

NSW & ACT  
**BAPTIST**  
CHURCHES



**Newhope Baptist Church  
(Kellyville & The Ponds)**

Church  
Constitution and  
Governance Procedures

# CONSTITUTION

## 1. NAME

The name of the Church is Newhope Baptist Church (Kellyville & The Ponds)

## 2. DOCTRINAL POSITION OF THIS CHURCH

The doctrinal position of the church accords with the evangelical doctrines set out in the Baptist Union of NSW Incorporation Act, 1919 (NSW) and subsequent amendments approved by the Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT Assemblies.

The attached "Statement of Beliefs" provides an expansion of each of these doctrines.

## 3. MEMBERSHIP (Newhope Partners)

### 3A. Eligibility

Members of Newhope Church are referred to as Newhope Partners. Newhope Partners shall be persons who give evidence of a sincere profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, be led by his Spirit and agree to hold to the doctrines set forth in this Constitution under the heading "Doctrinal Position of this Church". They also agree to and sign the Newhope Partners Covenant (Appendix A).

A Newhope Partner who has not been baptised by immersion shall be restricted in the following three respects:

1. Voting in relation to the call or removal of a Pastor of this Church
2. Voting in relation to a property transaction by this Church
3. Being a delegate of this Church to an Assembly of the Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT.

### 3B. Admission

- (a) Applicants for Newhope Partnership shall apply to the Pastor or Chairman of the Leadership Council.
- (b) Applicants must be 16 years or older.
- (c) Applicants must have been attending Newhope for at least six months prior to applying for Newhope Partnership. (Does not apply to Newhope paid staff and their partners)
- (d) Applicants must be baptised by full immersion or by an equivalent profession of faith by an evangelical Church.
- (e) Newhope Partners under 18 years of age can not vote on matters relating to property transactions.
- (f) Applicants have completed and signed the NewHope Partners Covenant (Appendix A)

NewHope Partnership is for a maximum of three years. However, every third anniversary of the Church (beginning 29<sup>th</sup> March, 2014) - all NewHope Partners will be invited to renew their Partnership and re-sign their commitment to the NewHope Partners' Covenant.

Only NewHope Partners can serve as members of the Leadership Council, Nominating Committee or as Ministry Team Leaders (Coordinators of a Specific Ministry Area).

### 3C. Responsibilities of NewHope Partners

As per NewHope Partners Covenant (see appendix)

### 3D. NewHope Partners Roll

A NewHope Partners' Roll and an Absent Partners' Roll shall be kept.

### **3E. Removal from NewHope Partnership**

The Leadership Council will prayerfully review the Partners' Roll regularly and place people, where appropriate, on the absent Partners' Roll.

NewHope Partners, who for a period of six months fail to actively participate in the life of the Church without satisfactory explanation or fail to honour other responsibilities of the NewHope Partnership Covenant, will be followed up by the Leadership Council and may be put on the Absent Partners' Roll. Where the failure to actively participate in the life of the Church relates to moving out of the district in which the Church is situated, then such members shall be transferred to an Absent Partners' Roll.

NewHope Partners whose names are on the Absent Partners' Roll shall have no right to vote at any Church meeting and will not be included for the purpose of calculating the quorum required.

### **3F. Transfer of Membership**

Any NewHope Partner in good standing may request that a letter of commendation be sent to another Baptist Church they wish to join. The Leadership Council will process the request at its discretion.

## **4. LEADERSHIP COUNCIL**

### **4A. Responsibilities of the Leadership Council**

The Leadership Council will be selected and appointed with specific regard to the gift mix of Ephesians 4:11-13 and demonstrate spiritual maturity, good character, leadership gifts and ministry wisdom. The Leadership Council will include between 3 and 6 members and the Lead Pastor who is always on the Leadership Council. The elected members will serve for a term of three years and no member can serve more than three terms without a break of one year. No more than 1/2 of the team will stand for election in any year. They will be elected on a 75% majority.

The Leadership Council will elect its own chairperson. Whilst the Lead Pastor is a member of the Leadership Council he/she cannot serve as Chairperson.

The role of the Leadership Council is to:

- Set the spiritual direction of the Church and equip God's people for the work of ministry
- Prepare a Vision for the Ministry, which includes goals, ministry philosophy and the resources to meet the Vision.
- Bring any recommendations regarding property as needed.
- Support and encourage the work of the pastoral team and keep them accountable with the Church's ministry goals.

Only NewHope Partners can be nominated and elected to the Leadership Council.

### **4B. Removal of Leadership Council Members**

Anyone elected to the Leadership Council may be removed from office by a simple majority of the members present at a Church meeting. The quorum for such a meeting shall be 30 or one-sixth of NewHope Partners eligible to vote, whichever is less.

## **5. LEAD PASTOR**

### **5A. Appointment and Removal of Lead Pastor**

The Lead Pastor shall be a person whose credentials are acceptable to the Baptist Association of NSW holds the doctrines set forth in this Constitution under the heading: "Doctrinal Position of this Church".

The Lead Pastor shall normally be ex-officio Leader of all ministries, although the responsibility may be delegated to another member of the pastoral team or member of the Leadership Council.

The Lead Pastor will be appointed or removed upon 75% majority of the Newhope Partners present, eligible to vote, and voting at a meeting of which notice has been given to members two weeks prior to such meeting, the purpose of such meeting having been specified.

A quorum shall be at least 50% of those eligible to vote.

All *terms and conditions* of a call shall be conveyed to the Lead Pastor in writing and set out in an employment contract, having previously been clarified between both parties, together with full particulars of the Church and its development. Acceptance shall be made in writing to the Church, indicating acceptance of terms of call.

#### **5B. Lead Pastor**

The Lead Pastor is responsible for the overall spiritual leadership of the Church, within the bounds of and in accordance with the direction set by the Leadership Council. The Lead Pastor is also responsible for the leadership and equipping God's people for the work of ministry.

All other Pastoral Staff and Ministry Team Leaders report to the Lead Pastor who will bring reports to the Leadership Council on ministry developments. Other Pastoral Team Members do not generally attend Leadership Council Meetings but may be invited at the discretion of the Lead Pastor.

#### **5C. Continuity of Leadership**

Should there be no Pastor, the Leadership Council will assume pastoral responsibilities.

### **6. MEETINGS**

Church meetings will be held as required and all the NewHope Family may attend. However only eligible NewHope Partners may vote. The Chairperson of the Leadership Council or another member who has been appointed by the Leadership Council will chair the meetings.

A Church Meeting shall be called for the following matters:

- Property
- New Lead Pastor Appointments
- Leadership Council and Nominating Committee Appointments

At least two weeks notice of the meeting must be given.

The Church Meeting shall be a meeting of those persons on the NewHope Partners' Roll.

### **7. OFFENCES and DISPUTE**

**7a.** Where a NewHope Partner becomes an offence to the Church by reason of immoral or un-Christian conduct, the Leadership Council will make every effort, in the spirit of love and gentleness, to restore the NewHope Partner to fellowship (Matt. 18:15 - 17).

**7b.** Where such efforts fail, the Leadership Council recommend to the Church to terminate or suspend for a specified time. Suspension or termination of membership shall only be made by a simple majority of the Members present and voting at a Church Meeting.

**7c.** Matters of offence or dispute between NewHope Partners shall not be brought before the Church unless the parties have first complied with the direction of Matthew 18:15-17.

### **8. ORDINANCES**

(a) Baptism.

The Pastoral Team may baptise any believer upon application, or alternatively any Newhope Partner may baptise any believer upon approval of the Lead Pastor.

(b) Communion.

Communion shall be observed regularly. All believers in the Lord Jesus Christ shall be invited to take part in the communion.

## **9. PROPERTY OWNERSHIP AND DISSOLUTION**

### **9A. Property Ownership**

The Trustees of all Church property shall be the Baptist Churches of NSW Property Trust. All decisions regarding such properties must be done in accordance to the requirements of the Trust.

### **9B. 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 remuneration where a member is an employee of the church, fee for services where a member is a contractor to the church and reimbursement of expenses incurred by a member on behalf of the church.

### **9C. 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.
- b) In all other cases be transferred to the Baptist Association of NSW or to any not-profit Baptist organisation with similar purposes.

## **10. GOVERNANCE PROCEDURES**

The church shall conduct itself in accordance with the Governance Procedures

## **11. ALTERATIONS TO CONSTITUTION**

No alteration shall be made to the Constitution except by a 75% majority of Newhope Partners present, eligible to vote, and voting at a meeting convened for the purpose.

The quorum for such a meeting shall be 25% of the Newhope Partners

Any proposed change to the Constitution shall be given in writing as a Notice of Motion to the Leadership Council and shall be distributed by Chairman of the Leadership Council to all members not less than 2 weeks before the date of such meeting.

# GOVERNANCE PROCEDURES

## 1. PRINCIPLES

We are committed to a governance system which:

- Demonstrates servant leadership and is honouring to God.
- Empowers leaders for ministry whilst holding them accountable.
- Is transparent and open.
- Supports the pastoral team in their ministry.

## 2. PHILOSOPHY OF GOVERNANCE

- The Church shall be affiliated with the Baptist Association of NSW, 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 (Newhope Partners).
- 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 Newhope Partners.

## 3. THE LEADERSHIP COUNCIL & NOMINATING COMMITTEE

There are two key committees established for governance, which operate in conjunction with the Church Meeting. The two committees are:

1. The Leadership Council (role detailed in the Constitution)
2. The Nominating Committee

Nominations for these committees shall normally be invited from members at least 2 weeks prior to a Church meeting. Nominations are to be in writing, signed by the nominee and the nominator, and handed to the Lead Pastor or Chairman of the Leadership Council.

### 3A. Nominating Committee

A Nominating Committee consisting of the Lead Pastor, a representative of the Leadership Council (nominated by the Council) and two non-Leadership Council members (affirmed by the Church) will be responsible for bringing nominations for positions on the Leadership Council to the Church. Only one nomination will be brought per position available. Each position will have a Role Description and will have at least the following criteria – a specific regard to the gift mix of Ephesians 4:11-13 and demonstration of spiritual maturity, good character, leadership gifts and ministry wisdom. This will be the criteria to which the Nominating Committee decides on who to bring to the Church.

The non-Leadership Council members will serve a 3-year term and no member can serve more than three terms without a break of one year.

Only Newhope Partners can be nominated and elected to the Nominating Committee. Newhope Partners may not recommend themselves to the Nominating Committee.

## **4. PASTORS**

### **4A. Calling a Pastor**

- (a) A Pastoral Search Committee appointed by the Leadership Council shall call for nominations. Newhope Partners 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 Baptist Association of NSW of the vacancy and seek advice and assistance from the appropriate denominational 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 Baptist Association of NSW 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 Council 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.

Churches should note that the terms of the call will generally be as recommended by the Baptist Association of NSW and should be extended without stating any length of tenure.

### **4B. Appointment and Removal of Associate Pastors**

The appointment or removal of an associate pastor will be done with consultation between the Lead Pastor and Leadership Council.

### **4C. Ministry Team Leaders**

Ministry Team Leaders are coordinators of a specific ministry area or program. They are responsible for ensuring their areas of ministry operate in accordance with the direction and goals of Newhope. Ministry Team Leaders are appointed and report to the Lead Pastor or their delegated representative. Only Newhope Partners can serve as Ministry Team Leaders.

## **5. OTHER**

### **5A. Employees**

The Leadership Council may resolve to employ clerical or other paid staff, in order to function effectively. The Leadership Council shall determine the employment details of any such employee/s. All persons paid wages, salaries, stipends or other employment related benefits by the Church, are employees of the Church.

### **5B. Filling any Casual Vacancies**

In the event of an unexpected vacancy, the Leadership Council may appoint an interim to fill the vacancy until the position is filled.

## **6. CHURCH MEETINGS and PROCEDURES**

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

Except in the case of the election of the Officers of the Church, where voting shall 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 that 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.

**7. 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 Council, to do so.

**8. GENERAL**

**8A. Property**

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

**8B. Insurance**

The Church, as recommended by the Baptist Association of NSW, 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.

**8C. Auditor**

An auditor shall be appointed by the Leadership Council and shall audit the financial records as required.

**9. ALTERATIONS TO GOVERNANCE PROCEDURES**

The Leadership Council can make alterations to the governance procedures from time to time. Any amendments made will be communicated to the Church.