

# Recovery Down Under



**Narcotics Anonymous  
in Australia**

**A Short History**

## CONTENTS

---

INTRODUCTION

GLOSSARY

# Recovery Down Under

# Narcotics Anonymous in Australia

A short history

AUSTRALIAN PARTICIPATION IN THE WSC

THE ASIA PACIFIC FORUM

ISSUES

# CONTENTS

---

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>			2
<b>GLOSSARY</b>			3
<b>I. BACKGROUND</b>	The formation of NA; NA in Australasia in the 1960s and early 1970s; NA and DA from 1972 to 1981		5
<b>2. TWELVE STEPS AND TWELVE TRADITIONS: 1976-1981</b>	Melbourne; Sydney; The First National Convention		14
<b>3. A "NEW NA" IN SYDNEY - 1981-85</b>			22
<b>4. A REGIONAL COMMITTEE</b>			26
<b>5. NA REGIONAL SERVICES</b>			28
<b>6. AREAS</b>	<b>ACT</b>		49
	<b>NEW SOUTH WALES</b>	Sydney Areas	52
		Blue Mountains	54
		Mid North Coast	54
		Far North Coast	56
		Hunter Valley	57
		Central Coast	60
		South Coast	62
	<b>NORTHERN TERRITORY</b>		66
	<b>QUEENSLAND</b>		67
	<b>SOUTH AUSTRALIA</b>		71
	<b>TASMANIA</b>		76
	<b>VICTORIA</b>		82
	<b>WESTERN AUSTRALIA</b>		85
	<b>NEW ZEALAND</b>		90
<b>7. AUSTRALIAN PARTICIPATION IN THE WSC</b>			93
<b>8. THE ASIA PACIFIC FORUM</b>			94
<b>9. ISSUES</b>			96

Copyright 1996 by Fellowship Service Office, Inc.  
 All rights reserved. Published 1996.  
 Printed in Perth, Australia

The information in this document was gleaned from the memories of early members of NA in Australia and New Zealand, records of Regional Service Committee meetings and NA publications. There may be errors of fact or interpretation, although as far as possible efforts have been made to corroborate accounts by individuals.

This publication was compiled and produced by the Australian Regional Literature Committee of NA. Any opinions expressed in these pages are not necessarily those of NA as a whole.

## INTRODUCTION

Those of us who have become members of Narcotics Anonymous since its early days may not always realise what it was like for those who came before us, who had to work together to provide a safe place for addicts to recover and to maintain their own recovery. The aim of this document is hopefully to stimulate our interest in and our gratitude for the services which NA provides today. These are services which we may often take for granted, and which could disappear if we become complacent and tire in our own efforts to carry the message of recovery to other addicts and the community at large. Perhaps we may also learn more of the value of the Traditions by becoming aware of how the early members had to learn about putting them in place and the consequences of not doing so.

## GLOSSARY

**Area Service Committee (ASC).** A committee created to provide common services for NA groups in a specific locality. Composed of GSRs, ASC office bearers and sub-committee chairs. Usually part of a region.

**Area Service Representative (ASR).** Elected by an ASC to participate on the Area's behalf in the Regional Service Committee (RSC).

**Common needs groups.** Also known as **special interests groups.** Specialised groups formed to provide additional identification for addicts with particular needs or interests in common, eg women's, men's, gay or lesbian groups.

**Fellowship Service Office (FSO).** A legally incorporated company set up by the Australian RSC to print and distribute literature and other NA merchandise.

**FSO Board of Directors.** A board composed of NA members, elected by the Australian RSC to administer the FSO.

**FSO Pool.** Pool of NA members elected by the Australian RSC from which the FSO Board of Directors appoints new board members.

**Group.** An NA group holds NA meetings in order to carry the message of recovery to the addict who still suffers, providing a setting for identification and a healthy atmosphere for recovery for addicts with a desire to stop using.

**Group Service Representative (GSR).** Elected by an NA group to participate on the group's behalf in the ASC.

**Hospitals and Institutions (H&I).** A field of service devoted to carrying the NA message to correctional inmates and patients in treatment.

**NA approved literature.** Also known as conference approved literature or fellowship approved literature. Literature officially sanctioned by the fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous as given voice by its groups through their delegates to the World Service Conference.

**Phoneline.** An NA telephone contact service providing means by which an addict or a general community member can get information about Narcotics Anonymous, especially NA meetings lists. Usually administered by an ASC sub-committee.

**Public Information (PI).** A field of service devoted to carrying the NA message to government and private agencies, the public media, those in the helping professions and the community in general so that addicts seeking recovery will be referred to Narcotics Anonymous.

**Regional Service Committee (RSC).** A body that draws together the combined service experience of a number of adjoining Areas for mutual support of those Areas. Composed of ASRs, Regional office bearers and subcommittee chairs.

**Regional Service Representative (RSR).** Elected by an RSC to participate on the Region's behalf in the World Service Conference.

**Temporary Working Guide to our Service Structure (TWGSS).** A piece of NA literature which outlines principles for service in NA. It replaced The NA Tree, the earliest service manual.

**Trusted servant.** An NA term for its officers, derived from the NA Second Tradition which states that "our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern."

**World Convention Corporation (WCC).** An incorporated body which administers the NA World Convention.

**World Service Conference (WSC).** A conference of world-level trusted servants and delegates from throughout the world which deliberates on policy matters affecting NA world-wide, such as the approval of literature.

**World Service Office (WSO).** The major service centre of NA which prints and distributes NA literature and merchandise and carries out the directives of the WSC in matters which relate to communications and information for the fellowship of NA, its services, groups and members. The WSO is a registered non-profit corporation.

**World Service Office Board of Directors (BOD).** A legally incorporated body which administers the World Service Office, made up of members elected by the WSC.

**WSO Board of Trustees (BOT).** A board composed of members with substantial cleantime and occasionally non-addicts whose role is to safeguard the Twelve Traditions of NA.

**Zone.** A collection of regions or NA communities in geographical proximity which gather together based on common needs.

## I. BACKGROUND

### The Formation of Narcotics Anonymous

The origin of the concept that the twelve steps of Alcoholics Anonymous could be applied to addicts is unclear. References to "Narcotics Anonymous" have been discovered in USA newspaper and magazine articles as far back as the early 1940s. In February 1947 the US Public Health Service Hospital in Lexington, Kentucky began holding meetings of a group called "Addicts Anonymous". A Salvation Army publication refers to a Major Dorothy Barry and her work with addicts in New York City, saying that she had worked with Narcotics Anonymous since it started in 1947. An article in *Time Magazine* in May 1951 refers to the first anniversary of Narcotics Anonymous in New York, while an article in the *Saturday Evening Post* of 7 August 1954 mentions an addict who had become involved with Addicts Anonymous in Lexington and moved to New York City in 1950 where he began Narcotics Anonymous. Later the director of the Lexington program set up another program in Southern California.

Narcotics Anonymous as we know it today was started in Southern California in 1953 by a group of six addicts from AA. One of the founding members was Jimmy Kinnon, who believed that the earlier groups had died out because they had come to be dominated by one or two persons. The new fellowship was based on the Twelve Traditions. The first Step of AA was amended to refer to "our addiction" and the word "we" was added to the Steps.

The first meeting was held in a church building in Sun Valley, Southern California on Monday 5 October 1953. By the late 1950s NA had died out but around 1960 it had started again and the Board of Trustees was established in the mid-60s to ensure that it never died out again. During the 1960s and 70s the first pieces of NA literature were written and published. These were a white book entitled *Narcotics Anonymous* and a service manual called *The NA Tree*. In 1972 the World Service Office was opened in Los Angeles.

### Narcotics Anonymous in Australasia in the 1960s and early 1970s

NA in Australia and New Zealand, as in the USA, grew out of a combination of meetings established by addicts who were staying clean in AA and those set up by rehabilitation facilities. From the 1960s attempts were made to establish self-help meetings for addicts in Australia. Information about various meetings of Drugs Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous is patchy and has been gleaned from newspaper reports and recollections of members who were attempting to get clean in the 60s and 70s.

#### Sydney

In 1962 Chris, a chemist who was an AA member, was approached in his Sydney shop by a woman who was an addict. Chris referred her to the AA Central Office who told her that although she could come to AA meetings she could not participate. He decided to start a meeting for addicts and invited several people from AA to join. There were six people at the first meeting, which was held in a building on the corner of Stanley and Palmer Streets in East Sydney. At first the meeting was called "Addicts Anonymous" and later, because it had the same initials as Alcoholics Anonymous the name was changed to "Drugs Anonymous".

Chris knew that there was a 12 Step fellowship for addicts in the USA but did not know its name. He wrote a letter and sent it to AA in the USA who passed it on to NA. He was sent a tape and a letter by Jimmy Kinnon and the meeting became a Narcotics Anonymous meeting. Later the Sydney group exchanged tapes with members in Southern California and received a copy of the little white book, *Narcotics Anonymous*. The meeting had a regular attendance of around 40 people but after a while numbers dropped off. It is unclear why, but confidence in the meeting could not have been helped by the discovery that members of the Drug Squad were parking up the road and noting who went in! Around 1966 the meeting moved to a church in Darlinghurst. One of the members started up a meeting in Marrickville which went for a year or two, but did not survive for long after the founding member left and handed over the meeting to a new secretary who was still using. Early in the 1970s the meetings folded altogether. Some of the members who had begun their recovery in NA kept going to AA meetings and stayed clean.

During the time these meetings were going, NA came to be known by a number of professionals working in the addiction treatment field. A book by a Sydney sociologist, Robert W Connell, entitled *Drug Scene Kings Cross*, published in 1967, made references to addicts attending Narcotics Anonymous. *Drug Dependence*, published in 1968, contained an interview with Dr Stella Dalton, who was running a rehabilitation centre at Parramatta called Wisteria House. Dr Dalton referred to a weekly in house meeting of Narcotics Anonymous which had been attended by a number of people from Sydney, but at which attendance had recently dropped off. In the same book the Reverend Ted Noffs mentioned that he had been referring people from the Wayside Chapel to Narcotics Anonymous.

One member, Dale, who had attended some of the East Sydney meetings, later attended another NA meeting which started up in Sydney in 1974, without any affiliation with the US fellowship of the same name. Dale recalls that there was discussion at the meeting about whether there should be any such affiliation and there was dissension among the members when some of them attempted to obtain a grant from drug and alcohol authorities. When it was pointed out that such a move would breach Traditions there was talk about not being bound by the Traditions because the fellowship was not affiliated with NA in the US. These arguments created disunity and many people disassociated themselves from "NA".

### Adelaide

In April 1966 a Narcotics Anonymous "movement" was reported in *The Adelaide Advertiser*. Three addicts, including a doctor and a nurse, had started a meeting on Wednesday nights at the Baptist Church Hall in Broadview, SA. They described their program as similar to Alcoholics Anonymous and referred to a similar "movement" in Sydney, where as far as they knew the only other Narcotics Anonymous meetings in Australia were held.

What happened to the Adelaide NA meetings is unclear, but in April 1967 a member of "Drugs Anonymous" appeared on a talkback program on an Adelaide radio station discussing drug addiction.

### New Zealand

During the late 1960s Narcotics Anonymous meetings are believed to have been set up in Auckland by James K Baxter, a poet and philanthropist.

### Brisbane

In 1969 a meeting of Drugs Anonymous was advertised around treatment centres in Brisbane, but although about 30 people turned up at the hall in Fortitude Valley the meeting was cancelled.

### Hobart

In June 1972 an NA meetings list was printed in southern California, containing around 35 meetings. The list contained a contact address in West Hobart, Tasmania. No other records have been found of this meeting.

## Narcotics Anonymous and Drugs Anonymous from 1972 to 1981

In Sydney Drugs Anonymous meetings were started from 1972 by David G, a member of AA who was making 12th step calls to a half-way house for addicts and who believed that the AA program could be adapted for drug addicts. Between 1974 and 1976 the DA meetings came to be associated with a rehabilitation facility which moved around NSW. By early 1976 there four of these meetings.

One of the people attending these meetings was Jim F, an American who was a member of AA but had come into contact with NA in the USA. He wrote to the World Service Office, and in 1976 received some tapes, one of which was of a service meeting, and another of an NA convention and banquet at which Jimmy Kinnon outlined the history of NA. With the tape was a note from Jimmy Kinnon.

Jim et al, 6/26/76  
 It was around this time  
 24 years ago that N.A. was born as we  
 now know it, we said that we were  
 concerned more with future members, many  
 not yet born. I led a meeting last nite  
 & this fact was heavy; of about 45  
 people more than half were less than  
 25 yrs old. In day by day living  
 we really do build a future.  
 Yours in Fellowship & Love - Jimmy Kinnon

A note from Jimmy Kinnon which accompanied the tape sent to Jim F in Sydney in 1976.

"Jim et al,

It was around this time 24 years ago that NA was born as we now know it, we said that we were concerned more with future members, many not yet born. I led a meeting last nite & this fact was heavy; of about 45 people more than half were less than 25 yrs old. In day by day living we really do build a future.

Yours in Fellowship & Love - Jimmy Kinnon"

Along with the tapes Jimmy sent some literature, including some White Books. At around this time DA changed its name to NA, however most of the meetings did not run strictly by the Traditions. Literature was distributed with the phone number of the treatment facility stamped on it as a contact number. A Directory of Alcoholism and Drug Dependence Services in NSW, published in 1976, lists Narcotics Anonymous as a service, giving the phone number of a rehabilitation centre as a contact. There were very few members in these meetings getting or staying clean and NA had a bad reputation among those addicts who were staying clean in AA.

Meanwhile in Melbourne in 1976 an NA group which ran by the Traditions had been started (see Chapter Two). This group and others which formed over the next few years were to run for some time before any joint service structure was formed. Jimmy Kinnon put the Sydney and Melbourne members in touch with each other and a correspondence began between Melvyn B in Melbourne and Jim F. A letter sent to Melvyn by Jim in August 1976 indicated some of the problems the Sydney groups were having. "The addict's mind," Jim wrote, can easily identify NA as being affiliated with another agency which it cannot be by Tradition Six. We've had this problem with NA and [name of rehabilitation centre]." Jim was, however, very positive about the value of the meetings. "They allow addicts to identify and develop empathy at the level of feelings and emotion rather than apparent symptoms."

Early in 1976 the World Service Office developed a draft of a worldwide NA directory. A copy of known meetings was sent to Australia to be updated. There were seven meetings or contacts on this list: Monday evening at Orange Grove School in Leichhardt; Thursday evening at North Sydney Community Centre in Crows Nest; Friday evening at North Ryde Psychiatric Centre; Friday night at the Lifeline Centre in Darlinghurst; Saturday evening at the Warringah Medical Centre in Dee Why; a Sunday meeting in the Cronulla Sutherland area; and a contact address in Melbourne for Melvyn B.

The list was circulated in Australia and updated details were forwarded to the World Service Office. Later in 1976 the World Directory was published, containing in addition to the above meetings: Tuesday evening at St Thomas Church, North Sydney; Wednesday evening at St Francis Church, Paddington; Saturday evening in Mt Druitt; Saturday evening at Fawkner Park Community Centre in South Yarra; Tuesday

evening at the Wollongong Crisis Centre; Monday and Thursday afternoons at Chapel by the Sea in Bondi; and Sunday afternoon at St Joseph's Church in Burwood. By the end of 1976 there were 13 meetings. "I feel that, in a sense, we've over extended ourselves," Jim F wrote to Melvyn B, "and some of them are not very strong."

Greg Pierce, who was chair of both the WSC and the WSB during 1978, continued to send letters to known NA contacts, requesting information. In January 1978 he received a letter from Jim F listing current meetings. The list was similar to that printed in the 1976 Directory, but there were now two meetings in Melbourne, one in Canberra, one in Nowra, one in Perth and one starting in Darwin.

In Sydney in 1978 a meeting was started by Michelle S on Thursday evenings at the Bondi Junction Community Health Centre. "No one came," Michelle says. "I would sit there for an hour and a half reading literature." After a while she began taking people from one of the Sydney rehabilitation centres to the meeting. "The 12th Step in those days was anyone with a day clean going to detoxes and hospitals ... even detoxing people at our own homes," says Michelle. "The characters who stayed around were pretty weird - most of them would bust, then it was a great adventure going to rescue them."

In 1979 a booklet entitled *NA (NSW)* was printed by another rehabilitation centre in Katoomba, NSW, containing reprints of some approved NA literature which had been obtained from the US along with various articles on drugs, addiction, alcoholism, treatment and education. The booklet included a variety of advertisements for businesses in the Blue Mountains, indicating that there was little understanding of or regard for the Traditions at this time. Also inside was a list of six NA meetings in Sydney: at Burwood, McKinnon, Bourke Street Clinic in Redfern, Blacktown, Glebe and Darlinghurst. These did not include the meetings associated with the other rehabilitation centre.

Most of the Sydney meetings at this time were associated with one of a number of rehabilitation centres and there was no spirit of unity between them. They tended to be dominated by one or two personalities and did not always adhere to the Traditions, sometimes allowing people who were using to hold office and accepting money from outside agencies. Michelle S, who began attending NA meetings early in 1978, recalls that "no one ever talked about the Traditions in those days ... The guys were dead against people coming from AA. They used to

say, 'The only step you need to do is the First Step.' They were a good example of people who were stark, raving mad, but staying clean ... They were quite miserable about being clean. They didn't want to know about affiliating with the US."

In January 1979 Billy M and Patsy S started an NA meeting in Fremantle, WA. Billy had attended an NA meeting in Melbourne. A third member, Phil B, was given some NA literature by the head of a drug and alcohol treatment centre in Perth. He wrote to the World Service Office and received more literature. (See *Western Australia*)

Prior to 1981 there had been a number of contacts made between NA meetings in Australia and the World Service Office. When the first World Service Conference was held in California in November 1976 the meetings known to the conference included 16 in Australia. Because of the lack of structure and communication between the groups at that time very little is known of these meetings. However we are aware of some later correspondence between WSO and Australian groups. This includes that of the Melbourne groups from 1976 and the Fremantle group in 1979. Although there were a number of meetings throughout Australia before 1981, some of which were adhering to the Traditions, there was little communication between the meetings and no unifying support structure within the Region.

## 2. 12 STEPS AND 12 TRADITIONS: 1976 TO 1981

### Melbourne

A number of people who had been attending AA meetings in Melbourne in the mid seventies had been discussing the possibility of starting a meeting for drug addicts, adapting the Twelve Steps for this purpose. They had not heard of NA. Two of these people came into possession of the White Book *Narcotics Anonymous*. One of these was Matthew and another was Melvyn B, who had written to Hazelden in the US to obtain recovery literature. He was sent a catalogue which included the White Book and ordered a copy. During the 1970s another book which was distributed by Hazelden, entitled *Young, Sober and Free*, written by Shelley, a recovering addict in the US, was widely used by addicts seeking recovery.

In 1976 a group of seven people got together and decided to start a meeting on Saturday nights. Melvyn wrote to the World Service Office to register the group and was sent some more literature. He also received a note from Jimmy Kinnon giving him the number and postal address for two members in Sydney, Jim F and David G. Jimmy advised him to contact them and "get them to help you and also keep in touch with us." In July 1976 Jim F wrote to Melvyn, introducing himself as the "NSW Chairman of NA", and saying he had been informed by Jimmy Kinnon of his interest in starting a group in Victoria. He mentioned that he was available to come to Melbourne and help start a meeting in August. "Being addicts, we said, 'Stuff him, we'll start it ourselves'," recalls Des, one of the early members. Melvyn had found a venue at the Fawkner Park Community Centre in Prahran. The meeting began on Saturday 21 August 1976 in Prahran, attended by seven members: Matthew, Melvyn, Elva, Des, Ross, Kelvin and Kevin. The group structure was based on a service manual called *The NA Tree*.

The following week Jim came from Sydney, bringing with him US speaker tapes of oldtimers such as Jimmy K and Chuck. He told the Melbourne group that outside of the meetings which were associated with one of the rehabilitation centres there was no NA in Sydney. At that time there were six meetings in Sydney, frequently attended by over 20 people, mostly referred by AA or by this rehabilitation centre.

### NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

PRAHRAN GROUP. 21/8/76

Chairman: Matthew

Speakers: Des  
Elva  
Ross  
KEVIN  
KELVIN  
MELVYN

ATTENDANCE: 7.

COLLECTION: \$7.50

ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS.  
SECRETARY: MATTHEW.  
TREASURER: ROSS.  
LITERATURE: DES.  
P/R: MELVYN.

#### *The attendance list for the first Melbourne meeting*

Matthew and Des visited Sydney and attended some of the NA meetings at Kings Cross which had previously been known as Drugs Anonymous. These meetings were heavily supported by AA members and most were not strictly run by the NA Traditions. While in Sydney the Melbourne members also visited the manager of the rehabilitation centre who had the original copies of the US speaker tapes which they had heard. They found him unco-operative and probably as a result there was no attempt made at this stage to set up a shared service structure for the Melbourne and Sydney groups. However, Melvyn and Jim F continued to correspond.

Melvyn had some posters made up for the meeting with the message "If you want to use drugs, that's your business; if you want to stop using drugs, then that's ours." The notices were put up around Melbourne, especially in the suburbs of St Kilda and Fitzroy. The group's literature was stamped with a PO Box number in Belgrave and Melvyn's phone number. Late in 1976 a gaol meeting was started at Fairlea Prison.

In December 1976 another letter was received from Jimmy Kinnon along with white books, a copy of *The NA Tree*, information pamphlets, a group starter kit and a price list. The letter mentioned that the Victorian contact address had been given to members in WA.

Early in 1977 there was conflict in relation to obtaining literature from the WSO. Both Sydney and Melbourne required fairly large numbers of white books and Jimmy Kinnon suggested that they work out between them an address to which all the books could be sent. In the meantime the books were sent to Jim F in Sydney. Jim also had some books printed himself. The Melbourne fellowship was unhappy about having to obtain literature from Sydney.

During 1977 the Melbourne members began spreading information about NA to various local church, welfare and government organisations and were contacted by newspapers and radio stations. In July a meeting was held at which an area service committee was elected, consisting of five members with a minimum of 12 months cleantime. Other than a secretary, no office bearers were elected.

One of the people who got clean going to the Prahran meeting was Bill D, probably the first addict in Melbourne to get clean purely through NA. He moved to Bendigo a year later and began a meeting there, the second meeting in Victoria. This meeting folded after he left and reopened several times over the years. The Prahran meeting continued for 18 months. Much of this time it struggled and eventually it folded. Meanwhile Kelvin and Des had started a new meeting on Wednesday night at the Carlton Community Centre in 1978. Over the first year this meeting's attendance grew to about 15 people, although some of the people who supported the meeting were not NA members. When the owners of the venue tried to use the NA name on a leaflet advertising their services, the group, recognising the importance of Tradition 6, moved to a new venue. Another meeting was started by Melvyn in Belgrave in 1979. There was some friction between the two groups but despite this the fellowship continued to grow and there were

soon meetings nearly every night. In December 1980 members of the fellowship began to publish a national NA magazine, entitled *NA Today*.

During 1979, when the Basic Text was being developed an original draft of the first part was sent to Melvyn. He was given permission to copy and distribute it around the fellowship. Later groups throughout the world were invited to comment on the text and to send their own personal stories to be considered for inclusion. Melvyn and others sent stories to the World Service Office and Melvyn's story, which was a brief history of how NA had started in Melbourne was included in a book which was sent out for comment in 1980. He was later requested to write a more personal story about his recovery. This story, "Up From Down Under", was included in the second part of the Basic Text when it was eventually published.

An Area Service Committee was set up in Victoria around 1980. Belinda was the first ASR. After NA meetings run by the Traditions began in Sydney in 1981 (see page 18) the Sydney members made contact with regard to setting up a service structure based on the *Temporary Working Guide*, which they had received from the World Service Office. This book superseded *The NA Tree* from which the Melbourne groups had been working. Later in 1981 Melbourne hosted a National Convention of NA (see page 20). Around 1982 Billy Mac, who had been attending the Carlton meeting for around 12 months, and who had earlier begun an NA meeting in Western Australia (see WA), returned to Perth, taking with him the responsibility for publication of the *NA Today* magazine.

## Sydney

A characteristic of the NA meetings held in Sydney prior to 1981 was a lack of unity or support structure and little adherence to the Traditions although there had been limited contact with the World Service Office. There were a number of what might be called "the old NA" meetings still running in 1981. Most of these were associated with rehabilitation centres and usually did not adhere strictly to the Traditions. Those which had Steps and Traditions banners used AA banners with references to alcohol whited out. Sometime around the end of 1980 or the beginning of 1981 a meeting was started in Camperdown by a South American woman called Miri and her friends, Bruce and Lee. These three had been involved with a group within AA who analysed the Steps with a dictionary and were very enthusiastic about the Steps and Traditions. At around the same time Dave S, who had been clean for several months and was going to AA meetings as well as the "old NA" meetings, complained to an acquaintance who was working in the drug and alcohol field that he had been attacked for sharing about the Steps in NA meetings. They discussed the possibility of Dave starting up another NA meeting and he eventually approached Derek D and Mario T, both of whom had been clean for around two years as members of AA. In late August Dave, Mario and Derek decided to start an NA meeting in Waverley run strictly according to the Traditions, keep it going for six months and see what happened.

On a Wednesday night in September 1981 the first Waverley meeting was held. (This was later to become the Paddington meeting). Dave had obtained some literature and banners from one of the members involved in the "old NA." Some of these members attended the first meeting but did not stay till the end. Dave was unable to obtain any more literature, so he phoned Jimmy Kinnon in the US, who sent some more.

Derek, Mario and Dave also attended some of the Camperdown meetings where they noted that there were Traditions on the wall and that there were people attending who were clean. This meeting was heavily supported by AA members. It was later to move to Glebe, where it is still running on Friday nights. The members of the Waverley and Camperdown meetings got together and made a commitment to work together to provide a safe environment for addicts who wished to stop using. This was the beginning of the "new NA" or NA as we know it today.

A number of AA members who had been attending the Camperdown meeting came to the inaugural Waverley meeting. Garth P, who was a member of both groups, says he was encouraged by these members to stop going to AA and to put his energies into NA. Once NA got to a point where there was a meeting every day, they advised him, it would bloom.

About a month after the Waverley meeting started the members of the Waverley and Camperdown groups held a service meeting. They had some literature which had been discovered by Garth in a suitcase at a rehabilitation centre, including a copy of *The NA Tree*. Pat S, who had the longest cleantime, was elected as ASR, a position he held for 18 months. An address at a postal box at Leichhardt was established and Pat wrote to the World Service Office at Sun Valley, having found their address on the White Books which had been widely distributed throughout the drug and alcohol field by a Sydney rehabilitation centre. In this letter he explained that the two groups were adhering to the Traditions and that other groups in Sydney were not. Most of the literature in Sydney was not NA approved and had been financed outside the fellowship. "Over the years of NA in Sydney," Pat wrote, "many addicts have steered clear of NA ... due to the controversy raging within. I believe ... personalities have been placed before principles. ... Many addicts are now coming out of the woodwork so to speak after hearing about two meetings of NA that are adhering to the 12 Traditions of NA."

## The first National Convention

1 1<sup>st</sup> Australian National Convention of N.A., 1981.  
Melbourne 31<sup>st</sup> Oct. 1<sup>st</sup> Nov.

Name.	Group.
Barry A	Melbourne N.A.
Derek D	Sydney (Waverley Outreach)
Mario T.	Sydney (Waverley Outreach)
PHIL WILCOX	MELB VIM
Ross Cooper	Melbourne N.A.
Christie R.	Melbourne
Gabriel A.	Holbourne N.A.
Belinda W.	Melbourne N.A.
Des W.	Melb. N.A.
Nick C.	N.A.
Phil B.	NA WA.
John Beckett	Melb.
John Mitchell	F.A. MELB
James	F.A. MELB
Ruthless	FA FOREST HILL
Alan M.	FA FOREST HILL
J. Lonsbury	FA FOOTSCRAY
L. Hooker	FA FOOTSCRAY
CHRIS DAVID	NA (MELB)
Eric Eagle	N.A. MELB
Ch W Hall	Survey Hills
Charles D. Stacht	AA GALLERY
JOHN LOGAN	PERSONAL EMERGENCY SERVICE (PES)
DAVE	AA. N.A. MELB
Billy M	(Melb)
Steve B.	AA. N.A. (MELB)
RANE MARY	FA FOREST HILL
MARIE KANE	FA FOREST HILL
MAX KEAR	FA FOREST HILL
MAURSON KEAR	FA FOREST HILL
Sally App.	FA WILLIAMS TOWNS
Andrew Dawson	PANENNAN
Melissa Boudier	BELGRAVE
Nina	Melbourne (res)

2

ZACK C.	A.A. MELB.
GARY	A.A. MELB.
VAC	F.A. MELB.
ALAN + FREYA VALSA	MELBOURNE A.A. + N.A.
ZILZED SLACK	WILLOTON
Des A.	A.A. MELBOURNE
G. Green	Geelong
Rob Blair	Melb. N/A
Dennis M	N.A.
CHRIS V	OBSERVER
Nicky C.	A.A.
John F.	F.A. (yet again!)
Maria	Altona Collingwood

The attendance list for the first national convention

On the weekend of 31 October - 1 November 1981 the first Australian National Convention of NA was held at the back of Wesley House. It was attended by a handful of Victorian NA members along with visitors from Sydney and Perth as well as supporters from a number of other fellowships.