

Conference of Churches of Christ
in Victoria and Tasmania

Constitution

Associations Incorporation Act 1981

Conference of Churches of Christ in Victoria and Tasmania Inc



Statement of Purpose

What is our COMMON MISSION?

To be a movement of the people of God gathering around the central figure of Jesus Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, living out his Way in our local contexts and inviting others to do the same.

What are our SHARED VALUES?

The Gospel

We passionately value the good news about God as revealed to us in Jesus Christ, and are committed to the mission of communicating it and sharing it with others, making disciples who can make more disciples, and so extend the Kingdom of God.

The Scriptures

We value and affirm the centrality of the scriptures as our authority for Christian belief, identity and practice.

Diversity

We value and recognise the diversity of Christian understanding, belief and experience. Therefore, we value the freedom, flexibility and creativity of a variety of ministry practice and expression, and are committed to the nurture of a diversity of healthy and growing mission-shaped churches that, by crossing frontiers and impacting cultures, are a sign, witness and foretaste of all that God has for the world through Jesus Christ.

Formation

We value various spiritual practices and disciplines described in the New Testament as aspects of our formation as disciples of Jesus, and our constant renewal by God and the Holy Spirit. Therefore we passionately encourage active personal formation through practices and disciplines that include (but are not limited to) baptism, the breaking of bread, fellowship, prayer, worship, meditation, stewardship, spiritual gift discovery etc.

Collaborative Ministry

We value the unique contribution to ministry of each individual believer, and are committed to equipping believers (through, for example, the five-fold ministry pattern of Ephesians 4:11-16), and releasing them to participate in ministry and mission on the basis of their giftedness and capacity.

Servanthood

We value the biblical principles of servanthood and therefore seek to be a servant church committed to responding to human need with love and compassion and to identify and release servant leaders.

Justice

We value the dignity, equality and inherent worth of all persons regardless of gender, race, economic standing or belief system. Therefore, in announcing the Kingdom and expectant of its arrival, we will work for social justice, equal opportunity for all persons, and the responsible care and management of the environment.

Collaboration and Unity

We value the close fellowship, community and collaboration of all those who accept Jesus as Lord and Saviour. Therefore, we passionately seek to promote unity in the wider church and are committed to the ultimate ideal of visible unity.

1. Name

The name of the association is "Conference of Churches of Christ in Victoria and Tasmania Inc", in this constitution called the Conference.

2. Definitions

Conference means the Conference of Churches of Christ in Victoria and Tasmania Inc.

Conference Council means the governing body of Conference constituted and operating in accordance with this constitution.

Affiliated Church means any church, mission agency or other body which is a member of Conference in accordance with this Constitution.

Partner Department means one of Properties Corporation, Community Care, CCTC and Mission and Ministry.

Properties Corporation means The Properties Corporation of Churches of Christ in Victoria and Tasmania

Financial Budget year means the year ending on 31 December.

Act means the Associations Incorporations Act 1981.

Community Care means Churches of Christ Community Care.

CCTC means the Churches of Christ Theological College.

Mission and Ministry means Mission and Ministry of Conference.

Conference AGM means the annual general meeting of Conference conducted in accordance with this constitution.

3. Mode of Operation

Conference shall act through its Conference Council and Partner Departments who agree to act in partnership to achieve the purposes of the Conference Council.

4. Affiliated Churches

4.1 An Affiliated Church is

4.1.1 Any Church of Christ, mission agency or other body which are shown in the records of Conference as an affiliated member of Conference at the date of adopting this constitution; and

4.1.2 Such other Churches of Christ, mission agencies or other bodies as shall from time to time become Affiliated Churches in accordance with this constitution.

4.2 A church, mission agency or other body shall be deemed to be no longer an Affiliated Church when it has ceased to exist.

4.3 On the recommendation of the Conference Council, a meeting of Conference may by resolution declare a church, mission agency or other body to be no longer an Affiliated Church. Such a recommendation shall be formed following the application of the procedure outlined in clause 17.

4.4 An Affiliated Church which has decided to cease to be an Affiliated Church may notify the Conference Executive Officer in writing of that decision not less than six weeks before the date of the Conference AGM. The Conference AGM may by resolution declare that the Affiliated Church is no longer an Affiliated Church and any conditions which apply to the disaffiliation.

5. Affiliation with Conference

5.1 Any church, mission agency or other body desiring to become an Affiliated Church of Conference ("Applicant Church") shall apply in writing to the Conference Executive Officer at least six weeks before the Conference AGM.

5.2 The Conference Executive Officer shall notify all Affiliated Churches of the name of any Applicant Church within one week after the closing date for applications.

5.3 An Applicant Church may become an Affiliated Church by resolution of the Conference AGM, this being the first business of the Conference AGM.

- 5.4 A church's affiliation with Conference shall be confirmed by a document jointly signed by the church's leaders and the Conference Executive Officer and Conference President.
- 5.5 The Conference Executive Officer must keep and maintain a register of affiliated churches, including their name, address and the date of their affiliation. This register will be available for inspection by any affiliated church upon request, and the register can be copied by an affiliated church.

6. Objections to Applicant Churches

- 6.1 An Affiliated Church may object to an Applicant Church where the objection bears upon the good standing or otherwise of churches, mission agencies and other bodies in relation to Conference and upon the advisability of it being an Affiliated Church.
- 6.2 An objection must be in writing and forwarded to the Conference Executive Officer at least three weeks before the Conference AGM.
- 6.3 Upon receiving an objection in accordance with this clause, representatives of the Conference Council shall meet with representatives of the objecting Affiliated Church and representatives of the Applicant Church objected to, shall hear the evidence relating to such objections, and shall present a recommendation to the Conference AGM. No discussion in reference to objections shall be permitted at the Conference AGM, except on the recommendation of the Conference Council.

7. Ministry Contribution

- 7.1 Every Affiliated Church shall contribute each year to the annual Budget of Conference and the Council of Churches of Christ in Australia on a percentage basis of the Affiliated Church's general offerings, as reported in the Church's Census of the previous year.
- 7.2 The percentage of the Affiliated Church's general offerings that will form the Ministry Contribution is fixed by resolution of the Conference AGM.
- 7.3 If an Affiliated Church's Ministry Contribution provided for in clause 7.1 remains unpaid for a period of twelve months, the Church shall meet with representatives of Conference to discuss the Church's circumstances, and shall not be entitled to official representation at Conference AGM or any other General Meeting until all outstanding contributions are paid; if the Ministry Contribution remains unpaid for three consecutive years the Church's ongoing Affiliation will be reviewed.

8. Meetings

- 8.1 A meeting of the Affiliated Churches of Conference must be held annually at such time and place as the Conference Council shall determine ("the Conference AGM").
- 8.2 The Conference AGM must be held within 5 months of the end of the Financial Budget year.
- 8.3 The Conference Executive Officer will give notice to all Affiliated Churches of the date of the Conference AGM not less than three months prior to the date of the meeting.
- 8.4 A Special General Meeting may be called at the discretion of the Conference Council should the necessity arise or following a written request from at least ten Affiliated Churches, and the Conference Executive Officer shall give notice of any such meeting at least four weeks prior to the meeting.
- 8.5 At any meeting any member in good standing of any Affiliated Church may take part in the deliberations but the privilege of voting shall be exercised by duly appointed delegates only.
- 8.6 The quorum at any Meeting of Conference is 30% of the number of duly appointed delegates notified to the Conference Executive Officer in accordance with this constitution.

9. Representation at Conference Meetings

- 9.1 Affiliated Churches shall be entitled to representation at the Conference AGM and other General Meetings of Conference as follows:
 - 9.1.1 Affiliated Churches with not more than 100 members, two delegates.

9.1.2 Affiliated Churches with more than 100 members, two delegates for the first 100, and one for each subsequent 50 or part thereof.

9.2 Each delegate, even if representing more than one Affiliated Church, shall be entitled to one vote only.

9.3 Each Affiliated Church shall forward to the Conference Executive Officer a letter giving name or names of delegate or delegates of such Affiliated Church and such letter shall be accepted as sufficient evidence of appointment unless the contrary is proved.

9.4 Affiliated Churches unable to appoint local delegates may arrange with the Conference Executive Officer to appoint delegates on their behalf.

10. Notice of Business

10.1 Any member in good standing of an Affiliated Church may propose a resolution for consideration at the Conference AGM.

10.2 A member proposing a motion must give notice in writing to the Conference Executive Officer six weeks prior to the date of the Conference AGM setting forth all proposed motions and signed by the proposer.

10.3 The Conference Council shall forward notice of any proposed motions to all Affiliated Churches at least four weeks prior to the date of the AGM.

10.4 No motions shall be submitted to the Conference AGM unless they are proposed in accordance with this clause except:

10.4.1 where the motion is for the receipt and adoption of reports or votes of thanks; or

10.4.2 where 80% of the delegates present and voting without discussion permit a motion to be introduced; save that such permission shall not be given for the introduction of motions involving financial appeals.

11. Eligibility for Office

11.1 Subject to clause 11.2, any member in good standing and fellowship with any Affiliated Church shall be eligible for election or appointment to any department or office of Conference.

11.2 Any person employed by Conference is not eligible for election or appointment to any department or office of Conference, except where otherwise provided in this constitution.

11.3 No person shall be eligible for simultaneous election or appointment to more than one department or office of Conference, except where otherwise provided in this constitution.

12. Conference Officers

12.1 Conference shall have the following officers:

12.1.1 The President

12.1.2 The President Elect

12.1.3 The Treasurer

12.1.4 The Conference Executive Officer

12.2 Where the office of President Elect is vacant, the Conference Council shall call for nominations to the office of President Elect by at least four weeks notice to Affiliated Churches. The Conference Council shall elect the President Elect taking into account any nominations received.

12.3 Upon the conclusion of the term of the President or where the office of Conference President becomes vacant for any reason, the President Elect shall be installed as Conference President at the Conference AGM and shall hold office for a period of two years or otherwise determined by the Conference Council.

12.4 The immediate Past President may act, as appropriate, as a representative of the President.

- 12.5 The President and the Conference Executive Officer shall be ex officio members of all Boards of Partner Departments and shall be issued with notices of meetings and copies of minutes as and when supplied to elected members.
- 12.6 The Conference Treasurer shall be appointed by the Conference Council and may hold office for a term not exceeding three years, but shall be eligible for re-appointment, shall report to the Conference Council and shall attend Council meetings as required.
- 12.7 The Conference Executive Officer shall be appointed by the Conference Council and may hold office for a term not exceeding five years, but shall be eligible for re-appointment.

13. Conference Council

- 13.1 The Conference Council shall consist of a maximum of twelve members made up as follows:
 - 13.1.1 Conference President. The President Elect shall act as alternate to the President.
 - 13.1.2 Chairperson of Properties Corporation or a member of the board of trustees of Properties Corporation nominated by the board of Trustees of Properties Corporation.
 - 13.1.3 Chairperson of Department of Community Care or a member of the board of Community Care nominated by the board of Community Care.
 - 13.1.4 Chairperson of CCTC or a member of the board of CCTC nominated by the board of CCTC.
 - 13.1.5 Chairperson of the Mission and Ministry Board or a member of the board of Mission and Ministry nominated by the board of Mission and Ministry.
 - 13.1.6 Conference Executive Officer.
 - 13.1.7 A maximum of six members elected by the Conference AGM following nomination by a member in good standing and fellowship with an Affiliated Church, or the Conference Council.
- 13.2 Any member in good standing and fellowship of any Affiliated Church is eligible to be an elected member of the Conference Council.
- 13.3 Elected members of the Conference Council shall hold office for two years with, as near as practicable, half of these retiring each year. Elected members are eligible for re-election. An elected member shall not hold office for more than six consecutive years and may not be nominated again for a period of two years after that term.
- 13.4 The office of an elected member of the Conference Council shall fall vacant if the member:
 - 13.4.1 Ceases to be regarded by Conference Council as a member in good standing and fellowship at an Affiliated Church.
 - 13.4.2 Gives notice in writing to the Conference Executive Officer of his or her resignation which is accepted by Conference Council.
- 13.5 A casual vacancy in the office of an elected member may be filled by the Conference Council until the Conference AGM immediately following the appointment.
- 13.6 Council members nominated by the Properties Corporation, Community Care, CCTC and Mission and Ministry shall serve for a term of two years and are eligible for re-nomination, but shall not serve for more than six consecutive years and may not be re-nominated for a period of two years after that term.
- 13.7 The Conference Council shall elect from its members, other than the Conference Executive Officer, a Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson who shall be elected annually.
- 13.8 A quorum of the Conference Council shall consist of six members. The Chairperson shall be entitled to a deliberative as well as a casting vote when without such vote there would be an equality of votes.
- 13.9 The day to day management of the Council shall be conducted by the Conference Executive Officer.

14. Role of Conference Council

The role of the Conference Council is:

- 14.1 To oversee the spiritual health and direction of Conference.
- 14.2 To work with the Partner Departments to identify the theological values that underpin the activities of these Partner Departments.
- 14.3 To create and foster healthy relationships between the Partner Departments and between Affiliated Churches.
- 14.4 To facilitate the creation of a strategic plan for Conference by working together with the Partner Departments and Affiliated Churches.
- 14.5 To monitor and if necessary review the finances for the whole of Conference by working together with the Partner Departments.
- 14.6 To oversee broad corporate governance issues of Conference and the Partner Departments to ensure that compliance, regulatory, safety issues and emerging developments in corporate governance are appropriately addressed.
- 14.7 To develop broad policies within which Conference and the Partner Departments will operate including issues such as but not limited to Conference reporting requirements, obtaining of feedback from Affiliated Churches, types of decisions that Partner Departments should bring to the Conference for approval.
- 14.8 To oversee and review the appointment of the Conference Executive Officer.
- 14.9 To develop strategies for creating and maintaining a “public face” for Conference.
- 14.10 To communicate information to each Affiliated Church, and consultation and information about the broader direction of the Conference.
- 14.11 To communicate and cooperate with other churches, denominations and faiths on behalf of Conference.
- 14.12 To report to Affiliated Churches on the year's activities and present an Audited Financial Statement of Accounts for the previous period ending 31 December each year.
- 14.13 To form and disband committees and auxiliaries as the Conference Council deems necessary for the ongoing work of Conference.

15. Partner Departments

15.1 *Properties Corporation*

The Properties Corporation of the Churches of Christ incorporated by Act of Parliament No. 4818 (Vic) shall be a Partner Department of Conference having responsibility for all matters relating to property and trusteeship of the Conference or Affiliated Churches or departments of the Conference. The Chairperson for the time being of the Trustees of The Properties Corporation of the Churches of Christ shall, for the purposes of the Act, be the head or representative of the Churches of Christ in Victoria and as such shall be entitled to be registered under Section 33 of the Religious Successory and Charitable Trusts Act 1928 or any subsequent legislative enactment superseding the Act.

15.2 *Community Care*

Churches of Christ Community Care ACN 004 222 020 shall be a Partner Department of Conference responsible for the development and conduct of caring and benevolent programs of Conference and to fulfil the regulatory and statutory requirements of its aged care ministry.

15.3 *CCTC*

The Churches of Christ Theological College ABN 42 004 238 662 shall be a Partner Department of Conference responsible for theological education and ministry and leadership formation and to fulfil the regulatory and statutory requirements of its accrediting agencies.

- 15.4 *Mission and Ministry*
Mission and Ministry ABN 59 360 658 319 shall be the Partner Department of Conference responsible for the development of mission and ministry including creating, building and sustaining healthy local churches.
- 15.5 All Partner Departments shall be authorised to collect and disburse their own funds and shall submit to the Conference AGM a financial statement duly audited. They shall be responsible to Conference, and shall duly report their proceedings thereto.
- 15.6 The appointment of all members to the boards of Properties Corporation, Community Care, CCTC and Mission and Ministry shall be ratified at the Conference AGM.

16. Voting

- 16.1 Voting, when required for elected positions, shall be by ballot, using the Single Transferable Vote Method of Proportional Representation, but in the case of an election to fill one vacancy only, the ordinary method of Preferential Voting shall be used.
- 16.2 Except where otherwise provided in this constitution, resolutions of Conference shall be passed by simple majority.

17. Disputes and mediation

- 17.1 The procedure in this rule shall apply to disputes under these Rules between—
- 17.1.1 An Affiliated Church and another Affiliated Church; or
 - 17.1.2 An Affiliated Church and Conference; or
 - 17.1.3 An Affiliated Church and a Partner Department; or
 - 17.1.4 A Partner Department and another Partner Department; or
 - 17.1.5 A Partner Department and Conference.
 - 17.1.6 A minister or church member and Conference Council and/or a Partner Department.
- 17.2 The parties or their representatives must meet and discuss the matter in dispute, and, if possible, resolve the dispute within 30 days after the dispute comes to the attention of all of the parties.
- 17.3 If the parties are unable to resolve the dispute at the meeting, or if a party fails to attend that meeting, then the parties must, within a further 30 days or in a time directed by the Conference Council, hold a meeting in the presence of an appropriately skilled independent person who is able to assist in the resolution of the dispute.
- 17.4 The independent person will be either
- 17.4.1 a person chosen by agreement between the parties; or
 - 17.4.2 in the absence of agreement the Conference Council or where this is impractical the Conference Executive Officer will nominate a person to assist with the resolution of the dispute.
- 17.5 The independent person cannot be a member of a party to the dispute.
- 17.6 The parties to the dispute must, in good faith, attempt to settle the dispute.
- 17.7 The independent person must not determine the dispute.
- 17.8 If the dispute cannot be resolved in accordance with this clause, the Conference Council shall take whatever action in relation to the dispute that it deems necessary.

18. Non-profit Organisation

The assets and income of the Conference shall be applied solely in furtherance of its statement of purposes and no portion shall be distributed directly or indirectly to the members of the organisation except as bona fide compensation for services rendered or expenses incurred on behalf of the organisation.

19. Trading

The Conference is authorized to trade in accordance with Section 51 of the Act in order to facilitate the achievement of the purposes of the Conference.

20. Documents and Common Seal of the Conference

20.1 The Conference Council shall appoint the Conference Executive Officer to take custody of the common seal of the Conference.

20.2 The common seal shall not be affixed to any instrument except by the authority of the Conference Council and such affixing shall be witnessed by the signatures of two members of the Conference Council.

21. Documents, Books and Securities

21.1 The Conference Council shall appoint the Conference Executive Officer to take custody of all books, documents and securities of the Conference.

21.2 This constitution, the Statement of Purposes of Conference, the accounts of Conference, and the minutes of the resolutions of each General Meeting and of each ordinary vote, shall be available for inspection by members of Affiliated Churches.

21.3 The Conference Executive Officer shall maintain a list of Affiliated Churches that may be inspected by a delegate appointed by any Affiliated Church.

22. Alterations to this Constitution and the Statement of Purposes

22.1 This Constitution and the Statement of Purposes of Conference shall only be altered by a Special Resolution.

22.2 A resolution is a Special resolution if:

22.2.1 At least twenty one days notice is given to Affiliated Churches of the intention to pass a resolution as a special resolution; and

22.2.2 the resolution is passed at the Conference AGM or Special General Meeting; and

22.2.3 the resolution is passed by at least 75% of all valid votes cast by duly appointed delegates only.

22.3 The provisions for trading and winding up in Clause 19 and 25 shall not be altered except with the consent of the Minister responsible for the administration of the Act.

23. Sources of Income

The Conference may raise its income from affiliation fees paid by Affiliated Churches, donations, distributions from charitable trusts, and other sources.

24. Use of Conference Funds

24.1 The Conference must use funds raised by it for purposes that fulfil the purposes of the organization.

24.2 The Conference Executive Officer shall be responsible for the signing of cheques or may appoint other proper officers of the organization to do so. All cheques will require two signatures.

25. Dissolution of Conference

In the event of Conference being dissolved, the amount that remains after such dissolution and the satisfaction of all debts and liabilities shall be transferred to another organization with similar purposes which is not carried on for the profit or gain of its individual members.