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 In all matters where a percentage vote has not been specified in the Constitution, the issues in question shall be decided by a simple majority vote.

 The Chair in his or her wisdom may exercise a casting vote in addition to his or her ordinary vote.

 In the event of nominees for a position receiving less than the required percentage of votes, the position shall remain vacant. Casual vacancies may be filled at the next Quarterly Business Meeting or at a Special Meeting as directed by the Church. At a meeting convened to fill such vacancy, a nominee must receive the required percentage of votes and shall be elected for the remainder of the usual term.

 Absentee votes shall be accepted for the election of Officers and for motions that have been notified in advance. These votes must be in the hands of the Church Secretary prior to the commencement of the Church Business Meeting.

12 **AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION**

 With the adoption of this Constitution, the previous rules of the Church shall be deemed to be cancelled and of no effect. No alteration or addition shall be made to this Constitution except at a meeting specially convened for that purpose, notice of which shall have been given in writing at least three months before the date of the meeting. Notice of this meeting shall then be given by announcement at the services on the two previous Sundays.

 No alteration shall be made to this Constitution except by a vote of 75% of the Active Members present and voting or voting by absentee vote.

 A quorum for the meeting to change the Constitution shall be 50% of Active Members.

 Members shall be advised of all proposed amendments at least one month prior to the specially convened meeting.

**GYMEA PEOPLES CHURCH**

**INC.**

****

**CONSTITUTION**

**[REVISED 2016]**

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 may be introduced at the meeting.

 A Special Business Meeting may be called by the Leadership to deal with a matter of urgency by announcement at one Sunday Service immediately preceding the meeting.

 Notices of motions dealing with issues considered by the Chair to be of a major nature shall be tabled at that meeting for debate at the next General Business Meeting or Special Business Meeting.

11.7 **CONDUCT OF BUSINESS MEETINGS**

 The agenda for all Business Meetings shall be distributed to Members present.

 The Leadership shall appoint one of its Members to preside at all Business Meetings. The Chair shall open the meeting with a time of prayer by the Members.

 A quorum for all Business Meetings of the Church shall be 25% of Active Members.

 All Church Business Meetings shall ordinarily close with prayer by the Chairman no later than 10.00 pm. but the meeting may vote one extension of 30 minutes after which the meeting may be adjourned to a date agreed by a majority present.

11.8 **VOTING AT BUSINESS MEETINGS**

 Only Active Members shall be entitled to vote at a Church Business Meeting.

 Voting of the Church by the Active Members present on matters to be decided shall ordinarily be on the voices or on the count of upraised hands if called for. The Chair of the meeting, at his or her discretion, or as moved and carried by the Meeting, may require a ballot to be conducted.

 For the election of Pastor, Elders and Deacons, scrutineers shall be appointed by the Chairman from the floor of the meeting to distribute, collect and count ballots. Scrutineers shall, where possible, be persons unrelated to nominees; furthermore, no nominee or seconder shall be permitted to assist in counting votes.

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11.2 **ELECTIONS**

Each nominee for the office of Elder (other than Pastors) shall require 80% of the votes by secret ballot of the Active Members present and voting, or voting by absentee vote, to be elected to the office of Elder.

Each nominee for the office of Deacon shall require 70% of the votes by secret ballot of the Active Members present and voting, or voting by absentee vote, to be elected to the office of Deacon.

At the election of Deacons next-occurring after the adoption of this Constitution, one-half of the Deacons shall be elected for one year only. A ballot of the elected Deacons shall determine this non-recurring situation.

11.3 **QUARTERLY CHURCH BUSINESS MEETING**

 Business Meetings to conduct the routine business of the Church shall ordinarily be held quarterly.

11.4 **ANNUAL CHURCH BUSINESS MEETING**

 The Annual Church Business Meeting shall ordinarily be held in the month of March each year. The purpose of the Annual Business Meeting shall be to receive reports of all the Church’s ministries for the previous year, an audited financial statement of the Church affairs and for the review and election of Church Officers and ministry leaders.

11.5 **SPECIAL CHURCH BUSINESS MEETING**

 A Special Church Business Meeting may be convened at the request of the Leadership to deal with matters of urgency or of a special nature, or on written request of 10% of the Active Members of the Church.

11.6 **NOTICE OF BUSINESS MEETINGS**

 Notice of a Quarterly Business Meeting, Annual Business Meeting and Special Business Meeting (other than Special Meetings dealing with discipline) shall be given by announcement at the services of the two Sundays preceding that meeting. In the case of a Special Business Meeting, the announcement shall indicate the nature of the business to be considered at that meeting and no other business

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**CONSTITUTION OF GYMEA PEOPLES CHURCH**

1 **NAME**

 Gymea Peoples Church is an incorporated association within the meaning of the Association Incorporation Act 1984. It is hereinafter referred to as "the Church".

2 **STATEMENT OF FAITH**

 The Members of Gymea Peoples Church believe in:

2.1 The divine inspiration and infallibility of the Old and New Testaments as the supreme and final authority of faith and practice. (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Ps. 138:2)

2.2 The existence of one sovereign, almighty God in three persons, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (Gen. 1:1; Matt. 28:18; John 4:24; 10:30; 2 Cor. 13:14)

2.3 The deity of the Lord Jesus Christ and His virgin birth in human form. He is the only begotten Son of God, the Second Person in the Trinity, and True God and True Man. (Matt. 1:18-19; Acts 4:12; Phil. 2:5-11; Heb. 1:2, 3, 8)

2.4 The fallen, sinful, lost estate of all mankind. (Gen. 1:26; Rom. 3:19,23; 5:12; Is. 64:6)

2.5 The deliverance of all believers from the penalty and power of sin through the perfect obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ, His shed blood and substitutionary death, His resurrection from the dead, His ascension to the right hand of the Father and His unchanging priesthood. (Rom. 3:25; Col. 1:20-22; 1 Peter 1:18-19; 2:24-25; Heb. 7:24-25; 8:1; Rom. 8:34)

2.6 The direct and personal work of the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Triune Godhead, in the regeneration of men; that He indwells, seals, sanctifies, guides, teaches and anoints each believer. (Jn. 15:26; 16:7, 13; Eph. 1:13; l Jn. 2:20-27; 1 Cor. 12:13; Rom. 8:27)

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10.2 **MAINTENANCE AND PURPOSE**

 Property of the Church shall be adequately maintained and covered by comprehensive insurance. Neither the Church buildings nor any of its property shall be let or used for any non-Church activity, unless the consent of the Leadership is first obtained.

10.3 **DISSOLUTION**

 In the event of dissolution of the Church, all assets and funds on hand shall, after payment of all expenses and liabilities, be handed over to organisations with similar objects to those detailed in Sections 3.1 – 3.4. The selection of such organisations shall be made by a duly constituted Special Church Business Meeting. Ratification of the selection is to be a minimum of 75% of those present and voting. A quorum for this meeting shall be 50% of Active Members. Should it not be feasible to convene such a meeting, the decision shall be the responsibility of the Leadership then in existence.

10.4 **BORROWINGS AND LOANS**

 The Church may, from time to time, for any of the purposes of the Church, borrow money from any person or financial institution (including any one or more of themselves) and lend money to any person, either with or without security and/or interest, and for the purposes of borrowing may mortgage or charge any property or asset of the Church.

11 **BUSINESS PROCEDURES**

11.1 **NOMINATIONS**

 Nominations for Elders (other than Pastors), Deacons, Secretary and Treasurer shall be called for 28 days prior to the Annual Business Meeting.

All such nominations shall be in the hands of the Secretary not later than two weeks prior to the Annual Business Meeting of the Church. The Church shall be advised of all nominations on the two Sundays immediately preceding the Annual Business Meeting via the weekly Church bulletin and by announcement from the pulpit.

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 (Acts 2:41; 8:12-13, 36-39; 9:18; 10:47; 16:15, 33; 18:8; 19:5)

6.2 **LORD’S SUPPER**

 The ordinance of the Lord’s Supper shall be observed regularly. (Luke 22:19-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-30)

7 **SCRIPTURES**

 For all public Church activities, we endorse the use of translations rather than paraphrases.

8 **FINANCE**

 The Church shall keep a record of all financial transactions, present a statement at each Ordinary and Annual Church and Diaconate Meeting and present an audited statement at the Annual Business Meeting.

 No department or organisation shall incur a debt without sufficient funds within that department to cover the debt.

 The Church shall be financed only by: freewill offerings; gifts and bequests from its Members, adherents and benefactors; and the earnings of its accumulated assets. The financial year of the Church shall terminate on 31st December of each year. Cheques signed on behalf of the Church shall be signed by the Treasurer and one other from the Leadership.

9 **CHURCH MINISTRIES**

 All ministries and groups bearing the name of the Church shall be accountable for their conduct to the Leadership.

10 **PROPERTY**

10.1 **OWNERSHIP**

 The assets of the Church shall be held in the name of the Church. The Diaconate may deal with these assets by majority vote. Prior approval of the Church shall be obtained for the acquisition, modification, maintenance or disposal of assets above a significant value. The Leadership shall be responsible for safe custody of title deeds, insurance policies, investment certificates and bank accounts.

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2.7 The absolute necessity of repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. (Acts 13:38-39; 17:30; 20:21; Rom. 3:24-25; Titus 3:5)

2.8 The bodily resurrection of the dead; the everlasting life of believers; the ultimate judgement of God on all unregenerate persons and their everlasting affliction. (Jn. 5:28-29; 10:27-29; Rev. 20:11-15)

2.9 The personal and imminent return of the Lord Jesus Christ for His Church; and with His Church to reign on earth. (1 Thess. 4:15-17; 1 Cor. 15:51-52; Rev. 3:10; Zech. 14:2-4; Jude 14; Matt. 24:31)

3 **OBJECTIVES**

3.1 To proclaim the gospel of God’s grace to sinners and to exhort the people of God to follow holiness.

3.2 To promote and encourage a spirit of Christian love and fellowship between like-minded congregations and individual Christians.

3.3 To give wholehearted support to scripturally sound missionary enterprise in Australia and overseas.

3.4 To contend for the faith as recorded in God’s Word.

3.5 To maintain a place of worship in Gymea for the use of Members and Adherents and to render assistance where appropriate.

4 **MEMBERSHIP**

4.1 **QUALIFICATIONS**

 Membership of the Church shall consist exclusively of those persons who have attained the age of 18 years, confess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour and give evidence of regeneration and adhere to the Statement of Faith of the Church.

4.2 **RESPONSIBILITIES**

 In addition to the general responsibilities of all adherents to provide mutual love and care, to support the Church financially, to pray for it, to seek its peace, to attend its services, to support its objectives

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 and to protect its reputation, the Members of the Church should also participate in Business Meetings when possible and volunteer, as appropriate, for service as an officer (“officers” are defined in Clause 5).

4.3 **DEFINITIONS**

4.3.1 **LEADERSHIP**

In this constitution, the Leadership refers to the Elders and the Diaconate (meeting of Deacons).

4.3.2 **MEMBERSHIP**

 Membership shall consist of Active Members and Absentee Members (these are defined in Clauses 4.5 and 4.6.

4.4 **MEMBERSHIP ROLL**

 A record of the names of all Members shall be kept by the Church Secretary. This record shall be in two parts. One part shall be for the names of Active Members and the other for the names of Absentee Members. Both registers shall be revised annually at a meeting of the Leadership prior to the Annual Business Meeting of Members.

Names may be removed from either part of the roll as a result of:

a. the death of the Member,

b. the discipline of the Member,

c. the resignation of the Member,

d. the Member transferring his or her membership to another Fellowship, or

e. the Church, on the recommendation of the Elders, agreeing that the Member is deemed to be no longer committed to the life and ministry of the Church or no longer satisfies the qualifications or meets the responsibilities for membership as in 4.1 and 4.2.

4.5 **ACTIVE MEMBERS**

 Active Members are those who maintain regular attendance at Church services.

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5.3 **SECRETARY AND TREASURER**

 The Church shall elect a Secretary and Treasurer from within the Diaconate at the Annual Business Meeting of the Church. Their term of office shall be 12 months and they shall be eligible for re-election. In their absence, the leadership shall appoint a representative from the Active Membership to discharge their responsibilities. The responsibilities of Secretary and Treasurer are described in the document, “Roles and Responsibilities within Gymea Peoples Church.”

5.4 **ASSISTANT PASTOR**

 The Church may, at its discretion, call and appoint an Assistant Pastor, in a manner and under conditions similar to that of Pastor. His responsibilities shall be stated in his employment contract and he shall serve under the authority of the Pastor.

5.5 **OTHER CHURCH POSITIONS**

 The Church, on the recommendation of the Leadership, may at the Annual Business Meeting appoint, for a period of 12 months, Sunday School Superintendent, Music Director, Youth Director, Communion Supervisors and such other Officers as the Church may deem necessary.

5.6 **PUBLIC OFFICER**

 The Public Officer shall be appointed by and from the Diaconate and may continue in the office for the duration of his or her service as a Deacon. The Public Officer is responsible to ensure that the requirements of the Associations Act, 2009 are being satisfied at all times.

 In the event of a vacancy occurring the Leadership shall, within 14 days after the vacancy, give notice of the vacancy to the appropriate NSW Government authority and appoint one of its number to fill the vacancy.

6 **ORDINANCES**

6.1 **BAPTISM**

 Any person who professes faith in the Lord Jesus Christ may make application to the Eldership, for believers' baptism by immersion.

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 experience of the Diaconate to assist them, when necessary and appropriate, in the spiritual affairs of the church.

5.1.4.2 **TERM OF SERVICE**

 Elders shall be elected for a period of three years with the right of re-election. There shall be no limit to the number of terms served by an Elder. Casual vacancies occurring during the year may be filled at other than the Annual Business Meeting. The term of office shall be for the remainder of the vacancy. The number of Elders shall be determined by the spiritual needs of the Church and the availability of suitable men. Elders may attend meetings of the Diaconate and may vote.

5.2 **DEACONS**

 The Church shall elect Deacons from the Active Membership.

5.2.1 **RESPONSIBILITIES**

 Deacons shall supervise the temporal affairs of the Church. Deacons, as far as may be practicable, shall attend and support all associated meetings of the Church and assist in visitation of the sick and needy. Deacons are not responsible for the spiritual oversight of the Church though there is necessarily a spiritual element in all they do.

5.2.2 **QUALIFICATIONS**

 The qualifications of a Deacon are given in 1 Timothy 3:8-12. Deacons shall be above the age of 25 years and have been Active Members of the Church for at least 6 months. It is preferred that Deacons shall be married.

5.2.3 **TERM OF SERVICE**

 The number of Deacons shall be as decided by the Annual Business Meeting. Deacons shall hold office for a period of 2 years and shall retire by rotation but shall be eligible for re-election. Casual vacancies occurring during the year may be filled at other than the Annual Business Meeting, in similar manner, after 14 days’ notice of such election. The term of office shall be for the remainder of the vacancy.

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4.6 **ABSENTEE MEMBERS**

 Absentee Members are those who have expressed the desire to remain on the membership register but are unable to attend the regular services of the Church. Absentee Members do not have the right to vote at a Church Business Meeting. A period of 12 months’ non-attendance may give reason, if considered warranted by the Leadership for a person’s name to be transferred from the Active to the Absentee Members’ register. At the discretion of the Leadership, an Absentee Member who resumes regular attendance may be relisted as an Active Member.

4.7 **ADMISSION**

 Application for membership shall be made through the Leadership of the Church. It shall, in due course, appoint two of its Members to interview the applicant, outlining the Statement of Faith, the Objects of the Church and the qualifications and responsibilities of membership. A recommendation shall be made from the Leadership to the next programmed Church meeting. A vote of the Church Business Meeting shall be taken and eligibility of the applicantshall be determined, in all cases, by a simple majority vote of those present. Membership is effective as soon as the application is approved by the Church.

4.8 **TRANSFER**

 Church Members who wish to transfer to the membership of another fellowship may be given, if approved by the Diaconate, a letter of commendation by the Secretary.

4.9 **RESIGNATION**

 Members may, at any time, resign from membership. Such resignation shall be in writing and addressed to the Secretary of the Church and shall be effective from the date of receipt.

4.10 **DISCIPLINE**

Where a Member's conduct reflects badly/negatively on the name of Christ or the testimony of the Gospel or of the Church, the Church is commanded by Scripture to exercise corrective Church discipline. (Matt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 5:3-5,13; 2 Thess. 3:6) The goal of corrective discipline is always: the glory of God; the welfare

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and purity of the church; and the restoration and spiritual growth of the offender. Corrective Church discipline shall be conducted in a spirit of meekness. (Gal. 6:1)

The process of conflict resolution in the Church is given in Matt. 18:15-17. If any matter is brought to the Church for resolution it shall be dealt with in the first instance by the Elders, who may then confer with the Diaconate. In the event of no satisfactory solution being reached, the matter shall be referred, with the appropriate recommendations and prudent disclosure of relevant details, to the Church. The Church, at its discretion, may rebuke, suspend or remove from office or membership an offending party or take other such action as may be deemed appropriate.

All such matters shall be dealt with at a Special Business Meeting of the Church of which 14 days’ notice shall have been given to the Members but not by way of announcement in the Church services, verbal or otherwise.

Any person whose office or membership has been suspended or terminated for any offense may be restored by vote of the church, upon evidence of his or her repentance and reformation and subject to the qualifications of office or membership. (1 Cor. 6:9-11; 2 Cor. 2:6-8)

5 **CHURCH OFFICERS**

5.1 **ELDERS**

5.1.1. **QUALIFICATIONS**

 The qualifications of an Elder are in accordance with the Scriptures as found in: 1 Tim. 3:1-7, Titus 1, and 1 Peter 5:1-3. An Elder shall be a man of sufficient maturity for the above qualifications to be measured.

5.1.2 **PASTOR**

The Pastor shall be called to the Pastorate on the vote of 80% of the Active Members present and voting or voting by absentee vote at a Special Business Meeting called for such purpose. Such meeting shall be convened by written notice to all Active Members and shall be announced at the services on the two preceding Sundays.

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On his appointment the Pastor shall automatically become a Member of the Church.

The Pastor’s term of service shall ordinarily be ended by 3 months’ notice on either side. Upon the notice of the termination of the Pastor, a new Pastor shall be called. The Leadership shall appoint a Pastoral Selection Committee to manage the process of filling a Pastoral vacancy. The Pastoral Selection Committee shall bring a recommendation to the Leadership for endorsement before a vote of the Membership taken at a Special Business Meeting called for that purpose. The Pastoral Selection Committee may consider any number of possible Pastoral candidates concurrently however only one nominee for the Pastorate shall be before the Church at any one time.

 The terms of the Pastor’s employment shall be outlined in his employment contract.

5.1.2.1 **RESPONSIBILITIES**

 The Pastor shall, with the other Elders, oversee the spiritual affairs of the Church by preaching, teaching, visitation, interview, discipline and prayer. He shall have prime responsibility within the Eldership for preaching and pastoral care.

5.1.3 **ASSOCIATE PASTOR**

 The Church may, at its discretion, call and appoint an Associate Pastor, in a manner, under conditions and with responsibilities similar to that of Pastor.

5.1.4 **OTHER ELDERS**

 The Church Members, on recommendation of the Leadership, may at its discretion appoint Elders from the Active Membership of the Church. Appointees shall have at least 12 months Active Membership. If appointed, the following shall apply:

5.1.4.1 **RESPONSIBILITIES**

 The other Elders shall, with the Pastor, oversee the spiritual affairs of the Church by preaching, teaching, visitation, interview, discipline and prayer. Elders may utilise the wisdom, skills and