

**ASSEMBLIES OF GOD IN AUSTRALIA**

**NATIONAL CONFERENCE**

**UNITED CONSTITUTION**

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**ARTICLE 1 - THE NAME**

- (a) The name shall be the ASSEMBLIES OF GOD IN AUSTRALIA.
- (b) While any church in affiliation with the Assemblies of God in Australia shall be at liberty to retain any name the local church desires, we recommend that wherever possible the scriptural name of Assembly of God be recognised and adopted.

**ARTICLE 2 - DEFINITION**

- (a) ASSEMBLIES OF GOD IN AUSTRALIA is a movement of Pentecostal churches in voluntary cooperation, on terms of equality, as self-contained and autonomous Christian churches, uniting for aggressive evangelism, unity, fellowship, order, discipline and other purposes.
- (b) The basic principle of Assemblies of God is defined as that of cooperative fellowship.

It designates a body of believers, one in experience and purpose, bound by the cords of Christian love and not by ecclesiastical traditions or powers. By cooperative fellowship, we understand a partnership in service in which the efforts of individual believers are coordinated and united, instead of individuals doing that which seems good to them without regard to the effect their actions may have on other members of the body. The members voluntarily agree to work together for the spreading of the gospel and for the edification of the body of Christ. The ground of this fellowship is the Word of God, and it can be maintained only by the indwelling Spirit of God in the hearts of believers who are dominated by the desire to glorify our Lord, the great head of the church. The principles of this fellowship naturally affect the movement in all its aspects.

It touches the relations of the National Conference and Executive to the State Conferences and Ordained Ministers to the local churches and of every member of any church to the church. This obviously must mean that the sovereignty of a church in no wise permits it to do anything injurious to other affiliated churches; neither should any church stand in the way of the development of other churches within a reasonable distance of its place of worship, in localities where the size of the population would justify the opening of new churches. A church is jeopardising its own interest by refusing to cooperate with the state and national officary in matters of state and national interest. The organisation of the state movement is to care for the work of the movement within the state.

It has no right to usurp authority over the local church for its own benefit but it is obvious that the state has a right to protest against the action of a church which persists in making unwise decisions in matters which are vital to its own welfare and to the movement at large; also to give such advice and render such aid as may be necessary for the welfare and peace of the church. The sovereignty of the state is likewise limited by the interstate interest of the national movement: each State

Executive needs to recognise the need of cooperation with the National Conference and National Executive in order to preserve the unity of the movement nationwide.

- (c) Where the terms “ordained minister” or “ordained” are used in this constitution or the National or State by-laws, they refer to ministers holding a current Ordained Ministers Certificate or an Ordained Missionaries Certificate of the Assemblies of God in Australia.

### **ARTICLE 3 - OBJECTIVES**

- (a) The full gospel evangelisation of Australia, in obedience to the great commission of Matthew 28:19-20.
- (b) To contend for ‘the faith once for all delivered to the saints’ - Jude 3 (NKJV).
- (c) To seek, by the grace of God, the full restoration of New Testament Christianity as exhibited in the scriptures of the New Testament; in the holiness of life, power and sincerity of faith of the believers; in the order of government and discipline obtaining in the church which is his body; and also in that manifestation of power and confirmation of the preached Word of God with signs and wonders following, as characterised the New Testament church, based on the immutability of God’s Holy Word, and the all-sufficiency of Jesus Christ our Lord.
- (d) To establish churches as a result of the foregoing, patterned after the simplicity of the New Testament principles of order, government and practice; free from human traditions, and recognising the headship of Jesus Christ our Lord.
- (e) To send out missionaries to foreign lands with the same objectives in view.
- (f) To engage in Christian action in the relief of human suffering and need by all available means and in development programs appropriate to developing countries and disadvantaged groups.

### **ARTICLE 4 - PREROGATIVES**

- (a) To provide a basis of fellowship among Christians of like faith.
- (b) To establish and maintain such departments and institutions as may be necessary for the propagation of the full gospel and the attainments of the objectives of the movement, as outlined in Article 3.
- (c) To train, ordain and send out ministers of the gospel, missionaries and other ministries, called of God to the full gospel ministry.
- (d) To do all such things as are requisite and conducive to the attainment of the objectives as set forth in Article 3, including the right to own, hold in trust, use,



sell, convey, lease or otherwise dispose of such property, real or chattel, as may be necessary.

- (e) To approve all scriptural teaching methods and conduct, and to disapprove all unscriptural teaching, methods and conduct.
- (f) It is not intended, however, that the Assemblies of God in Australia should be established nor identified as a sect; that is, a human organisation with centralised legislative power that creates laws to impose unscriptural authority on its members or churches, or which deprives them of their scriptural rights and privileges. It does recognise, however, the need for, and recommends the adoption of, scriptural methods and order for worship, unity, fellowship, work and discipline - 'endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace until we all come into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ'- as recorded in Ephesians 4:17-32.

## **ARTICLE 5 - DOCTRINAL BASIS**

### **Preamble**

The Holy Scriptures, known as the Bible, is the inspired Word of God and our all sufficient rule for faith and practice.

These articles of faith of the Assemblies of God in Australia, grounded in these scriptures, are given as a basis for belief, fellowship and ministry 'that we all preach the same thing' (1 Corinthians 1:10). Let it be remembered, however, that this is not given as a summary of the complete revelation of biblical truth, only that it covers our present needs as to these fundamental doctrines.

#### **1. THE ETERNAL GODHEAD**

We believe in the unity of the true and living God who is the eternal, self-existent one, who has revealed himself as one being in three persons - Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and who is the Creator and preserver of things visible and invisible - Genesis 1:1; Deuteronomy 6:4; Psalm 86:9-10; Isaiah 43:10-11; Matthew 28:19; Mark 12:29; John 1:1-3.

#### **2. THE LORD JESUS CHRIST**

We believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the second person of the triune Godhead, who was and is the eternal Son of God; that he became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and was born of the virgin Mary.

We believe in his sinless life, miraculous ministry, substitutionary atoning death, bodily resurrection, glorious ascension, and abiding intercession - Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23; Luke 24:39; Acts 1:9; 2:22; 10:38; Romans 8:34; 1 Corinthians 15:4; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Ephesians 4:8-10; Hebrews 7:25-26; 9:12; 1 Peter 2:22.

### 3. THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the third person of the triune Godhead, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, and is ever present and active in the work of convicting and regenerating the sinner, and sanctifying and guiding the believer into all truth - John 14:26; 16:8-11; Romans 8:14; 1 Peter 1:2.

### 4. THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

We believe in the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, namely the Old and New Testaments in their original writings. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is infallible, inerrantly revealing the will of God concerning us all in all things necessary to our salvation, and is absolutely supreme and sufficient in authority in all matters of faith and conduct. The Bible does not simply contain the Word of God, but is, in reality, the complete revelation and very Word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit, so that whatever is not contained therein is not to be enjoined as an article of faith - Matthew 5:17-18; 24:35; John 4:39; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21.

### 5. THE DEVIL

We believe in the personality of the devil, who, by his influence, brought about the downfall of man, and now seeks to destroy the faith of every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ - Genesis 3:1-15; Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13; John 13:2; James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8.

### 6. THE FALL OF MAN

We believe that man was created by God by specific immediate act and in his image and likeness, morally upright and perfect, but fell by voluntary transgression. Consequently, all men are separated from original righteousness, being depraved and without spiritual life - Genesis 1:26-31; 3:1-7; Romans 5:12-21.

### 7. THE ATONEMENT

We believe that God's answer to man's sinful state is in the death of his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, on the cross, whose sufferings and shed blood have made full atonement for the sins of the whole world, both original and actual, and that there is no other ground for salvation - 2 Corinthians 5:18-21; Galatians 1:4; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14; Hebrews 9:25-26; 1 Peter 1:19-20.

### 8. SALVATION OF MAN

We believe that salvation is received through repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. This experience is also known as the new birth and is an instantaneous and complete operation of the Holy Spirit whereby the believing sinner is regenerated, justified, and adopted into the family of God and becomes a

new creation in Christ Jesus and heir of eternal life - Titus 2:11; 3:5-7; 1 Peter 1:23; 1 John 5:1.

#### 9. THE CHURCH

We believe that the church is the body of Christ, the habitation of God through the Spirit, with divine appointments for the fulfillment of its great commission. Each believer, born of the Spirit, is an integral part of the general assembly and church of the first-born whose names are written in heaven -Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:22; Hebrews 12:23.

#### 10. WATER BAPTISM

We believe that baptism, by single immersion, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, is enjoined on all who have repented and have believed in Christ as Saviour and Lord, and that it is symbolic of our identification with Christ in his death, burial and resurrection - Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:16; Acts 10:47-48; 2:38-39; Romans 6:4-5; Colossians 2:12.

#### 11. THE LORD'S SUPPER

We believe that the Lord's Supper, consisting of the elements of bread and the fruit of the vine, is the symbol expressing our sharing the divine nature of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1:4); a memorial of his sufferings and death (1 Corinthians 11:26); and a prophecy of his second coming (1 Corinthians 11:26), and is enjoined on all believers 'until he comes' - Matthew 26:26-28; Luke 22:15-20; Acts 20:7.

#### 12. SANCTIFICATION

We believe that sanctification is an act of separation from that which is evil, and of dedication unto God. We believe it is the glorious provision for every believer in Christ to be made pure in heart and wholly sanctified, through the operation of the Holy Spirit, by the blood of Jesus and the Word of God - John 17:15-19; Acts 15:8-9; Romans 12:1-2; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4; 5:23-24; Hebrews 2:11; 10:16-19.

#### 13. THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is the bestowing of the believer with power to be an effective witness for Christ. This experience is distinct from, and subsequent to, the new birth; is received by faith, and is accompanied by the manifestation of speaking in tongues as the Spirit gives utterance, as the initial evidence - Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-5, 8; 2:1-4; 8:15-19; 11:14-17; 19:1-7.

#### 14. GIFTS

We believe in the present day operation of the nine supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit, as recorded in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10. We also believe in the ministry gifts of Christ, as recorded in Ephesians 4:11-13.

## 15. DIVINE HEALING

In accordance with the teachings of the scriptures, we trust our heavenly Father to protect and heal our bodies from sickness and disease. We believe that divine healing for the body, as with all redemptive blessings of God, has been provided for us by the atoning death and victorious resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ; it is the privilege of all believers and it is appropriated by faith in our heavenly Father's unfailing promises - Exodus 15:26; Psalms 103:3; Isaiah 53:4; Matthew 8:16-17; Mark 16:17-18; 1 Peter 2:24; James 5:14-15.

## 16. THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

We believe in the premillennial, imminent and personal return of our Lord Jesus Christ to gather his people to himself. Having this glorious hope and earnest expectation, we purify ourselves, even as he is pure, so that we may be ready to meet him when he comes - John 14:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17; 2 Thessalonians 2:1; Titus 2:13; James 5:7-8; 1 John 2:28; 3:2-3.

## 17. THE MILLENNIUM

We believe in the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to set up his millennial reign on this earth, Psalm 11; 96:10-13; Daniel 7.22; Zechariah 14:5; Revelation 5:9-10; 20:1-10.

## 18. THE PUNISHMENT OF THE WICKED

We believe in the everlasting punishment of the wicked (in the sense of eternal torment) who willfully reject and despise the love of God manifested in the great sacrifice of his only Son on the cross for their salvation - Matthew 25:46; 13:49-50; Luke 12:47-48; Romans 6:23; 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9; Revelation 20:11-15. We believe that the devil and his angels and whoever is not found written in the book of life shall be consigned to everlasting punishment in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death - Revelation 19:20; 20:10-15.

## 19. THE NEW HEAVENS AND THE NEW EARTH

'We, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells' - 2 Peter 3:13; Revelation chapters 21-22.

## 20. CREATION

We believe that the heavens and earth and all original life forms, including humanity, were made by the specific immediate creative acts of God as described in the account of origins presented in Genesis, and that all biological changes which have occurred since creation are limited to variation within each species.

## ARTICLE 6 - CONSTITUENTS

- (a) The constituents of ASSEMBLIES OF GOD IN AUSTRALIA shall be those churches which at the date of adopting this constitution are represented at National Conferences by delegates who vote for its adoption and whose members endorse the doctrinal basis as set forth in Article 5 of this constitution.
- (b) Such churches in Australia as shall from time to time be received by the granting of a Certificate of Fellowship by the National Executive or the National Conference, such to be signed by the National President and National Secretary, shall also be recognised as constituents.
- (c) Each church in fellowship with the Assemblies of God in Australia shall have the right, under Jesus Christ its living head, to autonomy in all things local, providing such does not adversely affect the united movement.
- (d) Registered and unregistered churches in the Assemblies of God in Australia, shall only appoint persons holding an Ordained Minister's Certificate, Probationary Minister's Certificate or Specialised Ministries Certificate, as pastors in charge of the church.

Persons holding a Specialised Ministry Certificate and appointed in charge of a church should apply for transfer to a Probationary Minister's Certificate.

- (e)
  - i) The appropriate State Executive of the Assemblies of God in Australia may accept an invitation to hold a meeting of members, or to assist or advise in the business or affairs of the church, by the senior minister, or the board, or by a majority of the current membership of the church, by written and signed request, notwithstanding the contrary opinion of any of these.
  - ii) Such meeting shall be chaired by a member of the State or National Executives, appointed by the State Executive who shall set the agenda.
  - iii) All business conducted shall be in accordance with the constitution of the church, and the State or National Executive official of the Assemblies of God in Australia may not institute any rule, take any action, or make any decision affecting the church unless such motions are carried by a majority of the members.

## ARTICLE 7 - THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF ASSEMBLIES OF GOD IN AUSTRALIA

### (a) *Supreme Governing Body*

The National Conference of the Assemblies of God in Australia shall be recognised as the supreme governing body of the united movement with power to make whatever decisions may be necessary or advisable in the interests of the work as a whole.

**(b) *Biennial National Conference***

A National Conference of the Assemblies of God in Australia shall be held biennially, at a time and place to be fixed by the National Executive or by the sitting conference.

**(c) *Special National Conference***

A special National Conference may also be called at any time deemed necessary, by the National Executive or at the request of two or more of the State Executives.

**(d) *Changes to Constitutional Documents***

In regard to constitutional documents the National Executive is empowered to make any spelling and grammatical corrections and By-laws changes required by the constitutional amendments and that such corrections be notified to the ensuing Conference.

**ARTICLE 8 - NATIONAL OFFICERS**

- (a) The officers shall consist of the National President, National Vice President(s), National Secretary, National Treasurer or National Secretary/Treasurer, together with such other officers as shall be appointed from time to time.
- (b) The National President and National Vice President(s) shall be chosen from the ordained ministers, and shall be persons of mature experience and ability, who shall have been ordained for at least five years.
- (c) The National Secretary and the National Treasurer or National Secretary/Treasurer may be chosen from the ordained ministers or ordinary membership of the Assemblies of God in Australia and shall be of mature experience and ability. If the National Secretary and/or National Treasurer are drawn from the ordinary membership of the Assemblies of God in Australia they shall be ex officio members of the National Executive without voting rights.
- (d) The National President, National Vice President(s), National Secretary, National Treasurer or National Secretary/Treasurer shall be ex officio delegates to National Conferences with full voting powers provided they have no vote by virtue of National By-law Article 2:4(a) or (b).

**ARTICLE 9 - NATIONAL EXECUTIVE**

- (a) Each biennial National Conference shall elect a National Executive, according to the terms of the United Constitution Article 8, to include the National President, National Vice President(s) and the National Secretary or National Secretary/Treasurer.

- (b) Between biennial National Conferences the National Executive is authorised to provide leadership and act in all matters that affect the movement of the Assemblies of God in Australia, at their discretion. All decisions of the National Executive must be in harmony with the provisions of this constitution and any decisions of the National Biennial Conference.

#### **ARTICLE 10 - AUDITING**

The National Executive shall ensure that a proper audit of all books and accounts administered by the National Secretary/Treasurer or National Treasurer is carried out, for presentation to the biennial National Conference.

#### **ARTICLE 11 - NATIONAL ORDAINED MINISTERS**

All ordained ministers may be consulted by the National Executive in matters of importance to the movement. This consultation can be by any means the National Executive considers appropriate.

#### **ARTICLE 12 - STATE MOVEMENTS**

- (a) State movements, recognised by the national movement, shall be autonomous in regard to matters relating to or affecting the state only.
- (b) Each state shall have its own Conference, State Executive and executive officers, consistent with the provisions of this constitution.

(c) **Biennial Conference**

A conference shall be held in each state biennially, at a time and place to be fixed by the State Executive or by the sitting conference, to consider matters affecting the state. A conference may also be held at any time and place deemed necessary by the State Executive.

- (d) The administration of state matters not affecting the general movement shall be vested in the State Executive between conferences.

#### **ARTICLE 13 - STATE ORDAINED MINISTERS**

All ordained ministers resident in a state may be consulted by the State Executive in matters of importance to the movement in that state. This consultation can be by any means the State Executive considers appropriate.

## **ARTICLE 14 - MINISTRY**

- (a) Assemblies of God in Australia believes in the scriptural functioning of the ministry gifts of the risen Lord to the church as seen in the New Testament, eg Ephesians 4:11-12.
- (b) Believing that in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in this dispensation of grace, the Lord has made no distinction in pouring out his Spirit both on women as well as men, we recognise the right and privilege of those so called and gifted to minister, whether they be men or women.
- (c) **Ministry Certificates**

The Assemblies of God in Australia recognises, by the granting of appropriate certificates, ministries as set out in the National By-laws and Missionary Constitution.

## **ARTICLE 15 - MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE**

The National Executive of the Assemblies of God in Australia or its appointee shall have powers to issue ministerial certificates, and to suspend and withdraw such in cases of improper conduct or wrong teaching, in accordance with the provisions of the National By-laws.

## **ARTICLE 16 - WORLD MISSIONS**

### **1. *World Missions Council***

There shall be a World Missions Council including the World Missions President and the World Missions Director appointed by the National Executive and endorsed by the National Conference. The Missions President may be invited to attend National Executive meetings.

The World Missions Council shall be responsible to the National Conference and the National Executive for the world missions program of the Assemblies of God in Australia.

### **2. *World Missions Constitution***

The World Missions Council shall formulate a missionary constitution for the effective operation of the World Missions department, which shall embrace both departmental functions, and field organisation and which shall set out standards and conditions for missionary candidates and service. Such constitution shall be initially approved by the biennial National Conference and only altered or amended by the World Missions Council, with the consent of the National Executive.



## **ARTICLE 17 - HOME MISSIONS**

- (a) In states where there is no Assemblies of God in Australia work or in such states as now have no organised conference and State Executive, it shall be the prerogative of the National Executive to pioneer new works in strategic fields and to foster and provide them oversight until such time as they shall become self-supporting.
- (b) There shall be a national home mission fund financed by gifts, contributions and such funds as may be assigned to it.
- (c) Notwithstanding Clause (a) above, the National Executive may, on behalf of Assemblies of God in Australia, initiate, establish and supervise National Youth, Students', Men's, Women's and Ethnic Ministries, Christian Education, Royal Rangers, Men's and other ministries throughout Australia.

## **ARTICLE 18 - BIBLE COLLEGE**

### **1. Purpose and Administration**

- (a) The National Conference shall recognise the need for practical training of prospective ministers, missionaries and other ministries. To this end a national Bible college shall be set up for the training of prospective ministers, missionaries and other ministries.
- (b) A separate incorporation shall be established to hold property and manage the college on behalf of the movement.
- (c) The elected members of the National Executive shall constitute a majority of the members of the incorporation.
- (d) There shall be College Directors, appointed by the members of the incorporation and endorsed by the National Conference. The College President shall be recommended by the National Executive and appointed by the membership of the incorporation and will be a member of the College Directors.
- (e) The College directors will be responsible to the National Conference and the National Executive for the administration of the affairs of the national Bible college.

### **2. Handbook of College Administration**

The College Directors shall formulate a handbook of college administration, for the effective operation of the college, which shall set out the objectives and principles of the college in accordance with the policy stated in Article 18, 1.(a)

above, such handbook being initially approved by, and only altered or amended with the consent of, the National Executive.

#### **ARTICLE 19 - COMMUNICATIONS**

- (a) The Assemblies of God in Australia shall have a Communications Department with the purpose of communicating with its pastors, its constituents and with the broader community, using such means and technology as is appropriate for informing, teaching and evangelising.
- (b) The Communications Department shall be responsible to the National Executive for the content and means of its communications.

#### **ARTICLE 20 - DIVORCE**

Low standards of marriage and divorce are unscriptural and very hurtful to individuals, to the family and to the cause of Christ. Therefore, we discourage divorce by all lawful means and teachings. We positively disapprove of any persons getting a divorce for any cause except for sexual immorality (Matthew 5:32; 19:9) and believe that the remarriage of unscripturally divorced Christians is prohibited by the Word of God - see Matthew 5:32; 19:9; Mark 10:11-12; Luke 16:18. Those persons who, as Christians, unscripturally divorce and remarry or who are the guilty party shall not be issued with or retain any Assemblies of God in Australia credential.

#### **ARTICLE 21 - NATIONAL PROPERTY**

The National Executive will make appropriate provision for the holding of Assemblies of God in Australia properties under their absolute control, on behalf of the movement. Appropriate provision may include the establishment of trust(s) or the formation of company(ies). The properties shall include but shall not be limited to the National Office, World Missions building and the national Bible College.

#### **ARTICLE 22 - STATE AND DISTRICT PROPERTY**

Each State Executive will make appropriate provision for the holding of state and district properties under their absolute control, on behalf of the state movement.

#### **ARTICLE 23 - LOCAL CHURCH PROPERTY**

Local church property may be held:

- (a) in its own name where incorporated, or

- (b) by the State Executive making provision for the holding of local church properties on behalf of the local church.
- (c) by a corporate body controlled by the local church upon trusts determined in accordance with the constitution of the local church, or
- (d) by individuals appointed by the local church in accordance with and upon trusts determined in accordance with its constitution.
- (e) 'Local church property' means any property held for or controlled by a church that holds a Certificate of Fellowship and any property of an outreach commenced by such a church.

#### **ARTICLE 24 - INDEMNITY**

Any trustee holding any national, state, district or local church property and any person holding office in a corporation which so acts as a trustee shall hereby be indemnified out of the assets of any such trust and saved harmless in respect of any claim arising in any way in connection therewith.

1. The movement shall indemnify every person who holds or who has held any elected or appointed office within the movement against a liability:
  - (a) incurred by any such person acting in that capacity to a person, other than a person suing in a representative capacity on behalf of the movement itself, where the liability does not arise out of a lack of good faith;
  - (b) for the costs and expenses incurred by any such person;
    - (i) in defending proceedings, whether civil or criminal, in which judgment is given in his or her favor or in which he or she is acquitted; or
    - (ii) in connection with an application, in relation to such proceedings, in which the court grants relief to him or her at law.
2. Every employee who is not the holder of elected or appointed office of the movement may be indemnified out of the property of the movement against the liability;
  - (a) incurred by the employee acting in that capacity;
  - (b) for the costs and expenses incurred by him or her;
    - (i) in defending proceedings, whether civil or criminal, in which judgment is given in favor of the employee or in which he or she is acquitted; or

- (ii) in connection with an application, in relation to such proceedings, in which the court grants relief to the employee at law.
- 3. The clause 'the movement' means Assemblies of God in Australia whether expressed at national, state, district, or local level in Australia or its missions expression outside of Australia.

#### **ARTICLE 25 - INTERPRETATION**

The official interpretation of this constitution shall be vested in the National Executive between conferences.

#### **ARTICLE 26 - AMENDMENTS**

Proposed amendments to this constitution must be submitted in writing to the National Secretary at least three months prior to the date of the ensuing National Conference of the Assemblies of God in Australia.

Such shall be considered carried when carried by a 75% majority of the delegates present and eligible to vote.

**ASSEMBLIES OF GOD IN AUSTRALIA**

**NATIONAL CONFERENCE**

**NATIONAL BY-LAWS**

## **ARTICLE 1 - BY-LAWS**

These By-laws were adopted by the National Conference in session at Brisbane in May 1979, and are amended up to and including the National Conference, May 1999. They are set forth for the guidance of constituents, ministry and officers for the orderly conduct of the business of the movement. The United Constitution of the Assemblies of God in Australia takes precedence over these By-laws should any conflict of provisions appear at any time.

## **ARTICLE 2 - NATIONAL CONFERENCE**

### **1. Purpose**

It shall be the function of the National Conference as the supreme governing body:

- (a) To promote possibilities for fellowship between local churches.
- (b) To make whatever decisions may be necessary in the interests of the Assemblies of God in Australia.
- (c) To carry out elections to office in accordance with the National By-laws procedure and to appoint committees for special work as occasion may arise.
- (d) To receive and consider reports from the states, departments, officers and committees and, where appropriate, make any decisions or recommendations arising therefrom.
- (e) To consider and decide on any constitutional matter that may arise.
- (f) To deal with any appeals that may be presented.

### **2. Sessions**

The National Conference shall be held biennially, at a time and place fixed by the National Conference, but the National Executive may, by majority decision, make such alterations as is deemed necessary.

### **3. Notice**

The National Secretary shall send to all churches of the National Conference, and those holding Ordained Minister's Certificates, a notice in writing of the Conference, not later than four months before the commencement of conference. All remits, which must be in the form of a resolution, shall be in the hands of the National Secretary three months prior to the commencement of conference.

If a church or an ordained minister wishes to submit a remit to National Conference it must first be submitted for consideration, to the appropriate District Executive. If the District Executive endorses the remit, it may then be forwarded to the appropriate State Executive. If the District Executive fails to endorse the remit, the church or minister has the right to appeal to a District Conference and the Conference has the right to endorse the remit for submission to the State Executive. In states where there are no districts, the remit may be sent directly to the State Executive.

If the State Executive endorses the remit, it must then be forwarded to the National Secretary for inclusion on the agenda for the National Conference. If the State Executive fails to endorse a remit, the church or minister has the right to appeal to the next State Conference. If the State Conference endorses the remit it must then be forwarded to the National Secretary for inclusion on the agenda for the National Conference.

If a remit fails to pass at a District or State Conference, there is no further right of appeal.

Remits may be submitted direct to the National Secretary by State Conferences, State Executives and the National Executive. All remits shall be notified to registered churches and ministers holding a current Ordained Minister's Certificate six weeks prior to the commencement of conference.

#### **4. Membership**

- (a) The National Conference shall comprise all churches that hold a current Certificate of Fellowship and are in financial standing, represented by one delegate for every two hundred and fifty (250) adults in regular attendance (18 years and over) or part thereof.
- (b) Every ordained minister is entitled to attend as a voting member.
- (c) Missionaries holding a full Missionary Certificate are eligible to attend and to vote.
- (d) In the event that the name of a church delegate is not received by the National Secretary, twenty-one days prior to the commencement of the National Conference, the National Executive may, in its absolute discretion, veto such delegate's voting power in which case the delegate shall have no voting rights but may attend as an observer.

#### **5. Special Conference**

Special conferences may be called by the National Executive at its discretion, or at the request of two or more of the State Executives. A written notification of the Conference setting forth the reasons for the special conference shall be distributed to the State Secretaries, churches and those holding Ordained Minister's Certificates, not less than three weeks prior to the commencement of

the special conference, which shall consider the matters listed on the notice but no other business, except as provided for in Article 17 of these By-laws.

## 6. **Chairman**

The National President, or his nominee, and in his absence, the National Vice President, shall preside over all meetings of the National Conference. In the event of the National President and the National Vice President being absent, the National Conference shall be presided over by a member of the National Executive appointed by the National Conference at that meeting.

## 7. **Business**

- (a) The National Conference may discuss any business not on the agenda but brought forward by the National Executive. General remits received less than three months prior to conference may be placed on the agenda at the absolute discretion of the National Executive.
- (b) No remits involving constitutional changes shall be brought before the National Conference unless included on the provisional agenda.
- (c) The National Executive shall prepare the agenda.
- (d) The only persons eligible to vote are members of the National Conference attending in person.
- (e) In the normal course of business all resolutions shall be decided by a show of hands. However, the chairman may require that a secret ballot be taken.
- (f) All resolutions shall require a 55% majority of the voting strength to be carried.
- (g) **Quorum:** All members registered and present in any properly called meeting of a National Conference shall constitute a quorum.

## **ARTICLE 3 - NATIONAL EXECUTIVE**

### **1. Membership**

The National Executive shall consist of nine members and shall include the National President, National Vice President, National Secretary, National Treasurer or National Secretary/Treasurer. Persons nominated for the National Executive shall have been ordained for at least four years except the National Secretary and National Treasurer or National Secretary/Treasurer, who may be elected from the ordinary membership of Assemblies of God in Australia. In special circumstances, the National Executive may waive the four year requirement.



Note: As per United Constitution Article 8(b), the National President and National Vice President(s) shall have been ordained for at least five years.

## **2. Term of Office**

With the exception of the National President and full time office bearers, whose initial term shall be a period of four years, the term of office shall be from the conclusion of the National Conference at which elected, until the conclusion of the National Conference next following.

## **3. Vacancies**

In the event of a vacancy or vacancies occurring on the National Executive, the same shall be filled by the National Executive from those who have been ordained for at least four years. In the event of any member being incapacitated through illness or any other cause, the National Executive may likewise appoint any other eligible person to act in place of that member so incapacitated.

## **4. Meetings**

The National Executive shall meet at such times and places as it may, from time to time, decide. Meetings shall be convened by the National Secretary, at the request of the National President or at the request of a simple majority of the National Executive.

## **5. Quorum**

Five persons personally present shall constitute a quorum. In the event of the National Executive being reduced below a quorum but not less than three members, those members shall add to their number until a quorum is present, when the first and only business of the National Executive shall be to call for nominations and complete the election procedure in accordance with Article 3 provided that such elections may be conducted by a postal ballot.

## **6. Powers and Duties**

The powers and duties of the National Executive shall be to do all those acts and things which, in its opinion, are necessary and beneficial to further the aims of the Assemblies of God in Australia.

## **ARTICLE 4 - WORLD MISSIONS COUNCIL**

- (a) The World Missions Council shall consist of no less than five members and the Director, all of whom have held an Ordained Minister's Certificate for at least four years and display evidence of missionary vision and preferably overseas or missionary experience. In special cases, the National Executive may waive this requirement of at least four years.

- (b) A quorum shall consist of a simple majority of members.
- (c) Any vacancy occurring in the council, between National Conferences, shall be filled by the National Executive, in consultation with the World Missions Council.
- (d) The initial appointment of the World Missions Director shall be for four years
- (e) Notwithstanding the above clauses, the maximum representation on the World Missions Council from the staff of the World Missions Office shall be two, including the Director.

## **ARTICLE 5 - BIBLE COLLEGE DIRECTORS**

- (a) The members of the Bible College incorporation should appoint a board of directors that shall consist of no less than five members including the college president. At least 50% of directors shall have been ordained for at least four years. Any other members shall be people who bring academic, management and/or financial expertise to the board of directors.
- (b) A quorum shall consist of a simple majority of members.
- (c) The National Executive, in consultation with the Bible College Directors shall fill any vacancy occurring on the board of Directors between National Conferences.

## **ARTICLE 6 - NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS**

### **1. Nominations**

- (a) Nominations for the National Executive, may be made by National and State Executives, State Conferences, local churches and those holding an Ordained Minister's Certificate.

(While the World Missions Council and the Bible College Directors are not appointed by the National Conference, State Executives, State Conferences, registered churches and ordained ministers are invited to propose the names of those they consider qualified for these positions. Such proposals should be in writing to the National Secretary not less than three months prior to the commencement of National Conference. The National Executive shall consider such proposals at their discretion.)

- (b) Nominations must be received, in writing, by the National Secretary, not less than three months prior to the commencement of the National Conference, which nominations shall be assented to, in writing, by the nominee. In the event that the number of nominations is less than the number of positions or offices to be filled, the National Executive shall make nominations up to the number required. Not less than six weeks prior

to the commencement of the National Conference, the National Secretary shall advise all churches and those holding Ordained Minister's Certificates of the nominations.

- (c) The National Executive shall recommend to the National Conference, one or more of the persons nominated for the offices of National Secretary, and National Treasurer or National Secretary/Treasurer, but all nominations shall be presented to the National Conference.

**N.B.** Nominees do not have to be present at Conference to be eligible for election.

## **2. Election Procedure**

- (a) All elections shall be made by secret ballot.
- (b) The first office to be filled shall be that of the National President. The offices of the National Vice President(s), National Secretary or National Secretary/Treasurer shall then be successively filled, and then the ordinary members of the National Executive.
- (c) When the nominee for National Treasurer is a holder of an Ordained Minister's Certificate and is being considered for executive office, his election shall take place immediately following that of National Secretary.
- (d) A 55% majority vote of all votes cast shall be necessary to constitute an election. Candidates having the highest number of votes over the requirement of 55% of the total votes cast, shall be declared elected. If the required number of members has not been elected after the first ballot the name of the candidate with the lowest number of votes shall be eliminated. The remaining candidates shall be nominees for a further election. This latter procedure shall be repeated until the required number of members has been elected.

## **ARTICLE 7 - NATIONAL OFFICERS' DUTIES**

### **1. National President**

It shall be the National President's duty:

- (a) To preside at National Conferences.
- (b) To direct at meetings of the National Executive.
- (c) To preside at meetings of the National Ministerial Committee.
- (d) To direct all work at the National Office.

- (e) To have the oversight of the work of the movement on behalf of the National Executive.
- (f) To represent the movement to the outside world.
- (g) To carry out any other duties usual and customary as presiding officer or such as may be directed by the National Conference or by the National Executive.
- (h) The National President shall be entitled to give his casting vote in the event of an equal vote on any matter, and to announce his decision.
- (i) The National President shall be an ex officio member of the World Missions Council and of the national Bible College Directorate and of any other national committee, except where otherwise stated, with the courtesy of the chair when he is in attendance.

## **2. National Vice President(s)**

It shall be the duty of the National Vice President(s):

- (a) To preside at meetings in the absence of the National President.
- (b) To assist the National President.
- (c) To perform any other duties under the supervision of the National President or such as may be directed by the National Conference or National Executive.

## **3. National Secretary**

It shall be the National Secretary's duty:

- (a) To make and file true records of the proceedings of the National Conference.
- (b) To act as secretary for the National Executive and make and file accurate records of the proceedings at all meetings of the National Executive.
- (c) To be custodian of the official seal of the Assemblies of God in Australia and of all official records, minutes of conferences and meetings of the National Executive and National Ministerial Committee, and of correspondence inward and copies of outward correspondence of the Assemblies of God in Australia.
- (d) To issue and keep records of all annual certificates of fellowship under the direction of the National Ministerial Committee.

#### **4. National Treasurer**

There shall be a National Treasurer appointed at the biennial National Conference. It shall be the National Treasurer's duty:

- (a) To be custodian of all funds in the Assemblies of God in Australia General Fund and any other funds placed in his/her care by the National Conference or by the National Executive.
- (b) To keep an accurate record of all receipts and expenditure, conducting his/her work according to accepted business standards.
- (c) To present a report on the several funds from time to time as may be requested by the National Executive.
- (d) To carry out such other duties as are customary to his/her office or as may be directed by the National Conference or the National Executive.

### **ARTICLE 8 - NATIONAL MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE**

#### **1. The National Executive shall constitute the National Ministerial Committee of the Assemblies of God in Australia.**

It shall have power to:

- (a) Issue certificates in accordance with Article 8, 3(b) and 9, 1.
- (b) Suspend and withdraw ministers' certificates in the case of improper conduct or false teaching in accordance with Article 8, 3(b).

#### **2. Certificates**

The Assemblies of God in Australia recognises five certificates with respect to ministry within Australia, namely:

Christian Worker's Certificate (CWC)  
 Specialised Ministries Certificate (SMC)  
 Probationary Minister's Certificate (PMC)  
 Ordained Minister's Certificate (OMC)  
 Associate Minister's Certificate (AMC)

#### **3. Issuance and Suspension of Certificates**

- (a) Christian Worker's Certificates, Specialised Ministries Certificates, and Probationary Minister's Certificates are issued and may be suspended or withdrawn by the state or its appointee.

- (b) Ordained Minister's Certificates and Associate Minister's Certificates are issued and may be suspended or withdrawn by the National Ministerial Committee, on the recommendation of the State Executive.
- (a) The process of issuing these credentials may, at the discretion of the National Executive, be delegated to the states but the responsibility for setting standards and required qualifications shall remain the responsibility of the National Executive. States may not change application procedures and requirements for the holders of these credentials except on a uniform national basis with the approval of the National Executive.
- (b) In extreme and emergency cases, where there is sufficient evidence of a serious breach of ministerial conduct, the State President together with the National President have the power to suspend ministers' certificates for a period of thirty days, pending investigation by the State Executive, who will then make recommendation to the National Executive.

**Note:** The National President should be immediately informed of an investigation by any State President.

#### **4. Right of Appeal**

Ordained Minister's Certificate and Associate Minister's Certificate holders.

- (a) The right of appeal to the National Executive shall be granted, provided that written notice of appeal is lodged with the National Secretary, not later than thirty days after notification of the suspension or withdrawal of his/her certificate.
- (b) The right of hearing shall, in such cases, be before the National Executive or any persons they may appoint.

#### **5. Right of Appeal of National Executive Personnel**

The right of appeal shall be to an appeals board, consisting of the State President of each state, such appeal to be lodged as in 4 (a) to the National Secretary.

**Note:** It is understood that all certificated personnel are not only responsible to the local church or department, but as members of the movement, they are under the oversight of the State and National Executives.

### **ARTICLE 9 - MINISTRY**

#### **1. Certificates**

The Assemblies of God in Australia recognises six particular ministries by the issuance of an appropriate certificate: Christian Worker's Certificate, Specialised Ministries Certificate, Probationary Minister's Certificate, issued by the

appropriate State Executive or their appointee; Ordained Minister's Certificate, Associate Minister's Certificate, and Overseas Associate Minister's Certificate issued by the National Ministerial Committee.

## **2. Qualifications for an Ordained Minister's Certificate**

### **Basic Requirements:**

- (a) Be an experienced person of God in good standing with those within the church and of good report by those outside the church.
- (b) Having demonstrated the qualifications set out in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:7-9, possessing ministerial ability as stated in Ephesians 4:10-12, and having been baptised in the Holy Spirit, as described in Article 5 of the United Constitution.
- (c) Having held a Probationary Minister's Certificate for at least two years or having been a credentialed minister in another recognised movement.
- (d) Be acquainted with, accept and adopt the United Constitution structure and administration of the Assemblies of God in Australia.
- (e) Having undertaken a recognised Bible study course and/or gives evidence that he/she is equipped by private reading and study and has had practical experience.

## **3. Application Procedure**

Application shall be made on the prescribed form to the National Ministerial Committee, through the state, in accordance with that state's procedure.

## **4. Rights and Responsibilities**

Those holding Ordained Minister's Certificates shall have the right to:

- (a) Attend District, State and National Conferences (of which he/she is a member) with full voting rights.
- (b) Be registered to solemnise marriages.
- (c) Do all those things which befits one as a minister of the gospel.
- (d) He/she shall be responsible for the payment of dues to the national, state and district as may be required.

## **ARTICLE 10 - CHURCHES**

### **1. Requirements**

Requirements for a Certificate of Fellowship shall be:

- (a) The minimum basis of 50 adults in regular attendance.
- (b) A functioning board of a pastor and at least two board members including secretary and treasurer, or secretary/treasurer, such administration having successfully functioned for at least twelve months.
- (c) Adoption of the United Constitution of the Assemblies of God in Australia and adoption of Local By-laws.
- (d) An assurance of accepting responsibility for its share of national, state and district requirements.

### **2. Application**

Application shall be made to the National Executive on the prescribed form, through the State Executive or its nominee, whose recommendation shall be required.

### **3. Loss of Autonomy**

Where a church falls below the minimum requirement of 30 adults in regular attendance or ceases to maintain the requirements for registration, it may be declared by the State Executive to be an unregistered church.

**Note:** Exceptions may be made to any of the foregoing requirements at the discretion of the State Executive, especially in the case of churches in small or isolated rural communities.

### **4. Associate Churches**

#### **1. Requirements**

- (a) The minimum requirement for recognition for associate church status shall be as for churches, Article 10.1 (a), (b) and (c).
- (b) Associate fellowship may be a step to full fellowship in the Assemblies of God in Australia.

#### **2. Rights and Privileges**

- (a) A right to one delegate to State and National Conferences, with voting power.
- (b) Payment of half the annual church quota of dues.



- (c) Only ministers endorsed by the State and National Executives shall be ministers of such associate churches.

### **3. Application Procedures**

- (a) Application shall be made on the prescribed form to the National Executive through the State Executive or its nominee, whose recommendation shall be required.
- (b) Associate fellowship shall be recognised by the granting of a certificate signed by the National President and the National Secretary.
- (c) All churches shall remain in the movement only so long as they continue to endorse the United Constitution together with such amendments as shall be made from time to time and shall continue in loyalty to the movement and in the unity of the Spirit to promote the objectives of the Assemblies of God in Australia.
- (d) The National Executive, on the recommendation of the appropriate State Executive, shall decide for or against in all cases under (c) above. Its decision shall be final.
- (e) A certificate shall be issued by the National Executive to all churches in the movement and also such churches as shall be received into the national movement.

### **5. Unregistered Churches**

All unregistered churches, except outreaches from a mother church or recognised minister endorsed by the State or National Executives, shall be under the authority and oversight of the appropriate Executive.

## **ARTICLE 11 - OTHER MINISTRIES**

Assemblies of God in Australia makes provision for the establishing of Christian centres of witness, evangelism, counselling, social relief, drug rehabilitation, and so on. Such centres shall be recognised by the granting of a certificate of affiliation by the National Executive, signed by the National President and the National Secretary.

### **1. Basic requirements shall be:**

- (a) A recommendation from the appropriate State Executive.
- (b) Supervision by a person holding a certificate recognised by the National Executive.
- (c) Adoption of the United Constitution of the Assemblies of God in Australia.

(d) Willingness to submit annual reports and audited financial statements.

## **2. Appeals**

Where such centres are approved, they are permitted to make national, state or district appeals when endorsed by the National, State or District Executives, providing that any matters of discipline, appeal and future development be according to the provisions laid down in the United Constitution, or district charter and By-laws where applicable.

## **3. Associate Ministries**

Other ministries desiring associate fellowship and making application shall be considered by the National Executive on the recommendation of the state.

# **ARTICLE 12 - ASSOCIATE MINISTERS**

## **1. Definition**

An associate minister is one, coming from sources other than our movement, who desires to work in cooperation with the Assemblies of God in Australia, having experience and qualifications to undertake the responsibility of the full gospel ministry, and an evident purpose to devote his/her life to the preaching of the gospel.

Notwithstanding the requirements of Article 8.2 of the National By-laws, the National Executive, at its discretion, may issue associate ministerial credentials to overseas applicants who meet the full application standards of the Australian movement. The credential granted to such overseas applicants shall be called an "Overseas Associate Minister's Credential" (OAMC) and issued according to the National Executive's policy.

## **2. Authorisation**

Authorisation is in the form of an Assemblies of God in Australia Associate Minister's Certificate, issued annually by the National Executive. Such shall not be issued to persons holding credentials with another body issuing credentials.

## **3. Qualifications**

- (a) Be an experienced person of God in good standing with those in the church and of good report by those outside the church, having demonstrated the qualifications as set out in Ephesians 4:10-12 and 1 Timothy 3:1-7, and having been baptised in the Holy Spirit, as described in Article 5 of the United Constitution.
- (b) Be acquainted with, accept and adopt the United Constitution structure and administration of the Assemblies of God in Australia.

- (c) Has undertaken a recognised Bible study course and/or gives evidence that he/she is equipped by private reading and study and has had practical experience.

#### **4. Ministry and Privileges**

- (a) He/she shall have the right to attend National, State and District (in which he/she resides) Conferences with the courtesy of the floor but without voting power.
- (b) He/she shall be responsible for payment for half the annual ministerial dues to the national movement and to the state (in which he/she resides) movement.
- (c) He/she shall receive an annual Associate Minister's Certificate.

#### **5. Application Procedure**

Application for an Associate Minister's Certificate shall be made to the National Credentials Committee through the respective District and/or State Executive where applicable.

### **ARTICLE 13 - ISSUANCE OF ORDAINED MINISTER'S AND ASSOCIATE MINISTER'S CERTIFICATES**

#### **1. Procedure**

- (a) Certificates, shall be issued on the first day of every second year.
- (b) Certificates, signed by the National President and National Secretary, must be held by all ordained ministers in Assemblies of God in Australia.
- (c) Without a certificate, a person cannot be regarded as an active minister.
- (d) State Executives shall review all credentials and submit, annually, the appropriate ministerial list to the National Secretary by 31 October.

#### **2. Active Ministry**

Active ministry is defined as:

- (a) Ministers having the oversight of a recognised church or holding a state or national administrative position.

- (b) Those ministering as recognised assistant pastors or assistants to the pastor endorsed by a church.
- (c) Recognised itinerant preachers and evangelists.
- (d) Recognised pioneer ministers.

### **3. Inactive Ministry**

- (a) An ordained minister, on ceasing to engage in active ministry, shall continue to be recognised as a minister in our movement, for a period of two years from the date of cessation.
- (b) A minister may have his/her name placed on the list of those open for a call.
- (c) Those who have held an Ordained Minister's Certificate which has lapsed and who desire to accept a call to the ministry, shall apply to the National Secretary for endorsement to be open for a call. On receipt of endorsement and subsequent to a call, they shall make application for re-issuance of an Ordained Minister's Certificate.
- (d) Endorsement, when granted, lapses at the expiration of twelve months, if no certificate has been issued.
- (e) Retired ministers shall continue to receive their annual Ordained Minister's Certificates.

### **ARTICLE 14 - OVERSEAS MINISTRY**

Ministers, from Assemblies of God or other acceptable movements, coming into Australia for permanent or semi-permanent ministry, should make application to the National Executive for issuance of an Australian credential.

Assemblies of God ministers coming into Australia for short-term ministry, do not require endorsement or an Australian credential. Those inviting will, as a courtesy, advise the National Executive of their presence in our country.

### **ARTICLE 15 - VISITING MINISTRY**

The National Executive may recommend or otherwise to churches, through the State Executives, such persons coming from any source other than our own Australian movement and seeking ministry. The advice of the State Executive should be sought in cases where persons are not known.

**ARTICLE 16 - NATIONAL DEPARTMENTS AND MINISTRIES**

The National Executive shall have the prerogative to establish departments and ministries that function at a national level, to facilitate the objectives of the Assemblies of God in Australia. Such ministries shall have the right to operate under their own constitutions and By-laws, approved by the National Executive. The ministries are subject to the direction of the National Executive and must present a report to the biennial National Conference. The leaders of all national departments and ministries shall be appointed by the National Executive.

**ARTICLE 17 - SUSPENSION OF BY-LAWS**

To allow members to bring forward business, which is of a special and urgent nature, which is not on the agenda, these By-laws may be suspended without notice by a motion carried by a 65% majority of the delegates present and eligible to vote. On the carrying of such motion, the National Secretary will place the said business on the agenda.

**ARTICLE 18 - AMENDMENTS**

Amendments to these By-laws may be made at any meeting of the National Conference, and shall be considered carried when carried by a 65% majority of the delegates present and eligible to vote.

**ASSEMBLIES OF GOD IN AUSTRALIA**

**NATIONAL CONFERENCE**

**STATE BY-LAWS**

## **ARTICLE 1**

*These By-laws were adopted by the National Conference in session at Adelaide in June, 1981, and are amended up to and including the National Conference, May 1999. They are set forth for the guidance of constituents, ministers and officers for the orderly conduct of the business of the movement. The United Constitution of the Assemblies of God in Australia and the National By-laws take precedence over these By-laws should any conflict of provisions appear at any time.*

## **ARTICLE 2 - STATE CONFERENCE**

### **1. Purpose**

It shall be the function of the State Conference, as the governing body in the state, to fulfil the purposes as set out in Article 2 of the National By-laws as these apply to the state.

- (a) To promote possibilities for fellowship between local churches.
- (b) To make whatever decisions may be necessary in the interests of the Assemblies of God in Australia.
- (c) To carry out elections to office in accordance with these By-laws, and to appoint committees for special work as occasion may arise.
- (d) To receive and consider reports from departments, officers and committees, and where appropriate, make any decisions or recommendations arising therefrom.
- (e) To consider any constitutional matter that may arise.
- (f) To deal with any appeals that may be presented.

### **2. Sessions**

The State Conference shall be held biennially, at a time and place fixed by the State Conference, but the State Executive may, by majority decision, make such alterations as are deemed necessary.

### **3. Notice**

The State Secretary shall send to all churches of the State Conference, and to all credential holders entitled to vote, a notice in writing not later than four months before the commencement of conference. All remits, which must be in the form of resolutions, shall be in the hands of the State Secretary three months prior to the commencement of conference.

Remits may be submitted by State Conferences, State Executives, churches holding a Certificate of Fellowship, and by ordained ministers. All reports and remits shall be submitted to churches and ordained ministers six weeks prior to the commencement of conference.

#### **4. Membership**

- (a) The State Conference shall comprise of all churches that hold a current Certificate of Fellowship and who are in financial standing, represented by one delegate for every two hundred and fifty (250) adults in regular attendance (18 years and over) or part thereof.
- (b) Every ordained or probationary minister resident in the state and all those with a specialised ministries certificate issued by the state shall be eligible to attend as a voting member.
- (c) Missionaries holding a full Missionary Certificate, whose Australian residential address is in that state, are entitled to attend and to vote.
- (d) In the event that the name of a church delegate is not received by the State Secretary, fourteen days prior to the commencement of the State Conference, the State Executive may, in its absolute discretion, veto the voting power of such delegate, who shall have no voting rights but may attend as an observer.

#### **5. Special State Conference**

Special State Conferences may be called by the State Executive at its discretion, or at the request of not less than one third of the registered churches in the state. A written notification of the conference shall be distributed to churches and those holding Ordained Minister's Certificates, not less than three weeks prior to the commencement of the Special State Conference, which shall consider the matters raised but no other business, except as provided for in Article 15 of these By-laws.

#### **6. Chairman**

The State President, and in his/her absence the State Vice President, shall preside over all meetings of the State Conference. In the event of the State President and the State Vice President being absent, the conference shall be presided over by a member of the State Executive appointed by the Conference at that meeting.

#### **7. Business**

Shall be as set out in the National By-laws Article 2.7 (a), (c) to (g).



## **ARTICLE 3 - STATE EXECUTIVE**

### **1. Membership**

The State Executive shall consist of not less than five, or more than seven members of the conference and shall include the State President, State Vice President, State Secretary and State Treasurer or State Secretary/Treasurer. Persons nominated for the State Executive shall have been ordained for at least two years. Persons nominated for the position of State President shall have been ordained for at least three years, and two years for other officers, except the State Treasurer, who may be chosen from the membership of the Assemblies of God in Australia.

### **2. Term of Office**

The term of office shall be from the conclusion of the State Conference at which elected, until the conclusion of the State Conference next following.

### **3. Vacancies**

In the event of a vacancy or vacancies occurring on the State Executive, the same shall be filled by the State Executive, from those who have been members of the conference for at least two years. In the event of any member being incapacitated through illness or any other cause, the State Executive may likewise appoint any other eligible person to act in place of that member so incapacitated.

### **4. Meetings**

The State Executive shall meet at such times and places as it may from time to time decide. Meetings shall be convened by the State Secretary at the request of the State President or a simple majority of the State Executive.

### **5. Quorum**

A quorum shall consist of not less than two thirds of the State Executive. In the event of the State Executive being reduced below a quorum but not less than three members, those members shall add to their number until a quorum is present, when the first and only business of the State Executive shall be to call for nominations and complete the election procedure in accordance with Article 3.1(a) provided that such elections may be conducted by a postal ballot.

### **6. Powers and Duties**

The powers and duties of the State Executive shall be to do all those acts and things, which in its opinion, are necessary and beneficial to further the aims of the Assemblies of God in Australia.

## **ARTICLE 4 - NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS**

### **1. Nominations**

Nominations may be made by the State Executive, the State Conference, local churches and those holding Ordained Minister's Certificates, consistent with the National By-laws, Article 6.

### **2. Election**

Elections to office shall be conducted in harmony with the National By-laws, Article 6.2.

## **ARTICLE 5 - STATE OFFICERS' DUTIES**

### **1. State President**

It shall be the State President's duty:

- (a) To preside at the State Conferences.
- (b) To preside at meetings of the State Executive.
- (c) To direct all work at the state office.
- (d) To have the oversight of the work of the movement on behalf of the State Executive.
- (e) To represent the state movement to the outside world.
- (f) To carry out any other duties usual and customary as presiding officer or such as may be directed by the State Conference or by the State Executive.
- (g) The State President shall be entitled to give his/her casting vote in the event of an equal vote on any matter, and to announce his/her decision.

### **2. State Vice President**

It shall be the State Vice President's duty:

- (a) To preside at meetings in the absence of the State President.
- (b) To assist the State President.

- (c) To perform any other duties under the supervision of the State President; or such as may be directed by the State Conference or the State Executive.

### **3. State Secretary**

It shall be the State Secretary's duty:

- (a) To make and file true records of the proceedings of the State Conference.
- (b) To act as secretary for the State Executive and make and file accurate records of the proceedings at all meetings of the State Executive.
- (c) To issue and keep a record of all state ministry certificates, under the direction of the State Executive.

### **4. State Treasurer**

There shall be a State Treasurer appointed at the biennial State Conference. Should the treasurer be a lay person, such shall be of mature experience and ability, but shall not be a member of the State Executive. It shall be his/her duty:

- (a) To be custodian of all funds in the Assemblies of God in Australia State Conference Fund and any other funds placed in his/her care by the State Conference or the State Executive.
- (b) To keep an accurate record of all receipts and expenditure, conducting his/her work according to accepted business standards.
- (c) To present a report on the several funds from time to time as may be requested by the State Executive.
- (d) To carry out such other duties as are customary to his/her office or as may be directed by the State Conference or the State Executive.

## **ARTICLE 6 - ISSUANCE AND SUSPENSION OF CERTIFICATES**

Christian Worker's Certificates, Specialised Ministries Certificates, and Probationary Minister's Certificates are issued, and may be suspended or withdrawn, by the State Executive or its appointee.

## **ARTICLE 7 - MINISTRY**

### **1. Ministers Certificates**

- (a) **Ordained Minister's Certificates (OMC), Associate Minister's Certificates (AMC), Active and Inactive Ministry:**

See Articles 9, 13 and 14 of the National By-laws.

- (b) **Christian Worker's Certificates (CWC), Specialised Ministries Certificates (SMC), and Probationary Minister's Certificates (PMC).**

## 2. Christian Worker

### (a) Definition

A Christian worker is one authorised to perform specific ministries under the oversight of an Assemblies of God in Australia minister or the State or District Conference. In special circumstances this certificate may be issued by a district or state to those ministers from overseas or other movements who are taking oversight of a church and need immediate authorisation while their transfer application is being processed.

### (b) Authorisation

Authorisation is in the form of an Assemblies of God in Australia Christian Worker's Certificate, issued annually by the State Executive or a committee appointed by it, and in unorganised states by the National Executive or a committee appointed by it.

**Note:** If, for any reason, the annual certificate is not renewed, such person will cease to be an officially endorsed Christian Worker in the movement.

### (c) Qualifications

- (i) Be in good standing with those in the church and of good report by those outside the church.
- (ii) Be baptised with the Holy Spirit, as described in Article 5.13 of the United Constitution.
- (iii) Be sufficiently experienced in the area of ministry specified by his/her senior pastor or by the State or District Conference, and involved in this area of ministry to such a degree as to warrant such recognition and authorisation.

### (d) Application Procedure

- (i) Application to become a Christian Worker must be made on the official form obtainable from the National, State or District Secretaries.
- (ii) **References:** Applications must be accompanied by the names and addresses of the minister and another Christian person, other than a relative and preferably an officer of his/her church, who have known the applicant for three years.

- (iii) Applicants will be interviewed by the State Executive, or their appointees, who will satisfy themselves concerning the applicant's character, ability to minister and that he/she has a satisfactory grasp of the doctrines of the Holy Scriptures as held by the Assemblies of God in Australia, and is acquainted with the United Constitution and By-laws.
- (iv) Notwithstanding a satisfactory report by the ministerial brethren, the State Executive or committee concerned may require the applicant to undertake a reading course or other training program.

### 3. Specialised Ministries

#### (a) Definition

One authorised to engage in various types of ministry on a probationary or specified basis, but who does not wish to enter the ministry as a life vocation, or who may not be fully qualified to minister outside a specified location or field of activity. Should he/she subsequently desire to proceed to a wider sphere of ministry, application may be made for a Probationary Minister's Certificate after satisfactory completion of at least one year's specialised ministry.

#### (b) Authorisation

Authorisation is in the form of the Assemblies of God in Australia Specialised Ministries Certificate, issued annually by the respective State Executive, and with the specific location and/or type of ministry clearly indicated on the certificate. If for any reason the annual certificate is not renewed, such person will cease to hold an officially endorsed specialised ministry position in the movement.

**Note:** Prior State Executive approval is required if the holder desires transfer from specific location or ministry.

#### (c) Qualifications

- (i) Be in good standing with those in the church and of a good report by those outside the church.
- (ii) Able to give evidence of the qualifications as set out in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:7-9, and having been baptised in the Holy Spirit as described in Article 5.13 of the United Constitution.
- (iii) Has had practical experience in preaching and Christian service or specialised ministry.

- (iv) Has equipped himself/herself by reading and studying to undertake the responsibilities of ministry in his/her field.
- (v) That he/she be acquainted with, accept and adopt the United Constitution structure and administration of Assemblies of God in Australia.

**(d) Ministry and Privileges**

- (i) He/she may be involved in a ministry which requires recognition within a specific church or engage in specialised ministry in a recognised field of activity.
- (ii) Has the right to attend State and District Conferences of the state/district in which he/she resides with full voting power.
- (iii) Has the right to attend National Conferences with the courtesy of the floor, when NOT representing a church.
- (iv) He/she shall be responsible to pay dues to the state in which he/she resides.

**(e) Application Procedure**

- (i) Application for a Specialised Ministries Certificate must be made on the official form obtainable from National, State and District Secretaries.
- (ii) **References:** Applications for a Specialised Ministries Certificate shall be accompanied by the name and address of a church or minister and at least two other Christian persons, other than relatives and preferably including an officer of his/her church, who have known the applicant for three years.
- (iii) Applicants will be interviewed by the State Executive, or its appointees, who will satisfy themselves that the applicant has the qualifications set out herein.

**4. Probationary Minister**

**(a) Definition**

A probationary minister is one showing clear signs of a divine call and God-given ability, and an evident purpose to devote his/her life to the preaching of the gospel.

Recommendations for an Ordained Minister's Certificate may be made on behalf of those who have satisfactorily completed at least two years as a probationary minister.

**(b) Authorisation**

Authorisation is in the form of an Assemblies of God in Australia Probationary Minister's Certificate, issued annually by the State Executive, and in unorganised states or in exceptional circumstances, by the National Executive.

**Note:** If, for any reason, the annual certificate is not renewed, such person will cease to be a probationary minister in the movement.

**(c) Qualifications**

- (i) Be a person of God in good standing with those in the church and of a good report by those outside the church.
- (ii) Able to give evidence of the qualifications as set out in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:7-9 , and having been baptised in the Holy Spirit, as described in Article 5.13, in the United Constitution.
- (iii) Has had practical experience in preaching and Christian service.
- (iv) Has undertaken a recognised Bible study course and/or gives evidence to the interviewing committee that he/she is equipped by private reading and study to undertake the duties of a probationary minister.
- (v) Be acquainted with, accept and adopt the United Constitution structure and administration of Assemblies of God in Australia.

**(d) Ministry and Privileges**

- (i) He/she may minister the gospel, conduct meetings, engage in evangelistic, home mission or pioneer work, or pastor a church, such to be under supervision, where the State Executive deems necessary, in accordance with the United Constitution, or serve as an assistant pastor. See Article 14 of the United Constitution.
- (ii) Has the right to attend State and District Conferences of the state/district in which he/she resides, with full voting power.
- (iii) Has the right to attend National Conferences with the courtesy of the floor, when NOT representing a church.
- (iv) Shall be responsible for the payment of dues to the state movement in which he/she resides, but shall not be liable for national dues.

- (v) At the discretion of the State Executive or National Executive, in unorganised states, he/she may be registered to solemnise marriages.

**(e) Application Procedure**

- (i) Application to become a probationary minister must be made on the official form obtainable from National, State and District Secretaries.
- (ii) Applicants will be interviewed by ministerial brethren who will satisfy themselves concerning the applicant's character, ability to minister, and that he/she has a satisfactory grasp of the doctrines of the Holy Scriptures as held by Assemblies of God in Australia, and is acquainted with, accepts and adopts the United Constitution structure and administration of Assemblies of God in Australia.

**ARTICLE 8 - CHURCHES AND ASSOCIATE CHURCHES**

Registration applications, loss of autonomy, rights and privileges of associate churches - see Article 10 of the National By-laws.

**ARTICLE 9 - OTHER MINISTRIES**

The establishment of Christian centres of witness, evangelism, counseling, social relief, drug rehabilitation, and so on - see National By-laws, Article 11.

**ARTICLE 10 - VISITING MINISTRY**

The National Executive may recommend or otherwise, to the churches through the State Executives, such persons coming from any source other than our own Australian movement and seeking ministry. The advice of the State Executive should be sought in cases where persons are not known.

**ARTICLE 11 - STATE DEPARTMENTS AND MINISTRIES**

State Executives will foster and promote departments and ministries as appropriate to their particular state.

**ARTICLE 12 - SUSPENSION OF BY-LAWS**

To allow members to bring forward business which is of a special and urgent nature which is not on the agenda, these By-laws may be suspended without notice by a motion carried by a two-thirds majority of the delegates present and eligible to vote.



On the carrying of such motion, the State Secretary will place the said business on the agenda.

### **ARTICLE 13 - AMENDMENTS**

Amendments to these By-laws may be made at any meeting of the National Conference, and shall be considered carried when carried by a 65% majority of the delegates present and eligible to vote.