

Caringbah Baptist Church Constitution

PREAMBLE

In adopting the following constitution the Church recognises that the Bible contains no binding system of formal church organisation. This means that:

- the Church should be encouraged, after due consideration, to alter, delete or replace any part of this constitution (except the doctrinal basis) in order to suit changing circumstances.
- the use of terms found in the New Testament to designate offices in this constitution does not imply that these offices are identical to the New Testament offices or that the practice of the early church is binding on subsequent generations.
- this constitution does not outline the principles of community life at CBC. These are expressed in the "Understanding Church Partnership" Course.
- where a Team Ministry exists, the term "Pastor" refers to the office of Senior Pastor

CONSTITUTION
Adopted February 1988
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TITUS 1: 5 - 9

The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you. An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless - not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.

1 TIMOTHY 3: 1 - 12

Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task. Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgement as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.

Deacons, likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons.

In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything.

A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well.

1. NAME

The name of the church will be Caringbah Baptist Church, hereinafter referred to as "the Church".

2. DOCTRINAL BASIS

2.1. THE GODHEAD

The existence in the one Godhead of three Persons - God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. He is infinite in power, wisdom, holiness and love.

2.2. THE SCRIPTURES

The divine inspiration and supreme authority of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, which are the infallible Word of God to us, written by human authors under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit.

2.3. THE DEITY AND HUMANITY OF CHRIST

The incarnation and virgin birth of the Lord Jesus Christ who is God the Son, and who in one Person is truly God and truly man.

2.4. THE SINFULNESS OF MAN

The fallen, sinful and lost estate of all mankind, the eternal existence of the soul and the resurrection of the body.

2.5. ATONEMENT FOR SIN

The efficacy of Christ's death as the only atonement for sin.

2.6. CHRIST'S RESURRECTION

The bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead and His ascension into heaven.

2.7. SALVATION

Justification by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour, and the eternal blessedness of the justified.

2.8. PUNISHMENT

The eternal damnation and separation from God of those who reject His provision for salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ.

2.9. THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The direct work of the Holy Spirit in the regeneration of persons, in their sanctification and in their preservation to the Heavenly Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ

- 2.10. THE RETURN OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST
The future personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 2.11. THE ORDINANCES OF THE LORD'S SUPPER AND BAPTISM
The two ordinances of the Lord Jesus Christ for believers, namely baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper.

3. OBJECTIVES

- 3.1. To promote the preaching of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and to teach and expound the whole Word of God.
- 3.2. To be involved in God honouring worship which is a mutual blessing, to administer the ordinances and to encourage individual worship in all believers.
- 3.3. To encourage Christian fellowship through each person's God given gifts and to serve the people of the community as God guides and enables us.
- 3.4. To foster missionary enterprise in terms of Christ's commission in Matthew 28: 19-20.
- 3.5. To inspire and maintain an active spiritual growth among members and adherents of the Church.

4. CHURCH GOVERNMENT

- 4.1. In accordance with the principles of local autonomy and congregational government, the body of believers who comprise the Membership of this Church has the power to manage its own affairs in a manner consistent with this constitution and subject to the headship of Jesus Christ.
- 4.2. GOVERNMENT AND PROPERTY – Trustee for all church property is Baptist Churches of New South Wales Property Trust.

5. MEMBERSHIP

- 5.1. All members must be persons who declare faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and hold the doctrines set forth in this constitution.
- 5.2. Upon Commitment to the Partnership Covenant, application for membership should be made through the Leadership (as in Clause 6.1.) and the applicant shall be provided with a copy of this constitution.

- 5.3 The Leadership shall appoint two Church members to visit each applicant for membership, and they will explain and answer questions on the constitution. They shall indicate the responsibility attaching to church membership including the contribution of each person's giftedness to the church and confirm the applicant's sincere profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and acceptance of the doctrine and practice of this church as set out in this constitution.
- 5.4 A written report of such visit shall be brought before the Leadership and if favourable, applicants will be accepted into membership.
- 5.5 Letters of transfer and/or commendation from other evangelical churches shall be taken into account.
- 5.6 Where matters of disagreement arise between members they should initially seek to resolve them between themselves in accordance with Matthew 5:23-24 & 18:15-17.
- 5.7 The Leadership will present to the church each year a list of the members whom it recommends be removed from the roll of members because of continued disassociation from the faith or fellowship of the church.

6. CHURCH LEADERSHIP

- 6.1 The Leadership shall be those, who having been baptised by immersion as believers, are elected to be servants of the Church through godly leadership in practical or spiritual ways according to their God given gifts in the following positions:
The Pastor, Secretary, Treasurer, Elders, Deacons. These people are empowered to transact all the business of the Church when acting within the framework of Church Policy which is determined at a Church members' meeting.
- 6.2. The Leadership shall be responsible for planning, implementing, monitoring and reporting upon the Church's activities in accordance with Church policy.
- 6.3. In appointing the Leadership, the Church shall have due regard for the qualities expected of church leaders as set out in such Scriptures as Titus 1: 5-9 and 1 Timothy 3:1-12.
- 6.4. All Leadership positions shall require a majority vote of seventy-five percent of the votes cast by those members present and voting to be appointed or removed from office. Where the Leadership person concerned is the Pastor, the Meeting shall have been called for that purpose.

7. PASTORATE

- 7.1. The Pastor's responsibilities shall include overseeing the work of the Church, including:
 - any full-time or part-time worker appointed to a team ministry
 - services of worship
 - other spiritual and practical ministries
 - administration.
- 7.2. The Pastor shall have the right to attend meetings of all auxiliaries and organisations of the Church with full voting rights.
- 7.3. The Pastor shall hold the doctrines set forth in this constitution.
- 7.4. The term of office of a Pastor may be terminated by three months notice in writing by either the Church or the Pastor.
- 7.5. The Leadership, subject to an indication of support from the Pastor, may appoint such persons as it chooses to a team ministry as either full time or part time workers. Before such appointments are made the Leadership shall draw up clearly defined terms of reference. Changes to these terms of reference can only be made by the Leadership.

8. SECRETARY AND TREASURER

- 8.1. These Offices shall ordinarily be filled at the Annual General Meeting. The term of office will commence on the day following the date of the election unless otherwise determined at the time of the election.
- 8.2. The Offices of the Church Secretary and Treasurer may be combined into one Office to be known as Church Administrator.

9. ELDERS

- 9.1. The election of Elders may take place at the Annual General Meeting or at such other times as the Leadership may determine. Elders must hold firmly to the doctrines set forth in this constitution so that they can encourage others in their faith by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it. They shall exhibit the characteristics set out in Titus 1: 5-9 and 1 Timothy 3: 1-12 and shall concern themselves with personal support of the Pastor, Pastoral team and the members of the Church. They shall care for God's people within the Church, and set an example to them.
- 9.2. The appointment of a member to serve as Elder should be for a three year term unless that person is unable any longer to perform the duties of their office.

10. DEACONS

- 10.1. The Church Diaconate will consist of those members elected by the Church to serve ordinarily for a two year term, with the nearest number below one half of the Diaconate retiring from office each year to ensure continuity.
- 10.2. The election of Deacons shall take place at the Annual General Meeting or at such other times as the Leadership may determine. The number of Deacons shall be determined at the meeting prior to the Annual General Meeting. Deacons shall have been in membership for at least twelve months and be over eighteen years of age.
- 10.3. The Deacons shall assist in the work of the Church and shall transact the routine business of the Church. They shall assist in the ministry of visitation and where discipline is considered necessary shall seek to restore and build up those with whom they have dealings. Such matters should be dealt with in a compassionate and concerned manner.

11. MEETINGS

CLASSES OF MEETINGS

- 11.1. Church members' meetings may be business meetings, special meetings and the annual general meeting.
 - 11.1.1. Business meetings shall be for the accountability to and setting of church Policy and shall occur at least twice per year.
 - 11.1.2. Special meetings may be convened at the discretion of the Leadership or on the written requisition of ten Members.
 - 11.1.3. The Annual General Meeting shall be held for the receiving of reports and for the appointment of the Leadership.

ADVERTISEMENT AND AGENDA

- 11.2. Church members' meetings will normally be advertised in the Church bulletin on the two Sundays preceding the meeting. The agenda will normally be available to Church members at services on the Sunday preceding the meeting, except in the case of any emergency meeting called pursuant of Clause 11, paragraph 1.2. (11.1.2.). The agenda will serve as official notice convening the meeting.

QUORUM

- 11.3. The quorum is the minimum number of Members who must be present at a meeting before it is valid. A quorum must be present throughout the meeting or the meeting will be invalid.
- 11.4. In the event of there not being a quorum, the meeting shall adjourn until a time fixed by the Leadership, but not more than fourteen days later. In the event that there is still not a quorum, the meeting shall be suspended.
- 11.5. The quorum for a Church members' meeting, except for the election to or removal from office of the Pastor or for alteration of the constitution, shall be twenty percent of the Membership ignoring any fraction.
- 11.6. The quorum for any meeting to discuss the Pastorate or alteration of this constitution shall be forty percent of the Membership ignoring any fraction.
- 11.7. Half the total number of the Church Leadership shall constitute a quorum of the Leadership.

MATTERS CONSIDERED AT MEETINGS

- 11.8. Confidentiality shall be observed in respect of all business classified confidential by a church members meeting, a Leadership meeting or a committee meeting.
- 11.9. No matter shall ordinarily be brought before a Church members' meeting unless details of same have been intimated to the Leadership at least two Sundays preceding the Church members' meeting.
- 11.10. Matters of major policy will not be discussed at a Church members' meeting unless the item has been specifically listed on the notice convening the meeting. Motions failing to be accepted on the agenda by the Leadership may be dealt with by either the provisions of Clause 11.1.2. or as a notice of motion for inclusion on the agenda of the next meeting. Matters of an urgent nature may be discussed, provided that they are indicated to the Secretary prior to the commencement of the meeting.
- 11.11. The person chairing a meeting may refuse to accept, or permit a vote on a motion which in their opinion may be divisive, unless required to do so by a seventy five percent vote of those members present and voting.

VOTING AT MEETINGS

- 11.12. Except as provided in Clauses 5.7. - 6.4. - 11.11. and 13.1., motions or amendments considered at a Church meeting will be decided by a simple majority of votes cast by those members present and voting.
- 11.13. The vote of the Church shall ordinarily be taken by voice or the showing of hands, but all voting in respect of appointment to, or removal from office of the Pastor or Church Leadership will be by ballot of those members present (whether or not the position is contested). Ballot shall also be used on other occasions as the Church may consider advisable. In the case of voting by secret ballot, votes deemed to be informal shall be considered as votes not cast.

NOMINATIONS FOR LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

- 11.14. Recommendations for Leadership positions must be endorsed by a meeting of the Elders of the Church. Once accepted, nominations must be in writing signed by two members and the nominee and given to the Secretary not later than two Sundays before the meeting at which they will be considered.
- 11.15. The list of nominations for each vacancy will normally be distributed to Members with the agenda on the Sunday preceding the Church members' meeting at which the election of the Leadership will take place.

TERM OF OFFICE

- 11.16. The term of office will commence on the day following the date of election unless otherwise determined at the time of election. In the case of the filling of a casual vacancy, the term of office of the appointee is the unexpired portion of his or her immediate predecessor in the vacated position.

12. CHURCH ASSETS

- 12.1. The assets and income of the Church shall be applied solely in the furtherance of its charitable purpose and the advancement of religion and no portion shall be distributed directly or indirectly to the Members except as bona fide reimbursement of expenses incurred on behalf of the Church.
- 12.2. In the event of the Church being dissolved, the amount that remains after such dissolution and the satisfaction of all debts and liabilities shall: a) in the case of property held in trust pursuant to the Baptist Churches of NSW Property Trust Act 1984, be dealt with in accordance with that Act and in particular Section 29 which said trusts provide that no portion shall be distributed directly or indirectly to the Members of the Church: b) in all other cases be transferred to the Baptist Union or to any other organisation with similar purposes and which has rules prohibiting the distribution of its assets and income to its Members and which is exempt from income tax.
- 12.3. To comply with the Baptist Churches of New South Wales Property Trust Act 1984 No4. Decisions relating to property held in trust shall be confirmed by a quorum of 20% of members who have been baptised by immersion.

13. CONSTITUTION

- 13.1. No alteration shall be made to this constitution except by seventy five percent majority vote of those members present and voting at a meeting convened for the purpose.
- 13.2. Any proposed alteration shall be given in writing as a notice of motion to the Secretary who shall distribute a copy to all members not less than one month before the date of such a meeting, except that proposed alterations to Clauses 2, 3 and 4 shall require such notice as to be not less than three months before the date of the meeting.