



CONSTITUTION

(2017 EDITION)

1. NAME AND PURPOSE

1.1 This church shall be known as the Tent Hill Baptist Church, a constituent member of 'The Baptist Union of Queensland' (known as Queensland Baptists).

1.2 The purpose of this church is to advance Christian religion by leading people to cultivate a relationship with God and serve the community.

2. STATEMENT OF BELIEF

- The Bible is the divinely inspired Word of God and the supreme authority and basis for all our beliefs and practices. (*2 Timothy 3:16-17, 2 Peter 1:20-21*)
- God exists as one God in three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. (*Matthew 28:19, Ephesians 2:18, Hebrews 9:14, Deuteronomy 6:4*)
- The Lord Jesus Christ is both divine, the only begotten Son of God, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, and human, the son of the Virgin Mary. (*Philippians 2:6-11, Colossians 1:15-20, Isaiah 7:14, Galatians 4:4*)
- All people are born sinful and separated from God; and in need of God's saving grace. (*Romans 3:10-18, Romans 3:23, John 3:16*)
- The Lord Jesus Christ has accomplished the forgiveness of sin and the freedom from the penalty and power of sin by his perfect obedience, death and resurrection and present intercession. (*John 14:6, Acts 4:12, 1 Peter 3:18, 1 Peter 2:24, Romans 8:34, Hebrews 7:25*)
- The immediate work of the Holy Spirit in the rebirth of people, in bringing them to maturity in Christ, in gifting them according to his will for ministry and in guaranteeing their spiritual inheritance until they acquire complete

possession of it. (*Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:7 ;4:11-13; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; 12:11-13*)

- Salvation is only possible through repentance to God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. (*Acts 2:38; 4:12; 16:30-31; and 20:21*)
- The dead will be resurrected and the final judgment of all people by the Lord Jesus Christ will happen. (*2 Thessalonians 1:6-10, Hebrews 9:27, Revelation 20:1-15*)
- The Lord Jesus will return visibly and gloriously to claim his own. (*Acts 1:11, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.*)
- The two ordinances of the Lord Jesus Christ – namely, Baptism and the Lord’s Supper (Communion) are of perpetual obligation; Baptism being the immersion of believers in water 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; (*Romans 6:4*), and the Lord’s Supper being a memorial, until He comes, of the sacrifice of the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. (*Luke 22:19-20*)
- Human sexuality: We accept the Scriptural position of human sexuality and marriage (*Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:5; Ephesians 5:31*). This position is further outlined in the attached addendum adopted by the QB assembly on 10th April 2015. (See Appendix 1)

3. Mission Statement / Philosophy of Ministry.

“Knowing Jesus, making Jesus known.” (Please refer to Tent hill Baptist Church current vision pamphlet for greater detail).

4. Membership

Members are persons who have been admitted to membership in our church by the following procedure.

4.1 Admission to Membership

Membership is available to any person who has publicly confessed faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, who has been baptised by immersion, and who holds to the beliefs set out above as an essential part of his or her faith.

Membership is also available to any person by transfer from a sister church or by restoration (in the case of a person who has been previously baptised).

4.2 Application for Membership

All persons applying for membership of this church shall be interviewed, and reported upon, by two visitors appointed by the Eldership.

The Eldership will then ensure that the applicant:

- (a) Fulfills the conditions of Membership at 4.1
- (b) Agrees with the Responsibilities of Members at Section 5; and
- (c) Concurs with the beliefs and Mission Statement of this Church and this Constitution and
- (d) Receives, as soon as possible, a copy of the accepted constitution of this church.

4.3 The eldership will notify this church of the application and commend the application to this church for at least two Sundays.

4.4 Objections to membership may be initially lodged in writing during the two weeks or verbally at the members meeting where the application for membership is being considered. Then the vote on the application will be held over to a subsequent meeting. The verbal objection must be subsequently made in writing and given to the Church Secretary. The objection is to be considered by the Eldership. A recommendation regarding the application is to be considered at a subsequent church meeting.

4.5 All persons accepted for membership shall be received by the right hand of fellowship at the communion of the Lord's Supper, or at a duly constituted church meeting. They shall sign the church membership register, thereby subscribing to the responsibilities of members.

4.6 Membership Register

A register will be kept of the names of the members of the church "Membership Register".

The names and addresses of all Members of this Church will be entered in a Membership Register by the Church Secretary

The Membership Register will be review annually by the Eldership to ensure accurate information is maintained.

4.7 A name may be removed from the Membership Roll by the Secretary at any time if the member:

Becomes a member of another church;

Requests removal from the Membership Roll;

Dies; or

Has their membership removed due to a disciplinary reason. See Section 6.

Members absenting themselves from the church service for a period of six consecutive months, when not prevented by sickness, duty or distance, shall be liable to have their names removed for non-attendance, provided that they shall be visited or written to, before such action is taken.

5. Conditions of Fellowship / Responsibilities

5.1 As baptized believers meeting in the Tent Hill Baptist Church we join ourselves together in a holy union and fellowship in the fear of the Lord.

5.2 We will endeavor at all times, by God's grace, to remain true to our commitment to Christ as expressed at our baptism. We will strive to walk in holiness and love; we will watch over each other for good and endeavor to stir up one another to love and good works. We especially pray for one another and for the welfare of the Church; we will commit to each other; and share one another's burdens as God shall enable us, avoiding all causes of divisions, and endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

5.3 We will meet together on the Lord's Day and at other times as we have opportunity, and encourage, by our attendance, all meeting of the Church. We will pray for and encourage the officers of the Church in the discharge of their duties, and will esteem and acknowledge our Pastors as over us in the Lord. We will pray for them, and support them in their ministry. We will contribute freely of our resources for their support, and for the expenses of the Church. We will be actively involved in ministry in accordance with God's equipping and leading, under the spiritual oversight of the Pastoral Team. We will generally observe and do all other duties urged upon us in the Word of God.

- 5.4** We will actively engage in opportunities to spread the gospel message and extend the Kingdom of God within our community and to the ends of the earth.

6. Church Discipline

- 6.1** Where a member becomes an offence to the church by reason of immoral or un-Christian conduct, the church will make every effort, in the spirit of love and meekness, to restore such member to fellowship.

- 6.2** All cases appearing to call for discipline shall be investigated by the Church Officers in a manner consistent with the Word of God. (e.g., Matthew 18:15-17)

In investigating any case, the Church Officers must give the member concerned:

- (a) Adequate notice of the date time and venue of a meeting of the Officers (or of any subcommittee appointed to investigate the matter) at which the matter will be discussed.
 - (b) Sufficient details the matters which are being investigated and of any material relevant to the particular issue being examined so that the Member can make submissions in response.
 - (c) The opportunity to make submissions to the meeting either orally or in writing.
- 6.3** Where a case for discipline still appears to exist, the Church Officers are to report the existence of the matter in sufficient detail to the church membership at a members meeting to allow an informed decision.
The Church Officers must ensure that the Member concerned is given:
- i. reasonable notice of the date time and venue of the church meeting;
 - ii. details of the recommendation to be made by the Church Officers to the arising from their investigation;
 - iii. The opportunity to speak to the church meeting where the Member concerned does not agree with the recommendation of the Church Officers.
- 6.4** A member placed under Church discipline will be notified in writing of the fact by the Church Secretary, stating the reasons for such action, the actions and limitations undertaken, the period of discipline, and exhorting the member to repentance and reconciliation.
- 6.5** A member's resignation as a means of escaping the consequences of disciplinary action will not be accepted.

6.6 In all cases where a member has been placed under discipline for a specified time, such member shall be communicated with at the expiration of the term with a view to restoration or otherwise.

6.7 If there is no indication of repentance and reconciliation, that person will be removed from this Church's Membership roll and will be notified of this fact in writing.

6.8 Dispute Resolution

Matters of offence or dispute between members shall not be brought before the church unless the parties have first complied with the direction of Matthew 18:15-17.

6.8.1 When the matter remains unresolved it may be brought before the Church Officers for investigation. The Eldership may investigate the matter themselves or they may choose to appoint independent counselors on their behalf. The purpose of any investigation will be to attempt to establish reconciliation by carefully hearing both sides of the matter. At the conclusion of the investigation, if forgiveness and repentance are evidenced, then counseling may be provided or arranged.

7. Church Members Meeting

7.1 A Members' Meeting is a meeting called for the purposes of transacting the business of this Church. All persons on the active Membership Register at the date of the meeting are eligible to attend, speak to motions and vote. At the invitation of the Chair, Non-Members may attend and may speak to agenda items, but are not eligible to vote.

7.2 An Annual Members' Meeting to receive the Annual Reports of this Church, elect Elders and Deacons, and transact other relevant business will normally be held within two (2) months of the end of the financial year. Notice will be given at least 14 days prior to the day of the Annual Members' Meeting.

7.3 Ordinary Members' Meetings will be held on a regular quarterly basis each year for the transaction of business and between such meetings the Elders and Deacons shall attend to the business. The annual Church budget will normally be presented prior to the end of the preceding Financial Year. Some decisions members cannot delegate to the Elders and Deacon are; pastoral appointments, land and property transactions, setting the budget, appointing the leadership group and amending the constitution. Also the questions of membership and previously

unauthorized large expenditure shall always be reserved for the Members' Meeting. Notice will be given at least 14 days prior to the day of an Ordinary Members' Meeting

- 7.4** Extraordinary (Special) Members' Meetings may be called at any time by the Pastors and Elders on their own initiative or on the written and signed request of not less than ten (10) members in good standing. The nature of the special business shall be stated and no other business shall be transacted at the meeting. Notice will be given at least 14 days prior to the day of an Extraordinary Members' Meeting.
- 7.5** Minutes of preceding members' meetings shall be read and confirmed before new business is proceeded with. At the Annual Members Meeting the minutes of the previous Annual Members Meeting are to be read.
- 7.6** A Quorum at the members' meeting shall be not less than twenty percent (20%) of the voting membership, with a minimum of twelve (12).
- 7.7** All members are eligible to vote provided that they are not under church discipline. It should be noted that members under 18 years of age may not vote on matters relating to property transactions
- 7.8** One of the pastors or one of the Elders or the Church Secretary shall usually preside at all members' meetings.
- 7.9** The vote of the church shall be taken ordinarily on the voices or by a show of hands, but all voting for the election of officers mentioned herein will be by ballot or as determined by the meeting. The Chairman may only exercise one vote.

8. Church Officers

The executive officers of the church shall be the Pastors, Elders and Deacons.

9. Pastors

Eligibility

The Church will only appoint Pastors who are currently Registered Ministers with Queensland Baptists or who are committed to apply for Registration with Queensland Baptists upon appointment by the church where they are not already in the registration process.

Call Procedures

The Eldership will present to the Membership a recommendation concerning the need for a Pastor (or Pastors), outlining the expected ministry responsibilities and seeking affirmation from the Membership in the matter.

On the recommendation of the Eldership, the Membership will appoint a Pastoral Candidate Committee to consider and approach suitable candidates.

Having determined before the Lord which person would be most suitable, the Pastoral Candidates Committee, in consultation with the Eldership, will submit that one name to the Membership and seek the Members' affirmation of that person. The motion to be considered will contain the terms and conditions of the Call.

Voting

The call shall be made at an extraordinary members' meeting with 14 days' notice given in writing to all members. A majority vote, by secret ballot, of three-quarters of the voting members present together with the proxy votes, is required to issue a call.

Proxy votes for the call of Pastors will be accepted provided they are in writing and received by the Church Secretary prior to the meeting.

Tenure

A Registered Pastor's call shall normally be for an indefinite period, but may be terminated after three months' notice from either side unless the termination is for circumstances otherwise provided for in this constitution. A Pastor who is not yet registered with Queensland Baptists shall only be called for a fixed term that is agreed upon in conjunction with Queensland Baptists. Upon the successful completion of the registration process the continuation of a Pastor's call shall be affirmed or otherwise at a duly constituted members meeting. If the registration process is not successfully completed within the fixed term the continuation of a Pastor's call shall be affirmed or otherwise at a duly constituted members meeting.

Review Process

The Eldership shall arrange a formal review of each pastor's ministry at agreed regular intervals (i.e. at least once every four years). The Eldership shall give notice to the Membership of the timing of the review and on completion, report on same to an ordinary members' meeting.

Removal of Pastors

If a Pastor is accused of any moral offence or any other misconduct, the matter will be referred by the Eldership to the relevant committee of the Baptist Union of Queensland for investigation. The recommendation/s of the investigating committee will be actioned.

10. Elders

Role

In accordance with Acts 20:28 and in co-operation with the pastors, the role of the eldership shall be to:

- Guard the church from error, participating in the preaching / teaching ministry of the church where gifted and invited to do so
- Oversee all the life and ministry of the church
- Shepherd those who are part of or associated with the Church, encouraging and building up such people and being an example in Christ like living.

Composition

The Pastors shall be considered to be full members of the Eldership. The Eldership, while meeting separately, may also meet with the diaconate for mutual benefit.

Eligibility

The Eldership shall consist of mature men whose lives are in accordance with the standards set by 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9 and 1 Peter 5:1-4. Elders shall be over the age of 18 years and have been in membership in the Church for at least six months.

Nomination

Any member may nominate any number of fellow members for the position of Elder. The nomination must be in writing and have the consent of the person/s nominated.

Nominations must be handed in to the Church Secretary two weeks before the annual members' meeting so that the church may be informed of the nominations.

Voting/Election

The election of Elders shall take place at the annual members' meeting by secret ballot. To be elected, a nominee must receive two-thirds of the votes of the members' present.

Tenure

Elders shall be appointed for a one-year term with no limit to the number of terms an Elder can serve.

Filling a Vacancy

Vacancies in the office of Elder may be filled by the church at any regular members' meeting in accordance with the foregoing rules. Any member so elected shall hold office only during the unexpired term of the Elder whose place they have been elected to fill.

Interim Leadership

In the absence of the Pastors, for up to a maximum of three months, one of the elders shall be appointed by the Eldership to the leadership of the church. For any longer periods the leadership issue will be referred to the membership.

Meetings

The eldership will usually meet once a month. The eldership shall elect a pastor or with the pastors' agreement, one of their number to chair meetings.

Removal of Elders

If an Elder is accused of any moral offence or any misconduct, the matter will be dealt with in accordance with the Discipline procedures outlined in this Constitution.

An Elder's position may be terminated after three months' notice in writing, either by the Elder or by this Church at an Extraordinary Members' Meeting.

11. Deacons

Role

It is the role of the deacons to co-ordinate all the practical aspects of the life and ministry of the church.

Composition

The Deacons, at their first meeting after the annual members meeting of the church, shall elect from their own number, a Church Secretary and Church Treasurer.

Alternatively, the annual members meeting may choose to elect from among the appointed Deacons, a Church Secretary and Church Treasurer. The Pastors are part of the Diaconate and shall normally co-ordinate the liaison between the Diaconate and Eldership.

Eligibility

The diaconate shall consist of mature Christian men and/or women in accordance with 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

Deacons shall be over the age of 18 years and have been in membership in the Church for at least six months.

Nomination

Any member may nominate any number of fellow members for the position of Deacon. The nomination must be in writing and have the consent of the person/s nominated.

Nominations must be handed in to the Church Secretary two weeks before the annual members' meeting so that the church may be informed of the nominations.

Voting/Election

The election of Deacons shall take place at the annual members' meeting by secret ballot. To be elected, a nominee must receive two-thirds of the votes of the members present.

Tenure

Deacons shall be appointed for a one-year term with no limit to the number of terms a Deacon can serve.

Filling a Vacancy

Vacancies in the office of Deacon may be filled by the church at any regular members' meeting in accordance with the foregoing rules. Any member so elected shall hold office only during the unexpired term of the deacon whose place they have been elected to fill.

11.1 Specific Roles on Diaconate

Church Secretary

Duties:

- Keep church records
- Keep minutes of all proceedings of the church
- Oversee receiving and sending correspondence on behalf of the church
- Normally chair the Deacons' meetings

Church Treasurer

Duties:

- Receive and account for all church funds
- Discharge all liabilities under the direction of the church
- Render a regular account to the church meetings
- Prepare a full statement of receipts and payments duly audited, for presentation to the annual church meeting
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Meetings

The diaconate will usually meet once a month.

The Removal of Deacons

If a Deacon is accused of any moral offence or any misconduct, the matter will be dealt with in accordance with the Discipline procedures outlined in this Constitution.

A Deacon's position may be terminated after three months' notice in writing, either by the Deacon or by this Church at an Extraordinary Members' Meeting.

12. Ministries

12.1 The Tent Hill church has ministries that exist for fellowship, to teach Christians God's Word and to bring others to faith in Christ.

12.2 The church shall appoint at a members meeting, a person/s to lead any such ministry which it may have in operation.

13. Safety Committee

A Safety Committee can be elected by the church membership in order to minimize the health and safety risks that maybe associated with the Tent Hill Baptist Church. The safety committee will also be responsible for implementing and continually managing the laws of the land as directed to our organization by any higher governance.

- 13.1** A safety committee should consist of at least two or more members of the church who will be responsible for the church's health and safety management under the guidance of the church membership.

14. Finances

14. 1. Donations from worthy sources

The officers of the church reserve the right to refuse any donation or gift which comes from, what they may deem, and an unworthy source.

Designated Gifts and Donations

Until the church approves otherwise all gifts whether designated for a particular purpose or not will be treated as available for use in an activity of the church in any way the church may determine and free from any obligation to use or apply the gift in a particular manner or for a particular purpose.

All gift designations shall be treated with proper respect as suggestions or requests, but will not be treated as a legal obligation.

1. Appeals

No appeals for outside causes shall be circulated by any person without first obtaining the approval of the Church Officers.

1. Auditor

The church shall appoint annually one of its members to act as auditor of the Church Treasurers accounts for the ensuing year.

2. Payments

All payments, whether electronic or by cheque, must be approved by two signatories to the church bank account.

3. Offerings

All offerings shall be counted by at least two deacons or their appointees, the accounts being duly entered and initialed in a book kept for the purpose by the church treasurer. All monies received shall be banked as soon as possible.

15. Real Property Matters

1. All real property purchases or alterations of a major nature, encumbrance by mortgage and sale or exchange will be dealt with at an Extraordinary Members' Meeting called for the purpose.
 2. Decisions concerning the acquisition or development of any real property by this Church will be made at an Extraordinary Members' Meeting called for the purpose.
 3. Initial leasing of property will be brought to this Church's Members for consideration and approval.
 4. Any decision will require the presence at the meeting of a quorum with at least two-thirds of members present supporting the recommendation in regard to Clauses 15.1 to 15.2
 5. For renewals of leases, provided no material alteration occurs, the Diaconate will be responsible to negotiate and enter into the required contractual arrangements. Information on such leases will be provided to the Members at the next available Ordinary Members' meeting.
1. Church buildings, equipment and property will not be used for any purpose except for the ministries of this Church, unless prior approval from the Diaconate or persons delegated by the Diaconate has been sought and obtained.
 2. Real property purchased, obtained by a ministry or donated to the Church will be deemed the property of this Church.
 3. All real property of the church shall be vested in The Baptist Union of Queensland as trustees for Tent Hill Baptist Church.

16. Alterations to the Church Constitution

No alteration shall be made to this constitution without the consent of two-thirds of the members present at an extraordinary business meeting called for that purpose. The wording of the proposed alteration will be submitted in writing to the membership at least four weeks prior to such meeting.

17. Dissolution of this Church

In the event of the church being dissolved, all property, assets and monies which remain after such dissolution and the satisfaction of all debts and liabilities shall be vested in the Baptist Union of Queensland.

Notwithstanding any previous or following provisions, this clause shall not be rescinded or amended without the prior approval of the Baptist Union of Queensland.

APPENDIX 1.



Queensland Baptists

Position Statement on Sexuality and Marriage

Adopted by QB Assembly 10.04.2015
Confirmed by Ministerial Services 16.04.2015

Introduction

In Matthew 19:5 Jesus affirmed the teaching from Genesis that “a man shall leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh” (Genesis 2:24). Such an understanding of God’s intent for marriage is also affirmed in Paul’s teaching in Ephesians 5:31. Accordingly, we believe that those who follow Jesus should also affirm that marriage is between a man and a woman. We will continue to hold this belief even if the legal definition of marriage is changed at some time in the future.

Background

The past few decades have seen a number of dramatic shifts in the social and moral fabric of Australian society as a result of the growing embrace of relativism, pluralism, individualism, and nihilism within most Western societies. Among the many social changes which have confronted and challenged the church during this time are the enduring impacts of the 1960s “sexual revolution”, and the more recent push, not only for the legalisation of same-sex relations (as provided for by each of the States and Territories of Australia since the early 1990s), but also the recognition of same-sex marriage. How has, and how should, the church respond to these dramatic shifts in the social context in which we are called to live as “salt and light” (Matthew 5:13-14)?

Churches which form a part of the Baptist Union of Australia have generally responded to these issues with one voice, affirming the Scriptural teaching that “among you [the community of faith] there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality” (Ephesians 5:3a). The word used here for “sexual immorality” is the word “πορνεία” or “*porneia*” which was used to describe the broad range of sexual sins, including illicit sexual intercourse, adultery, fornication, homosexuality, lesbianism, and intercourse with animals. Thus, even in the face of the pressures of the “sexual revolution” of the 1960s Baptists continued to affirm their opposition to pre-marital sex and adultery (extra-marital sex). It has been the conviction of Baptists that, regardless of the accepted norms and behavioural standards of society, as a community of faith we are called upon to submit to the “higher authority” of the Scriptures when it comes to our social and moral choices.

Our Authority

According to the 2001 Queensland Baptists Guidelines for Belief and Practice, we hold “The Bible, as the true record of God’s revelation, [and affirm that it] is the supreme written authority for our faith and practice”. With this in view, we are not compelled by the changing social and moral views of Australian society to relinquish our commitment to the biblical teaching on subjects such as sexuality, marriage, and the family, though we strongly desire to remain in constructive and compassionate conversation with our society.

Our Convictions

While some within the wider Christian community have felt compelled by the Christian imperative of love to revise their biblical and theological convictions about sexuality and marriage by the application of a variety of hermeneutical principles which allow them to accommodate changing cultural norms, we affirm our convictions on the biblical teachings about sexuality and marriage. These biblical teachings concerning marriage are focused around four normative principles:

1. Monogamy – God’s original intention was that marriage was to be consummated between one man and one woman (Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:5, Ephesians 5:31)
2. Commitment – God’s intention is that marriage involves a voluntary and lifelong commitment between a man and a woman (Matthew 19:4-6; cf Mark 10:6-9, Malachi 2:14)
3. Equality – God’s intention is for equality and mutuality between a husband and his wife (1 Corinthians 7:4)
4. Fidelity – God’s intention is that the only legitimate place for sexuality intimacy is within the commitment of marriage (Hebrews 13:4; 1 Corinthians 6:18-20)

In addition, we believe that, according to God’s pattern, children are best raised and nurtured in the secure environs of the marriage relationship where they have input of both a mother and a father (Ephesians 6:1-4). Thus, we hold to the position set forth in the Marriage Rites of the Baptist Union of Australia (2011) which affirms that “The Baptist Union of Australia defines marriage as being the union between a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life.”

Implications for Ministry

In a culture where societal norms regarding sexuality and marriage may change, we as Queensland Baptists affirm our responsibility to live lives that are “blameless and pure” as we lovingly “shine like stars in the universe hold[ing] out the word of life” (Philippians 2:15-16a). We would also humbly acknowledge, however, that while this is our aim, even as God’s people we often still struggle, failing to live up to the standards we espouse. As we do so, we come before God and one another in confession, seeking the help of God and others to live according to his word. Therefore, while on the one hand we acknowledge that sexual immorality in its many and varied forms is contrary to God’s design and desire, we continue to offer a humble and loving concern for all people regardless of their views on sexuality and marriage. Thus, we do not seek to stand in condemnation of those who have embraced sexual lifestyles which we believe are contrary to the biblically accepted expressions of sexuality and marriage. Yet at the same time we do not in any way endorse such lifestyles. We believe that the gospel, properly understood, brings the conviction of sin and, humbly embraced, guarantees not only our cleansing from sin and the gift of eternal life, but also the power to deliver us from sin (Romans 1:16).

Some would argue that while we may seek to proclaim biblical standards for those who belong to the church, we as Christians have no business in seeking to impose our views of ethics and morality on the wider society. By appealing to the concept of “the separation of church and state”, those who make such a case will often argue that, since Australia is a secular liberal democracy, the church should be excluded from any public policy debates and input into the legislative process. However, the Scriptures affirm that God’s people have a responsibility towards the wider society in which they are placed. In Jeremiah 29:7 God’s people were told that they should “seek the peace and prosperity of the city” to which God had sent them. While the concept of “the separation of church and state” was originally designed to prevent the state from interfering with matters of faith and practice, it did not preclude the church from having a voice into the public square. Therefore we believe that the church has a responsibility to graciously and yet firmly present the case for the biblical position on sexuality and marriage as being that which will always be in the best interests of society as a whole. This is at least part of what it means to live as “salt and light” in this world. However, at the end of the day, the church must acknowledge that the state may or may not endorse laws which affirm its convictions about issues of sexuality and marriage. Regardless to the State’s definition of marriage we will continue to affirm our position on marriage as set forth in this paper.

Implications for those preparing for and engaged in Ministry

It is incumbent upon all those who are preparing for or engaged in ministry to be actively seeking to live a life which is worthy of the gospel (Philippians 1:27).

In keeping with the biblical convictions of Queensland Baptists, Malyon College and The Training Collaborative, as the Queensland Baptists entities specifically responsible for the training and education of those seeking ordination or appointment as Ministers or Pastors, we reserve the right not to accept the enrolment of those who are (a) living in a *de facto* or (b) adulterous relationship or (C) engaged in a homosexual or transsexual lifestyle. Such lifestyle choices are seen as being contradictory to sound biblical doctrine and represent a significant stumbling block to one's spiritual development.

In keeping with the biblical convictions of Queensland Baptists, Queensland Baptists Ministerial Committee will not register those who are (a) living in a *de facto* or (b) adulterous relationship or (c) engaged in a homosexual or transsexual lifestyle. However, this will not preclude those who have in the past engaged in any of these lifestyles, but now acknowledge them as sinful and are now committed to sexual purity and fidelity, since all of us, including those who seek Registration, are sinners before God who can only be made right before God through genuine faith and repentance.

In the case of those who are already Registered as Pastors or Ministers, but later move into a *de facto* relationship or adulterous relationship, or embrace homosexual or transsexual practices, their Registration with Queensland Baptists will be withdrawn.

Implications for Constituent Churches

While acknowledging the independence of the local church, Queensland Baptists strongly recommends that churches not appoint people engaged in these practices as leaders within their churches. We note the admonition given by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 5 concerning those who wilfully engage in sexual immorality and his subsequent call for restorative love and forgiveness in 2 Corinthians 2:5-11. In Galatians 6:1 the Apostle Paul also urges the church, "if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted." Queensland Baptists also affirms its belief that the local church should seek to lovingly minister to all people, including those who have embraced sexual lifestyles which we believe are contrary to the biblical teaching on appropriate expressions of sexuality and marriage.