

Frankston Church of Christ
Constitution
Revision January 2012.

1. NAME

The body of Christians currently based at 130 Cranbourne Road, Frankston, Victoria and affiliated with the Conference of Churches of Christ in Victoria and Tasmania (hereinafter referred to as Conference), shall be known as the FRANKSTON CHURCH OF CHRIST (hereinafter referred to as FCC.)

2. AIM

The purpose of the FCC shall be :-

- 2.1 to worship God and to assist bringing people to faith in Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Lord;
- 2.2 to promote and maintain their spiritual growth and to experience God's power for Christian living;
- 2.3 to maintain a Christian fellowship and witness to the community according to the New Testament teachings;
- 2.4 to co-operate with other Christian churches, especially those affiliated with the Conference.

3 MEMBERSHIP

Membership at the FCC shall consist of:

- 3.1 **Member**:- being a person who believes in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and their personal Saviour, has publicly confessed their faith in Him and has been baptised by immersion, and who maintains their regular attendance and participation in the work of the Church, and has been formally welcomed into the FCC,
 - . or who has fulfilled membership requirements in another Church of Christ fellowship, and is transferred by letter from the Eldership of that Church to the Eldership of the FCC and is formally welcomed into FCC,having been instructed by the Senior Minister (or their delegate, either an Associate Minister or Elder) of the FCC in its beliefs, and in the principles and practices of Churches of Christ in Australia.
- 3.2 **Christian in Fellowship** :- A person other than a member of a Church of Christ who wishes to fully share in the life of this Church may be referred to as a Christian in Fellowship upon compliance with the following conditions:-
 - 3.2.1 Has publicly confessed their faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God their personal Saviour.
 - 3.2.2 Has been a full communicant of another Christian communion, and has a letter of transfer from the Eldership of that Church to the Eldership of the FCC commending acceptance into membership, OR has unanimous FCC Eldership approval.
 - 3.2.3 Has applied in writing, to the FCC and has been formally welcomed into membership as a Christian in Fellowship.
 - 3.2.4 A Christian in Fellowship is invited to full participation in the life of the church and congregation after twelve months (12) regular worship with the exception of:
 - a) Serving on the Board of Elders
 - b) Appointment as a Conference Delegate
 - c) Voting on matters relative to the distinctive witness of Churches of Christ, including:-

- (i) Name of the congregation,
- (ii) Observance of the Lord's Supper,
- (iii) Practice of Christian Baptism.

3.3 Transfer from Christian in Fellowship to a Member :-

A person may transfer from Christian in Fellowship to membership provided that they have met the provisions of 3.1 and the following requirements:

- 3.3.1 Believe it is God's will for them to enter into the life and witness of the FCC and agree to respect its affiliation with Conference.
- 3.3.2 Has been worshipping regularly with the FCC congregation for at least one (1) year.
- 3.4 Except for sections 3.2; 3.3; and 4.1 the words member, members and membership shall read as including Christians in Fellowship.
- 3.5 A member shall be removed from the Members roll by transfer, death, or by request from the member.
- 3.6 A member may be removed from the Members roll if their active participation in the life of the church shall cease for at least twelve (12) months, upon a majority agreement of the Eldership.
- 3.7 A member may be removed from the Members roll for disciplinary reasons, after the application of Matthew 18:15-20, and upon a majority agreement of the Eldership.
- 3.8 Those removed from the Members roll in 3.5 or 3.6 above may, at the discretion of the eldership, be moved to the Inactive Roll. Those on the Inactive Roll will be ineligible to hold an elected position and will only be entitled to vote upon written application to the eldership for each ballot to be taken.

4 GOVERNANCE

There shall be a single governing body called the Board of Elders (hereafter referred to as the Board).

- 4.1 The Board shall consist of a maximum of nine (9) elected Elders together with the Senior Minister. The Church Secretary and the Church Treasurer shall be ex officio members of the Board.
- 4.2 The responsibilities of Elders are to:-
 - model Christian spirituality,
 - recommend, empower and evaluate the senior minister,
 - guide formation of the church's mission, vision and values,
 - ensure effective organisational plans and programs,
 - encourage healthy change and ensure the management of conflict,
 - ensure appropriate management of ethical, legal and financial risk,
 - build high-trust relationships,
 - accept responsibility for the Board's performance
- 4.3 Elders shall be elected for a term of two (2) years. The term of office of Elders shall be limited to a maximum of four consecutive two year terms. Former Elders shall be eligible for re-election after a break of at least twelve months.
- 4.4 The terms of elected Elders shall be staggered so that half the number of elected members are eligible for re-election in any one year.

- 4.5 Prospective Elders must have been in membership for at least two (2) years prior to accepting nomination for election or prior to being co-opted as provided under 4.6.
- 4.6 In the event of a vacancy occurring during a period of office, the Elders may co-opt a qualified person until the next annual election.
- 4.7 The Board shall appoint an Elder from their number as their Chairperson who shall have a deliberative as well as a casting vote.
- 4.8 The Board shall meet at regular intervals throughout the year, with a minimum of four (4) times.
- 4.9 A quorum shall be sixty (60) percent of the Board.

5 DEACONS

Co-ordinators for significant functional areas, as determined by the Board, shall be elected by the membership and be termed Deacons.

- 5.1 A Deacon shall have been a member of the FCC for at least one (1) year prior to accepting nomination for election or prior to being co-opted as provided under 5.3.
- 5.2 The term of office for a Deacon shall be two (2) years but they shall be eligible for re-election.
- 5.3 In the event of a vacancy occurring during a period of office, the Elders may co-opt a qualified person until the next annual election.

5A CHURCH SECRETARY AND TREASURER

- 5A.1 The positions of Church Secretary and Church Treasurer shall be occupied by Deacons elected by the membership for these significant functional areas of Church activity
- 5A.2 The Church Secretary and Church Treasurer shall be ex officio (non-voting) members of the Board.
- 5A.3 The Church Secretary shall be responsible for distributing correspondence; arranging for the maintenance of accurate membership rolls; preparing statistical returns to the Conference, maintaining the Marriage Register issued to the FCC in accordance with the requirements of the Government Statistician; safe keeping of Church records; and performing general secretarial duties.
- 5A.4 The Church Treasurer shall be responsible for keeping comprehensive records of the Church's financial transactions; presenting monthly financial reports to the Board; convening and chairing the Finance committee; submitting an annual budget of income and expenditure to the Board for consideration and approval; presenting to the Annual Business Meeting of the Church an audited Statement of Income and Expenditure for the past financial year and the budget for the following year; and liaising with the auditor.

6 ENGAGEMENT OF MINISTER(S)

- 6.1 Appointment. When a ministerial vacancy occurs, the Board of Elders shall, with the assistance of Conference where appropriate, negotiate for the appointment of a Minister/s.
- 6.2 Church vote. The Eldership shall make a recommendation to the Church membership for ratification. Voting shall be by secret ballot. To be appointed the recommended person must receive at least 75% (seventy five percent) of votes cast.
- 6.3 Terms of appointment. Appointments shall be in accordance with the Conference Guidelines for Terms and Conditions of Employment of Ministers and the applicable Position Description of Ministry for the FCC.
- 6.4 Period. The initial period of appointment for a Senior Minister shall be agreed between the Elders and the minister, but shall not exceed five (5) years and for Associate Ministers it

shall not exceed three (3) years.

- 6.5 Extensions. Terms of appointment may be extended on application by the Minister or by invitation from the Membership at least twelve (12) months prior to the end of the current period and shall be determined by secret ballot of Church membership. To be carried, the motion for extension must receive at least seventy five (75) percent of the votes cast.
- 6.6 Termination.
 - 6.6.1 Three (3) months notice from either side is normal. It is to be expected that, during the period of notice, payment of salary and all allowances would continue.
 - 6.6.2 If the agreed period (6.6.1.) requires to be shortened, it can be negotiated, however, in the absence of mutual agreement, the full remuneration for the normal period of notice would be payable.
 - 6.6.3 In the event of a minister failing to perform the specific duties allotted by the Elders or where extreme circumstances exist, the Elders shall proceed to counsel the minister and in the event of his/her failure to respond, a written warning shall be issued. If the situation remains unresolved, the Board, under the terms of section 10.2 shall call a Business Meeting of the membership to consider a recommendation from the Elders for the termination of the ministry. The recommendation shall be decided by secret ballot of members. To be carried, the motion for termination must receive at least seventy five (75) percent of the votes cast.

7 PAID ADMINISTRATIVE-OPERATIONAL STAFF

- 7.1 The appointment and termination of paid administrative-operational staff shall be made by the Senior Minister in consultation with the Board.
- 7.2 The conditions of initial and continuing employment shall be in the terms of an Approved Position Description and where applicable the appropriate Award
- 7.3 All paid administrative-operational staff shall be responsible to the Board, through the Senior Minister.

8 CHURCH SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT

- 8.1 The Church School Superintendent, if required, shall be appointed by the Senior Minister in consultation with the Board.

9 AUDITOR

- 9.1 Auditor/s shall be appointed by the membership at the Annual Business Meeting on the recommendation of the Board for a term of one (1) year to audit the accounts prepared by the Church Treasurer.
- 9.2 Should an Auditor's position become vacant or where the appointment of an Auditor/s is otherwise unable to be made in accordance with section 10.1.2, the Board is empowered to appoint the Auditor/s. Such appointments will require ratification of the Church at the following Annual Business Meeting.
- 9.3 No Board member shall serve as Auditor of the accounts of the FCC.

10 MEETINGS

- 10.1 Annual Business Meeting - The Church shall meet annually for a general meeting during the month of November.
 - 10.1.1 Notice of the meeting, including proposed items of general business, shall be given to the membership at least five (5) Sundays preceding the proposed date.

- 10.1.2 The business of the Annual Business Meeting shall include:-
- a) Declaration of the ballot for election of office-bearers
 - b) Reception of the Financial report
 - c) Reception of progress reports from the Minister, Secretary and Auxiliaries.
 - d) Reception of the Budget for the current year.
 - e) Appoint Auditor/s for the current financial year.
 - f) Conduct of general business items that have been listed on the notice of meeting. No other business shall be dealt with.
- 10.2 Business Meetings - The Board may call a Business Meeting.
- 10.2.1 Notice of a Business Meeting shall be given to the membership at least two (2) consecutive Sundays immediately preceding the meeting.
- 10.3 Special Meeting - The Board may be petitioned to call a Special Meeting upon receipt of a written request stating the nature of the business to be discussed and signed by at least 20% of members. Such meeting shall be called within one (1) calendar month from the date on which the request is received by the Church Secretary.
- 10.3.1 Notice of a Special Meeting, including the nature of the business to be discussed, shall be given to the membership at least two (2) consecutive Sundays immediately preceding the meeting. Only business in the notice of meeting shall be dealt with.
- 10.4 The Board Chairperson shall act as Chairperson at the Annual Business, Special and Business Meetings unless the Board determines otherwise. Such person shall have a deliberative as well as a casting vote.
- 10.5 A quorum shall be 30% of the membership at the time of the meeting.

11 NOMINATIONS

- 11.1 Nominations for the offices of Elder and Deacon shall be called for at least five (5) Sundays before the date of the Meeting for which elections for any such office may be held.
- 11.2 Nominations, signed by nominator and nominee, must be received by the Church Secretary at least (3) Sundays prior to the date of election.
- 11.3 Nominations shall be listed in the Church paper as they are received with a short summary of each nomination.
- 11.4 To ensure that due consideration is given to nominations, a Nominations Committee consisting of the Chairperson of the Board, the Treasurer, the Secretary and the Senior Minister, shall be appointed to review positions becoming vacant, consider the selection of nominees, obtain their agreement to nominate to vacant positions, and present a list of approved nominations to the Church.

12 VOTING

- 12.1 Members of the Church whose names appear on the members roll in the week prior to the announcement of an Annual, Special or Business Meeting will have the right to vote.
- 12.2 Voting for the election of Elders, Deacons and Ministerial appointments shall be by ballot.
- 12.2A In all matters which call for a ballot of members, a Returning Officer and (2) two scrutineers, appointed by the Board prior to the ballot shall have sole responsibility for the due conduct of the ballot.
- 12.3 Elections of Elders, Deacons and Ministerial appointments shall be under the control of a Returning Officer who shall be appointed by the Board. The Returning Officer must not be a candidate for election.
- 12.4 To be elected, nominees for Elders, Deacons and Ministerial appointments must receive at

least seventy five (75) percent of valid votes cast.

- 12.5 Ballot papers initialed by the Returning Officer shall be made available to those eligible to vote at least two (2) Sundays prior to the returning date. The Returning Officer shall certify that ballot papers have been forwarded to all eligible members.
- 12.6 A ballot box, locked by the Returning Officer, shall be made available to those eligible to vote at least two (2) Sundays prior to the returning date.
- 12.7 The ballot box shall be opened by the Returning Officer in the presence of two (2) scrutineers.
- 12.8 The decision of the Returning Officer as to the informality of any vote shall be final and binding.
- 12.9 Details of the voting shall be recorded in a Tally Book for counting purposes and will be given to the Chairperson of the Board, or a designated Elder, for their consideration and maybe disclosed at their discretion.
- 12.10 A written report indicating the results of the election shall be handed by the Returning Officer to the Chairperson of the respective meeting, or to the Chairperson of the Board.
- 12.11 Unless otherwise specified, voting on all issues shall be by a show of hands by the members present and determined by a simple majority. However, if there is a request for a ballot by at least fifteen (15%) of the members present, then the question shall be decided by secret ballot. On a ballot being demanded only members who are present are entitled to vote.

13 VACANCIES

- 13.1 An Elder or Deacon who has not attended congregational meetings for five (5) consecutive weeks without leave of absence, shall be deemed to have resigned. If there is no acceptable cause for such absence the Board shall have the power to accept the resignation.
- 13.2 All positions in this constitution shall be open to male and female.

14 FINANCE

- 14.1 Control of the Church funds shall be vested in the Board.
- 14.2 The Church banking facilities shall be in the name of the FRANKSTON CHURCH OF CHRIST; the signatories to which shall be either the Church Treasurer or Church Secretary, and up to six other church members, as approved by the Board.
- 14.3 All accounts shall be passed for payment by the Board, except that routine payments may be made without prior approval and reported at the next regular Board meeting
- 14.4 The Board may appoint a Finance Committee from members of the Board and suitably qualified members.
- 14.5 The Church Treasurer shall submit monthly reports of receipts and payments, together with a summary of funds, to the Board meeting.
- 14.6 An audited financial statement of annual receipts and payments , and funds on hand, shall be submitted by the Church Treasurer to the Annual Business Meeting of the FCC.
- 14.7 Capital expenditure of the Church funds exceeding ten thousand dollars (\$10,000.00) at any one time shall not be made without the approval of the membership.
- 14.8 The financial year shall be from October 1st to the following September 30th

15 CHURCH PROPERTY

- 15.1 The Trustees of the Church's property shall be the Properties Corporation of Churches of

Christ in Victoria/Tasmania.

- 15.2 The Board shall determine and approve guidelines relating to the use and/or hire of the Church buildings.
- 15.3 The Minister(s) shall have the sole right to grant the use of the Church buildings for marriages and funerals, subject to conditions which the Board may impose from time to time.
- 15.4 The Board shall ensure that adequate security of the premises is maintained and that the property, plant and equipment is protected by insurance to the full replacement value.

16 CHURCH GROUPS (AUXILIARIES and OTHER MINISTRIES)

- 16.1 Auxiliaries and Other Ministries shall exist to help the Church achieve its aim and purpose.
- 16.2 Auxiliaries and Other Ministries shall be responsible to the Board in matters regarding their formation, appointment of Leaders, use of premises and finances.
- 16.3. The Board shall from time to time review all activities relating to the work of the FCC and will have the power of veto over all approved groups and all appointed personnel.
- 16.4 Auxiliary and Other Ministry Leaders shall submit annual reports, including a financial statement, for approval and presentation at the Church's Annual Business Meeting.

17 CHURCH RECORDS

- 17.1 The Board will ensure that adequate administrative, financial and membership records are maintained and kept in safe custody.
- 17.2 No records as noted in 17.1 shall be disclosed without the approval of the Chairperson of the Board.

18 ACQUISITION AND DISPOSAL OF PROPERTY

- 18.1 All proposals for the acquisition and disposal of real estate, or any project involving renovations or alterations to buildings or property valued of more than ten thousand dollars (\$10,000.00) shall be submitted to a Business Meeting, for approval by membership.

19 NON PROFIT CLAUSE

The Assets and Income of the Church shall be applied solely in furtherance of the above mentioned objects and no portion shall be distributed directly or indirectly to the members of the Church except as bona fide compensation for services rendered or expenses incurred on behalf of the Church. The church shall operate as a not-for-profit organisation.

20 DISSOLUTION CLAUSE

In the event of the Church being wound up, any surplus assets remaining after the payment of the Church's liabilities shall be transferred to the Properties Corporation of the Churches of Christ, on behalf of the Conference of the Churches of Christ in Victoria and Tasmania, and not carried forward for the purposes of profit or gain of it's individual members.

21 ALTERATIONS TO CONSTITUTION

- 21.1 Proposed alterations to this Constitution shall be notified in writing to the Church members by the Board at least three (3) weeks prior to a Business Meeting.
- 21.2 Any alteration to the Constitution must be conducted by ballot in accordance with Section 12 and be passed by a majority of sixty six (66) percent of the valid votes cast.

21.3 It is the responsibility of the Board to ensure by regular review that this Constitution meets the needs of the FCC in achievement of its aims.

22 ADOPTION

22.1 This Constitution was received and adopted at a Business meeting of Church members on ___/___/___ . All other constitutions and standing orders are revoked.

22A TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

22A.1 The constitution shall come into effect at the conclusion of the meeting during which it was adopted.

22A.2 Board members shall be entitled to complete their respective current terms of office should they wish to do so.

23 CONSTITUTIONAL SILENCE

Where this constitution is silent on any issue, the Board is empowered to decide the issue in that instance.

Revised in [month] [year]