

KENMORE CHURCH OF CHRIST LTD

ABN 90 648 902 596

Elders' Charter

Kenmore Church of Christ Ltd (the “**Church**”) is governed by the Board of Elders, who are appointed by the members in accordance with the Constitution. The role of the Elders is critical. With public disillusionment and governmental scrutiny toward churches at a peak, we are in a season where we need steady hands at the wheel with a strong understanding of governance. As a fellowship, the requirements for setting up a healthy and scalable structure and culture are vital.

Another requirement of Elders is to protect the mission and values of the Church and ensure the mandate from Churches of Christ in Queensland to create a church of “*Spirit and truth that multiplies disciples*” becomes woven into our culture. Elders need to be committed to that.

It is also a key consideration that the mix of Elders should provide a representation of the congregation regarding gifts, skills, age, gender, and ethnicity. We endorse the place and calling of both men and women in leadership roles.

The role of Elders is to be addressed in Church regulations and their appointment is intended to be staggered over a period of 3 years to ensure continuity of local knowledge within the Board of Elders.

As a Board, the Elders commit to the principles and expectations set out in this Charter.

1. Alignment – Who are we here to serve

- God
- Members of the Church (the body)
- The ministry team
- The Elders
- Community around us

2. Clarity – How will we work together

a. Christ-like behaviours that we will display:

- Passion for Christ
- Bible-centred
- Spirit-led
- Accountability
- Honesty
- Transparency
- Integrity
- Loyalty
- Respect
- Encouraging / Intentional support
- Co-operation / Collaboration
- Competent – seeking competent help

b. Governance interface with Ministry Team:

i. Expectations of Elders as the Governance team

1. Guardians of the purpose, vision, culture, and values of the Church
 - Not a passive eldership
 - Accountability is to the members
2. Spiritual Oversight and availability for Pastoral Care

- Spiritual oversight – oversee the heartbeat in the Church
- Pastoral oversight – have a sense of how people are going and be available for Pastoral Care needs
- 3. Governance oversight
 - Set up policy frameworks – for complying with legislation, ACNC reporting and other obligations
 - Comply with legal obligations – relating to:
 - Income tax
 - Governing rules (Constitution)
 - Health & Safety legislation
- 4. Stay out of the following (unless the Senior Minister steps out of line):
 - Day to day process
 - Strategic plan, operations plan
- ii. Expectations of the Ministry team
 1. Own and deal with ministry issues
 2. Implement vision and purpose in accordance with the strategic plan
 3. Implement systems and procedures – as per policies (to be read and complied with)
 4. Open communication – in accordance with the appropriate line of authority
 5. Implement and comply with the Leadership Manual

3. Board meeting protocol

- a. Elders are expected to attend the majority of Board meetings.
- b. We undertake to participate in Board meetings and decision-making in the following ways:
 - Read agenda prior to meeting and participate in agenda items.
 - Elders responsible for agenda items submit papers the week before the Board meeting.
 - Elders are to be forthright in Board meetings and have a duty to question, request information, raise any issue, and fully canvass all aspects of any issue confronting the Church.
 - Make decisions by Consensus Agreement, or by a vote if we cannot reach a consensus.
 - Personally commit to upholding all decisions made by the Board (whether by consensus or by vote) and display this commitment outside Board meetings.

4. Elders Responsibilities – What we will do

- a. As a well-led, safe and legal community, we will read, understand, and refer regularly to Church policies to ensure these are complied with.
- b. We will assess our performance annually with reference to this Charter, the Church constitution and policies and procedures.
- c. As a Christ centred community, we will (as and when required):
 - Provide advice to the Ministry Team Leader on high level pastoral issues and managing the risk of the congregation being negatively impacted by high profile cases;
 - Provide resources on how to research, debate and provide a position on issues that have the potential to create division and relational pain in the Church;
 - Implement complaints and conflict procedures to help the community maintain unity. Unresolved or poorly resolved conflict will have a detrimental impact on the culture of the community and compromise its capacity to fulfil its mission;
 - Ensure any significant change is proactively managed and communicated in a clear and timely fashion to the congregation and in a way that allows for input from relevant stakeholders;

- Set expectations for the Spiritual formation of the community. Provide spiritual oversight of the church by setting an example of Christ-likeness and take a “God first” approach to church life, including regular prayer together.
- d. We acknowledge that all Board discussions and confidential information received by us in the course of our duties as Elders remains the property of the Church, and we will not disclose such confidential information, or allow it to be disclosed, unless that disclosure has been authorised by the person from whom the information is provided or is required by law.

Dictionary

Consensus Agreement

Wherever possible, we seek to make our decisions using consensus procedures. Reaching a decision by consensus takes account of the insights of each member. The process ensures issues are fully aired and all members feel they have been adequately heard. Decisions are taken not simply because one more than 50% of members are in favour of a proposal, but because all agree to a way forward. Some may feel it is not necessarily their first option, but all can support it and commit themselves not to undermine the decision.

It is important to realise the consensus decision may be agreement on further processes for dealing with the situation – consensus does not imply every issue has a single resolution.

True consensus is not the same as unanimity – we must be careful to recognise that real consensus arises out of real community, and often only through real tension as people express their insights with passion and integrity, and yet with respect for really hearing others’ points of view.

Some writers describe an outcome called ‘pseudo-consensus’, and a moment’s thought will allow many to recognise this not unfamiliar situation occurs in many councils of the church. Pseudo-consensus occurs when a group arrives at an apparently unanimous decision that has actually been subtly or overtly dictated by one or a few, where the issues have not been fully aired and where some members do not feel they have been heard – or even that they are free to express doubts or alternative ideas.

Considerable responsibility is placed on the chairperson to be sensitive to the mood of the meeting. It is frequently necessary to summarise or extract partial decisions. By feeding these back to the group it may be possible to make progress through a series of small steps rather than deferring all decisions to the end of the process.

At the same time members of the group must feel empowered to make their attitudes known and to raise issues about which they are not yet convinced or have different attitudes from those already expressed. At some point it is necessary for the chairperson to state explicitly what appears to be the common mind of the group, and to listen and watch carefully for signs of dissent before testing that assumption with the whole group.¹

Governance

Guiding the organisation to fulfill its purposes and intentions, including by formally taking responsibility for its structural and legal obligations, and acting on behalf of and for the congregation as a whole.

Pastoral Care

Providing reasonable care and support for the church community to meet their physical, emotional and spiritual needs especially during times of distress or crises. The Elders are not responsible for administering Pastoral Care, but for ensuring that the overall health of the church is being administered well and being available to be called upon to pray for the church community if needed (i.e. for the sick in hospital).

¹ https://assembly.uca.org.au/images/stories/Regulations/2012/Manual_for_Meetings_2009.pdf

Spiritual oversight

Ensuring a healthy Biblical community and a balanced application of all Biblical principles as guardians of the general welfare of the Church. Exercising spiritual maturity, wisdom, and theological understanding to protect, guide and give judgments about spiritual direction. Influencing through presence, not by day-to-day management, but by spiritual authority based upon relationship with God and the people, and devotion to spiritual impartation through prayer, encouragement, and exhortation in truth.

