



Report to Areas B, C and D Southern Region - May 2005

The AATimes website and publications are published by AA members under guidelines approved by Areas B, C and D in the Southern Region of Australia. (See guidelines <http://www.aatimes.org.au/aboutus/>) The guidelines specify that the editor should make a regular report, so here it is.

The AATimes publishes AA meeting information and a calendar of events for groups in Victoria through these services -

- A Web site accessible via the internet
- Information accessible via WAP and iMode enabled phones and devices
- A regular Newsletter sent to subscribers via email
- Printable meeting Lists and Booklets downloadable from the web.

Domain name

The AATimes website was previously hosted by VicNet (a Victorian Government site that offers free web space to community groups) but as of April, it has been moved to its own domain- www.aatimes.org.au

It can also be found via these URLs www.aatimes.org or just aatimes.org

Finances

The domain name registration and web space has been paid for by donation from AA members. The cost is very small – domain registration and web hosting has been paid in advance for the next 12 total for a total cost of \$115.95

In this regard, we are self supporting and do not need to ask for donations from other members or for financial support from Areas. We do not need to hold a prudent reserve.

Web site

In April we made some changes to the page layout and simplified parts of the structure. This has made the pages less 'busy' and we hope has made it easier to navigate. The meetings lists page is now simpler and we hope easier to use. Any comments or suggestions for improvement are most welcome.

Newsletter

We currently have around 170 groups and individual members on our free subscriber list who receive the newsletter each Monday as well as updates. So that we comply with AA Traditions as well as Australian privacy requirements and the Australian Spam Act 2003 (<http://internet.aca.gov.au>), the subscriber email list is kept private and is held only on a single desktop machine, not a server. It is not shared with anyone else.

Meetings Lists/Booklets

There are 2 types of printable meetings lists which are available for download from the website - Single sheet lists and 16 Page booklets. They are updated each month with the latest changes. I have had good feedback about the single sheet lists. These can be printed double sided on one A4 page which is a lot easier than cutting and folding the 16 page booklets.

National Office Website Meetings list

I'm still maintaining the Victorian meetings listings on the National Office website.

Note also: This month the National Office have added extra contact numbers in the Victorian section of the "How to Contact Alcoholics Anonymous" page of their website. It now includes phone regional numbers for Bendigo, Geelong, Melbourne City and Shepparton.

Email addresses

Because we now have the new domain name, we are now able to offer groups a free email address if they would like. Groups can request an AATimes email address which will be in the format <groupname>@aatimes.org.au. They will be given a password and instructions on how to collect the email using a normal email client. For example, the Triangle group has an email address – triangle@aatimes.org.au and the Inner City District email address is innercity@aatimes.org.au

If any of the Areas, Districts or Groups would like to have one of these free addresses, please contact me on the phone number or email address below.

Mobile Phone access

WAP

The AATimes information – Meeting lists and Event Calender – is available on mobile phones with WAP capability. This has been working for 6 months on the Optus, Vodafone and Three networks but for a while there was a problem accessing this via the Telstra mobile phone network. The technical problem has now been overcome and Telstra users can access the AATimes WAP site as well.

The URL to access AATimes a WAP enabled mobile phone is:

<http://wap.aatimes.org.au>

iMode

Telstra is now marketing iMode which also allows users to access internet information via special iMode enabled handsets. This technology is very common in Japan and parts of Europe but has only very recently been introduced to Australia by Telstra.

World first! We believe that *we are the first region in the world to provide AA meeting information via iMode*. Since April this year, AATimes has been available on iMode enabled phones and can be accessed via this URL:

<http://i.aatimes.org.au>

WAP (Wireless Application Protocol) is a feature which enables people to view information from the internet via a mobile phone handset. Most newer mobile phones have this capability and it can be activated if you ask your service provider.

iMode is another protocol for mobile phone handsets which also allows mobile phone users to access information from the internet. It uses a different standard to WAP and is *only* available on special Telstra handsets.

Future plans

Now that we have full control over the website because it has been moved off Vicnet onto our own domain we will be able to make some improvements to the 'backend' to make easier for the editor to maintain. I'm developing new software that will allow maintenance of meetings lists and event calendar directly even simpler using database technology. It will mean, for example, that the calendar of events on the web page and via mobile phones will automatically update and leave out past events as each day passes. – One Day at a Time!

New Editor

I have now been the editor of the AATimes for just over two years and it is coming time to rotate off and make hand over to someone new. A new editor will be selected by the AATimes advisory committee comprising the Southern Region Trustee, representatives from Areas B, C and D and myself.

If you know any members with a willingness to do service, enthusiasm for computer technology and a commitment to AA traditions, please get them to contact me.

Yours in service,

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AATimes

Website: www.aatimes.org.au
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