

# B-Line

Canberra & Regional Newsletter for Alcoholics Anonymous

October, 2020

## Area Delegate needed

*The position for Area B Delegate for Eastern Region is one of the service positions available for AA members looking to make a contribution.*

**Area B takes in a massive area from Canberra to Corrowong and to Bega and Bowral.**

The Area B Delegate is the voice of the region to the Australian National Conference and a vital link between our region and the rest of Australia. The rotation to the new Delegate is scheduled for December and is a three-year rotation.

Outgoing Delegate, Pip O, said it was a rewarding experience to represent the Area.

"I took on this job and I didn't really know what it was and it was pretty daunting," Pip said.

"I just took on the attitude I'm doing the best I can and that's all I can do."

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### Other positions vacant

#### Area B

- Alternate Secretary
- Communications Coordinator

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#### Canberra CSO

- Office Coordinator
- CSO Treasurer
- Secretary of the CSO Committee

**See page 7**

### THIS EDITION

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## Become a B-Line contributor

**We are looking for your stories:**

- Personal stories
- Group discussions
- Topics for consideration

Email: [bline.areab@aacanberra.org](mailto:bline.areab@aacanberra.org)

## Join Area B on Saturday 10 Oct

Area B "Topics for Conference" Assembly that is being held via ZOOM on **Saturday 10th October 2020**.

The Assembly starts at **12:00 Noon with Topics for Conference** followed at **3pm** by **"12 Concepts for Service" Workshop**.

AA has voted to hold an abridged Conference in 2020. This means that most of the Topics are being held over until next year or being given to the related National Committees.

Only 4 Topics are being discussed this year. They are:

**TOPIC #009/2020** - Virtual Meetings

**TOPIC #012/2020** - Moving Activities on line

**TOPIC #024/2020** - JobKeeper payments be returned

You can access the documents for these topics online [HERE](#)

**TOPIC #023/2020** - Proposal to split Area C, Eastern Region documents are accessible [HERE](#) (because its a large document)

Since **"Participation is the key to Harmony"**, please ask your Group to review the Topics documentation and ZOOM in to the Area Assembly on Saturday October 10th to let our Delegate know what your Group wants.

**This is important for the future of AA in Australia.**

Spread the word. Looking forward to seeing you there.

## Eastern Region Area B "Topics for Conference" Assembly & Third Legacy Workshop



**Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> October 2020**  
**12 midday – 4:30pm**

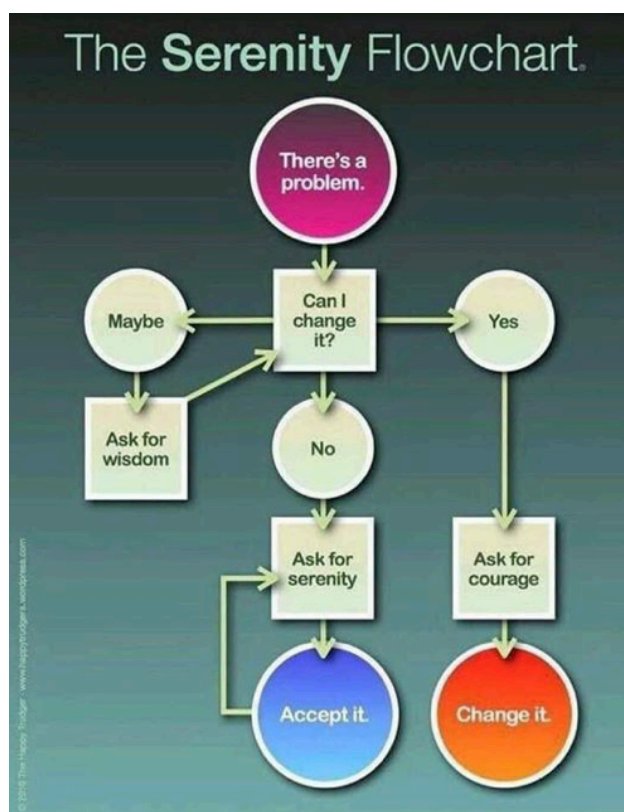
**Join via Zoom ID Area B Business Meeting Room**  
ZOOM ID: 81138906684 Password: 1212

### Program

**12midday-2pm** - "Topics for Conference" Meeting

**2:15 -2:45pm** - GSR Updates

**3pm-4:30pm** - "12 Concepts for Service" Workshop



# I AM FREE

*Former Canberran, Tania, talks about her journey of recovery.*

My name is Tania and I am an alcoholic. My sobriety date is 5 January 2012.

I lost everything to my drinking. Worst of all, I lost myself. I was nothing.  
Bankrupt - physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually.

I was always a realist escapist.

Life was a goal - not a journey.

I set the bar so high I could never attain it.

Freedom for me was anything that would numb existence.

I didn't want to die. I felt overwhelmed by life and my way out was to black out.

I was unique. A sensitive soul. No one understood me. The world was too cruel and harsh for me.

Self-pity set in at an extreme level. I was a victim but it wasn't externalised. I didn't want people to feel sorry for me I just wanted them to forget about me. I really didn't feel worthy. Little did I know people did care. I harmed them greatly without even realising it. I came from a loving and caring family. My parents were Catholic and did a lot of service for others. They had a strong faith that was definitely not hypocritical. But I still never felt a 'part of'. I was always seeking something. My parents' form of faith did not work for me. I had to eventually find my own conception of a power greater than myself. I felt the same as what Bill Wilson describes:

*'Before the coming of faith I had lived as an alien in a cosmos that too often seemed both hostile and cruel. In it there could be no inner security for me.'*

Bill Wilson, Grapevine 1962.

I was in the Canberra Hospital detox unit in September 2011. I'd experienced my umpteenth rock bottom due to alcohol. Physically I was so sick. I didn't realise at the time that I was also burned out mentally, emotionally and spiritually. But I still hadn't surrendered. It's not human nature to surrender. We are told to keep fighting. But with alcohol

I had absolutely no self-esteem. I had been in a fifteen-year marriage and was used to being cared for by a partner. I thought that was all I needed. Someone to look after me and make everything right. My family and friends had had to abandon me. They couldn't watch me destroy myself any longer. I got out of detox and so did my newfound friend. We were buddies.

I had met my match. I had to surrender to win. I had nothing left. I was empty. I was needy. I latched on to an external comfort yet again. A guy who seemed to care. He brought me breakfast when I was very sick and shaking from withdrawal from alcohol. I went into detox a shivering, shaking mess. I'd lived solely on vodka, 2 bottles a day, for the 2 weeks prior. I had lived on the street in cold Canberra weather. I hadn't eaten and had lost 10 kilograms in 2 weeks. I was hunched over and exhausted as sleep had only come when I drank to blackout.

Sometimes sober buddies, sometimes drinking buddies. He promised the world and I believed him. We spent the final week of our drinking holed up in his tiny room. I couldn't even get out of the single bed we shared due to continual intoxication. At one point I remember my Mum coming over to see when I was coming home to be with my children. I think when she saw the state I was in she was glad I wasn't at home. The room was disgusting. Cigarette butts and wine cask bladders were strewn everywhere. An unaired, smoke filled room. Filth. I do recall her disgust. But I was a slave to alcohol.

# I AM FREE

I can't even remember how I got out of that situation, but somehow I ended up in the psych ward at the Canberra Hospital on the night of the 4th of January 2012. I was taken there in a paddy wagon, picked up from the back of the local shops after supposedly telling my mother I was going to kill myself. Anything would have been better than the hell I was living in. But I was never going to kill myself. I just wanted to drink. I spent the night pacing the ward and asking for Valium, which they wouldn't give me. My head was insane and I had delirious visions and couldn't sleep at all. I smoked a lot of cigarettes that night. The level of my insanity was so intense I spent the night searching for alcohol in the soap containers. I would have stuck my head under the soap container and drank the soap had there been ethanol in it.

***'When I caught a cab to my parents house the next day I miraculously didn't ask to stop at the bottle shop on the way.'***

When I caught a cab to my parents house the next day I miraculously didn't ask to stop at the bottle shop on the way. My children ran away from me when I went anywhere near them and my parents were disappointed yet again. I rang my sponsor to ask if she knew where another member was who had stolen money from me. Her partner happened to pick up the phone.

I asked him if he knew the whereabouts of the aforementioned person. He said, 'I don't want to know about that. When are you coming back to AA?' I replied, 'I don't have time for this AA bullshit. I have kids, a job and parents to look after.' (Mind you I wasn't doing much about looking after anyone and I was very lucky to still have employment. I'd lost many jobs due to drinking and my kids had been taken away from me on a few occasions.) His response was, 'Well you'll lose all those things if you don't come back.'

Something happened that day and I have been sober ever since. I went to a lot of meetings and often took my kids with me. They have benefitted from hearing the design for living within this program. I eventually worked the steps and the second time I went through them I did them by studying the Big Book with a sponsor and something shifted in my sobriety. I was to know a new peace and happiness.

Today, right now, I don't want for anything. I have needs but they are all met. Best of all I have love. Most importantly for myself. My youngest son was vying for my affection over his brother, 'Mummy, who do you love the most?'

'Me!'

He was shocked.

'If I didn't love myself first I couldn't love you and others.'

Loving myself means I love the spirit within. The higher power that I hand my life over to on a daily basis. I am no longer running the show. I can put in the action but the director is not me. When I run the show things don't go very well. Everyone is doing everything wrong and my expectations aren't met! I sit in frustration and anger. If only they were doing things my way everything would be OK! Expectations are pre-meditated resentments.

I also know that nothing external will solve my malady today. Daily connection with a power greater than myself is all I have to be able to manage life on life's terms and to maintain a sense of inner peace and serenity.

I have experienced major grief in sobriety. At 2 years sober I was to lose my parents within the space of 6 weeks. The miracle is I didn't think about picking up a drink. I felt like I'd been hit by a truck, but I didn't pick up. When I first came into the rooms I heard someone share they had lost their mother at 2 years sobriety.

I remember thinking that I would have to drink if that happened to me! It did happen to me and I didn't drink.

**Continued on page 5**



# I AM FREE

I share this story with newcomers so they can gain hope that no matter what happens in sobriety they will not have to pick up a drink as long as they are living the program. Someone said to me once that grief is self-pity. It's not. Grief is an entirely different ball game and I did seek external help from a professional.

I had one session with a grief counselor and I heard what I needed to hear and felt relief. I still have moments of grief today but I know it's OK to feel them, sit with them and pray and eventually they will pass. I do not need to numb emotions with drink anymore.

The 9<sup>th</sup> step promises in AA are beautiful and they have come to fruition in my life, but the most important line in those promises is the last one, 'if we work for them.'

I am no longer a slave to alcohol and, on most days, I am also free from the bondage of self. When I go into my own head the best cure is to think of someone else and to be of service to others in AA.

Freedom is the realisation that I have no control over anyone other than myself and how I react to others. Wow! I love that. I am free.

## Eastern Region Contacts (NSW/ACT)

### **Eastern Region (NSW & ACT)**

**Sydney City** Offices 1&2  
Kings Cross Parking Station  
9a Elizabeth Bay Road  
Bus. (02) 9389 6333 24  
hrs. (02) 9387 7788 PO  
Box 478, Bondi Junction 2022 .

**Northern Sydney** Kuringai  
Community Groups Centre, cnr  
Mona Vale & Rosedale Rds. St  
Ives 2075 Bus (02) 9488-9805  
24 hrs. (02) 9488 9820 PO  
Box 151 St Ives 2075

**Blue Mountains & Western  
Sydney** Ph 24 hrs 0428 160 457  
PO Box 4141, Winmalee. NSW  
2777

**Byron Shire District**  
AA 12 Step Ph: 1800 423 431 or  
0401 945 671 (24hrs)

**Canberra** Grant Cameron  
Community Centre, 27 Mulley  
Street, Holder, ACT (02) 6287  
3020. PO Box 3898, Weston,  
ACT 2611

**Gosford** William Court 6/12  
William St. Gosford, Phone (02)  
4323 3890 PO Box 46 Gosford  
2250.

**Newcastle** Greater Newcastle  
CSO, 31 Gregson Ave, Mayfield  
West NSW 2304  
PO Box 196, Jesmond 2299  
1300 531 725

**Southern Highlands**  
(02) 8250 7318 [www.aash.org.au](http://www.aash.org.au)

**Wollongong** 114-116 Princes  
Highway, Upstairs cnr. Elliott  
Road, Fairymeadow. 2519. Phone  
(02) 4285 6788

## Area Delegate needed

Continued from page 1

"It's a privilege, its frightening but there is a lot of support. It's fascinating to understand how the Conference and service structure works to ensure the future of the fellowship. I have really enjoyed getting to know the members in the region. We don't have the districts yet but I have really enjoyed getting to know people around the region. It's been really satisfying and exciting to be part of the assembly last year when Area B came from nothing, no quorum, to 40 people and third legacy elections for the Area B committee.

***"I think the priority now is to bring the region together" Pip O, Area B Delegate***

I was really grateful to the [Amalgamation Committee]. It was such a contribution to Area B to have that amalgamation work done.

"I think the priority now is to bring the region together."

And exciting to see our democracy, which is how AA works.

When you go to Conference and see how it works it is amazing to see the minority voice in action is astounding and to see.

And I found it very satisfying to go into Conference and go 'you know what, I want to be a channel of peace and unity.'

**Further information is also available from Pip O and Judy W or check out the AA Service Manual for more information:**

[http://www.aaservice.org.au/membersonly/wp-content/uploads/ervice Manual 2012 V May 2012 Final Area Del.pdf](http://www.aaservice.org.au/membersonly/wp-content/uploads/ervice%20Manual%202012%20V%20May%202012%20Final%20Area%20Del.pdf)

# Area B Service opportunities available

*The Area B Committee is responsible for the health of the Conference structure and for growth and harmony in Area B's Fellowship. Service opportunities are:*

## **Alternate Secretary**

The Alternate Secretary assists the Secretary to take minutes from Assemblies and send them to committee members for confirmation.

### **Other duties include:**

- Maintain mailing lists
- Preparing 'lively' bulletins to send out to Google groups and/or B-Line
- Maintains records and files and other information packages.

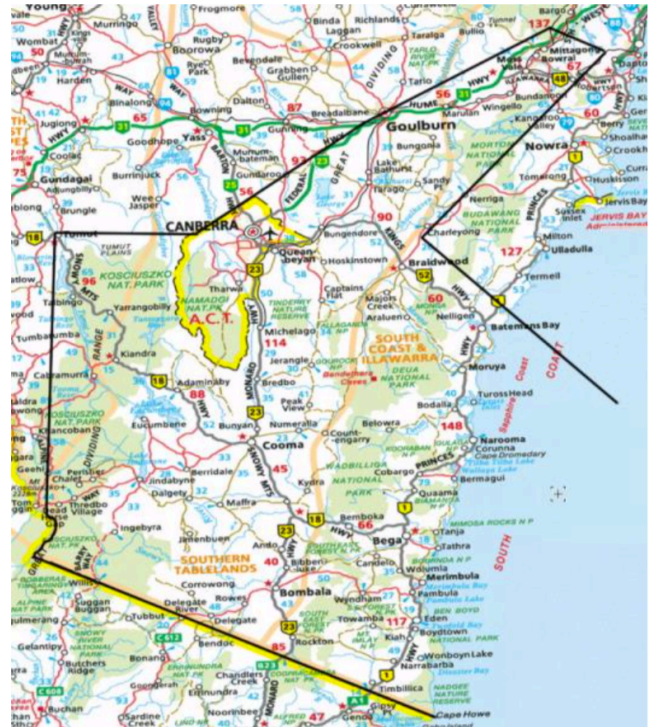
## **Sobriety requirement**

It is recommended in the Australian AA Service manual that the sobriety period for Secretary be no shorter than two years and preferably more than five.

## **Communications Coordinator**

This position will have the responsibility to coordinate:

1. the development of a new online presence/ website/app for the Area, or improvement of existing online presences, which would:
  - a. service the information needs of the members of the Area
  - b. assist in Area coordination (eg managing distribution lists, email addresses etc)
  - c. provide a central point of information in the Area about AA, and resources for the public and professional community
2. project management of the online presence:
  - a. coordinating a group of members who have skills and experience to offer on the issue
  - b. identifying and confirming an optimal pathway to improving online information, whether improving existing websites, combining websites, or pursuing a new website
  - c. liaison with the Canberra and Southern Highlands Central Service Offices to ensure effective coordination.
  - d. identifying and seeking Area committee agreement to an optimal commissioning strategy (the private sector or a combination of member resources)
  - e. planning for, seeking agreement to and acquitting to the Area Committee any expenditure used in its creation.



**Area B is a massive geographical area.**

# Canberra Central Service Office vacancies

*Looking to do some service? The Central Service Office committee coordinates the following services for local members, surrounding towns and outside enquiries.*

## **CSO Office Coordinator**

Sobriety requirement: 2 years. Position rotates after 2 years.

### Responsibilities:

- \* Oversee the smooth running of our AA Office at Holder.
- \* Manage Staff Roster -fill vacancies as they occur. Fill one-off staff vacancies from casual pool. Recruit for casual pool.
- \* Act as back-up Staffer if required (record Literature sales/Donations, respond appropriately to a variety of calls to office, general office work (basic).
- \* Maintain office and kitchen supplies.
- \* Act as point of contact for ACT Property Group (Landlord) and Square (all-in-one device for credit card payments and receipts).
- \* Submit monthly reports to CSO Committee.
- \* Attend monthly CSO Meetings.

### Other requirements:

- \* Basic computer skills.
- \* Reliability.

This is a very rewarding service position. The liaising with other AA members (Staffers, AA groups/members, GSO) is the best part of it.

## **CSO Treasurer**

Sobriety requirement: 2 years. Position rotates after 2 years.

### Responsibilities:

#### **Financial transactions:**

The treasurer maintains records of all income and expenditure using (user-friendly) Quicken accounting program loaded onto the office computer; arranges cheque payments of invoices as necessary, banks incoming cash and maintains the office petty cash.

#### **Group donations:**

The treasurer distributes group donations as requested by each group, usually 60:30:10 (CSO:GSO:Area B). Payments are made by cheque and mailed.

#### **Reports to the Fellowship:**

The treasurer produces monthly reports for the CSO meeting on the previous month's income and expenses, provides information as necessary to the committee where additional expenditure is planned, and consults with the committee for direction (e.g. for distribution of excess funds etc.).

#### **Annual Report**

The treasurer produces an annual report for the CSO Council meeting of all income and expenditure for the financial year (1 March – 28 February) and the current financial standing.

This is a vital service position, and very satisfying and worthwhile for the person undertaking it. Consider nominating!

## **Secretary to CSO Committee:**

Sobriety requirement: 6 months.

### Responsibilities:

Attend monthly CSO committee meetings on 1<sup>st</sup> Sat of month, 4.30-5.30pm

Request agenda items by email from committee members in advance of the meeting

Email the agenda a few days before the meeting

Take notes (minutes) during committee meetings of decisions made and action to be taken

Email draft minutes to the committee after the meeting. Make amendments as required after committee feedback. Email final copy.



# UPDATE ~ SEPTEMBER 2020 2021 AUSTRALIAN AA NATIONAL CONVENTION

2nd – 5th April 2021

Hilton Hotel, ADELAIDE

Our host planning committee has been meeting monthly for over a year now and we are a really committed crowd of members.

Our venue, the Hilton, still remains closed due to COVID but it is due to open in mid October.

We have recently decided to condense the convention by removing the Thursday evening public information session and starting the convention on the Friday. This provides substantial saving on the venue hire which also takes some pressure off with our fundraising limitations.

Having said that, our fundraising committee are doing a brilliant job under the current circumstances. We have just over 60 registrations at the moment. If the convention is forced to be cancelled, everyone will be offered a full refund.

Our program has been developed and we have some exciting sessions lined up.

We have an exciting evening planned for the Saturday. A truly amazing band, top class DJ and a substantial buffet!

Please join our Facebook group (details below); we have some great celebrations, information and interaction happening.

We need your support! So please, register now and increase your chance to win one of the monthly prizes.

Andy P  
Chair  
Adelaide Convention Committee

## PRIZES TO WIN... EVERY MONTH THE EARLIER YOU REGISTER, THE INCREASED CHANCE YOU HAVE OF WINNING

Every month we will draw a winner for a different prize and every month you have pre-registered, you will receive an additional ticket in the draw (eg. if John registered in June 2020, he will receive three entry tickets to September's draw). If you want to increase your chances to win one of the monthly prizes, be sure to register your weekend Convention ticket ASAP!

*Note: There will be a max of six six per draw*



## DINNER & ENTERTAINMENT

Yummy Food

Adelaide's Hottest Party Band

Award Winning DJ

LIMITED TICKETS

\$100 each

## REGISTRATIONS

Early Bird - \$100 for weekend

Day rates available

Refer to website

## DONATIONS WELCOME

BSB: 065 115

ACC: 1046 0183

Adelaide AA Convention 2021

## WANT TO BE INVOLVED?

We would love your help on any of our sub-committees - fundraising, registrations, merchandise, greeters, ushers, timers, meeting chairs etc, be sure to email us your interest.



Private FB group

"Adelaide Convention 2021"

Register now: [aanatcon2021.com.au](http://aanatcon2021.com.au) | Contact us: [aanatcon2021@gmail.com](mailto:aanatcon2021@gmail.com)



## National Treatment and Correctional Facilities Forum Bridging the gap

The National Treatment and Correctional Facilities Forum was held via Zoom on 28 and 29<sup>th</sup> August. It was organised by Area G, Eastern Region and was well attended. It was very successful and well organised with some great speakers who without Zoom may not have been able to attend.

One of the main themes that kept coming up on the Corrections side was how to bridge the gap between AA in gaol and AA in the wider community.

This gap is a problem as many people on release have many issues to deal with in their lives. These issues are important and include obtaining housing, fixing up finances, attending Centrelink, reuniting with families, repairing relationships and dealing with families, kids.

However, there is more we can do to bridge this gap and ease the process for detainees who are transitioning to AA in the broader community upon their release.

At the Forum, Area B Eastern Region (ER) ran a workshop to explore some ideas.

Narelle, who is a Class A Trustee (non-alcoholic) and a Correctional Facilities Officer from WA shared some different perspectives about what works and what doesn't. She shared, with permission about a detainee who embraced AA in gaol but on release fell through the cracks in many areas including AA. It set the tone for the workshop on the importance for finding some practical solutions

Pat from the Correctional Facilities Team Area B (ER) followed, presenting some resources that could be useful in bridging the gap, between AA and Facilities both Correctional and Treatment. These resources were developed by Area B (ER). They include a business card, an A5 and an A4 poster and pamphlet. The posters are designed to be placed on the facility notice board and the business card and

pamphlet for the detainee to take with them on release. Examples are pictured.

The resources can be easily adapted for each facility and would also work well in a Treatment Facility. They are not Conference approved but may become a Conference topic for 2021 where Conference can consider whether to approve them.

The Chair then asked for ideas and experiences from the attendees at the workshop on how we can bridge the gap. The following ideas were explored. Ensure detainees have a local meeting list and website address on release

Give out phone numbers

Arrange to pick up on release and take the ex-detainee to a meeting

straight away

AA could become part of a 'one stop shop' for detainees on release.

Reach out to parole officers and make sure they are 'educated' about the importance of the parolee continuing to attend AA.

Have QR Codes to meeting lists and website that can be scanned. Arrange a time and place to meet the ex-detainee before their first 'outsides' meeting.

Sponsorship for detainees to ensure an ongoing relationship with members on release.

Ensure detainees have plenty of literature including a Big Book on release.

The resources mentioned above are available to detainees before release and that they are part of a release pack.

Engage in the correspondence program for detainees so they have pre-releases contacts in the wider AA community



### Bridging the Gap

Once you have left the AMC and you have to face life on life's terms, everything might seem just a little too much. Things mightn't go how you thought or hoped they would and people might seem to look at you differently.

#### **Don't pick up that first Drink!**

Try to remember the **HALTS**.

**Don't get too -**

- |                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| <b>Hungry</b>        | - Have something to eat, something sweet.            |
| <b>Angry</b>         | - Try saying the Serenity Prayer.                    |
| <b>Lonely</b>        | - Go to a meeting or call someone in the Fellowship. |
| <b>Tired/Thirsty</b> | - Don't get over tired, drink water or a milkshake.  |
| <b>Serious</b>       | - How important is it? Keep it simple.               |

Try and call a member whose number you have or call -  
**1300 22 22 22** that's **1300 AA AA AA** (Anywhere in Australia).  
That person can talk with you and let you know where the nearest meeting is to you.  
We'll be waiting, because someone was waiting for us.  
That made all the difference.

## Become a B-Line contributor

We are looking for your stories:

- Personal stories
- Group discussions
- Topics for consideration

Email: [bline.areab@aacanberra.org](mailto:bline.areab@aacanberra.org)

## Atheist & agnostic members share in new book



# ONE BIG TENT

Atheist and agnostic  
AA members share their  
experience, strength and hope

This new AA book brings together a cross-section of views of non-believers who have still been able to benefit from the AA program. It would be invaluable for god-wary newcomers who baulk at the AA program's repeated references to God; even though there are only a couple of atheist and agnostic meetings in Australia, **One Big Tent** shows such newcomers they are not alone.

The book is a compilation of stories published in **The Grapevine**—starting with Bill W reminding us in 1965 to be inclusive of anyone who declares themselves a member of AA.

This book is also a boon for anyone struggling with 'the god thing'. It reassures any atheist, agnostic or freethinking alcoholic that the AA program embraces them. Reading **One Big Tent** should also open the mind of any member carrying the AA message. As the Long Form of Tradition Three puts it: "Our membership ought to include all who suffer from alcoholism." That includes atheists, agnostics and freethinkers.

[Click here](#) to read a selection of quotes from the book

**One Big Tent.** It is available from your local Central Service Office for \$20

## Secular Meetings

**Monday 10am AEST:** Contact [brookvalsecularaa@zoho.com](mailto:brookvalsecularaa@zoho.com) for email invite to Zoom meeting

**Monday 7pm ACST:** Contact [southozaaaa@gmail.com](mailto:southozaaaa@gmail.com) for email invite to Zoom meeting

**Tuesday 7pm AEST:** Zoom meeting ID: 737 851 765 Password: 559614

**Thursday 7:30pm AEST:** Bulimba QLD Library 219 Oxford St Bulimba OR Contact [bulimbasecularaa@gmail.com](mailto:bulimbasecularaa@gmail.com) for email invite to join on Zoom

**Friday 6:30pm AEST:** Contact [aaaacanberra@gmail.com](mailto:aaaacanberra@gmail.com) for email invite to Zoom meeting

**Saturday 11am AEST:** Contact [brookvalsecularaa@zoho.com](mailto:brookvalsecularaa@zoho.com) for email invite to Zoom meeting

**Saturday 12 noon AEST:** Woden ACT Library Conference Room Corinna Street Phillip