



WOLLONGONG
BAPTIST CHURCH

CONSTITUTION AND HANDBOOK OF PROCEDURES

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PART 1 – CONSTITUTION

1. NAME OF CHURCH

The name of this church shall be Wollongong Baptist Church.

2. STATEMENT OF BELIEFS¹

2.1 THE NATURE AND UNITY OF THE GODHEAD

We believe in one God, eternally existing in three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (the Godhead²), who know, love, and glorify one another. This one true and living God is infinitely perfect both in his love and in his holiness. He is the Creator of all things, visible and invisible, and is therefore worthy to receive all glory and adoration. Immortal and eternal, he perfectly and exhaustively knows the end from the beginning, sustains and sovereignly rules over all things, and providentially brings about his eternal good purposes to redeem a people for himself and restore his fallen creation, to the praise of his glorious grace.

2.2 THE DEITY AND HUMANITY OF CHRIST

Jesus Christ as the second Person of the Godhead² is eternally one with God the Father of whose person and glory Jesus is the accurate expression. To become human He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He is truly God and truly human, existing in one person and without sin.

2.3 THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Godhead², is eternally one with the Father and the Son, yet He is sent by them to achieve the divine purpose in the world and in the Church.

2.4 THE DIVINE INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES

The Scriptures, consisting of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, written by the people of God inspired by the Holy Spirit, are the Word of God. These writings are utterly authoritative and without error in the original texts, complete in their revelation of his will for salvation, sufficient for all that God requires us to believe and do, and final in their authority over every domain of knowledge to which they speak.

¹ Note: Our Statement of Beliefs has been based on the Association of Baptist Churches of NSW and ACT Statement of Beliefs, as adopted by the 1979 Assembly, amended by the 2003 Assembly and further amended by Wollongong Baptist Church.

² Or Trinity

2.5 THE SINFULNESS OF PEOPLE

People were made in the image of God and for fellowship with God. By transgression of God's command humankind fell from fellowship with God and their nature was corrupted. As a consequence all people are spiritually dead, under Satan's dominion and control, and subject to God's wrath and condemnation. Therefore, apart from God's grace, people are helpless and hopeless in every respect whether physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually.

2.6 CHRIST'S ATONEMENT FOR HUMAN SIN

In order to redeem people from the guilt, penalty and power of sin, Jesus Christ became human and died a sacrificial death as our representative substitute. By His resurrection, God's acceptance of His atoning death was demonstrated. This atonement is sufficient and effective for God's people. The sinner is justified and reconciled to God, not through any personal merit, but solely on the basis of God's gracious gift of salvation in Jesus Christ received through repentance and faith.

2.7 THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The ministry of the Holy Spirit is necessary for the acceptance of God's provision of salvation. In bringing about spiritual re-birth as God's children, the Holy Spirit convicts sinners of their sinfulness, leads them to personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, thereby bringing them to fellowship in Christ. Working within the life of believers the Holy Spirit witnesses to their relationship with God, leads into all truth, bestows gifts for effective service and produces growth in Christ-like character for holy living.

2.8 THE CHURCH

The Church is the body of people whom God has separated from the world through faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour. All regenerate persons are members of the universal Church of God which takes local form wherever groups of believers unite for worship, fellowship and service in accordance with scriptural principles. Through the priesthood of all believers Christ has equipped every local church to make disciples of all nations. God calls individuals to positions of oversight and leadership or to special ministries. The Church recognises such by ordaining pastors, commissioning missionaries, appointing elders, deacons and other leaders, following New Testament practice. The Church is distinguished by her gospel message, by her sacred ordinances, her discipline, her Great Commission, by her members' love for one another and for the people of the world and, above all, by her love for God.

2.9 THE BAPTISM OF BELIEVERS BY IMMERSION

Baptism is a commandment of the Lord Jesus Christ but not a requirement for salvation. It is a public declaration of a person's faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. In accordance with the New Testament it should be administered by total immersion which symbolises the believer's identification with Christ in death, burial and resurrection. Baptism also symbolises the washing away of sins and the believer living and walking in newness of life, having died to sin and having been made alive to God.

2.10 THE COMMUNION

The observance of the Lord's Supper, instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ, is to be practiced with the elements of bread and wine by believers in Christ until the end of the age. It commemorates and declares our thanks for the Lord's atoning and substitutionary death. The celebration of the Lord's Supper expresses our fellowship with and in the Lord Jesus Christ as members of the Body of which He is the Head.

2.11 THE RETURN OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

At the end of this age, according to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally, bodily and visibly in His glory to the earth. The full consummation of the Kingdom of God awaits His return.

2.12 THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

At the end of the age, there is to be a resurrection both of the righteous and the unrighteous. After death people's bodies return to dust, but their spirits return immediately to God - the righteous made perfect in holiness, received into paradise and taken consciously into the presence of Christ and the unrighteous to be reserved for the judgment.

2.13 REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS IN A FUTURE STATE

God has appointed a day of final judgement for the world. On that day believers will be presented faultless before God by the obedience, suffering and triumph of Christ, all sin purged and its corrupting effects forever banished. Those judged righteous, in their resurrected and glorified bodies, will receive their reward and will dwell forever in the new heaven and the new earth with the Lord. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment.

3. THE EMPHASIS AND AIMS OF THE CHURCH

3.1 The vision of Wollongong Baptist Church is:

To be a Bible based, mission oriented, multicultural community of Christ's disciples.

3.2 The mission of Wollongong Baptist Church is:

To know Christ and to make Him known.

To fulfil this mission, the Church adopts as our objective the desire to glorify God through:

- The **edification** or building up of believers among our congregations by the regular assembling for corporate, public worship, to teach and respond to God's word in prayer and praise, and to administer the ordinances of communion and baptism. (Heb 10:24-25; 2 Tim 3:16-4:2; Col 3:16; 1 Cor 11:23-26; Matt 28:19)
- **Evangelising** non-believers by proclaiming the gospel, so that God might draw people into a saving relationship with Himself through faith alone in Christ alone. This sharing of the good news will be promoted in the Wollongong community, including through cooperating with other local churches wherever possible; and throughout the nation and wider world through the active support of mission work. (Matt. 28:17-20; 2 Cor.5:18-21; Eph 2:8-9; Acts 1:8; Col 4:3-4)
- **Discipling** all who come to faith in the Lord Jesus through teaching God's word. This equipping and training will aim to encourage active spiritual growth, including a regular prayer life, so that everyone may grow to maturity in Christ, and use their spiritual gifts in service of the church, under the guidance of the indwelling Holy Spirit. (Matt 28:18-20; Col 1:28; John 14:16-17)
- **Building our church community**, so that all who attend might have a strong sense of belonging to the body of Christ, as expressed through our local church. We seek to grow together in love, and to maintain the unity of the body; and (1 Cor 12:12-20; Rom 12:4-5; Eph 4:11-16)
- **Using the resources** that God has given us wisely, that we might further the ministry of the gospel, care for our church family, and seek to assist those who are in need beyond our church family. (Phil 4:15-18; Rom 15:24; Gal 6:9-10)

4. THE ORDINANCES OF THE CHURCH

4.1 BAPTISM

Persons giving clear evidence of commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ and prepared to accept their place in the body of Christ may be baptised by full immersion³.

4.2 THE COMMUNION

The Lord's Supper shall be observed regularly and all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ shall be invited to take part⁴.

5. MEMBERSHIP

5.1 PURPOSE OF MEMBERSHIP

All who genuinely commit to the church in Christian fellowship are spiritual 'members' of the church, through Christ. Formal church membership recognises those members over 18 years of age who wish to formally commit to the responsibilities that come with belonging together in Christ, loving one-another in community, being taught and pastored in the gospel, partnering in the task of mission, and sharing in governing the affairs of the church.

Such formal members shall be persons who give evidence of a sincere profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and agree to hold to and support the doctrines set forth in this Constitution under the heading "Statement of Beliefs"⁵.

Members of the church are called to express:

- a. Devotion to Christ, affirming:
 - their trust in the gospel of salvation by God's grace alone in Christ, and
 - a readiness to live their life in thankful service of Christ.
- b. Devotion to Christ-centred community, affirming:
 - the preciousness of the local church to God, and

³ See Section 2.9.

⁴ See Section 2.10.

⁵ See Section 2.

- a readiness to honour the pattern of loving relationships described in the New Testament.
- c. A commitment to Christ-centred mission, affirming:
 - the priority of gospel mission in the plans of God, and
 - a readiness to gladly serve together in the cause of the gospel.

5.2 COVENANT AFFIRMATION

Each member shall be encouraged to make, honour and, from time to time, re-affirm this covenant with the gathered Church:

Church Covenant

Having been brought by God's grace to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, we now, depending upon the Holy Spirit, establish this covenant with one another.

In all we do, we will aim to glorify and enjoy the God of our salvation, from whom and through whom and to whom are all things: to Him be all glory forever!

(1 Cor. 10:31; Rom. 11:36)

We will eagerly maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace by walking together in love and in the Spirit, and by putting away all bitterness, anger, and injurious speech.

*(Eph. 4:3; Gal. 5:16, 25;
Eph. 4:29, 31)*

With humility and gentleness, patience and love, we will be kind to one another, tenderhearted, encouraging and facilitating any necessary reconciliation, forgiving each other, even as God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven us.

*(Eph. 4:1-2; Luke 17:3;
Matt 18:15-17; Col. 3:13;
1 Thess. 5:11;
1 Pet. 1:22)*

We will carry each other's burdens, praying for each other, rejoicing with those who rejoice and weeping with those who weep.

(Gal. 6:2; Rom. 12:15)

We will encourage personal reading of the scriptures and the practice of a regular personal prayer life. We will train our children in the instruction of the Lord, seeking to walk in a way that adorns the gospel of Christ before our family, friends, and neighbours.

*(Ps 119:105; 2 Tim 3:15;
2 Tim 2:8; Eph 6:18;
Prov. 22:6; Eph. 6:4;
1 Pet. 3:1)*

We will strive to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, as we wait for the blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

*(Gal. 5:22-24; Titus 2:12;
1 Pet. 1:14)*

We will not neglect to gather together, but will support and treasure the biblical preaching of the whole counsel of God, praying together, the faithful observance of baptism and the Lord's Supper, and the loving exercise of church discipline.

*(Heb. 10:25; 2 Tim. 4:2;
Acts 2:38; 1 Cor. 11:26;
Matt 18:17; 1 Cor. 5:13)*

We will contribute cheerfully and generously to the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the advancement of the gospel both to our neighbours and the nations.

*(Matt. 28:19; Luke 12:33;
2 Cor. 9:7)*

We will, when we move from this place, unite as soon as possible with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

In all these things, we rely on our God who has made a new and everlasting covenant with us.

(Jer 32:38-41)

In and because of Jesus we pray. Amen.

6. CHURCH GOVERNMENT AND ORDER

6.1 GOVERNING BODY

6.1.1 AUTONOMY

Recognising the headship of Jesus Christ and the leadership of the Holy Spirit, the Church shall be governed in accordance with the fundamental Baptist principle of autonomy of the local church and congregational government. That is, the decision-making of this Church shall be vested in the body of believers who comprise its membership.

6.1.2 MEMBERS MEETING

The Members' Meeting is the governing body of the local church, the Lord Jesus Christ being recognised as the Head of the Church.

6.2 THE PASTORATE

- a. The Pastor(s) of the Church shall be Christian men who have been baptised as believers by immersion.
- b. The Pastor(s) will provide leadership in all areas of the Church's ministry, including:
 - Preaching and teaching the Bible
 - Pastoral care of those attending the congregations of the Church
 - Local and global mission
 - The regular services of the Church
 - The Eldership and its responsibilities.
 - The Pastorate, led by the Senior Pastor (if any), will be the responsibility of the Pastor(s) and any other persons appointed to pastoral ministries.

6.3 ELDERS

- a. The Eldership shall be comprised of the Pastors of the Church and men elected to be Elders. The Elders are responsible for the spiritual oversight of the Church, being called to live Godly lives as an example to all, caring and praying for the church community, directing the affairs of the church and guarding the truth.
- b. The Eldership will also be responsible for:
 - Teaching, care and discipline in areas agreed upon between them and the Pastor(s)
 - Setting of church strategy and goals

- Co-ordination of Key Ministry Areas through appointment and encouragement of Key Ministry Co-ordinators
 - Helping the members to understand the Emphasis and Aims of the Church (see Section 3)
 - Working towards the implementation of the Emphasis and Aims of the Church (see Section 3)
 - Annual review of membership
 - Other matters referred to it by the Church
 - Any other matter mutually agreed upon from time to time through regular Eldership meetings.
- c. In the absence of all Pastors, the Elders will be responsible for the ongoing oversight of spiritual matters including preaching.
- d. Elders will be ex-officio members of the Diaconate.

Refer to Appendix A for qualifications for an Elder.

6.4 DEACONS

The Diaconate shall be comprised of men and/or women elected to be Deacons. The Church will elect Deacons to be responsible for:

- a. The practical outworking of Church decisions
- b. The maintenance and the development of Church property, facilities and equipment
- c. The practical administration of the Pastorate, including its personnel and ministries
- d. The administration of Church finances
- e. Assisting the Pastor(s) and Elders in aspects of spiritual ministry according to the gifts given them by the Holy Spirit and recognised by the Church.

Refer to Appendix B for qualifications for a Deacon.

6.5 KEY MINISTRY CO-ORDINATORS

Key Ministry Co-ordinators will be appointed by the Eldership to lead Key Ministry Areas within the church. They will meet at least annually with the Eldership, to be encouraged in their role, to report on their area and to pray with the Elders.

Where necessary, the Elders will be responsible for removing Key Ministry Co-ordinators from their role.

Refer to Appendix C for the role description for Key Ministry Co-ordinators.

6.6 AFFILIATION

As an affiliated church of the Association of Baptist Churches of NSW and ACT we will support their co-operative efforts to promote the gospel of Jesus Christ.

6.7 HANDBOOK OF PROCEDURES

The governance of the Church will be conducted in accordance with the “Handbook of Procedures”⁶.

⁶See Part 2.

PART 2 – HANDBOOK OF PROCEDURES

1. PREAMBLE

The following procedures are for guidance in the administration of the Wollongong Baptist Church.

The church shall conduct itself in accordance with the Constitution.

2. MEMBERSHIP

2.1 APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

- a. Application for membership may be made to the Secretary or a Pastor, who will then refer the matter to the Elders. Applicants will then meet with two persons decided upon by the Elders. They will discuss:
 - Their conversion experience.
 - Their spiritual growth.
 - Their current spiritual state.
 - Their understanding and support of the Church's Statement of Beliefs (including believer's baptism by immersion).
 - Their future role in the life and ministry of the Church.
 - The Constitution and Handbook of Procedures.

A full report on the applicant in relation to these issues shall then be prepared by an Elder and presented to the next Church Meeting for its consideration.

- b. In cases of believers recently baptised under the auspices of Wollongong Baptist Church, the requirement of the above mentioned meeting may be regarded as having been satisfied at the discretion of the Elders.
- c. In cases of transfer from another Baptist Church, the Secretary shall, in addition, seek a letter of transfer or commendation from that Church. This letter shall be considered, together with the report from the Elders, by the Church. If, however, a letter of transfer is not available, the application may be considered by the Church on the report from the Elders only.
- d. The applicant, if accepted at a Church meeting, should be publicly welcomed at the first suitable service following such meeting.

2.2 TYPES OF MEMBERSHIP

2.2.1 RESIDENT MEMBERSHIP

Resident Members are those members who are actively engaged in the work of the church or regularly attend the services of the Church or who, living in the district, are prevented by health or legitimate circumstances from activity or attendance.

2.2.2 NON-RESIDENT MEMBERSHIP

Non-Resident Members are those members who have moved from the district but who are still actively engaged in the work of the church or members who have moved from the district and are in the process of finding a new church home. This could include missionaries from the church who are working overseas or students at Bible College.

2.2.3 ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

Associate Members are those members who have withdrawn from involvement in the Church, who have not responded to encouragement to return and who have been removed from the Resident Roll. Such members, at the discretion of the Church, may be placed on an Associate Roll so that contact can be maintained with a view to restoring them to fellowship with the rest of the body. Both Rolls will be reviewed with revision if appropriate under Clause 2.3.2.

2.3 CESSATION OF MEMBERSHIP

2.3.1 REASONS FOR THE CESSATION OR WITHDRAWAL OF MEMBERSHIP

Membership may cease or be withdrawn for the following reasons:

- a. By transfer to another Baptist Church. If a Church member in good standing moves from the district and wishes to join another Baptist Church, such Church, upon request, shall be granted a letter of transfer or commendation. The Secretary shall be responsible for such letters and report such transfers to the next Church Meeting.
- b. **By personal request for removal of name.** If a Church member feels unable or unwilling to agree with the doctrine or policy of the Wollongong Baptist Church, such member may request the removal of his/her name from the roll. Such request will be referred to the Eldership and, thence, to the Church.
- c. **By resolution of the Church for failure of conduct, beliefs, etc.** Should any member become an offence to the fellowship by reason of unrepentant sin or by consistent breach of such member's commitment, the Church may by resolution remove his/her name from the roll. This shall only be done after the Elders have sought to bring that person to repentance and loyalty to Christ.
- d. By a member moving to a church of another denomination.
- e. Death of a Member.

23.2 REVISION OF ROLL

The Secretary will prepare each year a list of those members who have:

- a. Failed to participate in services of worship, without valid reason, for a period of six months or more; or,
- b. Moved away from the district.

In the case of a. above, if, after every reasonable endeavour has been made by the Elders to restore those members to fellowship, the Elders shall present to the Church a recommendation that the names of these members be removed from the membership of the Church and, as appropriate, placed on the Roll of Associates.

In the case of b. above, if it is unlikely that the member will return to the district in the short term, the Elders shall present to the Church a recommendation that the names of these members be removed from the membership of the Church

Admission and removal of members shall be by the vote of at least 75% of the members present and entitled to vote at a properly constituted Church Meeting.

2.4.1 RECONCILIATION OF DISPUTES/DISCIPLINE

Matters of dispute and discipline shall not be brought to the Church unless the parties concerned have first complied with such teaching as Matthew 18: 15-18; 1 Corinthians 6: 1-2; Matthew 5: 23-24.

3. ORDINANCES

3.1 BAPTISM

Baptism shall be carried out by members of the Pastoral Team, Elders or other persons approved by the Elders.

3.2 COMMUNION

Communion shall be carried out by members of the Pastoral Team, Elders or persons arranged by them. Those assisting must be persons clearly known to be committed to Christ and to the body of Christ.

4. MEETINGS

4.1 CHURCH MEMBERS' MEETINGS

- a. Church members' meetings (in this Part called "Meetings") shall consist of those persons registered on the Resident Members Roll and shall normally be held quarterly. Additional meetings may be convened by the Eldership or the Diaconate or upon requisition signed by not less than 10% of the resident members.
- b. Notice of any Meeting shall be given at services on at least the two Sundays prior to the meeting.
- c. The chairperson for Meetings shall be appointed by the Senior Pastor or, in his absence, a member of the pastoral team or, in the absence of a pastoral team, the Elders. The Senior Pastor may choose to chair the Meeting himself.
- d. The duration of any Meeting shall be decided by the members present. If business is not completed by the time decided upon (or by such extension of time as may be agreed upon by the members then present) the Meeting shall be adjourned to a date to be fixed by that Meeting.
- e. An Annual Meeting shall be held each year which shall:
 - Receive reports from Pastors, Elders, Treasurer, Secretary, Co-ordinators of Key Ministries (and other current Committees as required)
 - Conduct elections as set out below.
- f. Matters to be considered by the Meeting are:
 - Acceptance of Church goals and ministry strategies (such as the "Two Year Plan").
 - Reports of ministry areas of the Church.
 - Annual elections and appointment of newly created offices during the year.
 - Acceptance and removal of members.
 - Annual revision of rolls on recommendation of the Elders.
 - Acceptance of Annual Budget.
 - Appointment or removal of members of the Pastoral Team.
 - Acquisition, disposal mortgage or lease of real property and in this regard the voting age shall be determined by the Baptist Churches of NSW Property Trust Act 1984.
 - Expenditure outside the budget.
 - Appointment of delegates to the meetings of the Association of Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT.

g. Quorum for Meetings:

- The quorum at any Meeting shall be set by the members at least annually as a percentage of the current resident members roll, and the Diaconate will make the percentage recommendation to members.
 - If a quorum is not present after thirty minutes of the time appointed for the Meeting to commence, then the Meeting shall be adjourned to the same time and place the following week and the provisions of Clause 4b. as to notice shall not apply. However if a majority of those originally present so resolves, the said period of thirty minutes may lawfully be extended to such longer period as it shall agree and if a quorum is still not present after such longer period then the Meeting shall be adjourned as stated above.
 - Such adjourned Meeting shall be competent to deal with the matters adjourned notwithstanding the absence of a quorum excluding matters under clause 5.1.
 - Non-members may be invited to be present at and participate in the whole or any part of a Meeting but without the right to vote.
- h. All matters affecting the management or general interests of the church shall normally be submitted to the Secretary, Diaconate or the Eldership before presentation to the Church.
- i. Voting at Meetings shall be by voices or show of hands unless otherwise agreed. The Chair shall exercise one vote.
- j. Any person who has a financial or other pecuniary interest in a matter to be discussed in a Meeting shall retire from the Meeting during such part of the discussion as determined by a majority of members present.
- k. If a matter is declared confidential it shall be treated as confidential by all members until such time as such matter has been made public by a person so authorised by the Church, the Diaconate or the Eldership.

4.2 OTHER MEETINGS

- a. Other meetings may be convened from time to time for the efficient organisation of the church.
- b. Such meetings may include those for the Eldership, the Diaconate, Key Ministry Areas and other committees of the church.
- c. The Senior Pastor may, at his discretion, preside at all meetings of the church, Eldership, Diaconate and other committees.
- d. A quorum at meetings of Elders and Deacons shall be 50% of those eligible to attend and to vote.

5. PROCEDURES

5.1 APPOINTMENT OR REMOVAL OF PASTORAL TEAM MEMBER

- a. Each member of the Pastoral Team shall be appointed or removed by resolution of the Church, with the resolution receiving at least 75% of the votes of those present and entitled to vote.
- b. A quorum for appointment or removal of any member of the Pastoral Team shall be 40% of resident membership.
- c. Notice of the Meeting for the appointment or removal of a member of the Pastoral Team shall be distributed to resident church members at least two weeks before the meeting and must specify the purpose of the meeting. Notice shall also be given at all services on the two Sundays preceding such a meeting.
- d. A Pastorate Search Committee consisting of members appointed by the Church (and having a majority of elders) shall call for nominations. Any member of the congregation may make a recommendation to the Committee by submitting a name together with reasons supporting the recommendations, in writing, for discussion within the Committee.
- e. The Committee may advise the Association of Baptist Churches of NSW and ACT of the vacancy and seek advice and assistance from the appropriate denominational officer.
- f. Should more than one name come before the Committee, discussion will continue until agreement is reached regarding the approach to one person. A representative of the Committee shall communicate privately with this nominee, to ascertain his willingness to allow his name to be placed before the Church.
- g. Should this nominee be willing, his name shall be submitted to the Elders who if they approve shall present the recommendation to the Church. Only one name shall be before the Church at any one time.
- h. In the event of an adverse vote, or approach not being accepted, the above procedure shall be repeated until successful.
- i. The role of Pastor shall be open only to one who has been baptised as a believer by immersion.
- j. Condition of Appointment: The members of the Pastoral Team shall be appointed on the conditions negotiated between them and the Eldership in consultation with the Deacons and agreed upon by the Church at the time of the appointment. These conditions shall include agreement upon a reasonable time for a review of the current ministry of any member of the Pastoral Team. At least two months' notice of termination by either the

Pastor (or Pastoral Team Member) or the Church will be required, to take effect not earlier than twelve months from the commencement of ministry unless otherwise agreed upon between the Church and the Pastor.

- k. Stipend and allowances will be reviewed at least annually by the Diaconate who will then bring recommendations to the Church.
- l. Upon attaining the age of sixty-five years a Pastor shall retire except, however, that he may remain in office after that age by annual vote at a Church Meeting. Such a vote must be at least 75% of those present and entitled to vote.

5.2 CHURCH OFFICERS

5.2.1 ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The officers of the Church shall consist of Pastor(s), Elders, Deacons (including Secretary and Treasurer) and such other offices that the church may establish from time to time. Such officers will attend to the affairs of the Church within the framework of the Constitution and Handbook of Procedures, and are responsible for the adherence to Legislation and Regulations that are in force from time to time.

Election of officers and all Church appointed positions shall be conducted at the Annual Meeting and appointments shall be for a term of two years unless otherwise provided. Appointees may be reappointed by the Church subject to their consent.

To be elected, a candidate for any office must receive at least 75% of the votes of those present and entitled to vote.

When the number of candidates for an office renders it impossible for nominees to obtain the required 75% of the vote of those present and entitled to vote, a further vote shall be taken as follows:

- The Chairman and Secretary, will recommend to the meeting the number (only) of candidates with the least votes to be eliminated from the list before such further vote is taken. The names of these candidates will not be revealed until this decision is made by the meeting.
- The Members shall vote on this recommendation.
- If the recommendation is accepted, the Chairman and Secretary will notify the meeting of the remaining candidates and a further vote shall be taken.

If a vacancy occurs during the term of any office or appointment, the person appointed to that vacant office shall be appointed for the remainder of the term of the person replaced.

Voting for Church appointed positions shall be by ballot.

Anyone elected to an office may be removed from an office by a simple majority of the Members present and entitled to vote.

5.2.2 ELECTION OF ELDERS

- a. The Elders shall nominate new Elders. After informing the Deacons, the Elders shall submit the nominations to the vote of the Church meeting.
- b. The role of Elder shall be open only to those male members who have been baptised as believers by immersion.
- c. Elders shall be appointed for a term of two years by rotation as to half their numbers.
- d. An Elder shall not be a Deacon.

5.2.3 ELECTION OF DEACONS

- a. The maximum number of deacons to be elected shall be determined at the members' meeting prior to each Annual Meeting.
- b. Nominees for the office of Deacon shall be male or female members of the Church.
- c. Deacons shall be appointed for a term of two years by rotation as to one half of the number elected.

5.2.4 THE SECRETARY

The Secretary shall by virtue of the office be a Deacon. The Secretary shall keep a record of all Deacons' Meetings and Church Members' Meetings, conduct correspondence and generally deal with the business matters of the Church. The Secretary shall also keep an accurate record of the names of all members, their addresses, date of admission and transfer or removal. The Secretary shall also present an Annual Report at the Annual Meeting of the Church members and arrange the Agenda for each Meeting in co-operation with the Elders.

An Assistant Secretary, who shall also be a Deacon, may be appointed to assist the Secretary in fulfilling these duties.

5.2.5 THE TREASURER

The Treasurer shall by virtue of the office be a Deacon. The Treasurer shall keep the financial records of the Church, receive monies for the Church and make all payments as directed by the Church. The Treasurer shall present a financial statement at each quarterly meeting of the Church, and the annual financial statement that complies with regulatory and Church requirements at the Annual General Meeting. If the annual financial statement cannot be completed in time for the AGM, the Treasurer will advise the meeting and present a preliminary financial statement at the AGM. The Treasurer will then present the annual financial statement at a church meeting at the earliest opportunity.

An Assistant Treasurer, who shall also be a Deacon, may be appointed to assist the Treasurer in fulfilling these duties.

5.2.6 NEW OFFICE

When a new office is contemplated the specific function of the office, together with nominations for the office will be considered and formulated by the Elders and Deacons.

Recommendations will be brought to the members at least two weeks prior to a Meeting at which the matter is to be considered.

5.2.7 NOMINATION OF OFFICERS

- a. In the case of Annual Elections, nominations for Officers shall be called for on at least four Sundays. Nominations for all positions shall close two Sundays prior to the Annual Meeting. Nominations shall be in writing and delivered to the Secretary.
- b. A Nominating Committee shall be appointed at a meeting prior to the Annual Meeting. This Committee shall be comprised of one Elder, one Deacon and three other members (who themselves may be Elders and/or Deacons) as selected at that meeting. The Committee will receive names of nominees in writing from members and will be responsible for encouraging the Church to rise to its responsibilities in the matter and may, as members themselves, submit nominations.
- c. **Nominations** may be made by any member in writing direct to the Nominating Committee, signed by the nominator and nominee.
- d. **Casual Vacancy:** Nominations to fill the vacancy shall be brought to the next Meeting or in urgent cases to a special members' meeting called for that purpose. Nominations shall be called for on the two Sundays prior to such Meeting and nominations shall close on the Sunday before such meeting.

5.3 FINANCIAL MATTERS

- a. The ministry of the Church shall be supported and expenses met by voluntary contributions and any other method approved by members.
- b. Bank accounts may only be operated with the approval of the Treasurer in consultation with the Deacons.
- c. All signatories to such accounts must be approved by the Treasurer in consultation with the Deacons and a register maintained of all accounts, and their signatories, operated by organisations connected with the Church. The Treasurer shall also record the termination of the authority of any signatory.
- d. Cheques shall be signed on behalf of the Church by any two of the authorised signatories.
- e. The Financial Year of the Church shall end on 30 June each year.
- f. The Treasurer, and any Assistant Treasurer, will be assisted by the Finance Committee which the Treasurer will appoint and chair.
- g. The Finance Committee shall assist in the preparation of the proposed annual budget for submission to the appropriate Church Meeting.

- h. An appropriate qualified person or persons shall be appointed annually to confirm and report whether the annual financial statements meet regulatory requirements and any additional Church requirements as specified by the Members.
- i. The Church shall operate as a not-for-profit organisation and comply with Australian Government requirements for “Basic Religious Charities”.

5.4 ORGANISATIONS OF THE CHURCH

- a. The Elders shall establish Key Ministry Areas in order to help fulfil the Emphasis and Aims of the Church⁷.
- b. The Elders will appoint co-ordinators of the Key Ministry Areas of the Church⁸. The Elders will advise the Secretary of these appointments. Such appointments will also be advised at the next Meeting.
- c. Appointments of positions associated with Key Ministry Areas will be made by Key Ministry Co-ordinators subject to ratification by the Eldership.
- d. Key Ministry Area committees shall seek to implement their activities according to the aims and purposes of any plan or vision as adopted by the members.
- e. Committees may be formed from time to time to facilitate the work of the Church.
- f. Appointment of positions to other committees will be made by the Church or Deacons subject to ratification by the Elders.
- g. The Senior Pastor, members of the Pastoral Team, Elders and Secretary shall be eligible to attend all meetings of Church committees. The Senior Pastor, or a Pastoral Team member in his absence, shall be notified of all such meetings.

⁷ See Wollongong Baptist Church Constitution, Section 3.2.

⁸ As per Wollongong Baptist Church Constitution, Section 6.5.

6. PROPERTY MATTERS

6.1 TRUSTEES

- a. The Trustees of the Church real property shall be the Baptist Churches of New South Wales Property Trust.
- b. In the event of the church being dissolved, all property, assets and monies which remain after such dissolution and the satisfaction of all debts and liabilities shall be dealt with in accordance with the Baptist Churches of NSW Property Trust Act 1984.

6.2 PROPERTY

Church buildings and facilities shall not be used or occupied by persons or organisations for any purpose except where prior consent has been obtained from the Church Secretary who may give such consent in accordance with decisions and written guidelines laid down by the Church.

In order to satisfy the requirements of the Baptist Union Incorporation Act 1919 and the Baptist Churches of NSW Property Trust Act 1984, only persons who have been baptised by immersion are entitled to vote on a resolution concerning property⁹.

6.3 INSURANCE

Adequate insurance shall be effected on all Church buildings and property. The Treasurer shall effect such other insurances as he or she deem advisable after consultation with the Diaconate.

⁹ See Section 42 of the Baptist Churches of NSW Property Trust Act 1984.

7. NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING FELLOWSHIPS

7.1 RELATION OF NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING FELLOWSHIPS TO THE MAIN BODY OF THE CHURCH

- a. Any non-English speaking fellowship or group under the auspices of the Church will be encouraged to constitute itself as soon as possible as a distinct congregation of the Church and come under the counsel of the Church.
- b. A non-English speaking fellowship or group that has agreed to constitute itself as a distinct congregation of the Church will:
 - Adopt and adhere to the Wollongong Baptist Church Statement of Beliefs¹⁰ in the teaching and practices of the congregation.
 - Accept and implement the Wollongong Baptist Church Emphasis and aims of the Church¹¹.
 - Actively work towards the establishment of a leadership team, and have regular discussions with the Senior Pastor and the English service's eldership to ensure accountability.
- c. While provision will be made in an ongoing way to cater for the ethnic distinctiveness of any such fellowship, encouragement will be given to cross cultural activities for the enhancement of fellowship and mutual edification.
- d. Leaders of non-English speaking congregations or fellowships will meet with the Elders at least annually to report on progress with regard to point b. (above) and the spiritual health of the congregation or fellowship.
- e. Any non-English speaking congregation or fellowship that desires to employ a pastor, must seek counsel from the English service's eldership, and ultimately bring the name of any proposed pastor to a quarterly church meeting to be voted on by the members.
- f. All non-English speaking congregations or fellowships must abide by Wollongong Baptist Church's child protection provisions, as outlined in Section 8 and appendices D and E of our Handbook of Procedures.

¹⁰ See Wollongong Baptist Church Constitution, Section 2.

¹¹ See Wollongong Baptist Church Constitution, Section 3.

8. SAFE CHURCH

Wollongong Baptist Church is committed to providing places, services and programs that promote physical, emotional, and spiritual health and safety and model the love of Christ to all whom we have contact with, particularly children, young people and vulnerable adults. The church regards this as a solemn duty to God and to each child and to the parents and family of each child. It is also a joyful privilege to share in the spiritual training, health, social development, safety and general welfare of each child.

In the interests of children and consequent upon our acknowledged duty of care to them under God and with the desire to maintain a good reputation for God's church, we require and expect members and adherents:

- a. To be ever watchful and alert to improper and inappropriate behaviour to any child, young person, or vulnerable adult, and
- b. To report any suspect conduct to a leader for action.

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (the Royal Commission) drew on its findings, extensive research, and consultation on what makes institutions a safe place for children and recommended ten Child Safe Standards:

1. Child safety is embedded in institutional leadership, governance, and culture
2. Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously
3. Families and communities are informed and involved
4. Equity is upheld, and diverse needs are taken into account
5. People working with children are suitable and supported
6. Processes to respond to complaints of child sexual abuse are child focused
7. Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training
8. Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur
9. Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved
10. Policies and Procedures document how the institution is child safe

Arising out of our strong commitment under God to the welfare of children, young persons and vulnerable adults under our care, and our acknowledgment of the recommendations from the Royal Commission, WBC has adopted the WBC Safe Church Policy (see Appendix D) and the WBC Code of Conduct (see Appendix E). In compliance with the requirements of the NSW Child Protection (Working With Children) Act 2012 and the NSW Child Protection (Working With Children) Regulations 2013. This policy is to assist the church in the implementation of the ten Child Safe Standards at WBC and thereby enhance the safety of our interactions with children, young people, and vulnerable adults.

9. ALTERATIONS TO THE CONSTITUTION OR HANDBOOK OF PROCEDURES

Any proposed alteration or addition to the Constitution or Handbook of Procedures shall be given in writing as a Notice of Motion to the Secretary which shall be distributed to members not less than three months (as regards the Constitution) or one month (as regards the Handbook of Procedures) prior to the meeting at which same will be considered.

No such alteration shall be made except by a 75% majority of members present and entitled to vote.

APPENDIX A - QUALIFICATIONS FOR ELDERS

According to 1 Timothy 3: 1-7; 2 Timothy 2:24; and Titus 1:6-9.

- a. Blameless and above reproach.
- b. Upright, holy and disciplined.
- c. If married, husband of one wife.
- d. Temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable.
- e. Able to teach.
- f. Not given to drunkenness.
- g. Not violent but gentle; not quarrelsome.
- h. Not overbearing; not quick-tempered.
- i. Not a lover of money, not pursuing dishonest gain.
- j. Loves all that is good.
- k. Manages his own family well, his children being obedient and respectful.
- l. Not a recent convert.
- m. Has a good reputation with outsiders.
- n. Holds firmly to the trustworthy message.
- o. Capable by sound doctrine to encourage and refute.

APPENDIX B - QUALIFICATIONS FOR DEACONS

According to 1 Timothy 3: 8-13

- a. A deacon must first be tested.
- b. Worthy of respect.
- c. Sincere.
- d. Not given to drunkenness.
- e. Not greedy for dishonest gain.
- f. Holding to the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience.
- g. If married, a faithful spouse.
- h. Managing their children and family well.

APPENDIX C - KEY MINISTRY CO-ORDINATOR QUALIFICATIONS

Qualifications for Key Ministry Co-ordinators are as for Deacons¹².

KEY MINISTRY CO-ORDINATOR ROLE DESCRIPTION

Key Ministry Coordinators (KMCs) are responsible to the Church through the Eldership and will:

- a. Notify the Eldership of any proposed team members for ratification and establish a team.
- b. Visit an Elders' meeting at least once each year and provide an update on their Key Ministry Area.
- c. Submit a report to members (via the Secretary) prior to quarterly church meetings.
- d. Make appropriate communication to the other key ministry coordinators or deacons about any issues affecting their responsibilities
- e. Publish any information or matters of significance in the church bulletin.
- f. Attend joint meetings of elders, deacons and KMCs as required.
- g. Make prayer needs known.
- h. Notify the Senior Pastor, or a Pastoral Team member in his absence, of any committee meetings.

With regard to finances they will:

- a. Submit a draft budget to the Treasurer as part of the annual Church budget process.
- b. Manage any spending within the final budget allocation.
- c. Ensure spending above the annual budget does not occur without agreement from the Treasurer.

¹² See Appendix B.

APPENDIX D – SAFE CHURCH POLICY

1. PURPOSE

Wollongong Baptist Church (WBC) is committed to the physical, emotional, and spiritual safety and wellbeing of children and young people involved in church life, whether from within WBC or from the general community. As such, WBC will take all necessary steps to ensure church gatherings, children's programs, and other events and activities are safe for children. WBC is also committed to enabling appropriate mechanisms for responding to any allegations of abuse and/or neglect concerning those within the church community.

2. CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER

At each Annual General Meeting, the Church members shall appoint a Child Protection Officer, responsible for:

- Working with the leadership to monitor and report on child-safe ministry policy and practice;
- Working with the leadership to comply with legislated child protection screening and training for all volunteers and paid ministry workers;
- Maintaining confidential records related to child-safe ministry policy and practice;
- Reporting, where necessary, allegations of abuse to relevant statutory authorities;
- Working with the leadership to provide pastoral care in child protection situations.

A Child Protection Officer must be aged at least twenty-one years and must have satisfactorily completed recognised child-safe ministry training within three years of their appointment, or within three months after their appointment. A person appointed as a Child Protection Officer is taken to have been appointed for twelve months, though the leadership team may revoke this appointment with just cause.

3. CHILD PROTECTION CODE OF CONDUCT AND PROTOCOLS

Children and young people are valued and respected by WBC. As such, all members, employees, and ministry volunteers are required to abide by the **WBC Child Protection Code of Conduct**, which details expectations for appropriate behaviour. The Child Protection Officer shall work with the leaders of each children's or youth ministry to develop any additional protocols which may be relevant to the operational concerns of individual ministries.

4. COMPLIANCE WITH SAFE MINISTRY SCREENING

WBC recognises the need for leaders, volunteers, and other ministry workers to be appropriately screened prior to commencing their involvement in ministries involving children and young people. This is an expression of our concern for those to whom we minister, and complies with

the legislative requirements placed upon WBC as an employer and as a child-safe organisation. To this end, it is expected that, **prior** to their commencement in any children's or youth ministries, **volunteers**:

- Have attended WBC for a minimum of six months prior to involvement in children's or youth ministry;
- Provide a valid NSW Working With Children Check clearance number to the Child Protection Officer.

In addition to a valid NSW Working with Children Check, it is expected that, **prior** to the commencement of their position, **employees**:

- Provide a minimum of two personal references which specifically address the applicant's suitability to work with children and young people.

The Child Protection Officer shall maintain confidential records of screening of employees and ministry volunteers engaged in children's or youth ministry, including criminal history record checks and Working With Children Checks. These records are to be kept indefinitely.

5. CHILD PROTECTION TRAINING

The Child Protection Officer shall, in conjunction with the leadership, ensure that all employees and ministry volunteers engaged in children's or youth ministry (where those volunteers are over the age of eighteen years) complete recognised child protection training (such as the *Creating Safe Spaces* workshop) within three months of commencing in their ministry. This applies to those involved in such ministries on a regular basis and to those who may assist on an irregular basis. This training is to be refreshed every three years at a minimum. The Child Protection Officer shall maintain records of attendance at child protection training.

6. JUNIOR HELPERS

WBC recognises that ministry volunteers under the age of eighteen years may assist children's or youth teams in their ministry. The Child Protection Officer shall work with the ministry leaders of these teams to ensure that all volunteers under the age of eighteen years understand and observe the Child Protection Code of Conduct, and are supported and supervised at all times by an employee or ministry volunteer over the age of eighteen.

7. REPORTING SUSPECTED ABUSE

Reporting allegations of abuse or neglect to Family & Community Services (FaCS) is an important component in protecting children and young people. WBC has a legal mandate to report in cases where there is reasonable grounds to suspect that a child or young person (or a group of children and/or young people) are at risk of significant harm because of physical or sexual abuse, neglect,

or serious physical or psychological harm resulting from domestic violence.¹³ As such, this policy expects that:

- Any church attendee may report concerns about abuse to a church pastor or the Child Protection Officer who will in turn report as soon as practicable to FaCS (T: 132 111);
- Any ministry leader who has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child or young person is at risk of significant harm (according to the criteria outlined above) is **required** to report these concerns to either a church pastor or to the Child Protection Officer;
- In cases where an allegation concerns a church pastor, employee, ministry leader or volunteer, these are to be reported to the Child Protection Officer, who will liaise with the Baptist Ministry Standards Manager.

The church pastor and/or the Child Protection Officer will take timely and appropriate action in response to any reported suspicions of abuse or neglect. At a minimum, this means:

- Completing the Mandatory Reporters Guide (MRG);¹⁴
- Reporting the suspicions to FaCS (T: 122 627) if 'risk of significant harm' is indicated in the MRG;
- Contacting the Baptist Ministry Standards Manager, if necessary;
- Providing pastoral support to relevant parties.

Additionally, WBC has a legal obligation to investigate and report any allegations against employees or volunteers, or where such employees or leaders have been found to have engaged in sexual misconduct with serious physical assault of a child or young person.¹⁵ In these cases, the Child Protection Officer shall contact the Baptist Ministry Standards Manager in the first instance and accept any and all guidance regarding conducting a workplace investigation and involving statutory child protection authorities (including the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian).

¹³ As defined in S24, Children and Young Persons (Care & Protection) Act 1998

¹⁴ Online at http://www.keepthem safe.nsw.gov.au/reporting_concerns/mandatory_reporter_guide

¹⁵ Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012

APPENDIX E - WBC CODE OF CONDUCT

1. PURPOSE

This Code is intended to help ensure the safety, welfare, and wellbeing of all children and young people involved in the life of Wollongong Baptist Church (WBC) by identifying appropriate behaviour and practices. All attendees, employees, and ministry volunteers are expected to abide by this Code, and to keep one another accountable in doing so. Violations of this Code are to be reported to a church Pastor and/or to the designated Child Protection Officer.

2. RESPONSIBILITY OF PARENTS

When families attend a WBC event where children are not involved in a scheduled children's or youth activity, parents and carers remain fully responsible for their own children. When parents and carers leave their child in the care of WBC ministry leaders for the purpose of a children's or youth activity, they must ensure that they can be contacted at all times by ministry leaders.

Furthermore, parents and carers must take all reasonable steps to ensure their child behaves appropriately whilst participating in a WBC children's or youth activity. Should a child's behavior be considered dangerous, disruptive, or otherwise inappropriate by ministry leaders, the parents of that child will be contacted and ministry leaders will work with them to resolve the situation. The child's continuing participation in the activity will depend on a satisfactory resolution being reached.

3. CARING FOR THE CHILDREN OF OTHERS

Attendees, employees and volunteers at WBC are to comply with the following:

CODE OF CONDUCT

DO

- Be a positive role model for children and young people.
- Treat children and young people with respect.
- Carefully plan all activities and programs to provide safe experiences.
- Respect the privacy of participants and their families, exercising discretion in the handling of any sensitive information.
- Make every effort to obtain parental consent before providing transport to a child or young person.
- Avoid situations where you are alone with a child who is not yours. If this is required for pastoral reasons, do obtain parental consent beforehand **and** conduct the meeting in a public space where others can see you.
- Report any concerns you may have that a child or young person may be at risk of harm or abuse to a Pastor or the Child Protection Officer.

DO NOT

- Engage in any activity or behaviour with a child or young person that is likely to physically or emotionally harm them.
- Use any form of physical force or restraint, especially in behavioural management. An exception would be the use of restraint in situations when a child is in immediate danger, or is causing danger to themselves or others.
- Initiate any form of physical contact with children who are not in your care. In general, physical interactions with children should be guided by their needs and not the needs of the adult (e.g. a crèche helper may comfort a distressed child by picking them up).
- Seek to give children or young people individual gifts (e.g. food, toys) without first obtaining parental consent.
- Take a child or young person to your home, in a motor vehicle, or encourage meetings with them without parental consent and without another adult being present.

- Communicate with a child by electronic media (email, text message, picture message, social media, Skype, etc.) without parental consent. One-to-one interactions with a child through these media are generally inappropriate.