



UNITED CONSTITUTION

(incorporating National By-laws)

May 2011

UNITED CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE 1 THE NAME

- 1.1** The name of the Movement shall be the ASSEMBLIES OF GOD IN AUSTRALIA.
- 1.2** The Assemblies of God in Australia has chosen to adopt the name “AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIAN CHURCHES” as a contemporary identity for its ministry in Australia and overseas. Either the name “Assemblies of God in Australia” or “Australian Christian Churches” may be used to describe the Movement.
- 1.3** Only churches, ministries and ministers properly affiliated with the Movement, shall be authorised to use the logo and name of the “Assemblies of God in Australia” or the “Australian Christian Churches”.

ARTICLE 2 DEFINITION

2.1 The Movement

The Movement is the unincorporated association known as the “ASSEMBLIES OF GOD IN AUSTRALIA” and also known as “AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIAN CHURCHES” It is a national association of Pentecostal churches in voluntary cooperation (Cooperative Fellowship), on terms of equality, uniting for evangelism, fellowship, order, discipline and other purposes. Its supreme governing body shall be the National Conference.

In circumstances where it is necessary for any aspects, initiatives or functions of the Movement to be incorporated, the manner and form of such incorporations must conform to the requirements set out in this constitution.

The National Company represents the movement as a whole as agent where an incorporated presence is necessary.

A State Company represents the movement within a particular state as agent where an incorporated presence is necessary for the particular state.

2.2 Cooperative Fellowship

“Cooperative Fellowship” describes the principles of relationship that provide cohesion and structure for the Movement. It is relevant to the relationship of individuals to a local church and the relationship of local churches to the Movement.

2.2.1 Cooperative Fellowship and the Local Church

The local church is a body of individual believers that come together, in Christian love, to partner in serving God and the community. The individual believers voluntarily work together for the purpose of spreading the Gospel, meeting needs in the community and building up the church. There is a respect and responsiveness to leadership in the church but each individual has an individual responsibility for his/her relationship with God.

2.2.2 Cooperative Fellowship and the Movement

The Movement is a conference of local churches that come together, in Christian love, to work cooperatively to attain common objectives (ARTICLE 3). It is acknowledged that the local church is God’s chosen means for communicating the Gospel and as such, it is an express purpose

of the movement to empower and encourage local churches to fulfil their mandates.

The Movement recognises the autonomy of the local church within the movement but cooperative fellowship places a responsibility on a local church to function consistently with the United Constitution, the State By-Laws and all policies approved by the National Conference of the movement.

2.3 National Conference

The National Conference is the supreme governing body of the Movement and operates according to ARTICLE 7 of this United Constitution.

2.4 State Conference

State Conferences are established under the authority of the national Movement and operate according to the United Constitution and the State By-Laws of the Movement.

2.5 Incorporation

In circumstances where it is considered necessary for any aspects, initiatives or functions of the Movement to be incorporated, the manner and form of such incorporations shall conform to the requirements of ARTICLE 22 of this Constitution.

ARTICLE 3 OBJECTIVES

- 3.1** To present the Gospel in a way that is consistent with the doctrines of the Movement as outlined in ARTICLE 4.
- 3.2** To encourage integrity and righteous living in its leaders, credentialed ministers and congregation members.
- 3.3** To plant and sustain churches that provide a safe and nurturing environment in which Christians can grow and others can find faith in Christ.
- 3.4** 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.
- 3.5** To train, ordain and send out ministers of the Gospel, missionaries and other ministries, for the work of God in Australia and overseas.
- 3.6** To allow and encourage individuals and churches to fulfil their God given purpose without undue interference or restriction on their activities and ministries.
- 3.7** To establish a code of conduct, policies and standards of behaviour, endorsed by the National Conference, that will be required standards for credential holders and churches.
- 3.8** To establish and maintain such departments and institutions as may be necessary for the fulfilment of the Movement's mission both in Australia and overseas.
- 3.9** To establish corporate entities on the basis set out in ARTICLE 22, under the ultimate control of its elected executives (National and State), to carry out the business of the Movement in an efficient and lawful manner.
- 3.10** To use whatever means are available, whether traditional or electronic, to communicate information to its ministers, constituents and the community at large.

- 3.11** To, either directly in its own right where possible or by its corporate entities, own, hold in trust, use, sell, convey, lease or otherwise dispose of such property, real or otherwise or engage in any lawful activity whatever, as may be considered necessary to fulfil the objectives of the Movement.

ARTICLE 4 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.

4.1 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).

4.2 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).

4.3 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).

4.4 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).

4.5 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).

4.6 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).

4.7 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).

4.8 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).

4.9 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).

4.10 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).

4.11 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).

4.12 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).

4.13 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).

4.14 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.

4.15 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).

4.16 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).

4.17 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).

4.18 The Punishment of the Wicked

We believe in the everlasting punishment of the wicked (in the sense of eternal torment) who wilfully 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).

4.19 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).

4.20 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 5 THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF ASSEMBLIES OF GOD IN AUSTRALIA**5.1 Purpose**

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

- 5.1.1** To promote possibilities for fellowship between local churches.
- 5.1.2** To make whatever decisions may be necessary in the interests of the Movement.
- 5.1.3** To carry out elections to office in accordance with this United Constitution and to appoint committees for special work as occasion may arise.
- 5.1.4** To receive and consider reports from the states, departments, officers and committees and, where appropriate, make any decisions or recommendations arising there from.
- 5.1.5** To consider and decide on any constitutional matter that may arise.

5.2 **Constituents**

The voting constituents of the National Conference of the Movement shall be:

- 5.2.1 Those churches which at the date of adopting this constitution hold a current Certificate of Fellowship.
- 5.2.2 Such registered churches as shall thereafter be received into the Movement by the granting of a Certificate of Fellowship.
- 5.2.3 Those individuals who hold a current Ordained Minister's Credential at the time of commencement of a National Conference.
- 5.2.4 Churches will cease to be voting constituents of the National Conference of the Movement at such a time as they no longer hold a current Certificate of Fellowship, and individuals will cease to be a voting constituent when, and from the time, an Ordained Minister's Credential is withdrawn.
- 5.2.5 Pastors and churches must be up to date with their National dues to be a voting constituent at the National Conference.

5.3 **Sessions**

The National Conference shall be held biennially, at a time and place determined by the National Executive or by a sitting of the National Conference.

5.4 **Notice**

The National Secretary shall send to all voting constituents, a notice in writing of the Conference, not later than four months before the commencement of conference. All remits from voting constituents, 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 voting constituent wishes to submit a remit to National Conference it must first be submitted for discussion at Regional level and receive endorsement by the regional leadership body. If the Regional leadership endorses the remit, it may then be forwarded to the appropriate State Executive. In states where there are no regions, 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 Region 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 Regional or State level, 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 Credential six weeks prior to the commencement of conference as part of a provisional agenda.

5.5 **Voting at National Conference**

- 5.5.1** All registered churches that hold a current Certificate of Fellowship and are in financial standing, may be represented by one delegate for every two hundred and fifty (250) adults in regular attendance (18 years and over) or part thereof and each such delegate shall be entitled to one vote.
- 5.5.2** Every ordained minister is entitled to one vote.
- 5.5.3** 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.

5.6 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 Credentials, 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 19 of this Constitution.

5.7 Chairman

The National President, or their nominee, and in their 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.

5.8 Business

- 5.8.1** 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.
- 5.8.2** No remits involving constitutional changes shall be brought before the National Conference unless included on the provisional agenda.
- 5.8.3** The National Executive shall prepare the agenda.
- 5.8.4** The only persons eligible to vote are delegates of Registered Churches and holders of an Ordained Minister's Credential attending in person. No proxy votes are allowed.
- 5.8.5** 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.
- 5.8.6** All resolutions shall require a 55% majority of the voting constituents present at the meeting to be carried except where different percentages are specified in this constitution.
- 5.8.7** Quorum: Provided that notice has been given, consistent with ARTICLE 5.4, the voting constituents present at a conference business session shall constitute a quorum. To be clear, there is no minimum number of voting constituents whose presence is necessary to validate the transactions of the National Conference.

ARTICLE 6 NATIONAL OFFICERS

- 6.1** 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.
- 6.2** The National President and National Vice President(s) shall only 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.
- 6.3** The National Secretary and the National Treasurer or National Secretary/Treasurer may be chosen from the ordained ministers or from individuals in fellowship and good standing with any church forming part of the Movement and shall be of mature experience and ability. If the National Secretary and/or National Treasurer are not holders of an Ordained Minister's Credential, they shall be ex officio members of the National Executive without voting rights.
- 6.4** The National Secretary, National Treasurer or National Secretary/Treasurer shall be ex officio delegates to National Conferences with full voting rights provided they have no vote by virtue of ARTICLE 5.5.2 of this United Constitution.
- 6.5** The roles and job descriptions of the National Officers shall be set and modified by the National Executive.

ARTICLE 7 NATIONAL EXECUTIVE

7.1 Membership

Each biennial National Conference shall elect a National Executive. The National Executive shall consist of nine members and shall include the National President, National Vice President(s), National Secretary, National Treasurer or National Secretary/Treasurer. Persons nominated for the National Executive shall have been ordained for at least four years except a National Secretary and a National Treasurer or a National Secretary/Treasurer, who is not the holder of an Ordained Minister's Credential. In special circumstances, the National Executive may waive the four year requirement.

Note: As per ARTICLE 6.2, the National President and National Vice President(s) shall have been ordained for at least five years.

7.2 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.

7.3 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.

7.4 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. All members of the National Executive shall be entitled to receive notice of meeting. The National Executive may resolve from time to time the manner and form of such notice and a minute of its meeting to the effect will be conclusive evidence as to the form of notice required.

7.5 Quorum

The quorum necessary for the transaction of the business of the National Executive shall be a majority or such greater numbers as it shall fix from time to time.

7.6 Technology Meetings

For meetings other than those held in person after written notice, a majority of the National Executive shall be deemed to hold or be present at a meeting when they communicate through a telephone conference call, video or other electronic conference method in circumstances where each of them can simultaneously hear what is said by and can speak to the other members. Such a meeting shall be deemed to be held at the place where the chairperson was present during the meeting. A resolution passed at a meeting under this sub-clause must be ratified at the next National Executive meeting where notice has been given to all members.

If a majority of the National Executive shall have advised the National Secretary in writing by fax or email that they are in favour of a resolution in particular terms such resolution shall be deemed to be passed at a meeting of the National Executive provided it shall be ratified at the next National Executive meeting where notice has been given to all members.

7.7 Powers and Duties

Between biennial National Conferences, the National Executive is authorised to provide leadership and act in all matters that affect the Movement, at their discretion. All decisions of the National Executive must be in harmony with the provisions of this United Constitution and any decisions of the National Biennial Conference.

7.8 Nominations

7.8.1 Nominations for the National Executive, may be made by National and State Executives, State Conferences or voting constituents.

7.8.2 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 voting constituents of the nominations.

7.8.3 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.

7.8.4 Nominees do not have to be present at the National Conference to be eligible for election.

7.9 Election Procedure

7.9.1 All elections shall be made by secret ballot. A separate ballot shall be held for each of the following:

- National President;
- National Vice President;

- National Secretary or National Secretary/Treasurer;
- National Treasurer (if required);
- Members of the National Executive other than National Officers.

- 7.9.2** 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.
- 7.9.3** 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.
- 7.9.4** All candidates must achieve at least a simple majority of votes cast to be declared as elected.
- 7.9.5** In ballots for National Officers, the candidate with the highest number of votes over a simple majority shall be declared as elected.
- 7.9.6** If no candidate, in the election for a National Officer, obtains a simple majority in the first ballot, a second ballot shall be held. Only the two candidates who achieved the highest and second highest number of votes in the first ballot shall be included in the second ballot.
- 7.9.7** In ballots for election of members of the National Executive other than office holders, all candidates achieving a simple majority, at least, up to the number of positions to be filled, shall be declared as elected in the order corresponding to the number of votes achieved by each candidate from the highest to the lowest.
- 7.9.8** If all vacancies for members of the National Executive other than office holders have not been filled following the results of the first ballot, a second ballot shall be held. The number of candidates in the second ballot shall be the number of remaining vacancies plus one. The candidates in the second ballot shall be chosen in the order corresponding to the number of votes achieved by each candidate in the first ballot from the highest to the lowest.
- 7.9.9** In the event of a tied vote between candidates for any vacancy, a further ballot shall be held, between the candidates with the tied vote, to fill the vacancy.

ARTICLE 8 AUDIT

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 membership of the appropriate corporate entities. It shall also ensure that a summary report be prepared, together with covering letter from the Auditor, for presentation to the National Conference.

ARTICLE 9 STATE CONFERENCES AND BY-LAWS

- 9.1** Whilst the Movement is a national movement, it recognises the necessity of administration of some matters at a state level.

- 9.2** Each state shall have its own Conference, State Executive and executive officers, consistent with the provisions of this constitution and the State By-Laws. The roles and job descriptions of the State Officers shall be set by the State Executive.
- 9.3** 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.
- 9.4** The administration of state matters not affecting the national Movement shall be vested in the State Executive between State Conferences.
- 9.5** All State Conference and Executive decisions are required to conform with the decisions of the National Conference and the National Executive.
- 9.6** In the event of a State being unable to appoint suitably qualified officers or executive members, the National Executive may appoint persons to fill the vacancies, at its sole discretion, until the next State Conference.
- 9.7** A State Executive may, by resolution, invite the National Executive to intervene in the management and affairs of that state for such period as it determines or until the next State Conference whichever is earlier. For the term of such intervention the National Executive shall replace the role of the State Executive or make additions to the State Executive, to represent the National Executive, with full voting powers.

In circumstances where the National Executive considers the interests of the Movement within a state are in serious jeopardy it may intervene so as to replace the role of the State Executive in all respects for such period as it determines or until the next State Conference whichever is earlier. In these circumstances the role of the State Executive is terminated upon written notification by the National Secretary that the National Executive has intervened under the provisions of this clause.

- 9.8** In the event of the National Executive replacing the role of the State Executive, a Special Conference, for the state, must be held within two months of the intervention. The special conference shall be informed of the reason for the replacement of the State Executive and determine the timing of the election of a new State Executive.

ARTICLE 10 MINISTRY

- 10.1** The Movement acknowledges that the church, both local and universal, has been endowed with Ministry Gifts as outlined in Ephesians 4:11-12.
- 10.2** Accepting that the Call of God, Ministry Gifts and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit have been bestowed on men and women without respect of gender, the Movement acknowledges the right and privilege of men and women to have their ministries recognised.
- 10.3.1** The Movement recognises ministries, by the granting of the appropriate certificates as set out in ARTICLE 11 of this Constitution. The movement may grant an OMC or a PMC to individuals who reside outside Australia subject to the provisions of this constitution.

ARTICLE 11 CREDENTIALS

11.1 Certificates

The Movement recognises four certificates with respect to ministry, namely:

- Ordained Minister's Credential (OMC)

- Provisional Minister's Credential (PMC)
- Specialised Ministry Certificate (SMC)
- Overseas Associate Minister's Certificate (OAMC)

11.2 Qualifications and Requirements of all Credential and Certificate Holders

- 11.2.1** To be a person of God in good standing with those within the church and of good report by those outside the church.
- 11.2.2** To have demonstrated the qualifications set out in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:7-9 for a leader in the church and have been baptised in the Holy Spirit, as described in ARTICLE 4 of the United Constitution.
- 11.2.3** To have undertaken a recognised Bible study course and/or given evidence to the interviewing committee that he/she is equipped by private reading and study to fulfill the relevant ministry.
- 11.2.4** To be acquainted with, accept and adopt the United Constitution, structure, policies and administration of the Movement.
- 11.2.5** To be living consistent with the Code of Conduct and other policies of the Movement.
- 11.2.6** To be regularly attending a church that holds a Certificate of Fellowship or a Provisional Certificate of Fellowship. This will not apply to credential holders resident overseas but the National Executive may require overseas resident credential holders to demonstrate that they are involved in appropriate church fellowship to the extent considered reasonable by the National Executive.
- 11.2.7** To complete professional development as required by the National and State Executive.
- 11.2.8** To be prepared to sign, as required, a declaration in relation to moral standing, compliance with legal requirements and doctrinal consistency with the Movement.

11.3 Ordained Minister

11.3.1 Definition

An "Ordained Minister" is one who is a proven minister as described in Ephesians 4:10-12. An Ordained Minister's Credential will only be granted to a minister who has held a Provisional Minister's Credential for at least two years. Ministers who have been ordained in another recognised movement may, at the discretion of the State Executive (with appropriate references and endorsement), be recommended for the issuance of an Ordained Minister's Credential.

11.3.2 Rights and Responsibilities

Those holding Ordained Minister's Credentials shall have the right/responsibility to:

- 11.3.2.1** Do all those things which befit one as a minister of the Gospel.
- 11.3.2.2** Attend Regional, State and National Conferences (of which he/she is a member) with full voting rights.
- 11.3.2.3** Be registered to solemnise marriages, except in the case of a credential holder residing outside Australia.
- 11.3.2.4** Pay all National, State and Regional dues, levies and other charges payable.

- 11.3.2.5** Live consistently with the qualifications and requirements as outlined in ARTICLE 11.2 of the United Constitution.

11.4 Provisional Minister

11.4.1 Definition

A "Provisional 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 Credential may be made by a supervising pastor on behalf of those who have satisfactorily completed at least two years as a provisional minister.

11.4.2 Rights and Responsibilities

Those holding a Provisional Minister's Credential shall have the right/responsibility:

- 11.4.2.1** To minister, under supervision, in any area that the Senior Pastor of a local church, or the State Executive deems to be appropriate.
- 11.4.2.2** To attend State and Regional Conferences of the state/region in which he/she resides, with full voting power.
- 11.4.2.3** To attend National Conferences with the courtesy of the floor but without voting rights unless as an official delegate of a registered church.
- 11.4.2.4** To be registered to solemnise marriages only if local circumstances require it (e.g. isolation) and the State Executive authorises it.
- 11.4.2.5** Pay all National, State and Regional dues, levies and other charges payable.
- 11.4.2.6** Live consistently with the qualifications and requirements as outlined in ARTICLE 11.2 of the United Constitution.

11.5 Specialised Ministry

11.5.1 Definition

A "Specialised Ministry" is one authorised to engage in various types of ministries on a specified basis, in a specific location or field of activity.

There is no articulation from a Specialised Ministry Certificate to Ordination but, if the holder wishes to proceed to a wider sphere of ministry, application may be made for a Provisional Minister's Credential after the satisfactory completion of at least one year as a specialized ministry.

11.5.2 Rights and Responsibilities

Those holding a Specialised Ministry Certificate shall have the right/responsibility:

- 11.5.2.1** To be involved in a ministry that requires recognition within a specific church or engage in ministry in a recognised field of ministry.
- 11.5.2.2** To attend Regional Conferences of the region in which he/she resides with full voting power and to attend the State

Conference in which he/she resides with courtesy of the floor unless as an official delegate of a registered church.

- 11.5.2.3** To attend National Conferences with the courtesy of the floor but without voting rights unless as an official delegate of a registered church.
- 11.5.2.4** Pay all National, State and Regional dues, levies and other charges payable.
- 11.5.2.5** To report to the appropriate State Executive any change of location or ministry. Note: Since the Specialised Ministry Certificate is location and ministry specific, there is no obligation on a State Executive to continue a SMC if location or ministry changes.
- 11.5.2.6** Live consistently with the qualifications and requirements as outlined in ARTICLE 11.2 of the United Constitution.

11.6 Overseas Associate Minister's Certificate

11.6.1 Definition

"Overseas Associate Minister" is one who is living and ministering outside of Australia, holds a credential with an accrediting body within their nation of residence but has, in the opinion of the National Executive, a significant ministry and clear connectedness with the Movement that makes the maintenance of the relationship advantageous. The minister's primary accountability rests with the accrediting body in their nation of residence and an overseas Associate Minister's Certificate will not be issued without the approval of the accrediting body within their nation.

If a minister does not hold a credential in his/her nation of residence and has a close connection with the Movement but does not qualify to hold an OMC according to the guidelines set out in the Overseas Credential Policy (specifically relating to the historical connection), the National Executive may grant him/her an OAMC if it believes there is a compelling reason to do so provided always that the candidate fulfils the qualifications in Article 11.2.

11.6.2 Rights and Responsibilities

Those holding Overseas Associate Minister's Certificates shall have the right/responsibility to:

- 11.6.2.1** Be acknowledged as an associate minister of the Movement.
- 11.6.2.2** Transfer directly to an appropriate credential/certificate upon relocation in Australia provided that the credential in the overseas nation is relinquished.
- 11.6.2.3** Attend Regional, State and National Conferences with the courtesy of the floor but no voting rights.
- 11.6.2.4** Pay all National, State and Regional dues, levies and other charges payable.
- 11.6.2.5** Live consistently with the qualifications and requirements as outlined in ARTICLE 11.2 of the United Constitution.

11.7 Issuance and Suspension of Credentials and Certificates

- 11.7.1** All credentials and certificates are issued by the National Executive.
- 11.7.2** The National Executive may establish such procedures as it considers just and necessary to investigate any complaint against a credential or certificate holder prior to consideration of such complaint by the National Officers.
- 11.7.3** Credentials and certificates may be suspended or withdrawn on the grounds of improper conduct or false teaching by decision of a majority of the National Officers either on their own motion or upon recommendation of a State Executive. The National Executive may appoint other persons in particular cases to comprise a panel to assist the National Officers in the task of deciding whether or not to suspend or withdraw a credential or certificate in such cases.
- 11.7.4** All applications for credentials and certificates shall be made on the application forms and according to the processes prescribed by the National Executive.
- 11.7.5** The administration of the application and processing of credentials and certificates 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 and certificates except on a uniform national basis with the approval of the National Executive.
- 11.7.6** In extreme and emergency cases, where there is sufficient evidence of improper conduct or false teaching on the part of a credential or certificate holder, the National President (or his appointee), on the advice of the appropriate State President, shall have the power to suspend a Minister's Credential or Ministry Certificate for a period of up to thirty days, pending investigation by the State Executive, who will then make recommendation to the National Officers.
- 11.7.7** The National President should be immediately informed of a formal complaint against a credentialed minister that may, in the opinion of the State President, lead to the suspension of the minister's credential or ministry certificate.

11.8 Right of Appeal

All credential/certificate holders who have their credentials or certificates suspended or withdrawn shall have right of appeal to the National Executive.

- 11.8.1** 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 credential or certificate.
- 11.8.2** The right of hearing shall, in such cases, be before the National Executive or any persons they may appoint.
- 11.8.3** The decision of the National Executive shall be final in relation to substantial outcome of, and procedure to be adopted upon, the appeal.

11.9 Right of Appeal for National Executive Personnel

If the credential/certificate holder whose credential/certificate is suspended or withdrawn is a member of the National Executive:

- 11.9.1 The right of appeal shall be to an appeals board, consisting of the State President of each state (or his appointee if the State President is a member of the National Executive)
- 11.9.2 The right of appeal to the appeals board 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 credential/certificate.
- 11.9.3 The decision of the appeals board, in relation to the appeal, shall be final.

11.10 Procedure for Issuance of Credentials and Certificates

- 11.10.1 Ordained Ministers Credentials shall be renewed biennially.
- 11.10.2 All other certificates and credentials shall be renewed annually.
- 11.10.3 Credentials/certificates, signed by the National President and National Secretary, must be held by all ministers in the Movement.
- 11.10.4 Without a credential/certificate, a person cannot be regarded as an active minister.
- 11.10.5 State Executives shall review all credentials and certificates as they become due, through the appropriate renewal form and submit the recommended ministerial list to the National Secretary by 31 October or other date specified in writing by the National Secretary.
- 11.10.6 Credentials and certificates will not be issued until the appropriate dues have been paid.

11.11 Active Ministry

“Active ministry” is defined as:

- 11.11.1 Ministers having the oversight of an ACC church or holding a state or national ministry/administrative position.
- 11.11.2 Those ministering as recognised assistant pastors or assistants to the pastor in an ACC church.
- 11.11.3 Recognised itinerant preachers and evangelists or those engaged in a recognised form of ministry activity.
- 11.11.4 Recognised pioneer ministers.

11.12 Inactive Ministry

- 11.12.1 An ordained minister, on ceasing to engage in active ministry, shall continue to be recognised as a minister in the Movement, until the expiration of their Ordained Minister's Credential. This is subject to the minister continuing to attend a church with a Certificate of Fellowship or a Provisional Certificate of Fellowship.
- 11.12.2 Those who have held an Ordained Minister's Credential which has lapsed and who desire to accept a call to the ministry, shall complete an appropriate application and any other required documentation. They should apply immediately for a reissuance of their credential.
- 11.12.3 The reissuance of a credential will only occur following the advice of the appropriate State Executive.
- 11.12.4 Retired ministers shall continue to receive their annual Ordained Minister's Credentials whilst they otherwise remain qualified according to this United Constitution.

ARTICLE 12 CHURCHES AND SERVICES

12.1 Registered Church

12.1.1 Definition

A "Registered Church" shall be defined as a church that holds a current Certificate of Fellowship issued by the Movement.

12.1.2 Certificate of Fellowship

Certificates of Fellowship shall be issued and may be withdrawn at any time at the discretion of the National Executive. Certificates will only be issued and retained by churches that meet the following requirements:

12.1.2.1 For the initial issuance of a Certificate of Fellowship, a church should have at least 50 adults in regular attendance.

12.1.2.2 For the renewal of a Certificate of Fellowship, a church should have at least 30 adults in regular attendance.

Note: The appropriate State Executive may recommend an exception to this requirement in the case of churches in small or isolated rural communities.

12.1.2.3 A church must appoint, as its senior pastor, a person holding a current Ministry Credential/Certificate of the Movement. If it wishes to appoint a person not holding a current credential/certificate, it may only do so with the express permission of the appropriate State Executive and only on condition that that person immediately begins the process of applying for an appropriate credential/certificate.

12.1.2.4 A church must have an appropriate written constitution consistent with this United Constitution and the State By-Laws. It should also have a functioning board of at least three members, independent of each other, including a Secretary and Treasurer or a Secretary/Treasurer. This administration should have been functioning for at least 12 months prior to the granting of a Certificate of Fellowship.

12.1.2.5 Acceptance of the United Constitution, State By-Laws, Code of Conduct and Policies of the Movement and Agreement to function according to them must be included in the church constitution.

12.1.2.6 Attendance of appropriate people at required compliance training sessions and a demonstrated cooperation with National, State and Regional Executives.

12.1.2.7 Payment of all National, State and Regional dues, levies and other charges payable.

12.1.2.8 Compliance with all applicable Federal, State and Local Government legislation as pertaining to churches and charities.

12.1.2.9 The church must maintain an appropriate insurance policy including coverage for "public liability" and "officers and directors".

12.1.3 State Executive Intervention

12.1.3.1 The appropriate State Executive of the Movement may accept a written and signed invitation to hold a meeting of members, or to assist or advise in the business or affairs of the church, by either the senior minister, or the board, or by a majority of the current membership of the church.

12.1.3.2 Such meeting shall be chaired by a member of the State or National Executives (or their appointee), appointed by the State Executive who shall set the agenda.

12.1.3.3 All business conducted shall be in accordance with the constitution of the church, and the State or National Executive official of the Movement 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.

12.2 Provisional Church

12.2.1 Definition

A "Provisional Church" shall be defined as a church that is recognised by the appropriate State Executive as working towards becoming a registered church but having not yet fulfilled the requirements of obtaining a Certificate of Fellowship. Such a church shall be under the authority and oversight of the relevant State Executive.

12.2.2 Provisional Certificate of Fellowship

A Provisional Church shall be granted a Provisional Certificate of Fellowship, upon being recognised by its State Executive. The certificate shall be subject to the maintenance of governance and legal requirements deemed appropriate by the State Executive and may be withdrawn at any time on the advice of the State Executive. The certificate shall be subject to review and renewal every two years.

12.2.3 State Executive Intervention

The State Executive shall have the right to give advice and direction as it sees fit and the State Executive should be consulted prior to any major decisions being made by the provisional church.

12.3 Satellite or Extension Service

12.3.1 Definition

A "Satellite or Extension Service" shall be defined as an outreach from a registered church that has a regular and distinct ministry to a community or people group but comes under the authority and control of the registered church. A service catering for a distinct group or ministering in a different location would qualify as a satellite or extension service but multiple services in one location would not qualify.

12.3.2 State Executive intervention

The State may only intervene in Satellite or Extension Services through the registered church as allowed in 12.1.3. The registered church is responsible for compliance with all requirements (including payment of dues) for the Satellite or Extension Service

12.3.3 Transition to church status

In the event that the responsible registered church and its satellite or extension service agree for the satellite or extension service to be separately listed as a church, the State Executive may accept it as a registered or provisional church depending on its meeting the required

criteria. If the responsible registered church and the satellite or extension service are in dispute about becoming a separately listed church, the State Executive may intervene and make a determination.

ARTICLE 13 NATIONAL DEPARTMENTS AND MINISTRIES

The National Executive may establish departments and ministries that function at a national level, to facilitate the objectives of the Movement. 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. In the event that a national department is incorporated, the provisions of ARTICLE 22 shall apply.

ARTICLE 14 WORLD MISSIONS

The Movement shall give priority to World Missions. The National Executive shall ensure that structures and initiatives are put in place to facilitate an effective ministry outside of Australia. Where it is deemed advisable to establish corporate entities, to fulfill the purpose of World Missions, the provisions of ARTICLE 22 shall apply.

ARTICLE 15 EDUCATION

The Movement shall give priority to the education of its constituents, particularly in relation to the practical training of prospective ministers for Australia and overseas. To this end, the establishment of institutions at all levels of education shall be encouraged.

Specifically, a National College shall be established, for the training of prospective ministers. The National College shall be authorised to establish such corporate entities that facilitate its educational purposes subject to ARTICLE 22.

ARTICLE 16 CODE OF CONDUCT AND OTHER POLICIES

- 16.1** The National Conference shall adopt, as policy, a "Code of Conduct" and such other policies that reflect the moral and ethical standards of the Movement.
- 16.2** All persons who have been issued with a credential or certificate by the Movement are required to adhere to such policies and a failure to do so may be regarded as improper conduct under ARTICLE 11.7.3 of this Constitution and lead to discipline according to ARTICLE 11.7.
- 16.3** All policies shall be circulated to registered churches and Ordained Ministers for consultation prior to introduction or amendment. They will then be ratified by the National Conference with a vote of at least 65%.

ARTICLE 17 PROPERTY

17.1 National Property

The National Executive will make appropriate provision for the holding of the Movement's 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) as set out in ARTICLE 22.

17.2 State & Regional Property

Each State Executive will make appropriate provision in their absolute discretion for the holding of State and District properties, on behalf of the state Movement.

17.3 Local Church Property

Local church property may be held:

- 17.3.1** In its own name where incorporated; or
- 17.3.2** By the State Executive making provision for the holding of local church properties on behalf of the local church where unincorporated; or
- 17.3.3** By a corporate body controlled by the local church, where unincorporated, upon trusts determined in accordance with the constitution of the local church; or
- 17.3.4** By individuals appointed by the local church in accordance with and upon trusts determined in accordance with its constitution.
- 17.3.5** Local church property means any property held for or controlled by a church that holds a Certificate of Fellowship or Provisional Certificate of Fellowship and any property of an outreach commenced by such a church.

ARTICLE 18 INDEMNITY

18.1 Indemnity

Subject to the terms of this Article 18, the Movement indemnifies:

- (a) any person who holds or who has held any elected or appointed office within the Movement whether or not validly appointed to occupy such a position;
- (b) any executive officers; and
- (c) any employees

from any loss suffered in respect of any wrongful act asserted against such person while acting in their individual or collective capacities as office bearers within the Movement.

18.2 Exclusions

The Movement will not indemnify any person for any claim arising from or attributable to:

- 18.2.1** A wilful breach of duty, the dishonest, fraudulent or malicious act or omission committed with criminal intent;
- 18.2.2** Sexual abuse claims, which means any actual, alleged or attempted assault or abuse of a sexual nature or any other lewd conduct.

18.3 Limits to Indemnity

18.3.1 The Movement's liability in respect of this indemnity is limited to the greater of:

- 18.3.1.1** The value of assets held on trust on behalf of the Movement; and
- 18.3.1.2** To the extent the claim made against a person is covered by a policy of insurance, whether or not that policy is held by or for the benefit of the Movement or not, the sum insured under that policy.

18.3.2 This indemnity is limited to office bearers, officers or employees, of the National Conference.

18.4 Advancement of Defence Costs

The Movement will pay all reasonable defence costs incurred in defending any civil or criminal proceedings commenced in respect of any wrongful act asserted against such a person while acting in their individual or collective capabilities on an on-going

basis as they are incurred prior to the final payment or settlement of any claim provided that:

- 18.4.1** Such defence costs are incurred with the written consent of the Movement. Such consent not to be unreasonably withheld; and
- 18.4.2** Such advance payments by the Movement shall be repaid to the Movement in the event that the person is not entitled to payment of any loss under this indemnity.”

ARTICLE 19 SUSPENSION OF CONSTITUTIONAL REQUIREMENTS

To allow members to bring forward business, which is of a special and urgent nature, which is not on the agenda, the requirements of this Constitution, in relation to business, 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 20 INTERPRETATION

The official interpretation of this Constitution and the State By-Laws, including the substantive meaning of any aspect of the Doctrinal Basis, shall be vested in the National Executive between conferences.

ARTICLE 21 AMENDMENTS

Proposed amendments to this Constitution must be submitted in writing, as a remit under ARTICLES 5.4 and 5.8 to the National Secretary at least three months prior to the date of the ensuing National Conference of the Movement. Such shall be considered carried when carried by a 75% majority of the delegates present and eligible to vote.

The National Executive is empowered to make any spelling and grammatical corrections that make no significant change to the meaning of this constitution. The National Executive is also empowered to make changes to by-laws and policies that are made necessary by constitutional amendments approved by the conferences. Such changes shall be notified to the Movement.

ARTICLE 22 MOVEMENT INCORPORATION PROVISIONS

- 22.1** In circumstances where the National Executive is of the view that it is necessary to legally incorporate any aspects (including State aspects), initiatives or functions of the Movement, it may approve such incorporation provided the following principles are adopted –
- 22.2** Except in circumstances where the National Executive deems it to be otherwise necessary, the constituent documentation of such incorporated bodies must provide:
 - 22.2.1** Acceptance of the Doctrinal Basis set out in Article 5 of this constitution;
 - 22.2.2** The voting constituency must consist of either the National Company or the individual members of the National Executive where it is not possible for the National Fellowship Company to do so because of legal requirements of the jurisdiction where the incorporated body is to be formed and;
 - 22.2.3** The controlling directorship or committee must only be eligible for election or re-election with the prior written approval of the National President or National Secretary except for State Companies where the board must be comprised by the State Executive elected in accordance with State Bylaws adopted by the National Conference and;

- 22.2.4** Annual financial reports be provided to the National Treasurer without demand.
- 22.3** For the purpose of this article and this United Constitution the term “National Company” means ‘Assemblies of God in Australia ACN 004 617 467 or such other body incorporated by the National Executive to replace it’s function.
- 22.4** The term “State Company” means a body incorporated within a state or territory of Australia where it is necessary to do so.

ARTICLE 23 NON-PROFIT

The income and property of the Movement however derived shall be applied solely towards the promotion of the objects of the Movement as set out in this United Constitution. No portion thereof shall be paid or transferred directly or indirectly by way of dividend, bonus or otherwise howsoever by way of profit, to individual persons who, at any time are or have been associated with the Movement, or to any person claiming through any of them provided that nothing herein shall prevent the payment in good faith or remuneration to any officers or servants of the Fellowship or other person in return for services actually rendered to the Movement or for goods supplied in the ordinary way of business (but not for services rendered as an office bearer) nor prevent the payment of interest on borrowed money, the maximum rate of interest to be not more than the current rate charged by Banks in Australia similar circumstances or the payment of rent for premises or goods let or hired to the Movement.

ARTICLE 24 DISSOLUTION

If the Movement should be dissolved and there be any property or assets after satisfaction of its liabilities, the same shall not be paid to or distributed among individuals associated with the Movement, but shall be paid forthwith, without demand to such other organisation with similar objects as the voting constituents present at the meeting of the National Conference to dissolve the Movement shall determine or in default thereof as determined by the Supreme Court of a State provided always that such payment or distribution shall only be made to such other organisation that is not carried on for the purposes of profit and gain to its individual members and where that entity is able, at the time of such payment or distribution, to satisfy the Movement that it holds endorsement from the Australian Taxation Office as a tax concession charity or other such qualification required under Australian law that results in the entity being exempt from income tax.

