Constitution of

WERRIBEE BAPTIST CHURCH

February 2019

Definition of Terms

Pastoral Team	The 'Pastoral Team' consists of the pastors and senior staff leaders, as appointed by the Lead/Senior Pastor. The 'Pastoral Team' is responsible for the day to day operations of the Church.
Church Council	The 'Church Council' is the governing body of the church as delegated by the membership. The responsibilities of the Council are outlined in Item 6.2.
Leadership Team	The 'Leadership Team' consists of the Pastoral Team and the Church Council. The 'Leadership Team' will work together to see the vision and mission of the Church carried out.
Elders	The elders are a group of people appointed to function in a 'lay-pastor' capacity. Elders will be a support to the Pastoral Team and assist in caring for the spiritual needs of the congregation.
Member	A member is someone who has met the qualifications outlined in Item 5. They will have responsibility to be a part of the decision making life of the Church.
The BUV	The Baptist Union of Victoria is the denomination the Church voluntarily chooses to align with.

1.0 Name

1.1 The name of the church is Werribee Baptist Church ("the Church").

1.2 Werribee Baptist Church is a properly recognised constituent church of The BUV. The BUV is incorporated under "The Baptist Union Incorporation Act, 1930 – approved by the Parliament of Victoria on 24th December 1930 - number 3903". This is a perpetual incorporation unless revoked by Parliament.

2.0 Not-For-Profit Status

2.1 The assets and income of the Church shall be applied solely in furtherance of its purposes and no portion shall be distributed directly or indirectly by way of profit to the members.

3.0 Doctrinal Basis and Ordinances

3.1 Affirming Baptist understandings of the Gospel, the Church is a member church of The BUV and accepts as expressions of the Christian faith the *Doctrinal Basis* as contained in Appendix I of this Constitution.

3.2 Baptism

3.2.1 Baptism is administered by the authority of the Lord of the Church and is the act in which a person, who has confessed faith in Jesus Christ as Lord, is identified with the Lord and His people and accepts the mission to which the Lord has called His people. Wherever practical, the mode of baptism in this church is the immersion in water of the person making the confession of his/her faith.

3.3 Communion

3.3.1 Communion is the commemoration of the sacrifice of the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ 'until He comes'. All who confess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ are invited to share in communion.

4.0 Mission Statement

4.1 The mission statement of the Church is *"Striving to be a loving community, seeking, serving and sharing Jesus".*

5.0 Membership

5.1 Commitment

5.1.1 The membership of the Church consists of people who are personally committed to Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour and to the mission of the Church.

5.2 It must be clear that the person:

5.2.1 Has made their own free decision to commit themselves to Christ.

5.2.2 Is in agreement with and committed to the Church.

5.2.3 Has participated in appropriate membership preparation or orientation.

5.2.4 Must be 18 years of age or older.

5.2.5 Has been baptised by immersion as a testimony of their personal faith in and commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. If immersion is impractical, unsafe or ill-advised for the person, they may receive believer's baptism in another format, or

5.2.6 Has been baptised according to the rites of another Christian church and made a public profession of their faith in and commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

5.3 If a person seeks to become a member of the Church, having been a member of another church, a letter of commendation may be sought from that other church.

5.4 Becoming a Member

5.4.1 Any person wishing to become a member of the Church shall attend an orientation to the life, ministry and service of the Church.

5.4.2 A prospective member is asked to provide a copy of their personal testimony.

5.4.3 A meeting will then be arranged between the person and at least two (2) representatives of the membership as appointed by the Church Council. The person will be received into membership on the recommendation of the representatives and the confirmation of the Church Council.

5.5 List of Members

5.5.1 A list will be kept of the names of the members of the Church ("Membership List").

5.5.1.1 Missionaries who have been sent by the Church to serve interstate or overseas, will continue to be active church members.

5.5.2 Members, excluding those listed in 5.5.1.1, who are working or studying in other places will be moved to the Non-Resident Membership List. A non-resident member will not have the right to vote.

5.5.3 A Reserve Membership Roll shall be kept of members who cease to participate in congregational life, but who, for compassionate reasons, need to be aware of the continuing love and concern of the congregation. As a guide, members may be considered for reserve membership after six (6) months of consistent inactivity without reasonable cause. A member on the Reserve Roll does not have the right to vote.

5.5.3.1 Reinstatement of reserve members to full membership may be made at the discretion of the Church Council.

5.6 A name may be removed from the Membership List at any time if the person:

5.6.1 Becomes a member of another church.

5.6.2 Requests removal from the Membership List.

5.6.3 Becomes inactive for a period of twelve (12) months or more.

5.6.4 Dies.

5.6.5 Has their membership removed by a decision of the Church Council for disciplinary reasons. Two (2) weeks' notice of the date and purpose of the action must be given to the member concerned.

5.7 The Membership List will be revised at least annually by the Church Secretary.

6.0 Leadership

6.1 The Church will be governed by the membership deciding on the following matters:

6.1.1 Election of Church Council.

6.1.2 Calling of Lead/Senior Pastor, including Interim, refer Appendix III.

6.1.3 Approval of annual budget and variation to budget where variation is greater than 20 percent (20%).

6.1.4 Buying/selling/leasing church land, as reflected in Appendix II.

6.2 Church Council

6.2.1 The Church Council is responsible for the governance of the Church. These responsibilities include the following, with power to delegate where it deems appropriate:

6.2.1.1 Giving prayerful and spiritual oversight to the Church.

6.2.1.2 Advancing the Church's mission, vision and values.

6.2.1.3 Reviewing the Lead/Senior Pastor's performance.

6.2.1.4 Legal compliance.

6.2.1.5 Financial accountability and approval of exceptional expenditure in excess of 10 percent (10%), but less than 20 percent (20%) of the total budget.

6.2.1.6 Producing written governing policies and processes.

6.2.1.7 Determining the responsibilities of Church Council Chairperson, Church Secretary and Finance Director.

6.2.1.8 Appoint an Interim Pastor to be affirmed by members at next members meeting.

6.2.1.9 Confirm the appointment of Associate Pastors and Elders.

6.2.1.10 The removal of Council Members with just cause.

6.2.1.11 Engage the Director of Ministries of The BUV on unresolvable matters between the Lead/Senior Pastor and the church.

6.2.2 The Church Council consists of the following:

6.2.2.1 Lead/Senior Pastor.

6.2.2.2 Up to two (2) Church staff members, appointed by the Lead/Senior Pastor.

6.2.2.3 Three elected officers:

a) Church Council Chairperson,

b) Church Secretary, and

c) Finance Director.

6.2.2.4 Two (2) other elected members of the Church.

6.2.2.5 The Administrator or equivalent position will be present at Church Council meetings, but will not be entitled to vote.

6.2.3 Eligibility

6.2.3.1 Only members who have been members of the Church for at least 12 months immediately preceding the election, will be eligible for election to the Church Council.

6.2.3.2 Church Council members must meet the biblical qualifications of an Elder.

6.2.4 Term of Office

6.2.4.1 Elected officers and members of Church Council will be appointed for a term of two (2) years. As nearly as possible, one half of the number will retire each year, but will be eligible for re-election. The maximum number of consecutive terms to be served by any one person is three (3).

6.2.5 Casual Vacancies

6.2.5.1 Should a casual vacancy occur, the Church Council may appoint a member to fill the vacancy and the member so appointed, will hold office until the next Annual General Meeting following their appointment.

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

6.2.6 Election Procedure

6.2.6.1 On the fifth and fourth weeks prior to the Annual General Meeting, nominations for Church Council positions will be advertised.

6.2.6.2 By the close of the third week prior to the Annual General Meeting, nominations must be signed by the nominator and the nominee and be submitted to the Church Secretary.

6.2.6.3 At any time prior to the publication of names as required in Item 6.2.6.4, the Church Council may make nominations for Church Council.

6.2.6.4 On the second and first weeks prior to the Annual General Meeting, the names of the nominees will be communicated to all Church Members.

6.2.7 Voting Procedures for Election

6.2.7.1 Each nominee must receive the endorsement of at least 80 percent (80%) of the members present and voting to be eligible to take office as a member of the Church Council.

6.2.7.2 If the number of members endorsed exceeds the number of vacancies, it will be necessary to determine their election by ballot. In the event of a tied vote affecting the result of the ballot, the Chairperson will exercise a casting vote prior to announcing the names of those elected.

6.2.7.3 For the purposes of Schedule B to The Baptist Union Incorporation Act 1930, the members of the Church Council are deemed to be “the Deacons”.

6.3 Lead/Senior Pastor

6.3.1 The Lead/Senior Pastor shall be a believer baptised in accordance with Item 5.2.5, with membership of Werribee Baptist Church to follow a successful calling.

6.3.2 The Lead/Senior Pastor shall be a member of the Church Council and be entitled to attend all meetings of Church Council, ministries, committees and organisations.

6.3.3 The Lead/Senior Pastor shall lead the team of appointed pastors and church staff and be ultimately accountable for all aspects of ministry and operation of the Church. A team of Pastors and Senior staff, known as the Pastoral Team, will be appointed to undertake the roles and responsibilities of various aspects of the Church’s ministry and operations and report to the Lead/Senior Pastor.

6.3.4 The Lead/Senior Pastor shall appoint Elders to act in lay pastoral roles to exercise care for the congregation and staff. A minimum of two (2) Elders will be appointed.

6.3.5 The Lead/Senior Pastor shall be given a position description clearly defining the role, tenure, responsibilities and accountabilities of the position.

6.3.6 The following decisions about a Lead/Senior Pastor of the Church require 80 percent (80%) majority of members who are present and who vote at a Special Church Meeting:

6.3.6.1 The calling of a Lead/Senior Pastor. The procedure to be adopted shall be as those detailed in Appendix III.

6.3.6.2 The approval of any extension of term if a Lead/Senior Pastor has been called for a specific term.

6.3.6.3 The removal of a pastor. A proposal to remove a pastor should not be put to a church meeting before the Church has consulted with the Director of Ministries of The BUV about the matter.

7.0 Church Council Meetings

7.1 The Church Council will meet as regularly as required for business, prayer and fellowship.

7.2 The quorum for any Church Council meeting will be not less than 50 percent plus one (50% + 1) of the members of the Church Council and must include both elected members and staff appointments.

7.3 Records of the decisions of all Church Council meetings must be kept.

8.0 Church Meetings

8.1 Ordinary church meetings to consider the life and ministry of the Church must be held at least two (2) times each year.

8.2 Ordinary church meetings shall normally be called as required. Additional meetings will be called if requested by Lead/Senior Pastor, the Church Council or one quarter of the membership of the Church.

8.3 Notice of the time, place and major business must be given to members on at least two (2) consecutive Sundays prior to the holding of any church meeting.

8.4 Every church meeting must have an agenda prepared by the Leadership Team.

8.5 Records of the decisions of all church meetings must be kept and a copy made available to church members no more than two (2) Sundays after the meeting.

8.6 The quorum for any church meeting shall be 20 percent (20%) of the membership of the Church.

8.6.1 If a quorum of members is not present at a meeting, another meeting will be held within two (2) weeks of the meeting and whoever attends will constitute a quorum.

8.7 A motion put to a church meeting will be carried by two thirds, unless otherwise provided for in this constitution, or unless the meeting decides that a particular decision will require a larger majority.

8.8 Absentee or proxy voting is only permitted for Members who have been sent by the Church as Missionaries to serve at a location other than where the Church is located, or members travelling for work, who have shown that their normal habit is to participate in members meeting. This should be demonstrated by attendance at a minimum of 50 percent (50%) of meetings over the past 12 months.

8.8.1 An applicable member wanting to place a proxy vote should complete the Proxy form and submit it to the Church Secretary prior to the meeting, refer Appendix IV.

8.8.2 Use of Technology

8.8.2.1 A member not physically present at a general meeting as described in Item 8.8, may be permitted to participate in the meeting by the use of technology that allows the member and the members present at the meeting to clearly and simultaneously communicate with each other.

8.8.2.2 For the purposes of this Part, a member participating in a general meeting as permitted under Item 8.8, is taken to be present at the meeting and, if the member votes at the meeting, is taken to have voted in person.

8.9 A budget for the next church year must be approved by a church meeting in every year.

8.10 An Annual Church Meeting must be held each year. Its agenda must include:

8.10.1 A report/presentation by the Pastor(s) and by the Leadership Team.

8.10.2 Audited financial statements for the preceding church year.

8.10.3 Church Council elections.

8.11 Special Church Meetings are needed to consider any decision regarding the calling, extension of term or removal of a Lead/Senior Pastor or buying/selling/leasing of church property. Special Church Meetings are governed under different rules set out in Schedule B to The Baptist Union Incorporation Act 1930.

9.0 Winding Up

9.1 If a church ministry ceases to function, the Church becomes the owner of any property purchased or owned by that ministry and any money in its possession.

9.2 In the event of the winding up or dissolution of the Church, any assets of the Church remaining after payment of the Church's liabilities shall, subject to any requirements imposed by the Australian Charities and Not-For-Profits Commission, be transferred to:

9.2.1 The BUV, provided that at the time of such transfer The BUV is endorsed as an income tax-exempt entity; or

9.2.2 In default of The BUV; such other income tax–exempt entity or entities as decided by The BUV

10.0 Alteration to this Constitution

10.1 No change shall be made except by the approval of 80 percent (80%) of the members present and voting at a properly constituted Church Meeting. Notice of the wording of the proposed amendments shall be given to members at least four (4) weeks prior to the said Church Meeting.

11.0 Document Revision History

Version	Date	Revised by	Details
000	21/01/2019	Elders under the direction of Stan Richey (Lead Pastor)	Draft to replace 2009 Constitution
1.0	18/02/2019	Approved by Elders under the direction of Stan Richey, after WBC Family mtg on 11/02. Adopted by WBC members on 25/02	Final Version
2.0	/ /	Insert name	Items ____ and ____ revised
3.0	/ /	Insert name	Items ____ and ____ revised

APPENDIX I

The Doctrinal Basis
from the Constitution of the Baptist Union of Victoria

1. The divine inspiration and supreme authority of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

2. The existence of one God in three persons - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

3. The deity and incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Son of God, the second person of the Holy Trinity.

4. The fallen, sinful and lost estate of all people.

5. The salvation of men and women from the penal consequences and power of sin through the perfect obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ, His atoning death, His resurrection from the dead, His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and His unchanging priesthood.

6. The immediate work of the Holy Spirit in the regeneration of men and women, in their sanctification, and in their preservation to the heavenly Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.

7. The necessity, in order to know salvation, of repentance towards God and of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

8. The resurrection of the dead, and the final judgment of all people by the Lord Jesus Christ.

9. The two ordinances of the Lord Jesus Christ, namely Baptism and the Lord's Supper, which are of perpetual obligation: Baptism being the immersion of believers upon the profession of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and a symbol of the fellowship of the regenerate in His death, burial and resurrection; the Lord's Supper being a memorial, until He comes, of the sacrifice of the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

APPENDIX II

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 to the Baptist Union of Victoria Incorporation Act 1930. 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 member churches for the following purposes and subject to the following conditions:

1. To allow the member 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 Lead/Senior Pastor called (including for a new term) to the Church:

4.1 Must be a believer baptised by total immersion;

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

4.4 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; and

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 members of the Church.

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

10.5 At a special Church meeting persons voting must be over 18 years, must have been members of the Church for at least six (6) months and must have been present at Church for communion at least once in the preceding six (6) months.

10.6 An 80 percent (80%) majority vote is required. The 80% rule relates to 80% of all those members 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 80% 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 six (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.

14.1 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. The Union automatically assumes full control of the Church property if:

15.1 The Church is dissolved;

15.2 The Church is dispersed;

15.3 The membership of the Church is reduced below six (6); or

15.4 Public worship in the Church sanctuary property stops for six (6) months, not being for building alterations.

At this stage any proceeds of sale of Church property by the Union would be deposited in the Union's Advancement Fund.

15.5 If the resident membership of the Church is reduced to less than 29 but more than five (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 (3) 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 (6) months does not apply.

APPENDIX III

The Calling of a Lead/Senior Pastor

When the Church is seeking to call a Lead/Senior Pastor the following procedure shall be observed.

1. The Baptist Union of Victoria (BUV) shall be notified and recommendation sought for the appointment of a Moderator. The Moderator shall be appointed by resolution of a church meeting. Subsequently, the Moderator shall chair all meetings of the church or of any Pastoral Search Team when matters related to the call of a Pastor are under consideration.

2. The Moderator shall advise the Council concerning the procedures required by The BUV and shall assist the Church and the Council to fulfil these requirements.

3. A church meeting convened for the purpose of considering filling the vacancy of the Lead/Senior Pastoral position shall settle the terms and conditions of a call and shall appoint a Pastoral Search Team to 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.

4. Members of the Church may be invited to submit in confidence the names of persons considered suitable for the filling of the vacancy of the Lead/Senior Pastoral position. Other persons suggested by the BUV or by other sources may also be considered.

5. The Pastoral Search Team shall in confidence, conduct conversations and/or interviews with persons considered to be suitable for filling vacancy of the Lead/Senior Pastoral position. Usually these will be arranged by the Moderator on behalf of the inviting church. Negotiations shall be conducted with only one person at any one time.

6. When the Pastoral Search Team is in agreement that a specific person is the one God is leading to be the Lead/Senior Pastor, they will submit that name to the Church Council. The Council will meet with the proposed candidate, and spouse if married, for a further interview. The Council will then affirm or reject the proposal of the Pastoral Search Team.

7. When the Church Council affirms a proposed candidate and is ready to recommend a person to a church meeting with a view to 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. His or her agreement to the terms and conditions of the call as set by the church meeting shall also be obtained.

8. A Special meeting of the church shall be convened for the sole reason of considering the recommendation in respect to the issuing of a call to the Pastorate, as reflected in Appendix II. The name of the person to be considered shall not be made known, unless requested by the candidate and approved by the Council, until the meeting has commenced.

9. At the Special meeting voting shall be by ballot and a call shall not be issued unless at least 80 percent (80%) of the members of the church who are present, and vote shall be in favour of issuing the call. Details of voting shall be confidential to the scrutineers and the Chairman and shall be made available on request to the pastor under consideration.

10. If the Special meeting shall decide to issue a call then the Moderator shall advise the person concerned and seek his or her response.

11. No public announcement of the outcome of the meeting shall be made until the response of the person concerned has been communicated by the Moderator to the Church.

12. If the Special meeting shall decide not to issue a call, then the Moderator shall advise the person concerned. The Pastoral Search Team with the Moderator shall continue the search for a Lead/Senior Pastor.

13. At all stages of the procedures every care shall be taken to ensure that confidentiality is maintained.

APPENDIX IV

Appointment of Proxy

I, _____ of
(Name)

_____
(Address)

being a member of Werribee Baptist Church, appoint

_____ of
(Name of Church Secretary)

_____
(Address of Church Secretary)

being a member of Werribee Baptist Church, as my proxy to vote for me on my behalf at the General / Annual / Special* general meeting of Werribee Baptist Church to be held on

_____ and at any adjournment of that meeting.
Date

My proxy is authorised to vote in favour or against** the following resolution:

_____
(Insert details of resolution)

_____
Signature of Member *Date*

* Indicate what type of meeting

** Indicate how the vote is to be recorded