

CONSTITUTION

NOWRA CHURCH OF CHRIST

April 2014

| Version | Amended |
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| 1.1 | Changes to 8.3 and 8.4 as per Church Meeting November 2011. |
| 1.2 | Changes to 8.7 and adding of 8.10 as per Church Meeting March 2014. |

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1 PREAMBLE

1.1 The Bible is the sole authority for all matters of faith and is the primary standard for conduct in the church.

2 NAME AND AFFILIATION

2.1 The church shall be known formally as "Nowra Church of Christ" or "the Church" in this document.

2.2 The Church shall be affiliated with the Conference of Churches of Christ in NSW.

3 OBJECTIVES

3.1 To glorify God through worship, instruction, fellowship, and evangelism.

4 MEMBERSHIP

4.1 The Church shall have both a Members Roll and a Supplementary Roll.

4.2 The Members Roll shall contain the names of persons who confess that Jesus is the Christ and is both Saviour and Lord, are endeavouring to live their faith day by day, and who are committed to the community of this church. Having applied for membership, such persons will be added to the Roll on the commendation of the Elders.

4.3 The application for membership of persons transferring from another church should, where possible, be supported by a letter of commendation from their previous church.

4.4 Members will be expected to consistently attend services of worship. A person may be removed from the Members Roll if they have not, without adequate reason, attended for a period of twelve consecutive Sundays.

4.5 Persons shall be removed from the Members' Roll by reason of death, transfer to another church, removal to another area, or request for removal in writing. Members who come under the discipline of the Elders may be immediately removed from the Roll and placed on the Supplementary Roll with a view to eventual restoration (see clause 9.6).

4.6 The Supplementary Roll shall contain the names of (a) Members who have moved from the district and who have not yet joined the fellowship of another Christian Church or are remote from a place of worship; (b) persons who have established a strong commitment to the Church; and (c) Members under the discipline of the Elders. Names shall be added to this roll on the initiative of the Elders.

4.7 A person transferring to another fellowship shall, upon request, be given a letter of commendation signifying their standing in the church.

5 AUTHORITY

5.1 The final authority for the transaction of all Church business shall be in the Church.

5.2 The Church shall delegate authority for all routine business to the Elders and their appointees. The Elders may delegate specific responsibilities. Major church policies and programs shall be referred to a meeting of Church Members, together with a recommendation for action.

6 CHURCH OFFICERS

6.1 The Church officers shall comprise: Senior Pastor and such Assistant Pastors as may be appointed from time to time, Elders, Deacons and such other appointees as may be deemed necessary.

6.2 The **Senior Pastor** shall, with the assistance of any Assistant Pastors, be responsible for the preaching ministry and shall exercise oversight over the various teaching activities of the Church. Further, they shall work within the Eldership to ensure pastoral care of the congregation.

6.2.1 The elected Elders shall be responsible for the process of calling a Senior Pastor. They may consult with such persons or committees as they see fit, including particularly those associated with the Conference of Churches of Christ in NSW. The Elders shall bring a recommendation to a specially convened Church Meeting.

6.2.2 The Elders' recommendation must be validated by at least 75% of the votes cast at a regular or Special Church Meeting. The Elders are then authorized to make all arrangements as may be necessary.

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6.2.3 The Senior Pastor shall, by virtue of office, be a member of the Church and an Elder. He shall, by virtue of office, have the right to a place on all Church and Church Group committees.

6.2.4 The Senior Pastor shall be accountable, in the first place, to the elected Elders and, finally, to the Church.

6.3 The number and responsibilities of **Assistant Pastors** shall be at the discretion of the Church and the Elders. The processes for the appointment of such persons shall be the responsibility of the Elders and shall be conducted as per clauses 6.2.1 and 6.2.2 above.

6.3.1 All Assistant Pastors shall, by virtue of office, be Members. The elected Elders may appoint Assistant Pastors to the Eldership, subject to the agreement of the Church.

6.3.2 Assistant Pastors shall be accountable, in the first place, to the Senior Pastor and the elected Elders and, finally, to the Church.

6.4 **Elders** shall be (a) Church members who are called and elected by the Church, (b) the Senior Pastor and (c) those Assistant Pastors who have been appointed to the Eldership. The Elders shall undertake the duties entrusted to them by the Church.

6.4.1 There shall be no prescribed number of elected Elders but a minimum of three is required to constitute an operational Eldership. Should the numbers fall below the minimum, the Elders have authority to continue to act pro tem but must fill any vacancies promptly.

6.4.2 Elders shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting for a period of three years. Any casual vacancy shall be filled at the first practicable business meeting (whether regularly scheduled or specially convened) and the appointment shall extend until the third AGM after the election.

6.4.3 The election of Elders shall proceed as follows:

(a) The Elders shall nominate persons whose present activities within the fellowship demonstrate those qualities needed to serve as Elders. The church shall be encouraged to present names for consideration. The final list of nominees shall be publicized in the church news letter and on the church notice board on the two consecutive Sundays immediately prior to the scheduled election.

(b) At the meeting, two electoral officers shall be appointed. A secret ballot shall then be conducted and the electoral officers shall announce the result to the meeting. Nominees must receive at least 75% of the votes cast to be elected.

6.5 The Elders shall guide the Church in spiritual and pastoral matters and shall appoint and oversee the work of all appointees. All such appointees shall be accountable, in the first place, to the Elders and, finally, to the Church.

6.5.1 A quorum shall comprise not less than half of the total number of Elders.

6.5.2 The Elders shall appoint an Administrator and Deacons to conduct the routine administrative business of the Church, and other persons as deemed necessary.

6.5.3 The Elders shall have the power to appoint Elders or other representatives to the committees of all Church Groups.

6.5.4 The Elders may appoint employees preferably from within the church membership to carry out specified day-to-day duties, including office and/or financial duties, subject to the approval of the church.

6.5.5 Independent auditor/s shall be appointed annually. They shall be required to certify the various Church accounts and the accounts of Church Groups.

6.6 The **Administrator** and other **Deacons** shall carry out tasks as allocated by the Elders and as specified in the Church Manual. They may be appointed for a fixed term, up to 3 years.

6.6.1 The **Administrator** shall oversee the work of the Deacons in the conduct of routine matters delegated by the Elders.

6.6.2 The **Finance Manager** shall be responsible for the control of all Church monies, the preparation of a budget, and the oversight of the financial activities of all Church Groups.

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6.6.2.1 The bank account shall be operated by the Administrator, Finance Manager, and two other persons selected by the Elders. Two signatures shall be required to operate the account.

7 CHURCH GROUPS

7.1 Organizations, herein called "Church Groups," may be established to facilitate specific ministries of the Church, often by working with specific age or interest groups.

7.2 The leaders of such Church Groups shall preferably be Church Members in good standing and their appointment shall be confirmed by the Elders.

7.3 The leaders of Church Groups which have a spiritual or pastoral orientation shall meet with the Elders quarterly.

7.4 The activities of all Church Groups shall be subject to the oversight of the Elders.

7.5 All properties and monies of such Church Groups are the property of the Church but separate records will be held for such funds. If a Church Group ceases to function, the Elders may use its properties and monies in the ministries of the Church as they see fit.

8 CHURCH BUSINESS MEETING

8.1 The church year shall commence on July 1. The Annual General Meeting shall be held as soon as practical after this date but not later than August 31.

8.2 The agenda of the AGM shall include: election of Elders; reception and adoption of previous minutes, financial reports, ministry reports, the budget for the new year, notices of motion and general business.

8.3 Three Church Business meetings shall be held per year.

8.4 The agenda for Church Business Meetings shall be similar to that of the AGM.

8.5 Special Business Meetings, to discuss specified agenda item/s only, shall be called by the Elders as necessary or upon the Elders receiving a written request signed by at least one quarter of the current membership. A meeting must be called within 4 weeks of receiving such a request.

8.6 The time and date of all business meeting shall be announced in the Church's weekly news letter and at all services on the two consecutive Sundays immediately prior to the meeting. Agenda papers shall be available on the relevant Sundays and at the meetings.

8.7 Members must be at least 18 years of age to be eligible to vote. A quorum shall comprise one quarter of the current membership eligible to vote.

8.8 Written notices of motion, signed by at least one twentieth, but not less ten, of the current membership eligible to vote, shall be submitted to the Elders who shall include them on the agenda of the next Business Meeting.

8.9 In matters of extreme urgency, the Elders may call a meeting (to deal with that matter only) with one week's notice, subject to said meeting authorising the action before discussing the matter.

8.10 Absentee votes will be allowed if there is a valid reason for being unable to attend a church business meeting. Absentee Voting forms must be lodged with the Secretary of Elders no later than 4pm on the Friday immediately preceding the church business meeting.

9 CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE

9.1 The code of conduct for Pastors, elected Elders, all other officers, leaders and employees shall, at all times, be guided by the Bible (as per clause 1.1), the wording of this constitution, and the Church Manual..

9.2 All Pastors shall, as a condition of appointment, read, sign and act in accord with the Code of Conduct issued by the Conference of Churches of Christ in NSW.

9.3 The Elders shall maintain a current Church Manual which describes the primary responsibilities of all church officers, appointees and those who work with them so that they carry out their duties in such a way that both the

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objectives of the Church (as defined in clause 3 above) and the various legal obligations (as expressed in State and/or Federal law) are met.

9.4 A complete copy of the Manual shall be provided to all Elders. Relevant sections shall be provided to individual persons according to their duties and responsibilities. A copy of the Manual shall be available for inspection by ordinary members of the Church.

9.5 Every Member has the right to present written and signed complaints to the Elders, based on sound Biblical or ethical grounds, against any Pastor, Elder, Deacon or member.

9.5.1 The Elders shall carefully investigate any such complaint, in particular speaking to both parties, before making any decision. Any disciplinary action should aim to eventually restore the offending party to full fellowship. Discipline may involve counselling or removal from the Members Roll.

9.6 Should conflict arise within the fellowship, the Elders shall attempt to resolve the matter, calling on the Conference of Churches of Christ in NSW if necessary.

10 AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

10.1 The constitution shall only be altered upon a properly presented notice of motion being passed by at least 75% of the votes cast at a properly constituted meeting.

10.2 Notices of motion regarding any proposed change to the constitution shall be submitted to the Elders in writing and signed by at least one twentieth, but not less than ten, of the current membership eligible to vote. The Elders shall take the proper action to present such items promptly to a Church Meeting .

11 CHURCH PROPERTY

11.1 All property, real and personal, belonging to the Church shall be vested in the Churches of Christ Property Trust under the provisions of the Churches of Christ in NSW Incorporated Act, 1947.

11.2 Neither the church building nor its properties shall be used for other than Church purposes unless agreed by the Administrator or the Secretary to the Deacons.

11.3 In the event of the closure of the Church, the Members shall resolve to give instruction to the Trustees of the Churches of Christ Property Trust to distribute the assets of the Church according to the wishes of the Conference of Churches of Christ in NSW.