

Constitution of Caringbah Baptist Church

PREAMBLE

Adopted: 1 February 2026

This Constitution governs Caringbah Baptist Church, an unincorporated association and registered charity under the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) and a member of the Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT. The Church affirms the Bible as its ultimate authority.

This revision of the Constitution is to support the vision and mission of the church as it seeks to grow in response to God's leading and more effectively engage with our community. In particular, the redefining of the leadership is to provide a more effective structure for a growing church and to enable more transparency, accountability and church member engagement in our church ministries.

The Constitution will be modified to reflect changes in circumstances or reviewed, at least, every 5 years.

CONSTITUTION REVISIONS

Adopted February 1988

Revised June 1995

Revised 1998

Revised 2003

Revised November 2003

Revised November 2012

Revised February 2026

PART 1 – IDENTITY AND PURPOSE

1. Name

The legal name of the Church is Caringbah Baptist Church, herein after referred to as the “Church”.

2. Basis

The Church shall consist of members who confess faith in Jesus Christ, affirm the Foundational Beliefs (Appendix A) and agree to follow the processes outlined within this Constitution.

3. Purpose

The Church exists to:

- a. promote the preaching of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and to teach and expound the whole Word of God.
- b. be involved in God-honouring worship that is a mutual blessing, to administer the ordinances and to encourage individual worship in all believers.
- c. encourage Christian fellowship through each person's God given gifts and to serve the people of the community as God guides and enables us.
- d. foster missionary enterprise in terms of Christ's commission in Matthew 28: 19-20.
- e. inspire and maintain an active spiritual growth among members and adherents of the Church.
- f. actively reach out to the community with the good news of Jesus Christ.

PART 2 –GOVERNANCE, MEMBERSHIP AND LEADERSHIP

4. Government

Recognising the headship of Jesus Christ and the leadership of the Holy Spirit, the church shall be governed in line with the Baptist distinctive of the 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 compose its membership.

5. Membership

- a. All members must be persons who declare faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and hold the doctrines set forth in this constitution.
- b. Application for membership is made to a member of the Executive Team, whereupon two (2) members appointed by the Executive Team will meet with and discuss the applicant's testimony to faith in Jesus Christ, ongoing obedience to Him, responsibility as a member, the church's Constitution and the Church's various ministries. A written report of such discussion shall be brought before the Executive Team and if favourable, applicants will be accepted into membership.
- c. A Membership Roll will be maintained and reviewed at least annually.
- d. If active members fall below 20, the Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT must be notified.
- e. Members have no right to property and no liability for church debts.

6. Expectations of Members

All members are expected to:

- a. always endeavour, by God's grace, to remain true to their commitment to Jesus Christ as expressed in their public declaration of faith.
- b. join regularly in the worship of the Church.
- c. lead a life worthy of Christ in love, humility and peace, endeavouring to build each other up through encouragement, counsel and comfort.
- d. regularly pray and study the Scriptures in private and in groups.
- e. seek opportunities to use their gifts and abilities to serve God and others.
- f. proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ by word and by deed.
- g. express their gratitude to God, and their responsibilities as His stewards by contributing regularly and wholeheartedly to the financial support of this Church and the wider Kingdom ministry.
- h. Resolve any conflicts that may arise in accordance with Scripture and the Church's Dispute Policy, which aims for peace, forgiveness and restoration

7. Removal from Membership

A member's name shall be removed from the Membership Roll upon death or upon their request. In addition, a member's name may be recommended for removal by the Executive Team where the member has failed to uphold his / her responsibilities as a member. The Executive Team will present to the Church not less than annually, a list of the members whom it recommends be removed from the Membership Roll.

LEADERSHIP

The Church affirms the importance of both Godly oversight and executive management in leadership with separation between these roles. Leadership comprises the personnel in the Oversight and Executive Teams. The Church will appoint people to these roles with due regard for Biblical principles of leadership (1 Tim 3:1-12 and Titus 1:5-9).

8. The Oversight Team:

- a. Provides spiritual oversight, strategic vision and governance to ensure that the values, purposes and vision of the church are being implemented and reviewed.
- b. Holds the financial and other delegations on behalf of the Church and delegates those to the Lead Pastor and Treasurer according to the Church delegation policy.
- c. Members of the Oversight Team shall be mature Christians, and members of the Church for at least 2 years, appointed with due regard to the qualities of leadership set out in the Scriptures.
- d. It shall normally consist of two (2) Elders and four (4) Deacons elected by the Membership at a General Meeting for a 3-year term beginning on the day following the election, with the minimum being one elder (1) and three (3) deacons.

The terms of reference of this team are described in the attached supporting procedures.

- e. Nomination for members of the Oversight Team shall be called for at least four (4) weeks prior to the meeting and shall be returned to the Oversight Team, signed by the nominator, not later than two (2) weeks prior to the meeting.
- f. The names of all nominees endorsed by the Oversight Team shall be made available to Church members two (2) weeks prior to the election meeting.
- g. The Oversight Team may, under extenuating circumstances, including but not limited to Pandemics, postpone scheduled meeting up to 120 days, where such meetings would be detrimental to Members' safety or to comply with Government requirements. During this period, the Oversight Committee may act on behalf of the Membership to protect the interests of the Church and / or its Ministries.

9. Executive Team

The Executive Team consists of the Lead Pastor and other pastoral staff as appointed to the Executive Team. It implements Church policies and ministry strategy.

It is accountable to the Church through the Oversight Team. The Lead Pastor, in consultation with and support from the Oversight Team, may appoint such suitable persons to staff as either full-time or part-time workers in accordance with the Church's employment policy.

10. Elders

The Elders will meet with the Lead Pastor on a regular basis to pray, seek the will of God and deal with spiritual issues as they arise.

11. Secretary and Treasurer

The Church shall appoint a Public Officer to the position of Secretary and also a Treasurer. These appointments may or may not be members of the Oversight Team. Where the appointments are not members of the Oversight Team the positions shall report into the Oversight Team.

Each appointee shall be a mature Christian and a member of the Church for at least 2 years, appointed with due regard to the qualities of leadership set out in the Scriptures. The term of appointment will be one year.

The Secretary - shall ensure adequate records of Church Meetings are kept, provide a flow of information to the Church Members and generally deal with the business administration of the Church ensuring that the compliance requirements are met and maintained.

The Treasurer - shall lead the Finance Committee and oversee all matters pertaining to the Church's finances, ensuring that relevant information is communicated to the Church Members, and that proper accounting records are kept. The Finance Committee reports to the Oversight Team.

12. Church Members' Meeting

- a. At least two (2) meetings shall be held per year (one (1) being the Annual General Meeting), unless extenuating circumstances prohibit such a meeting (see Clause 8 (g)).
- b. Additional Special Church Members' Meetings may be convened by the Oversight Team, or upon a written request to the Oversight Team signed by 15% of the total number of Church members.

Such a meeting may be called for a particular purpose and only consider matters of which written notice has been given.

- c. A Notice of Motion shall be submitted in writing to the Chairperson of the Oversight Team one month prior to a meeting.
- d. Notice of all Church Members' Meetings must be given at the Church's public gatherings held during the two (2) weeks that precede the meeting.
- e. Church policies are determined and approved by Leadership (The Oversight and Executive Teams). For significant policies (relating to doctrine, theology, or governance), Leadership will seek God's guidance and consult with the membership in developing the policy. Adoption of any such significant policy shall occur through a majority vote at a Church Members' Meeting. All policies are to be made available on the Church website except where there are privacy or confidentiality issues
- f. The Oversight Team shall ensure that an Annual Report and Annual Financial Statement, which has been audited externally, are submitted to the Annual General Meeting.
- g. Ordinarily, the vote of the Church shall be taken either verbally or by a show of hands. However, elections and appointments shall be by secret ballot, and a ballot may be demanded on any other occasion by a majority of members present.
- h. All appointments to the Oversight & Executive Teams, Secretary & Treasurer positions require approval of 75% of members present at a Church members' meeting.
- i. Quorums are required for the following Church Members' Meetings:
 - Church Members' Meetings - 25% of Members
 - Special Members' Meetings - 40% of Members
 - Pastoral Appointments - 50% of Members
 - Constitutional Changes - 40% of Members
 - Dissolution - 50% of Members

Quorums are determined as the percentage of Members on the Membership Roll at the time the meeting was called. In the event that there is not a quorum, the meeting shall be suspended and rescheduled for a later date.

- j. Matters taken to the Church Members' Meeting for final resolution shall include:
 - i. The election of members to the Oversight & Executive Teams, Secretary & Treasurer.
 - ii. The appointment of the Lead Pastor
 - iii. Yearly budget
 - iv. The purchase, sale, or lease of land or building
 - v. The borrowing of money
 - vi. Changes to the Constitution

13. Pastors

- a. Pastors must affirm the Doctrinal Basis of the Church.
- b. Appointment of the Lead Pastor requires 75% approval of the Members at a Special Meeting called for such a purpose.

- c. The selection and appointment process is governed by Church policy.

14. Safe Church

The Church is committed to maintaining a safe environment for all. To this end, a Safe Church Committee will be established to oversee training, compliance and response to concerns. The Committee reports at least twice (2) yearly to the Oversight Team. The terms of reference are outlined in the Church's Safe Church Policy.

PART 3 – PROPERTY AND LEGAL

15. Property Ownership

All property is held in trust by the Baptist Churches of NSW Property Trust and subject to the provisions of the Act 1984. Church assets must be used in support of its charitable and religious purposes.

16. Dissolution

The Dissolution of the Church requires 75% approval of baptised Members present at a meeting.

Assets must be transferred to the Baptist Union of NSW or, by approval of the Property Trustees, a similar charitable body.

17. Alterations to the Constitution

Amendment or alterations to this Constitution require 75% approval of members present at a meeting with a quorum of 40% of the members. Notice of proposed changes must be distributed at least one month prior to the meeting.

APPENDIX A – FOUNDATIONAL BELIEFS (Doctrinal Basis)

1. The God Head

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. 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.

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.

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.

5. Atonement for Sin

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

6. Christ's Resurrection

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

7. Salvation

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

8. Rewards and Punishment

God has appointed a day of final judgment for the world. At that time Jesus Christ will judge every person and each will receive reward or punishment according to their deeds. Those judged righteous will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment.

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

10. The Return of the Lord Jesus Christ

The future personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

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.

SUPPORTING PROCEDURES

To be maintained separately and updated as needed:

1. Oversight Team Terms of Reference

- **Purpose:**

To provide spiritual oversight, set vision and direction, as well as ensure alignment of ministries with the Church's mission and values.

- **Responsibilities:**

- Pray for and guide the Church in spiritual and strategic matters.
- Ensure sound doctrine and faithfulness to the Foundational Beliefs.
- Approve policies, budgets, and major initiatives.
- Ensure sound governance for the church and support church ministries.
- Provide accountability and monitor the performance of the Lead Pastor and other Executive Team members.
- Prepare an annual report for the Church Meeting.

- **Composition:**

It shall normally consist of two (2) Elders and four (4) Deacons elected by the Membership at a General Meeting for a 3-year term beginning on the day following the election, with the minimum being one Elder (1) and three (3) Deacons.

The Oversight Team may appoint any casual vacancies until the next Members' Meeting, or Special Meeting for such a purpose. The appointment of the vacancy will then be to the end of the term of the original vacant position, at which time the candidate, if elected by the Membership, may serve for the full (3 year) term.

- **Chairperson:**

Appointed from among Oversight Team members.

- **Meetings:**

At least every two (2) months. There will be a record of minutes kept.

A quorum of 50% is required for each meeting.

- **Reporting:**

The Oversight Team is accountable to Church Members' Meetings.

2. Pastoral Appointment & Tenure Policy

- **Purpose:**

To provide a clear and transparent process for appointing, supporting, and, if necessary, ending the tenure of a Pastor, particularly Lead Pastor, at Caringbah Baptist Church.

1. Appointment

- **Pastoral Search Committee (PSC):**

- Formed by the Oversight Team when a vacancy arises.
- Led by the Lead Pastor when appointing an Associate Pastor.
- For a Lead Pastor vacancy, the PSC will consult with, but not necessarily include any Associate Pastors, within the formal process.

- **Nomination Process:**

- The PSC identifies and recommends a candidate to the Oversight Team.
- The Oversight Team must unanimously approve the nomination before presenting it to the Church.

- **Member Approval:**

- Appointment requires at least **75%** members' approval at a Special Members' Meeting with **50% quorum**.
- The meeting must be announced at least two (2) weeks in advance, stating the purpose.

- **Terms of Call:**

- Conditions (duties, salary, benefits, leave, etc) must be agreed upon in writing before appointment.

2. Tenure and Accountability

- Pastors affirm the **Basis of the Church** (The Constitution, Appendix A – Foundational Beliefs).
- The Lead Pastor manages the Executive Team and staff, reporting in turn to the Oversight Team.
- All Pastors are accountable to the Oversight Team for ministry alignment and conduct.
- All Pastors participate in annual performance and ministry reviews led by the Oversight Team.

3. Suspension, Dismissal and / or Voluntary Termination

- The Oversight Team may suspend or dismiss a Pastor, after due, prayerful consideration whilst ensuring:
 - **Fair process** (in line with the Fair Work Act)
 - **Pastoral care** for the Pastor and congregation.
- The Oversight Team may seek member affirmation of its decision, if deemed necessary.
- Either party may terminate the call in accordance with the employment contract

4. Transition and Interim Leadership

- In the case of a vacancy, the Oversight Team may appoint an interim Lead Pastor (in an acting or interim capacity) until a permanent appointment is made.