

KURRI KURRI BAPTIST CHURCH

Constitution

Replace existing document?	Yes
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Adopted by Church on:	13.8.23
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Note: Throughout this document, "Church" refers to Kurri Kurri Baptist Church, the local Church which adopted this document.

1. NAME

The name of the Church is KURRI KURRI BAPTIST CHURCH.

2. DOCTRINAL POSITION OF THIS CHURCH

The doctrinal position of the Church accords with the evangelical doctrines set out in the Baptist Union Incorporation Act 1919 (NSW) and subsequent amendments approved by the Assembly of the Association of Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT:

- The nature and unity of the Godhead – Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- The deity and humanity of Christ
- The Holy Spirit
- The divine inspiration of the Scriptures
- The sinfulness of people
- Christ's atonement for human sin
- The work of the Holy Spirit in salvation
- The Church
- The baptism of believers only by immersion
- The communion (The Lord's Table)
- The return of the Lord Jesus Christ
- The resurrection of the dead
- Rewards and punishments in a future state

A theological statement entitled "Association of Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT – Our Common Beliefs", available from the Church, and at <https://nswactbaptists.org.au/beliefs/>, provides an expansion of each of these doctrines.

3. GOVERNANCE (i.e. Decision-making)

- The Church shall be affiliated with the Association of Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT accepting its responsibility to support and share in the ministries undertaken by the Denomination.
- Recognising the headship of Jesus Christ and the leadership of the Holy Spirit, the Church shall be governed in line with the fundamental Baptist principle of the autonomy of the local Church and congregational government. That is, the decision-making of this Church shall be vested in the body of believers who compose its Membership.
- Notwithstanding this principle of autonomy, the Church recognises and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and co-operation, which are common among Baptist Churches. Therefore the Church will be interdependent as well as independent.
- The Church shall conduct itself in accordance with the Constitution endorsed by the Members.
- The Leadership of the Church constitutes the Governance Body.

4. OBJECTIVES

The Church adopts as its objective, as declared in the New Testament, the glorification of God through:

- The inspiration and maintenance of active spiritual growth among its congregation by the regular holding of Church services, Believers Baptism and the administration of Communion.
- The proclamation of the truths of the Bible so that persons experience salvation.
- Teaching, training, discipling and baptising all who come to faith in the Lord Jesus so that they grow together in love, are loyal to each other and grow to maturity in Christ under the guidance of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

- Proclaiming the sole Lordship of Christ Jesus in the lives of the members of the congregation and seeking to fulfil His desires in the life of the community, nation and wider world through evangelism and other missionary enterprise.
- Assisting those who are in need, believing that social action and evangelism are mutually our response to the Gospel.

5. MEMBERSHIP

5A. Eligibility for Membership

Members shall be persons who give evidence of a sincere profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and agree to hold to the doctrines set forth in this Constitution under the heading "Doctrinal Position of this Church". Further, a Member who has not personally experienced the doctrine of the baptism of believers only by immersion, or is under the age of eighteen, shall be restricted in the following:

- a. Voting in relation to the call or removal of a Pastor of this Church,
- b. Voting in relation to a property transaction by this Church,
- c. Being a delegate of this Church to an Assembly of the Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT, and
- d. Accepting a call to be Pastor of the Church.

5B. Admission to Membership

Applicants for Membership shall apply to the Pastor or Secretary. Applicants for Membership shall be advised to the Church and interviewed by two Members appointed by the Leadership to discuss their testimony to faith in Jesus Christ, this Constitution and the various ministries of the Church. The applicant will be provided with a copy of the "Kurri Kurri Baptist Church Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers". A report shall be presented to the Leadership following the interview for approval. Applicants may be admitted to membership upon majority ballot at a properly constituted Church Meeting. The Church shall receive approved applicants into Membership.

Where the applicant for Membership has been a Member of another Baptist Church, letters of transfer or commendation shall be sought and taken into account.

The Church will be advised of all applications for membership and have the opportunity to discuss with the Pastor if requested.

5C. Responsibilities of Membership

- a. To endeavour at all times, by God's grace, to remain true to their commitment to Christ.
- b. To join regularly in the worship and witness of the Church seeking opportunity to use their gifts in the ministry of the Church.
- c. To lead a life worthy of Christ in love, humility and peace, endeavouring to build each other up through encouragement, counsel and comfort.
- d. To study the Scriptures in private and in groups as the Lord gives opportunity.
- e. To express their gratitude to God, and their responsibilities as His stewards by contributing regularly and wholeheartedly to the financial support of the Church and the wider work of the Association of Churches or causes of an interdenominational or missionary nature.
- f. To pray regularly in private and where possible in fellowship for the people and ministry of the Church and the Association of Churches.
- g. To support the Pastor and the Leadership in their work within the Church and community through prayer, and personal encouragement for their spiritual and material welfare.
- h. To participate in the decision-making of the Church.

5D. Membership Roll

The Secretary shall keep a Members' Roll and an Absent Members' Roll.

The Secretary shall notify the Association of the Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT if the Member's Roll falls below twenty active members aged 18 years and over.

5E. Removal from Membership

The Leadership will prayerfully review the Members' Roll annually.

The Leadership shall follow-up Members who for a period of six months fail to participate in the worship and witness of the Church without satisfactory explanation or fail to honour other "Responsibilities of Membership".

Where the failure to participate in the worship and witness of the Church relates to moving out of the district in which the Church is situated, then such Members shall be transferred to the Absent Members' Roll. The Church shall be informed of all such actions at the next Church Meeting.

Where the failure to participate in the worship and witness of the Church relates to some reason other than moving out of the district or where the Member in question fails to honour other "Responsibilities of Membership", every effort shall be made to restore such Members to worship and fellowship (Matthew 18:15-17).

Where these efforts fail, the Church may remove the Member from the Members' Roll or transfer them to the Absent Members' Roll by a decision of 75% majority of the members present and voting at a properly constituted Church meeting.

The Leadership will prayerfully review the Absent Members' Roll annually, seeking to determine those Members who shall be restored to active Membership; have their Membership transferred to another Church following a request or, if all reasonable actions fail, have the Church remove their name from the Absent Members' Roll.

5F. Transfer of Membership

Any Member may request that a letter of commendation be sent to another Baptist Church they wish to join. The Leadership may process the request, reporting their action to the next Church Meeting for confirmation.

5G. Offence and Dispute

- a. Where a Member becomes an offence to the Church by reason of non-adherence to the "Association of Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT – Our Common Beliefs", and/or the "Kurri Kurri Baptist Church Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers", the Leadership will make every effort, in the spirit of love and meekness, to restore the Member to fellowship (Matthew 18:15-17). Where such efforts fail, the Church may terminate, or suspend for a specified time, the Membership. Termination or suspension of Membership shall require a 75% majority of Members present, eligible to vote, and voting at a Church Meeting.
- b. In the event of a dispute arising either between the Members, the Pastor/s and the Members, or the Church and the Association of Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT, every effort shall be made to resolve it within the Church or with the support of the appropriate leadership of the Association of Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT.
- c. Matters of offence or dispute between Members, or Members and non-members shall not be brought before the Church unless the parties have first complied with the direction of Matthew 18:15-17.

6. CHURCH LEADERSHIP

The Pastor/s, Elders and Deacons may be appointed as the Leadership of the Church. Such Leadership will attend to the affairs of the Church within the framework of this Constitution, and are responsible for the adherence to Laws and Legislation that are in force from time to time.

- a. Continuity of Leadership. Should there be no Pastor/s, the Elders will assume pastoral responsibilities. In the absence of the Pastor/s and Elders, the Deacons will assume their respective responsibilities.
- b. Nominations. Nominations for all appointed officeholders shall normally be invited from members of the congregation at least four Sundays prior to the Annual Church Meeting. Nominations shall be in writing, signed by the nominee and the nominator, and handed to the Pastor or Secretary no later than three Sundays preceding the Annual Church Meeting. The nominees shall be announced for prayerful consideration one Sunday prior to the Annual Church Meeting.
- c. Appointment to Fill Casual Leadership Vacancies. In the event of any appointed person being unable to fulfil their full term the Church may appoint someone to fulfil the remainder of their term. In the event of an unexpected vacancy, the Leadership may appoint an interim until the next Church Meeting.

Nominations for casual vacancies during the year shall normally be invited from members of the congregation at least two Sundays prior to the Church Meeting at which the appointments will be made. Nominations shall be in writing, signed by the nominee and the nominator, and handed to the Pastor or Secretary no later than the Sunday preceding the Church Meeting.

- d. Removal of a Leader. An appointed person may be removed from the Leadership by 75% of Members present, eligible to vote, and voting at a Church Meeting.

6A. Pastor/s

The Pastor/s shall be a person who has been (or is in the process of becoming) either accredited or recognized by the Association of Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT and holds to the doctrines set forth in this Constitution under the heading "Doctrinal Position of this Church".

Where more than one Pastor is appointed, the Pastors shall comprise the Pastoral Team in which one will be the Pastoral Team Leader, appointed by the Church. The Pastor or Pastoral Team Leader shall normally be ex-officio Chairperson of all organisations, although the responsibility may be delegated to another member of the Pastoral Team, an Elder, a Deacon or a Church Member.

Pastors shall be appointed upon a 75% majority or removed upon a 75% majority of Members present, eligible to vote, and voting at a Meeting of which notice has been given on the two Sundays preceding such Meeting, the purpose of such Meeting having been specified. The quorum for such a Meeting shall be 75% of the Membership.

When calling a Pastor:

- a. A Pastoral Search Committee appointed by the Church shall call for nominations. Members of the congregation may make recommendations for discussion within the Committee by submitting a name, together with reasons supporting the recommendation, in writing to the Committee.
- b. The Committee may advise the Association of Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT of the vacancy and seek advice and assistance from the appropriate Association Officer.

- c. Should more than one name come before the Committee, discussion will continue until agreement is reached regarding the approach to one person.
- d. The Committee shall communicate privately with this nominee and/or with the appropriate Association Officer, to ascertain their willingness to allow their name to be placed before the Church.
- e. Should this nominee be willing, the name shall be submitted to the Leadership who if they approve shall present the recommendation to the Church. Only one name shall be before the Church at any one time.
- f. In the event of an adverse vote, or a call or approach not being accepted, the above procedure shall be repeated until successful.

All terms and conditions of a call shall be conveyed to a Pastor in writing, having previously been clarified between both parties, together with full particulars of the Church and its development. Pastors may be called to a full-time or part-time ministry depending on needs and negotiations. Acceptance of all terms and conditions of the call shall be made in writing to the Church.

The tenure of the Pastor may be terminated by two months' notice in writing by either the Pastor or the Church.

6B. Elders

The Church at the Annual Church Meeting may appoint Members of the Church who are over the age of 21 years and have been in Membership for at least twelve months to the office of Elder.

Elders shall support the spiritual ministry of the Pastor/s and share with the Pastor/s in the pastoral care of the Church.

The biblical material, especially 1 Timothy 3:2-7, Titus 1:7-9 and 1 Peter 5:1-4, shall be considered by the Church when appointing Elders. Only persons of known maturity, spirituality and gifts appropriate to the office shall be appointed.

Elders shall be responsible to the Church and in cooperation with the Pastor/s shall:

- a. Assist in shepherding those who are part of or associated with the Church, willingly and ably encouraging and building up such people and being an example to the Church in Christ-like living,
- b. Participate in the visitation, care, discipline and support of all who attend the Church, and
- c. Participate in the preaching and teaching ministry of the Church when they are recognised as having these gifts and are invited to do so by the Pastor.

Elders shall be appointed upon a 75% majority of Members present, eligible to vote, and voting at the Annual Church Meeting.

Elders, while meeting separately, may attend, participate and vote in Deacons' Meetings by mutual agreement. An Elder will not be a Deacon.

The term of office shall usually be two years with eligibility for reappointment. They shall be eligible to be renominated for a further two years however this will be followed by a break of at least one year.

6C. Deacons

The Church at the Annual Church Meeting may appoint Members of the Church who are over the age of 18 years and have been in Membership for at least twelve months to the office of Deacon.

The Deacons, who along with the Pastor/s shall be a committee, empowered to transact the routine business of the Church. Nominees shall give evidence of spiritual maturity and fulfil the qualifications of 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

The Deacons shall normally meet monthly and at other times as required. The Pastor may be the Chairperson or a Chairperson may be appointed from among the Deacons. The quorum for Deacons' Meetings shall be a majority of the Deacons.

Deacons shall be appointed upon a 75% majority of Members present, eligible to vote, and voting at the Annual Church Meeting.

Deacons shall endeavour to attend all appropriate Meetings.

The term of office shall usually be two years with eligibility for reappointment. They shall be eligible to be renominated for a further two years however this will be followed by a break of at least one year.

6D. Secretary

A Secretary shall be appointed by and from the Deacons.

The Secretary shall ensure that adequate records of all Church, Deacons and Committee Meetings are kept, conduct correspondence for the Church and generally deal with the business of the Church.

By means of an Annual report and otherwise, the Secretary will ensure an adequate flow of information from the various Committees to the Church Members.

The Secretary will keep an up-to-date Members' Roll and Absent Members' Roll of the Church, which will be available for Members to scrutinise.

In the absence of a Secretary the Deacons will fulfil the functions of the Secretary.

6E. Treasurer

A Treasurer shall be appointed by and from the Deacons and usually be the Public Officer.

The Treasurer shall receive all monies for the Church and make such payments as required. The Treasurer shall keep a record of all financial transactions, keeping the Church informed through regular reporting.

The Treasurer shall present a Financial Statement and Balance Sheet to the Annual Church Meeting covering the income and expenditure for the previous year. At all quarterly Church Meetings, the Treasurer will present a financial statement covering the income and expenditure for the previous quarter, and year to date.

In the absence of a Treasurer the Deacons will fulfil the functions of the Treasurer.

6F. Other Appointed Roles

Members may appoint persons to such other leadership and ministry roles as the Church deems appropriate, in order to function effectively.

6G. Employees

The Church may, on the recommendation of the Leadership, resolve to employ clerical or other paid support Staff, in order to function effectively. The Leadership shall determine the employment details of any such Employees and are responsible for the adherence to Laws and Legislation that are in force from time to time. All persons paid wages, salaries, stipends or other employment related benefits by the Church, are Employees of the Church.

7. CHURCH MEETINGS AND PROCEDURES

7A. Meetings

Church Meetings shall normally be held quarterly.

The quorum for all Church Meetings shall be 50% of the Membership.

Extraordinary Church Meetings may be convened by the Pastor/s, or upon requisition signed by 10% of the Members or a majority of the Leadership. An extraordinary Meeting may be called for a special purpose and only consider matters of which written notice has been given.

Notice of all Church Meetings shall be given on at least the two Sundays prior to the Meeting.

An Annual Church Meeting shall be called each year to receive reports and conduct elections as herein prescribed. Such Meeting to be within two months of the end of the Church Financial Year.

The Pastor or their nominee shall chair Church Meetings. In the absence of the Pastor, a member of the Leadership, or a Church Member shall be appointed Chairperson. Alternatively, for special reasons, in consultation with the appropriate leadership of the Association of Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT, an outside Chairperson may be appointed.

The Church Meeting shall be a Meeting of those persons on the Members' Roll and regular communicant members of the congregation. Members whose names are on the Absent Members' Roll shall have no right to vote at any Church Meeting.

Non-members may be invited to be present at and to take part in the whole or any part of a Church Meeting, without the right to vote.

Voting by Proxy

Proxy voting, by members eligible to vote, is permitted at duly constituted Church Meetings where voting is by ballot. Where there is a legitimate reason/s for non- attendance at said meeting, an official voting / ballot sheet may be used and signed if the proxy vote is returned by the advertised closing date.

7B. Procedure

All matters affecting the management and general interests of the Church shall normally be submitted to the Leadership before presentation to the Church.

Except in the case of the appointment of the Leadership, where voting shall normally be by ballot, voting shall be by voices or show of hands, or as determined by the Chairperson. The Chairperson may only exercise one vote.

Any person who has a financial or other pecuniary interest in a matter, which the Church wishes to discuss, shall retire from the Meeting during such portion of the discussion, as the majority of the Members present shall determine.

7C. Confidentiality

If a matter is declared confidential it will be treated as confidential by all who attend a Church Meeting, until such time as the matters discussed have been made public by a person authorised by the Church, or the Leadership to do so.

8. CHURCH ORGANISATIONS

The Pastor has the discretion to Chair all Meetings of the Church, Leadership and Church organisations.

All organisations associated with the Church shall formulate and present annually, for approval to the Leadership, guidelines governing their operations.

The Leader of Church organisations shall normally be appointed by the Church at the Annual Church Meeting, upon nomination from the respective organisations, provided that any member of the congregation may submit a nomination.

All organisations shall submit to the Leadership the names of all appointees to their various offices other than those appointed at the Annual Church Meeting.

9. GENERAL

9A. Ordinances

- a. Baptism. The Pastor may baptise any believer upon application, or alternatively a member of the Leadership or Member of the Church may baptise any believer upon approval of the Pastor.
- b. Communion (The Lord's Table). Communion shall normally be observed at least once a month. All believers in the Lord Jesus Christ shall be invited to take part in the Communion.

9B. Property Ownership

The Trustees of all Church property shall be the Baptist Churches of NSW Property Trust.

9C. Application of Church Assets and Income

The assets and income of the Church shall be applied solely in the furtherance of its charitable purpose and the advancement of religion and no portion shall be distributed directly or indirectly to the Members except as bona fide reimbursement of expenses incurred on behalf of the Church.

9D. Church Dissolution

In the event of the Church being dissolved, the amount that remains after such dissolution and the satisfaction of all debts and liabilities shall:

- a. In the case of property held in trust pursuant to the Baptist Churches of NSW Property Trust Act 1984, be dealt with in accordance with that Act and in particular Section 29 which said trusts provide that no portion shall be distributed directly or indirectly to the Members of the Church, and
- b. In all other cases be transferred to the Baptist Union of NSW & ACT, or to any other organisation with similar purposes and which has rules prohibiting the distribution of its assets and income to its Members and which is exempt from income tax.

9E. Property

Church buildings and property shall not be used or occupied by people or organisations for any purpose except with prior consent of the Secretary, who may give such consent in accordance with the decisions and guidelines laid down by the Church.

9F. Insurance

The Church, as recommended by the Association of Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT, will hold insurance policies. Property and Property Contents related policies will have 'insured values' which fairly approximate the replacement value of the property and contents insured.

9G. The Ministry

The ministry of the Church shall be supported and expenses met by voluntary contributions, or any other method approved by Members. Two Members, one of whom would normally be the Treasurer, shall authorise payments on behalf of the Church.

9H. Auditor

An Auditor shall be appointed by the Church and shall audit the financial records of the Church for presentation at the Annual Church Meeting. The Auditor shall be an external accredited person.

10. ALTERATIONS TO CONSTITUTION

Alterations to this Constitution shall require a 75% majority of Members present, eligible to vote, and voting at a Meeting convened for the purpose.

The quorum for such a Meeting shall be 50% of the Membership.

Any proposed change to this Constitution shall be given in writing as a Notice of Motion to the Leadership and shall be distributed by the Secretary to all Members not less than four Sundays before the date of such Meeting.

The Secretary shall notify the Secretary to the Assembly Council of the Association of Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT and the Treasurer shall notify the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) of any changes to this Constitution within 14 days of any decision being made by the Church.