



# Constitution

## **1. NAME**

The name of this church is Phillip Island Baptist Church (“the Church”).

## **2. AFFILIATION**

Affirming Baptist understandings of the gospel, the Church is a member church of the Baptist Union of Victoria and accepts as expressions of the Christian faith, the doctrinal basis, and the principles and ideals of the Baptist faith contained in the Constitution of that Union.

## **3. PARTNERSHIP IN MINISTRY**

Partnership in Ministry (PIM) shall consist of those who profess faith in Jesus, having personally accepted him as Savior and Lord, and who are willing to participate in the life of the Church, pledging themselves to God and to their fellow partners.

## **4. MISSION AND PURPOSE**

As a local community of the people of God, this Church exists to be-

- a) A worshipping community, devoted to God.
- b) A missional community, faithful to the Great Commission.
- c) A caring community, demonstrating God’s love.
- d) A serving community, living in the world as Christ was in the world.
- e) A nurturing community, helping disciples grow into God’s love.

## **5. HOW WE WILL OPERATE (Governance)**

- a) Under the guidance of God and Scripture, the Church will be governed by Christian principles, with the PIM meeting being the final authority on all matters.
- b) The Church recognises the Church Council, (CC), as its governing body and authorises it to manage the affairs of the Church, subject to this Constitution and decisions of the PIM meeting.
- c) The CC must operate according to the Mission and Budget. The CC may incur non-budgeted expenditure up to 10% of the total annual Budget and must report such expenditure in the Church newsletter.
- d) The CC maintains open communication with PIMs on the governance of the Church.
- e) On the appointment of a Pastor, where appropriate, suitable persons shall be set aside as Pastoral Companions.

## **6. ALTERATION TO THIS CONSTITUTION**

Changes to this Constitution, or covenant, can only be made at a Special Meeting convened for such a purpose. Any proposed alteration to this Constitution shall first be brought to the CC for discussion. Notice of the wording of the proposed alteration shall then be given to the PIMs at least 14 days prior to the meeting date.

# Companion Guide

## **1. PARTNERSHIP IN MINISTRY (PARTNERSHIP)**

PIBC is an open membership church. PIBC teaches and practises the Baptism of Believers but accepts Christians from other traditions into membership upon professing their faith.

### **1.1. Procedure to become a Partner in Ministry (PIM)**

- 1.1.1. A person who requests to become a PIM should be directed to the Church Council (CC) who will arrange two current Partners in Ministry to interview the person. To become a PIM requires the recommendation and approval of the CC. It must be clear that the person has made their own free decision to commit themselves to Christ and to the church, has participated in appropriate preparation and accepts the Church's constitution.
- 1.1.2. If a person seeks to become a PIM, having been a partner of another church, a letter of commendation may be sought from that other church.
- 1.1.3. Upon recommendation of the interviewees, and acceptance by the CC, the person is then introduced to the church as a PIM at a Sunday morning service.
- 1.1.4. Under the direction of the Church Secretary, a roll will be kept of the names of those who are Partners in Ministry ('Partners in Ministry Roll'). The Operations Administrator shall maintain the names of PIMs in the following sections:
  - a) Active PIMs are those actively engaged in the life and ministry of the Church.
  - b) Non-resident PIMs are- those in good standing, but no longer resident in the district.
- 1.1.5. A name may be removed from the PIM Roll if the person becomes a member of another church, requests removal from the Roll, dies, or has their PIM status removed by a decision of a Church meeting for disciplinary reasons.
- 1.1.6. The PIM Roll will be revised at each Annual Church Meeting on the basis of a report prepared by the CC. Unless the meeting notes that special circumstances apply, the names of those PIMs who have not attended (or been connected with) the Church in the past year may be removed.

### **1.2. Procedure for discipline**

All situations appearing to require the exercise of discipline will be investigated by the Pastor and, if necessary, referred to a CC meeting. If deemed necessary by the CC, the PIM will be visited by the Pastor and at least one member of the CC, in an endeavor to "restore them gently" (Galatians 6:1). If the PIM persists in such conduct, the CC will suspend their partnership. This includes removing the person in question's name from the PIM Roll.

## **2. MISSION, MINISTRY AND OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH**

### **2.1. The Church**

- 2.1.1. In the ministry of the Church, all regular attendees shall accept the responsibility to encourage and edify the whole fellowship, and at the same time, to receive from the fellowship that nurture and discipline essential to their own growth in grace.
- 2.1.2. The Church will be governed on Christian principles, with the PIMs meeting being the final authority on all matters.

### **2.2. Partnership meetings**

- 2.2.1. An Annual General Meeting will be held each year and include:
- a) Presentation of the annual report and financial reports.
  - b) Election of members of the CC.
- 2.2.2. A Mission and Budget Meeting will be held each year to consider and approve the Church's annual vision and budget, and the appointment of an auditor.
- 2.2.3. Special Meetings may be called by the Pastor, the CC, or by written request of one fifth of the PIMs, to the Church Secretary. If decided to proceed, two full Sundays' notice, setting forth the reason(s) for calling the meeting, shall be given and the meeting shall consider only the business for which it was convened.
- 2.2.4. Special meetings will be held when the following matters are to be considered:
- a) The appointment or removal of the Senior Pastor.
  - b) The renting, sale, purchase, exchange, or mortgage of property held in trust by the Baptist Union of Victoria for the Church; or
  - c) The use of money received from the sale, mortgage, or insurance of such property.
  - d) Special meetings must be called and conducted in the manner prescribed in Schedule B clause 10, in The Baptist Union Incorporation Act 1930. (A plain English summary of Schedule B, as prepared by The Baptist Union of Victoria, is reproduced as Appendix 3 to this Constitution).

### **2.3 Notice of PIMs meetings**

Notice of the time, place and major business of PIM meetings must be given, with 14 days clear notice by announcement at each worship service, and, if possible, through publication in the Church newsletter or email to PIMs.

### **2.4 Chairperson**

The Senior Pastor has the option of being the Chairperson of all PIM meetings, except in matters relating to the Senior Pastor. The CC will appoint the Chairperson at each PIM meeting at which the Senior Pastor does not preside, unless otherwise determined by the meeting.

### **2.5 Quorums**

A quorum for any regular meeting of the Church shall be 25% of the active partnership. The quorum for a special meeting where it involves the calling or removal of a pastor shall be 25% of the active partnership.

### **2.6 When a quorum is not attained**

If a quorum is not present within 15 minutes of the appointed time for the commencement of a Church Meeting or at the time of the presentation of a matter on which a vote is required, the Chairperson shall advise that, as a quorum is not present, the meeting stands adjourned and shall give notification for a further meeting in accordance with the Constitutional requirements for that meeting. If, at the replacement meeting, a quorum is not present within 15 minutes of the appointed time for the commencement of the meeting, the number of

members present at that time shall constitute a quorum. No business other than that contained in the original notice of meeting will be considered at this next meeting.

## **2.7 Voting**

- 2.7.1. PIMs who are recorded on the Active roll are eligible to vote at all PIMs meetings.
- 2.7.2. The vote of the Church will be taken ordinarily by voices or by the show of hands. All voting for the appointment or removal of the Senior Pastor, and the endorsement and election of the officers of the Church and members of CC must be by secret ballot. A meeting may require a secret ballot on other matters where it considers it appropriate.
- 2.7.3. A motion put to a PIM meeting will be carried by a simple majority, with the exception of motions considered at a Special Meeting and alterations to this Constitution, which require a two-thirds majority of those present and eligible to vote.
- 2.7.4. The Chairperson will have only one vote. In the case of a tied vote, the question will be resolved in the negative.

## **2.8 Minutes**

Records of the decisions of all PIMs meetings are the responsibility of the Church Secretary and must be kept and made available for inspection by PIMs.

## **2.9 The Senior Pastor**

- 2.9.1 The church shall call a Senior Pastor of the Church who shall be primarily concerned with the spiritual leadership and pastoral oversight of the church and shall perform the specific duties pertaining to their appointment.
- 2.9.2 The Senior Pastor shall be responsible for all ministries and ministry leaders in the daily operations of the church and be the spiritual leader in the life and ministry of the Church.
- 2.9.3 The Senior Pastor of the Church shall be the person whom the Church believes to have been called and gifted by the Lord to fulfil such a ministry of leadership: who is a believer, baptised by immersion upon personal confession of faith; who is committed to our Baptist heritage and who shall be chosen and called into office in accordance with the procedures set out in Appendix 2 of this Constitution.
- 2.9.4 The Senior Pastor shall be a partner of the CC and is entitled to attend all meetings of Church committees, auxiliaries and organisations.

### **2.9.5 Calling or Removing of the Senior Pastor:**

In the calling of a Senior Pastor, the CC shall call the Church to prayer.  
The procedure for the calling of a Senior Pastor is as per Appendix 2.

The pastorate may be terminated on the initiative of

- a) The Senior Pastor – after giving three months’ notice of intention in writing to the Church; this may be shortened in consultation with the CC.
- b) The Church – by a motion carried by a two-thirds majority of those active partners in ministry present and voting.

#### 2.9.6 Calling and removing of Associate Pastor/s and paid staff.

The associate pastor/s and other paid staff will work with the Senior Pastor in the daily operations of the Church and shall perform the specific duties pertaining to their appointment.

- a) Job description: Position description approved by the CC.
- b) The Senior Pastor needs to request permission from the CC to employ associate pastor/s or paid staff.
- c) Selection team: shall be nominated by the Senior Pastor, with approval from the CC. Any selection team must have at least one CC included. Minimum of 3 people. The successful candidate needs to be approved by the CC before they are offered the position.

The associate pastor may be terminated by the initiative of that pastor themselves, having given 3 months’ notice in writing to the CC. This may be shortened through consultation.

- d) In accordance with Fair Work regulations, the Senior Pastor and CC can move to give notice to the associate pastor that their position is terminated, with the regulatory notice.

### 2.10. Pastoral Companions

The Pastoral Companions are those PIMs responsible for assisting and supporting the Church’s Pastors, by enabling, encouraging, and supporting them in their spiritual leadership of the Church, in a confidential environment, meeting regularly throughout the year.

#### 2.10.1. Term of office:

2.10.1.1. Once chosen, a Pastoral Companion commits to serve a two-year period. The term may be extended further with the consent of their Pastor.

2.10.1.2. Their number shall be between two and five persons per group.

#### 2.10.1.3. Selection Procedure:

2.10.1.4. The individual pastors shall select their own Pastoral Companions.

2.10.1.5. After selection of the Pastoral Companions by the relevant pastor, their names must be provided to the Church Secretary within fourteen days, for recording.

### 2.11. Church Council

The CC is responsible for the governance of the Church. These responsibilities include the

following, with power to delegate where it deems appropriate:

- a) Giving prayerful and administrative oversight to the Church.
- b) Developing and advancing the Church's mission, vision and values.
- c) Engaging in strategic planning.
- d) Reviewing the Senior Pastor's performance.
- e) Legal compliance.
- f) Financial accountability.
- g) Producing written governing policies and procedures.
- h) Encouraging and developing potential CC members so that the future leadership of the Church is assured.
- i) Reviewing ministry teams and other such bodies to see that they best suit the fulfillment of the Church's mission.
- j) Assisting the Senior Pastor in appointing and dismissing leaders, pastors and other staff.
- k) Recommendation for the appointment and/or dismissal of Senior Pastor, as referred to in 2.9.5.

#### 2.12.1. Church Council Meetings

- The CC will meet as regularly as required for business, prayer and fellowship, and must be given reasonable notice of such meetings. Special meetings may be held, as deemed necessary by the Pastor, the Church Secretary, or on the written request of any two of the CC.
- The quorum for any CC meeting will be not less than 50% of the members of CC.
- Records of the decisions of all CC meetings must be kept by the Church Secretary and made available for inspection if a PIM meeting requests them. However, the CC Chairperson or other representative of the CC has the right to veto confidential information.

#### 2.12.2. Term of office

Elected CC members will be appointed for a term of two years. As nearly as possible, one half of the number will retire each year, but will be eligible for re-election.

#### 2.12.3. Spouse

Members of CC cannot serve on the Council in the same time period as their partner/wife/husband.

#### 2.12.4. Casual vacancies

Should a casual vacancy occur, the CC may co-opt a PIM to fill the vacancy, and the person so appointed will hold office until the next Annual General Meeting following the appointment.

An election must be held at the next Annual General Meeting and the partner so elected will hold office for the remainder of the term.



#### 2.12.5. Election procedure

Names to be put forward for nomination 4 weeks before an AGM, so that CC will have the opportunity to interview those nominated, in order to determine their suitability in terms of their skills, gifting and character. CC has the responsibility to accept or decline any nominations.

Nominations shall be in writing, signed by two partners and the nominee and must be received by the Church Secretary at least four full weeks prior to the Annual General Meeting. The Church Secretary is to advise the Church of the names of those nominated for two Sundays prior to the elections.

On the two weeks prior to the Annual General Meeting, the names of the nominees will be posted in the foyer of the church.

The minimum number to serve on the Church Council shall be five, not including the Senior Pastor.

#### 2.12.6. Voting procedures for Council election

Each nominee must receive the endorsement of at least two-thirds of the Partners present and voting, to be eligible to take office on the CC.

Note: For the purposes of Schedule B to The Baptist Union Incorporation Act 1930, the partners of the CC are deemed to be “the Deacons”.

#### 2.12.7. Officers

The Church Secretary, Church Treasurer, and Senior Pastor shall be the Church Officers, also known as the Administrative Executive.

The Church Secretary and Church Treasurer shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting for a term of two years and shall be elected in alternate years. Given that they meet the criteria (2.12.3), any casual vacancy shall be filled for the balance of the term of that office.

The Church Secretary and Church Treasurer shall be partners of the CC and shall fulfill the same requirements as necessary for the office of a member of CC.

The Church Secretary shall be responsible for -

keeping a record of all CC meetings, Church Meetings, and the Partnership Roll.

Conducting correspondence on behalf of the Church and dealing with business matters of the Church.

Presenting to the Church Annual General Meeting a written report covering the total Church work during the past year.

The Church Treasurer shall be responsible for -

Receiving all monies on behalf of the Church.

Making payments as directed by the Church Partners or CC meetings.

Presenting a financial report to each ordinary meeting of the Church Council and to each Partners in Ministry Meeting.

Presenting at the Mission and Budget Meeting a budget of estimated income and expenditure for the ensuing financial year.

Presenting an audited financial statement of Church income and expenditure for the financial year, to a Partners in Ministry Meeting, and nominating an auditor for the following year.

## **2.13. CHURCH FINANCE**

### **Offerings**

The ordinary expenses of the church shall be defrayed by the voluntary offerings from Partners and those attending public worship, and at other times and by such other means as are approved by the Church.

## **2.14. CHURCH MINISTRIES**

The Senior Pastor shall be ex-officio President of all ministries connected with the Church, and shall, when present, be entitled to take the chair at all meetings.

In all matters of dispute, the CC, subject to this constitution, is the final authority.

Property purchased and/or monies used by any ministry, if it disbands or ceases to function, shall become the property of the Church.

Rules and programs of any ministry connected with the Church shall be subject to the Church Constitution.

No organisation or ministry shall use the name of the Church without the consent of the CC.

## **2.15. CHURCH PROPERTY**

The Church property is available for use by ministries of the Church. The activities of all such ministries come under the authority vested in the Senior Pastor and this constitution.

While Church property is rate free, it ought not be let, except under special conditions, or when the Church has entered into special arrangements with the Baptist Union of Victoria, with the approval of the Executive Council.

Any organisation outside the local Church, desiring the use of any part of the church property, shall apply in writing to the Operations Administrator.

When using the premises, all organisations, whether belonging to the Church or not, are required to leave same in order, swept, clean and tidy for next use by others.

When breakages or damage to property occur, a report on same must be made to the Church Administrator or his/her delegate, and expenses met, or replacement made by the responsible party.

Smoking, the consumption of alcohol or other drugs, or gambling are not permitted on the premises.

Costs of lighting, heating, cleaning, etc., will normally be met by any outside organisations using the premises. Details shall be arranged by agreement.

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **PRINCIPLES AND IDEALS OF THE BAPTIST FAITH**

The doctrinal basis and the principles and ideals of the Baptist faith are accepted as our basis of faith. See BUV webpage: [www.buv.com.au](http://www.buv.com.au) and refer to the section 'what does it mean to be a Baptist?' <https://www.buv.com.au/about-us/what-does-it-mean-to-be-a-baptist/>

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **THE CALLING OF THE PASTOR**

When the Church is seeking to call a Senior Pastor, the following procedures shall be observed.

1. The Church Secretary shall notify the Baptist Union of Victoria that the pastorate is vacant, or is about to become vacant, and if required, may request the Baptist Union of Victoria to recommend persons sympathetic to the life of the Church for consideration for appointment as moderator. The moderator, who shall be appointed by resolution of a church meeting, shall normally chair all meetings of the Church, the CC or of any pastoral search committee when matters related to the call of a Pastor are under consideration.
2. For the purpose of considering the filling of the pastoral vacancy, the CC shall settle the terms and conditions of a call in writing. The CC, or a special Pastoral Search Committee appointed by the CC, shall take the necessary consultative steps with a view to recommending to a subsequent church meeting a person to be called to the pastorate of the Church.
3. The CC shall invite Partners of the church to submit in confidence the names of persons considered suitable for the filling of the pastoral vacancy.
4. The CC or the Pastoral Search Committee shall, in confidence, interview persons considered by it to be suitable for filling the pastoral vacancy.
5. When the CC or Pastoral Search Committee is of a mind to recommend a person to a church meeting, with a view to a call to the pastorate, it shall first obtain the consent of that person and an indication from him or her that, if a call is made, he or she will most likely accept it.
6. The Church Secretary shall, on behalf of the CC or the Pastoral Search Committee, convene a special meeting of the Church for the sole reason of considering the recommendation of a call to the pastorate. Two full Sundays' notice of the meeting shall be given, but the name of the person to be considered shall not be made known until the meeting has commenced.
7. At the special meeting, voting shall be by ballot and a call shall not be issued unless at least seventy five percent of the partners of the church over the age of eighteen years who are present and who vote shall be in favour of issuing the call. Details of voting shall be confidential to the scrutineers and the Chairperson, and shall be made available.
8. If the special meeting shall decide to issue a call, then the CC shall advise the person concerned and seek a response.
9. No public announcement of the outcome of the meeting shall be made until the response of the person concerned has been communicated to the Church.
10. If the special meeting shall decide not to issue a call, then the CC shall advise the person concerned. The CC or Pastoral Search Committee shall continue the search for a pastor.
11. At all stages of the procedures, every care shall be taken to ensure that confidentiality is maintained.

## APPENDIX 3

### Schedule B to The Baptist Union Incorporation Act 1930

#### ... a plain English summary ...

*This summary has been prepared by the Union office as a guide to the operation of Schedule B. It is a guide only. We recommend that Schedule B in its original form be read when specific questions arise. If you are in doubt about the meaning of a particular provision, please contact the Union office.*

The Baptist Union of Victoria ("Union") holds property on trust for its partner churches for the following purposes and subject to the following conditions:

1. To allow the partner church concerned "the Church" to build/alter a sanctuary, manse or other buildings/structures as desired by the Church. These buildings are to be used as directed by the Church.
2. Based firmly on the principles of congregational government, the Church has complete discretion to manage its affairs, subject to clause 10 below.
3. The Church is entitled to direct the use of money received by it.
4. A pastor called (including for a new term) to the Church:
  - 4.1 Must be Baptist;
  - 4.2 Must be called (including for a new term) by a Special Church Meeting complying with clause 10 below;
  - 4.3 Must subscribe to the Doctrinal Basis [reproduced as Appendix I], and a pastor removed from the Church must be dismissed by a Special Church Meeting complying with clause 10 below.
5. The Church is entitled to use its property as security to borrow money. The decision to mortgage or otherwise charge the Church property must be made at a special Church meeting complying with clause 10 below.
6. The Church is entitled to:
  - 6.1 create easements over;
  - 6.2 construct roads over;
  - 6.3 sell;  
its property. Without the consent of the Executive Council of the Union ("Executive Council"), the Church may not sell its property at substantially less than current market value.
7. Money received by the Church:
  - 7.1 raised by way of mortgage of Church property;
  - 7.2 derived by sale of Church property;
  - 7.3 received as an insurance payout in relation to Church property;  
must be used for further property purchase or building improvements. Moneys so derived are deposited with the Union in the normal course until the Church directs the use of the money.
8. The Church is entitled to rent Church property on terms decided by a special Church meeting complying with clause 10 below.
9. Where the Union receives money on behalf of the Church, the payee has no further responsibility to follow up the payment.
10. The special Church meetings referred to above:
  - 10.1 may generally be called at any time;
  - 10.2 may be called by the Church leadership;
  - 10.3 must be called upon the written request of at least one-sixth of the partners of the Church;

10.4 must be convened by 14 days' clear notice specifying the time, place and purpose of the meeting.

At a special Church meeting:

10.5 persons voting must be over 18 years, must have been partners of the Church for at least 6 months, and must have been present at Church for communion at least once in the preceding 6 months; and

10.6 A two-thirds majority vote is required. (The two-thirds rule relates to two-thirds of all those partners present and voting. ... if the vote is by ballot and invalid votes are cast, the number of invalid votes must still be included in the total number of votes against which the two-thirds requirement is measured.)

**11.** A minute signed by the chairperson of a Church meeting is sufficient evidence that the minute is an accurate record of a Church decision.

**12.** (Transitional provision).

**13.** In special circumstances of the Church owing money that the Union is liable to pay, the Union may, having given 6 months written notice to the Church, mortgage or sell Church property so as to cover the debt.

**14.** The beneficial ownership and control of Church property by the Church is not affected per se if the Church moves to another locality.

14A. In relation to the powers vested in the Church by clauses 4,5,7,8 and 13 above, the Church may, at any time, ask Executive Council to stand in the shoes of the Church and be able to exercise those powers in the Church's stead. Executive Council and the Church may later both determine that those powers will revert back to the Church.

**15.** If:

15.1 The Church is dissolved;

15.2 The Church is dispersed;

15.3 The partnership of the Church is reduced below 6; or

15.4 Public worship in the Church sanctuary property stops for six months (not being for building alterations), the Union automatically assumes full control of the Church property. [At this stage any proceeds of sale of Church property by the Union would be deposited in the Union's Advancement Fund.]

15A. If the resident partnership of the Church is reduced to less than 29 but more than 5, Executive Council may exercise the powers vested in the Church by clauses 4, 5, 7, 8 and 13 above. Executive Council may only exercise this discretion to stand in the shoes of the Church if it has given three months written notice of its intention to the Church and to Assembly. The Executive Council action must also have the endorsement of Assembly. Executive Council and the Church may later agree and both determine that the powers vested in Executive Council will revert back to the Church.

**16.** If the Church moves to another locality and leases the original Church property, then, until the end of the lease, the clause 15 "trigger" above, relating to the absence of public worship for at least six months, does not apply.

Trevor Spicer  
Union Administrator

13 October 2000