

CHURCH OF CHRIST WAGGA WAGGA
STANDING ORDERS FOR THE CONDUCT OF BUSINESS
EFFECTIVE FROM: 29-MAY-2011

The Holy Bible is the authority for all the matters concerning the spiritual oversight of the Church and for the qualities required for leadership and conduct. The following regulations are intended to assist the Church so that "... everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way." (1 Cor 14:40)

1. NAME

The Church shall be known as "Church of Christ Wagga Wagga". This Church is affiliated with the Churches of Christ in NSW.

2. PASTORS

- A. The negotiations for the calling, appointment and re-appointment of a Pastor shall be entrusted to the Elders, who shall make recommendations to the Church for approval. The recommendation to the Church shall include the term of ministry, which shall not exceed 5 years. The adoption of such recommendations shall require at least 70%# of the votes cast. Voting shall be by secret ballot.
- B. The Elders shall review the ministry of a Pastor from time to time as well as at an adequate time prior to the end of a term of appointment.
- C. Any Pastor being appointed shall be required to sign and adhere to the Churches of Christ in NSW – Ministers' Code of Conduct.
- D. Each Pastor shall report to, and be accountable to, the Elders at their regular meetings, and the Pastor shall report to the Church at the regular Church Meetings.
- E. Notice of termination of ministry shall be given by either party and shall be at least 3 months, except by mutual consent. Notice of termination shall be in writing.

3. ELDERS

- A. Elders shall be those members desiring to serve as an Elder, and approved by the Church in the light of the qualifications set out in 1 Tim 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. Elders shall be appointed for a period of 3 years.
- B. A nomination for elder shall be signed by the nominee and at least two members; and then passed onto the Pastor(s) and Elders for endorsement. If endorsed, the nomination will be brought before the Church for approval.
- C. Voting shall be by secret ballot.
- D. Approval of the appointment of an Elder shall require at least 70%# of the votes cast.
- E. Should there be no current Elders; nominations shall be endorsed by the Pastor(s) in association with a select committee appointed by the Church for that purpose.
- F. The closing date for the nomination of an Elder shall be at least 4 weeks prior to any Church meeting.
- G. An Elder may withdraw from office, or be removed from office by the Pastor(s) and Elders according to the biblical principles set out in 1 Tim 5:19 and Matt 18:15.

Given that the word Pastor and Elder is used synonymously in the Bible, from here on, the word Elders will refer to both Pastors and Elders combined.

4. AUTHORITY

The authority for transaction of all Church business shall be in the Church and shall be vested in the Elders who will carry out their duties in:

- A. Obedience to the Holy Bible,
- B. Accordance with these Standing Orders,
- C. Accordance with decisions made at an AGM or Special Meeting of the Church.

The business of the Church shall be conducted in accordance with any guidelines and/or policies issued by the "Conference of the Churches of Christ in NSW" and "The Churches of Christ Property Trust".

5. DEACONS

- A. In the light of Acts 6:1-6, Deacons shall be appointed according to the needs of the church.
- B. The Elders will announce the need for a Deacon, along with a draft job description, in the church newsletter for 3 Sundays in succession. Members are asked to prayerfully consider a nominee for the role.
- C. A nomination for Deacon shall be signed by the nominee and at least two members; and then passed onto the Elders.
- D. After seeking God's will, the Elders will appoint the appropriate Deacon.
- E. Deacons shall be those members, desiring to serve as a Deacon, and qualified in the light of 1 Tim 3:8-13.
- F. Should there be no current Elders; Deacons will be appointed by a select committee appointed by the Church for that purpose.
- G. A Deacon may withdraw from office, or be removed by the Elders.
- H. The Elders and Deacons of the Church shall meet as required for the conduct of Church business and to co-ordinate the Ministries of the Church. Where thought advisable by the Elders, "Special Invitees" may be co-opted into meetings to assist with the conduct of Church business.
- I. An Elder will be appointed to oversee and encourage each Deacon.

6. MEMBERSHIP

- A. Membership of the Church shall consist of those persons who:
 - i. Are at least 18 years of age.
 - ii. Believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and have confessed their faith in Him as their Lord and Savior.
 - iii. Believe in the authority of the Holy Bible.
 - iv. Have expressed their desire to serve and obey God in and through the Church,
 - v. Have been accepted by the Elders into membership.
- B. Unless requested otherwise, members are publicly welcomed into Church membership.
- C. Membership may be withdrawn by the Elders.
- D. The Elders shall keep a list of current members and will review this list as required. The membership list will consist:
 - i. Voting members, AND
 - ii. Non-voting members.

7. MINISTRY GROUPS

- A. No Ministry Group shall be commenced in the name of the Church without prior approval of the Elders.
- B. The Leader of a Ministry Group shall be appointed by, and be accountable to, the Elders for the operations of the Ministry Group.
- C. The Elders shall be ex-officio members of all Church Ministry Groups.
- D. The activities and the objectives of a Ministry Group shall be agreed between the Elders and the Leader. The Church shall be informed of the activities and the objectives upon the establishment of any new Ministry Group. No important alterations shall be made in the activities or objectives of any Ministry Group without prior consultation and approval by the Elders.
- E. All Ministry Group equipment and records shall become the property of the Church.
- F. All Ministry Groups shall present an Annual Report for the Annual General Meeting or as requested by the Elders.
- G. Each Ministry Group will have an Elder appointed to oversee and encourage the ministry leaders.

8. TREASURER

- A. The Church Treasurer shall:
 - i. Keep a proper record of all income, expenditure, assets and liabilities.
 - ii. Present a monthly financial statement to the Elders.
 - iii. Present to the Church at the Annual General Meeting, financial statements in respect of the preceding year.
 - iv. Present for approval at the Annual General Meeting a budget for the coming financial year.
 - v. Be one of the signatories to the Church bank accounts; and in consultation with the Elders, shall appoint additional signatories as required.
 - vi. All relevant financial matters shall require at least two signatures.
- B. An Elder will be appointed to be an overseer of the church finances.

9. CHURCH MEETINGS

- A. Annual General Meeting
 - i. The Church shall meet once each year to consider the life and function of the Church in review and prospect. This meeting will be called the *Annual General Meeting (AGM)* which shall be held as soon as practicable after the end each financial year.
- B. Special Meetings
 - i. Special meetings of the Church may be called by the Elders, or shall be held following a written request to the Elders, signed by at least 20%# of the voting members. The request for such a meeting must state the nature of the business to be dealt with at the Special Meeting.
- C. Attendance
 - i. Any attendee of the church is permitted to attend church meetings. However, only voting members are permitted to vote at such meetings.
- D. Chairperson & Secretary
 - i. A meeting chairperson and secretary shall be appointed by the Elders at least one week prior to the holding of a Church meeting.
- E. Notices of Motion
 - i. Members, who require a matter to be brought forward at a meeting of the Church, shall prepare the proposal in writing and give such Notice of Motion to the Elders at least 3 weeks prior to the Church meeting.
- F. Announcement of meetings
 - i. Announcements of all Church meetings shall be made in the regular services of the Church and appear in the Church's paper at least 4 weeks prior to the meeting.

G. Extreme Urgency

- i. The above procedure is to apply, except in cases of extreme urgency. The determination of "extreme urgency" will be at the discretion of the Elders.

H. The congregation shall be reminded prior to the meeting, of the need to prayerfully consider the vote with the aim of arriving at the Lord's will.

I. Procedure

- i. All Church Meetings shall be conducted in accordance with the recognised rules of debate, and subject to these Standing Orders. The order of business to be followed at meetings of the Church shall be as the Elders direct.
- ii. For proposals put to the Church which involve:
 - i. the appointment of any paid staff worker (including Pastors), or
 - ii. the buying, selling, or renting of any real estate, or
 - iii. any expenditure on a single item costing in excess of \$10,000,a formal vote at a Church Meeting shall be required. Approval of such proposals shall require at least 70%# of the votes cast.
- iii. For all other proposals, approval shall require at least 50%# of the votes cast.
- iv. Where there is substantial disagreement regarding a proposal, or for any other matter which the Elders deem by formal resolution to be a matter best suited for discussion and resolution by means of a consensus circle, the Church Meeting shall temporarily suspend its debate procedures and enter into the Committee mode of a Consensus Circle, to be operated in accordance with the procedure attached at the end of these Standing Orders.

J. Voting

- i. Voting shall be confined to voting members only.
- ii. In order to prepare for a secret ballot in connection with the engagement of a Pastor or the election of an Elder, a Returning Officer shall be appointed by the Elders at least 1 week prior to the holding of such a ballot.
- iii. An up-to-date list of voting members shall be provided to the Returning Officer by the Elders.
- iv. At the meeting there shall be a time of prayer prior to the ballot.

K. Absentee Votes

- i. Absentee votes will be allowed at the discretion of the Elders.
- ii. If absentee votes are permitted, they will be accepted by the Returning Officer and it shall be the responsibility of the Elders, in conjunction with the Returning Officer, to decide whether there is a good reason for the acceptance of an absentee vote by reason of age, health, absence from district, or other reason the Returning Officer deems reasonable in the circumstances.
- iii. All applications for an absentee vote shall be made to the Returning Officer, or in their absence, to an Elder.
- iv. In order to preserve the secrecy of the ballot, absentee votes shall be on a form provided by the Returning Officer and shall be placed by the voter in an envelope bearing the name of the voter and signed by the voter.

L. Counting

- i. When counting of votes is carried out, such absentee votes shall be withdrawn from the envelope without inspection and shall be immediately added to the votes cast at the Church Meeting.
- ii. The Church Meeting at which the ballot is taken shall appoint two scrutineers to assist the Returning Officer.
- iii. Ballot papers shall be retained by the Returning Officer for a period of 1 month and shall then be destroyed.

M. Minimum Number of Votes

- i. The minimum number of votes shall be 25%# of the voting members. If this minimum is not reached, the vote is deemed invalid.

10. ACTION TO BE TAKEN IN THE EVENT OF DIFFICULTIES ARISING

In the event that difficulties should arise in the relationships in the Church that do not seem to be readily resolved, in order to avoid any rupture of the Church, the Elders shall invite the relevant Conference body for assistance as an independent body to assist the Church to arrive at a satisfactory solution.

11. AMENDMENTS

Wording of any proposed amendment of these Standing Orders shall be given to the Elders in writing at least 4 weeks prior to the date of the Church Meeting at which the amendment is to be considered, and the wording shall be announced to the Church when the announcement of the Meeting is made. Amendments to be carried shall require at least 70%# of the votes cast.

12. A CONSENSUS CIRCLE - PROCEDURE FOR OPERATION

- A. The Chairman of the Meeting shall vacate the chair for the duration of the Consensus Circle, whilst the Meeting Secretary shall remain as official recorder of Consensus Circle minutes.
- B. The Meeting shall elect a three-person Guidance Panel to steer the Consensus Circle by choosing from among the members present, one Elder and two other members. The Chairman of the Meeting shall not be entitled to be a member of the Guidance Panel.
- C. The elected Guidance Panel shall appoint from within itself a Spokesperson to act on its behalf for a maximum duration of one hour during any one circle. The position of the Guidance Panel Spokesperson shall rotate at hourly intervals among the members of the Guidance Panel.
- D. A proposer in favour of the motion shall then move the formal motion being put to the Church.
- E. The Panel is charged with the responsibility of seeking a consensus (a complete agreement of opinion) upon the matter described in the motion. The substance of the motion is allowed to be altered during the course of the debate in keeping with what the Panel unanimously believes the whole body of the Meeting is able to agree to from time to time, without need for formal amendments. To test what the body is presently agreeable to, the Panel shall put the matters under debate to a straw (unsubstantial) vote by a show of hands from time to time, in an effort to steer the Meeting to a consensus as close to the substance of the original motion as the Meeting will allow.
- F. Throughout the course of Consensus Circle debate, the Meeting Secretary shall record stages of agreement in the form of circle minutes after each straw vote.
- G. During Consensus Circle debate, all persons in fellowship at the Church of Christ Wagga Wagga, irrespective of age or membership, shall have the right to speak to the motion, but only voting members present within the circle shall have the right of straw (unsubstantial) vote.
- H. The duration of any one Consensus Circle shall be a maximum of three hours, and the maximum number of Consensus Circle meetings that deal with the same matter shall be two.
- I. As soon as consensus is achieved on the finally accepted version of the motion (as recognised by a unanimous straw vote), the circle shall dissolve, the Meeting chairman shall resume the chair, and the agreed form of the motion shall be put to the Meeting for a binding substantial vote.
- J. If the end of two circle meetings does not achieve consensus, the circle shall dissolve, and the proposer of the original motion shall retain the right to put the original motion to a Church Meeting under the normal procedures.

- results are rounded to the nearest whole number.