with AA and AI-Anon participation).

The highlight of my recovery is taking a woman through the Big Book and watching her and her life change before my very eyes. If it wasn't for the amazing, inspiring and honest women in AA who have helped me over the last 15 years of continuous sobriety, I definitely would not have been able to stay sober. I plan to keep coming back.

(Tanya, Corrimal Women's Group)

## HOW I STAY SOBER WORKING AWAY

My name is Tim and I'm a recovered alcoholic. I'm a bit over 15 years sober and have a home group (Spirit of Freedom on the Gold Coast), a sponsor and I sponsor other men. I'm an active AA member and I work away fly in fly out (FIFO). When I'm away I can't get to AA meetings. This story is about how I stay happily sober during those away times without meetings and I hope the experience might help someone else see that, once sober, we can go where any free man (or woman) can go.

My day starts at 4.20am with the hideous alarm going off in my donga (accommodation room). I occasionally hit snooze but generally roll out of bed onto my knees and say the third step prayer or a sleepy version of it, to ask god to manage my life for another day. Straight into the shower after that and then off to the mess for breakfast (almost awake now). Once back in my room I lie on my bed and say the following prayer; "God I pray for the knowledge of your will for me and the power to carry that out" and then I set an alarm and meditate for ten minutes. For me that's just a practice of focussing on my breathing, "in 2-3, hold 2-3, out 2-3, hold 2-3, in 2-3...". I love my morning meditation and would be lost without it. God never speaks directly to me but I often get hunches and ideas that I'll act on that seem god inspired.

I head off to work for the 6am morning meeting and I set an alarm for 8am called “spot check”. It doesn’t take me long in the morning to get lost in work so the 8am alarm reminds me to take 2 minutes (literally) and check how I’m going so far. It reminds me of AA and God and that I’m not running the show and God is. Selfish, dishonest, resentful or frightened are the watchwords I use from the Big Book to do that spot check. I finish it with a prayer - usually ‘of myself I’m nothing - you do the work’. I reset that alarm for 10am and repeat every two hours through the day till my 6pm knock off.

Step 12 is a huge part of staying “happily and usefully whole” when I’m working away. I’m very fortunate to be able to sponsor a few blokes and I catch up with them on the phone a few nights a week to help them with Steps and Traditions, and in doing so I get the most help out of it. I’ve lost count of the number of times working away that I have been out of sorts and actually felt a huge perception shift happen during a call with a sponsee. Carrying the message works every time if I lose my gratitude.

At bed time I do the second part of my tenth step, the nightly review. It takes a maximum of 5 minutes and I write it out and email it off to my sponsor. I’ll also chat with him once a week, which can be tricky as he is in Florida, but I try to make it happen.

The simple tools I’ve mentioned above take bugger all time in the bigger picture and allow me to be comfortably sober for up to a month at a time without meetings. I dial into my home group every week and sometimes I can call into another meeting too. When I’m home I get to my home group and one or two others each week and am often involved in service in some capacity. I recently rotated off a 12-month commitment as coordinator of taking a H & I meeting into a local treatment centre. I was able to share the role with an AA friend who did the commitment on my time away.

What I’d love someone who reads this to get from my experience is this: get sober first! I didn’t try this till I’d been taken through the steps by a sponsor and had recovered from alcoholism. I was around 5 years sober with a solid grounding in AA before I went back to the FIFO life. But once we have recovered we really can go where any free man or woman can go. We don’t have to limp from meeting to meeting each day, but rather utilise this simple, powerful and portable program of action called the 12 Steps. Anything is possible once I’m sober!

Tim O, Spirit of Freedom, Gold Coast.

## SUMMARY OF AUSTRALIAN AA STRUCTURE INVENTORY DISCUSSION PAPER AND FELLOWSHIP SURVEY

The 2017 General Service Conference recommended that AA Australia should take structural inventory. No inventory of the Australian structure has been taken in nearly half a century. Conference 2017 Advisory Action #001B/2017 included the following planning points:

- Circulate a discussion paper informing the fellowship on the general service conference workshop (2/11/17).

- An online survey to be activated around the time of the discussion paper.
- The survey will seek the following information: Are we fulfilling our primary purpose? What, if any, are the issues at local, area, regional, national levels of structure? What would you change?
- Findings submitted to Conference 2018.
- The conference submission would be an inventory document to inform the desire for structural change if any, or to address *smaller matters via topics of Conference*.

The discussion paper is the first stage of a process intended to inform Conference, Central Service Offices and other Service Entities on what the Australian Fellowship may want, if anything, regarding structural change. Therefore, the paper aims to provide sufficient information for members and Groups to be able to further help Conference by completing an online survey about: fulfilling our Primary Purpose; Structural Issues (Local, Area, Regional and National); and any Desire for Structural Change.

We provide an edited selection of key information for *The Mixer* readers below. After reading the summary here and the full Discussion Paper (available from the AA service website - <http://www.aaservice.org.au/membersonly/>, or via area delegates, local group or central service representatives and websites), we hope you and your group will complete the 34-question survey, available by clicking on the link below:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/T82PLPN>.

The results and feedback from this survey will be reported to Conference 2018 to inform a further paper raising the issues and the processes required for any change.

YOURS IN SERVICE, 2018 CONFERENCE INVENTORY COMMITTEE

### **Functions Any Structure Must Perform**

Inventory may inform a simple national structure to carry out the following 5 functions with neither gap nor overlap:

- Public Information: our front door, where public and media can access our public relations and non-alcoholic spokespersons, and to facilitate the message to our delegated regions of Asia and Oceania.
- AA literature: hold the copyright, protect trademarks as we approve, publish and supply literature to members and the public, including professionals and the community. Carrying the message is substantially funded from sales of literature.
- Legal entity: the formal guardian of AA 'world services' for Australia; the custodian of the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions. Empowered to act on its own responsibility within its charters and by-laws, requiring administrative support.
- Australian Group Conscience: AA founders arranged for a single entity to have authority for the active maintenance of our world services, requiring administrative support to facilitate gatherings, independently of the legal entity.
- Public Liability Insurance: Groups need the protection of public liability insurance.

READ THIS ONLINE AT: [WWW.AAMIXER.COM](http://WWW.AAMIXER.COM)

### **A brief history of the Australian Service Structure.**

Australia has two service structures: Central Service and General Service. Central Service arose in the first few decades of the fellowship when state councils organically grew in different states to coordinate groups:

- 1952: NSW Service Council established.
- 1954: Victorian service council established. NSW propose the states get together for a National Forum.
- 1959: first National Forum. Australian Conference established, subject to confirmation from state service bodies.
- 1961: First Conference, declaring that: Conference exists to further our collective Twelfth Step work at the nation-wide level.
- 1968: Tasmanian state council established. Conference amended its constitution to admit 'state' Central Service offices to Conference with full voting rights. The 10th anniversary Convention resolved that Australia had 'come of age' and would assume responsibility for the 3 legacies of AA. Thus, Australia formally adopted the North American General Service Structure in March 1970.
- 1986: Conference adopts 'as nearly as possible' the North American structure, considering extending full membership to all CSOs but sticking with representation by State Central Service Offices for 'the foreseeable future'.
- 1988: Conference forms a Structure Committee to consider greater interaction between Conference, the Board, General and Central Service systems, with the committee to consider participation at conference by an increasing number of Central Service Offices being set up in Australia.
- 1991: The structure committee recommends that existing service bodies (CSOs) merge into Australian General Service Conference as regional committees with voting rights.
- 1992: Conference invites one CSO rep from each region to represent that region at conference with full voting rights.
- 1993: Conference refers a topic to structure committee recommending one stream of service.
- 1995: Conference rejects the call for a single service structure, encouraging Areas and CSOs to liaise over service matters.
- 1997: In view of the growth of the General Service Structure since the days when Central Service Offices were the major provider of AA services, Conference removes the vote from Central Service Offices attending Conference. CSOs could attend as observers.
- 2009: Conference reject a topic calling for a meeting of Conference and all central service offices to restore unity.

### **The Current Structure**

2,000 AA meetings across Australia are divided into 21 geographical Areas. These are re-grouped into 7 regions. As of 2017, 18 Areas are financial enough to send a Delegate to Conference, where up to 14 members of the General Service Board also have voting rights. World Service Delegates are non-voting members on board committees, they

have a right to attend board meetings in an advisory capacity only; but they do have a vote at Conference. The Manager of the General Service Office (which employs 3 full-time staff who serve both the Conference and the General Service Board) also has a vote at Conference.

According to the *Australian AA Service Manual* (p. 72, 2016 edition), “area delegates should ideally constitute more than 2/3 of the voting members”. At last year’s conference, only 16 delegates were in attendance. There are also currently 25 Central Service Offices listed as such in Australia. The Australian General Service Manual (Guideline GL-12) defines a CSO as follows:

“A central service office is an AA service office that involves partnership among groups in a community, just as groups are a partnership of individuals. It is established to carry out certain functions common to all groups, best handled by a centralised office, and is usually maintained, supervised and supported by the groups in their own general interest. It exists to aid groups in their common primary purpose of carrying the message to the alcoholic who still suffers.”

General service literature suggests 9 functional areas of a CSO:

- Receiving, distributing and following up on 12th Step calls, answering enquiries about AA.
- Maintaining conveniently located office and PO box.
- Ordering, selling AA conference-approved literature.
- Accepting and re-directing donations to GSO and Areas.
- Local information hub – newsletters, events, meetings lists, contacts.
- Manage details of local events.
- Maintain information about local hospitals, treatment centres.
- Cooperate with other community agencies, assist press or PI matters.
- Maintain contact with groups, particularly in Correctional or Treatment Facilities.

Some of these functions are duplicated in Area (General Service). This has resulted in examples of ‘two arms of service’ working well together, but more importantly, other examples where the service arms compete, duplicate or miss opportunities in other aspects of twelfth step work.

## AA’S BIGGEST TRIVIA NIGHT (APRIL 21ST – ST JOHN’S ANGLICAN CHURCH, TOORAK)

The 12 Step Office in Melbourne hosted this night of fun and fellowship as a fundraiser and a chance to bring people from groups all across Victoria who don’t usually get the chance to meet up.

The sell-out event saw twenty tables, each with ten people all keen to demonstrate their knowledge of trivia. There were also a number of extra people who managed to get a seat on the night too!

This was a product of a long period of organising by the Fun and Fundraising sub-committee who have all put in tremendous hours of service planning, organising and running an event that would stretch professionals. It never ceases to amaze these



days in our fellowship how willing our newer members are to put their hands up to do all manner of jobs and get the event delivered brilliantly. There was a set up crew, a food crew, a kitchen crew, a greeter crew, and a pack up crew, so good to see an event create so many opportunities for service. Maybe some older sober members might want to have a think about giving their recovery a shake up and coming out and joining in again!

The event itself went without a hitch, the quiz hosts were all great fun and did their jobs well (with the exception of a small 'accent' problem). The counting and adjudication was all run with precision and we only had one query on an answer.

At half-time we enjoyed the entertainment provided by a piano ballad Bon Jovi style made up of all the sayings and phrases you hear around the fellowship, and the unique comedy stylings of a talking koala.

The winners of the quiz in the end were the team from Lorne who took out the tickets to the Day On The Green Festival, but the overall winners were the members who gave of themselves to support putting the event on, a tremendous effort by all involved. The total raised to support the 12 Step Office to help us all carry the message will be announced at the Office General Meeting in May.

Thanks everyone and see you all next year.

Geoff S., Chair of the Steering Committee

## PAIN IN SOBRIETY

My name is Maureen and I am an alcoholic and I am sober by God's Grace and the 12 steps of AA, and for that I am so very grateful. I would like to share my experience with what I like to call BLACK PAIN (as opposed to back pain): that dark pain we can feel at times in sobriety.

When I was three years without a drink, I had surrendered my drinking to God, but all the rest I kept so I could control my life, and my loving God did not interfere. For the next 9 years I went on with my life thinking I was in control of my life. At 12 years sober I was going to meetings, I was doing service and helping others, I wasn't drinking and I was in "control". Then in the space of two weeks my second marriage fell apart, I lost my job, I stopped smoking 60 smokes per day and my son did not want me in his life, and I was to fall into a very big black hole. In that hole I was to lose everything: I lost belief in AA, the Steps, prayer, God, purpose and hope. I knew I was very sick but I never drank or picked up anything other than chocolate. I did not shower for days, I did not eat, I did not clean my unit and I stayed in the same clothes for days. I walked up to 20km per day and I cried every day sometimes 4 or 5 times a day. I went to meetings where I either cried or swore, and luckily no one said to me you can't come back because you are always crying or swearing - I was just told to keep coming back.

God was so very good to me because around 6 years earlier he put a lady in my life who was to become my sponsor and dear friend. I am so very grateful to her as she was always on my phone or at my kitchen table, and she would listen to me as I spoke

about my anger and the black pain I felt I was in. I was in that blackness for two years and she would say to me "God is the only one who can relieve you of your pain", but I did not have trust or faith that God could and would relieve me of the pain I was in. In those two years I tried to fix me with meetings, steps, prayer, talking, swearing and begging. I came to realise it was not about that but it was about surrender and acceptance and letting God get on with his work. See, I had to lose everything so I could depend on that loving God.

In January 1997 I just knew I couldn't handle another moment of this black pain, and I fell to my knees and I said the only prayer I could say, "I am stuffed, you win", with complete and total surrender. The black pain was taken out of me and I just know it will never return. It took another 12 months until I got purpose and hope back and I have never lost it since. Today my relationship with God and my sobriety are the most important things in my life, I have no interest in control today, I just let my God have all his own way. Those two years were the worst part of my sobriety yet they have resulted in the best. Thank God for AA and AA for God.

Maureen, Toowoomba, QLD

## HEARD AROUND THE TRAPS

"When I go to one AA meeting a week, I can stay sober. When I go to two meetings a week, I start to like myself. When I go to at least three meetings a week, other people begin to like me."

"Resentment - Not getting my way in the past. Anger - Not getting my way right now. Fear - Not getting my way in the future."

"When you find yourself in a hole, stop digging."

An AA member heard a chronic slipper bemoan the fact that he had been in and out of the local detox many, many times, ". . .and never felt any serenity at all!" To which one veteran AA replied, "Anyone feeling any degree of serenity in a detox is over medicated."

"Some of God's gifts come in oddly wrapped packaging."

"All an alcoholic who has slipped has to remember is, that, if their ego is small enough to fit through the door of an AA meeting, there is hope and they will always be welcome."

"Only the weak survive in AA."

"If you like everyone you meet in AA, then you are not going to enough meetings."

"I've spent my share of nights in jail. Thank God, nowadays, the only thing being arrested is my physical, mental, and moral decline."

"Q: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE between pride and humility?"

A: Pride is who is right. Humility is what is right."

"In AA, it doesn't matter who is right - only who is left."

"I know I'm getting better, as I try to save my best arguments for when someone else is in the room"

## GENERAL EDITOR'S NOTE

The *Australian AA Service Manual* recounts (p. 15, 2016 edition), in a short history of AA in Australia, that at the second National Convention, in 1961, which was the first held “under the auspices of the Australian General Service Conference”, it was resolved to “explore the possibility of establishing... an Australian magazine, along the lines of the similar services within the parent movement in the USA”. It was another two decades before we had our own national magazine, *Antenna*, which however was discontinued in the early 1990s. Meanwhile, at the same Conference, a short statement on the purpose of Conference began (p. 16): “The Australian General Service Conference is a part of the AA Fellowship in which all groups throughout Australia join together for unity in service to alcoholics who seek recovery”. Almost 50 years has passed since our national service structure was developed, during which time issues peculiar to Australia have emerged. In this 6th Issue of *The Mixer*, we include a summary of the Australian structure inventory Discussion Paper, which will help to inform the process of reflection on our service structure which was proposed at the last General Service Conference. We urge our readers to check out what is going on with this structure inventory so far, and to complete the Survey at the link provided. We would also like to hear from members about their thoughts on the Australian AA Fellowship's general service structure, including experiences of service within Areas, Districts, Groups, Service Offices and at the General Service Conference: such reflections and suggestions from our members could make an invaluable contribution to this Australian AA Inventory process. As for us as individual alcoholics and in our groups, so for our Australian Fellowship as a whole: it is only when we share honestly with each other on our experience, strength and hope of sobriety in AA that we really find out where we have come from and where we are, and can make decisions on where we are heading.

So far in *The Mixer*, we have had stories from members in cities and regions from Queensland all the way down the east coast to south-west Victoria. It is not surprising that all our stories so far have come from particular regions: our contributions almost exclusively are sent in from our local Editors in these areas, who go around their local fellowship and invite members to make contributions to our magazine. We have found that the most effective way to procure content for *The Mixer* is to approach individual members directly and invite them to contribute - if it wasn't for our small team of Area Editors, there would be no stories to read here! So, for those Areas that do not have an Editor yet, and for those members who are interested in helping out with getting content for our national magazine, please get in contact with us to find out about how to be involved (our email address is at the bottom of this page), or contact your local Area Delegate to find out more. We hope that, over time, we will receive member stories, articles, anecdotes and sayings from all around Australia, cities and country, to reflect the diversity of our fellowship and of members' experiences and issues.

Aside from good old AA identification stories (what we were like, what happened and what we are like now - including our glorious 'drunkalogues') and articles on Steps,

Traditions and Concepts, we would like to hear about issues for members, such as disability and access in AA, AA in remote areas, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members' experiences, strength and hope, AA in the online age, or sharing on any other aspect of getting and being sober in AA. So far we have had ID stories, stories from women in recovery, sharing from Australian AAs overseas and overseas members visiting OzAA, sharing about doing service in AA (including a report in this Issue on a successful AA trivia night event), articles on Steps, Traditions and Concepts and the service structure, poetry, and a rich vein of AA jokes, anecdotes and sayings. Unlike the many local state and regional, area and district publications by AA groups, which serve essential information sharing functions as well as sharing local member experience, strength and hope, the national magazine was set up to provide a forum for AA members Australia-wide to share with each other across the continent. So, for example, we don't deal with announcements of local events, but offer the opportunity for members to find out about issues related to the Fellowship as a whole. As with the *Grapevine* for Bill W. in the early years of AA, *The Mixer* offers an opportunity for the Australian AA Fellowship to share our experience, strength and hope with each other, which sharing is an essential part of the forming of our national group conscience. There are many forums these days, particularly online, for AAs to share and read AA stories etc.; but there is only one Australian AA national magazine!

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## AA PREAMBLE ©

*Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism.*

*The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for A.A. membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. A.A. is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy, neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.*

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