

**THE AUSTRALIAN AA
SERVICE MANUAL**

SECTION THREE

**THE GENERAL
SERVICE
REPRESENTATIVE
(GSR)**



**Qualifications & Duties
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THE GENERAL SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE

QUALIFICATIONS & DUTIES

The *General Service Representative* (GSR) is the link between the Group and AA as a whole and is probably the most important single factor in the whole AA structure. The GSR represents the voice of the *Group Conscience*, reporting the Group's wishes to the Area through the District Committee Member (DCM) and to the Area Delegate through Area Committees and Assemblies, from where it is passed on to the Australian General Service Conference. *Whatever authority there is in AA is vested in the Group Conscience, and is then conveyed by the GSR and/or the DCM to the wider AA community.*

Usually, the prospective GSR has two or three years of continuous sobriety in AA and has time available for District meetings and Area Assemblies. Because the GSR may become a Committee Member or an Area Delegate, the Group should consider whether a candidate has the abilities, the time and the resources for such future assignments. In order that a Group may make an informed decision in electing their GSR, they should be aware of the responsibilities the job carries. An effective GSR needs:

1. to be open minded and a good listener;
2. to be an information gatherer;
3. a keen interest in AA as a whole;
4. a willingness to serve AA.

The General Service Representative (GSR) is his/her Group's mail contact for the Australian National Office of AA (NOAA) in Sydney. The GSR receives the newsletter "*AA Around Australia*" in order to keep her/himself and the Group abreast of AA activities at national and international level.

Beyond that, the GSR keeps National Office supplied with changes of officers, meetings, venues etc. It is the GSR who fills out the annual *Group Information Sheet*, essential for the AA Directory and for National Office mailings.

The GSR knows what material is available from National Office, eg *Guidelines*, bulletins, films, tapes and kits, etc. and advises the Group of new literature announced in the pages of "*AA Around Australia*". It is the GSR's responsibility to make sure the Group is informed of the availability of *Conference Approved* pamphlets and books. The GSR needs to learn as much as possible about our *Traditions* and *Concepts* and should be familiar with the books "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions" and "AA Comes of Age" together with the publications "*The AA Group Handbook*" and "*AA Tradition - How it Developed*".

The General Service Representative is also the Group's contact for the DCM and the Area Committee, so that he/she can be kept informed of forthcoming activities and additional information coming out of National Office.

The GSR is required to attend the Group's Group Conscience Meetings and is usually involved in the Group's activities, such as the *Group Donation Plan*, the *Birthday Club* and *The Action Club*, all of which go towards the support of National Office. (S/he is equally interested in encouraging the Group to support the Central Service Office.)

The GSR also informs his/her Group of agenda items to be discussed at District meetings and Area Assemblies and makes sure s/he is aware of Group feelings on current AA issues and conveys this to those meetings and Assemblies.

The GSR participates in District and Area Service Meetings and often helps with planning, advance registration and publicity for Area get-togethers and Conventions. Following these events, the GSR reports back to the Group for the benefit of those who could not attend. *This reporting back is extremely important, as the GSR is the vital communication link between AA and the Group.*

The GSR has a good understanding of "*The AA Group Handbook*" and assists new Group Secretaries and Members to use it. When a new Group is forming, the GSR nearby can be a great help in advising them about National Office services.

ELECTIONS

The GSR serves for two years and is elected at a Group Conscience meeting, which may be held specially for that purpose if the Group prefers. To emphasise the need for care in selecting the GSR and the importance of the GSR's work in the District and Area, it may be helpful to borrow one (or more) of National Office's videos, and/or invite a seasoned District Committee Member to lead a special question-and-answer session.

An informed Group will enjoy a well-planned special meeting - it will emphasise the meaning of the hand of AA reaching out to bring the Group closer to the Fellowship as a whole.

There should be written nominations from the floor, then written ballots. A simple majority is usually sufficient for election; however, if there is likely to be a close vote, the Group should agree beforehand to have a second ballot with only the high-scoring candidates in the running. If two candidates then tie, or the second vote is not a 2/3 majority, the two names are placed in the hat and one is drawn.

This is a simplified version of the Third Legacy Procedure (see Section 12 for full version) for use at Group level if preferred.

THE ALTERNATE GSR

In case a GSR is unable to attend all District and Area meetings an Alternate GSR is needed. The Alternate GSR is elected at the same time as the GSR.

It has been found by some Groups that the alternate GSR can make an excellent PI (*Public Information and Cooperation with the Professional Community*) representative, rather than just being a stop-gap for the GSR.

REMINDER!

The GSR may be in line for election later as DCM, Area officer or as Area Delegate. Are your candidates qualified in terms of experience and time available? If a GSR is subsequently elected as DCM, it is suggested that the Group be invited to elect another GSR, as experience has shown that holding both positions simultaneously is likely to be too heavy a load for one person.

NOTIFICATION:

As soon as your GSR is elected notify your Area Committee and/or DCM and include full contact details.