

MINIMUM GOVERNANCE STANDARDS FOR AFFILIATED CHURCHES POLICY

CONTENTS

1.	PURPOSE	1
2.	SCOPE	2
3.	POLICY STATEMENT	2
4.	PRINCIPLES	4
	Responsible, Accountable, Consulted and Informed (RACI)	4
	Compliance, Monitoring and Review	6
	Reporting and Records Management	7
5.	DEFINITIONS AND TERMINOLOGY	7
6.	RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS	9
7.	FEEDBACK	9
8.	REVIEW AND APPROVAL DETAILS	10

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 This Policy aims to ensure church congregations affiliated with Churches of Christ in Queensland (CofCQ) maintain minimum standards of governance.
- 1.2 Minimum standards of governance are practices which the CofCQ Board and Conference Council consider are required to meet legislative and regulatory obligations and insurer's requirements. Good governance is also vital to effective decision making and risk management and promotes transparency, accountability, stewardship and integrity. The ideal is to support churches to hold a biblical structure of Governance as well as meet government and policy expectations.
- 1.3 This Policy acknowledges that governance may, on one hand, be a spiritual activity but is also within an increasingly complex and scrutinised regulatory and legislative environment, from which churches are not exempt.
- 1.4 Churches of Christ in Queensland is committed to embedding the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations that resulted from the recommendations made by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. Given this, the application of minimum standards of governance to churches that increase the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and vulnerable adults is necessary and appropriate.

MINIMUM GOVERNANCE STANDARDS FOR AFFILIATED CHURCHES POLICY

Risk Rating: HIGH

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy applies to all churches which have been admitted into membership of Churches of Christ in Queensland as a member congregation pursuant to its constitution.

<input type="checkbox"/> All			
<input type="checkbox"/> Children Youth and Families	<input type="checkbox"/> Seniors Living	<input type="checkbox"/> Housing Services	<input type="checkbox"/> Integrated Communities
<input type="checkbox"/> Centenary Development Foundation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Church and Community Engagement	<input type="checkbox"/> Corporate Services	

3. POLICY STATEMENT

The following are the minimum governance standards required for CofCQ Affiliated Churches and are based on the Eldership and Governance Framework document which aims to support churches to be Christ-centred, well led, and safe and legal communities of faith. The CofCQ Church and Community Engagement team is committed to assisting and providing resources to all affiliated CofC churches to enable these standards to be reached and maintained.

Christ Centred

Spiritual Leadership

- 3.1 A church must have members of a Governance Group who are nominated and approved in accordance with the church's constitution. The members must embody the characteristic of biblical leadership as stipulated in their constitution.
- 3.2 Conversations about the future of the church are happening at the Governance Group level and in alignment with the Kingdom of God and the agenda of Christ.
- 3.3 Mission, Vision and Values are in place and communicated to the church membership.

Relational Unity

- 3.4 The church follows a written Conflict and Complaints Handling Procedure.

Well Led

Clear Governance

- 3.5 The church has a constitution in place and is abiding by its constitution.
- 3.6 There is a functioning Governance Group with a minimum of 3 people, one of whom can be the pastor. It is also recognised, although not a minimum requirement, that a diversity of skills, experience and background in governance teams is best practice.

MINIMUM GOVERNANCE STANDARDS FOR AFFILIATED CHURCHES POLICY

Risk Rating: HIGH

- 3.7 Members of a church's Governance Group must be eligible to be Responsible Persons as defined by the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC).
- 3.8 Any associated entities run by the church are registered with the ACNC and are endorsed by the CofCQ Board.

Well Managed Finances

- 3.9 The church manages its financial risks and has strategies to ensure it has a financially viable future.
- 3.10 CofCQ invoices are paid annually (insurance and affiliation fees) and Centenary Development Foundation commitments are upheld (for example, loan repayments).
- 3.11 The church financial accounts are reviewed annually.
- 3.12 There are funds available to meet Long Service Leave and other liabilities.
- 3.13 There is a working annual budget.
- 3.14 The church is financially solvent:
 - The budgeted annual expenses are at or below predicted annual income.
 - there are other funds available to meet a predicted income shortfall (for example an approved church grant, investment income, savings) and the Governance Group has agreed to meet a shortfall this way.
- 3.15 The church can meet its minimum ongoing financial commitments and complies with its employment contracts.

Manage Staff Well

- 3.16 All Ministering People are endorsed by the Endorsement and Ordination Committee and have signed the CofCQ Ministering Persons Code of Conduct.
- 3.17 All staff have a signed contract and are remunerated at or above the most current CofCQ Ministerial Appointment and Employment Guide (MAEG) or an applicable award.
- 3.18 All staff have a current National Police Check.
- 3.19 All staff have current role descriptions.
- 3.20 All staff reviews are conducted at least annually.

Safe and Legal

Safe

- 3.21 The Governance Group have adopted and implemented a Safe Church Policy.
- 3.22 The church is registered with and committed to using Safe Ministry Check (or equivalent program offered by CofCQ) and have at least two nominated Safe Ministry Contacts.
- 3.23 All staff and Governance Group members are screened and trained via Safe Ministry Check (or equivalent program offered by CofCQ).

MINIMUM GOVERNANCE STANDARDS FOR AFFILIATED CHURCHES POLICY

Risk Rating: HIGH

- 3.24 All volunteers and leaders are screened and trained via Safe Ministry Check (or equivalent program).
- 3.25 All staff, leaders and volunteers who work with or make decisions relating to children will have valid Blue Cards and be linked to the church via the Blue Card Services Organisational Portal. Where staff, leaders and volunteers work with children, they will not commence that work until they have a valid Blue Card.
- 3.26 Person of Concern issues are appropriately addressed in accordance with current CofCQ Persons of Concern Policy.
- 3.27 All concerns relating to Abuse are reported to Queensland Police Service in accordance with the Queensland Criminal Code and to CofCQ's Safeguarding Response Group.
- 3.28 Complaints are promptly addressed according to a written Conflict and Complaints Handling Procedure.
- 3.29 Workplace Health and Safety Procedures meet legislative requirements and are being followed.

Legal

- 3.30 The church is compliant with ACNC requirements including:
 - registration with ACNC
 - current constitution submitted
 - annual returns and responsible people up-to-date
- 3.31 Constitution aligns with the ACNC Rules and has been reviewed within the last 5 years.
- 3.32 Records Management is adequate and Privacy requirements are met.

4. PRINCIPLES

Responsible, Accountable, Consulted and Informed (RACI)

- 4.1 Throughout the organisation, all workforce roles/types have some level of responsibility or accountability for adherence to this policy. The key roles and responsibilities are defined in the following statements.
- 4.2 The Director, Church and Community Engagement is responsible for the implementation of this Policy, under the oversight of and reporting to the Conference Council.
- 4.3 Written reports on the compliance of Affiliated Churches with these minimum standards will be made to the Conference Council, with verbal updates provided to the Mission, People and Culture Committee of the Board.
- 4.4 This policy is supported by roles and responsibilities in adherence to the following:

MINIMUM GOVERNANCE STANDARDS FOR AFFILIATED CHURCHES POLICY

Risk Rating: HIGH

Policy Risk Rating	Accountable	Responsible	Consulted	Informed
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Board	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CEO	Via Quality Compliance Coordinator	All workforce

Accountable Person

- is the owner and is accountable for the controlled document; and
- other than minor formatting and editing (known as admin changes), must approve all changes.

Responsible Person

- encourages a culture of good governance through the purpose or intent of a controlled document towards the culture of this organisation;
- ensures effective processes, reporting and management strategies are in place across Churches of Christ in Queensland;
- ensure risk-rated reviews are conducted in accordance with this Document Management Policy and the Policy Writing Information Sheet;
- ensures robust processes are in place to monitor compliance legislative requirements and obligations; and
- identifies risks and opportunities that can support continuous improvement opportunities.

Consulted Person/s

- identify areas within the organisation that policies and other controlled documents should be developed or reviewed for presentation to those accountable and responsible;
- evaluate and review Governing Principles and Benchmarks, providing suggestion where necessary, to the consultation process for improvements;
- provide peer support and facilitate communication between Senior Managers;
- ensure quality practice is applied through regular review;
- inform the Executive Group of any issues, within the context of the Document Management Policy, which may impact on the organisation;

MINIMUM GOVERNANCE STANDARDS FOR AFFILIATED CHURCHES POLICY

Risk Rating: HIGH

- review the actions taken or proposed for significant systems improvements made by the consultation team; and
- identifies risks and opportunities that can support continuous improvement opportunities.

Informed Persons

- are identified by the term Workforce and include: Employees, Volunteers, Contractors, Students and Consultants; and
- are expected to remain informed and knowledgeable of all policies related to their own areas of work within the organisation.

Compliance, Monitoring and Review

- 4.5 This policy is mandatory and binding upon
- the Board of Churches of Christ in Queensland;
 - CEO; and
 - Affiliated Churches

Breaches to this policy may result in investigation, disciplinary action and reporting to the Executive/Board and Conference Council.

- 4.6 This Policy will be reviewed every year by the Church and Community Engagement Team (CCE) and Governance teams for compliance with ACNC and other legislative requirements, minimum governance best practice.
- 4.7 This Policy is approved every year by the Conference Council.
- 4.8 Where it is identified by CofCQ that an Affiliated Church does not comply with these minimum standards, or the church Governance Group or pastor/s advise CofCQ of their non-compliance in one or more areas, the following steps will be taken:
- The CCE will offer support and assistance to an Affiliated Church to meet the minimum standards. This will include identifying where minimum standards are not met and having an agreed plan and timeframes for rectifying these. An agreed timeframe will typically be 3 – 6 months to allow for Governance Group meeting cycles and voting on any required constitutional changes, with any legal/child safety/ACNC compliance issues being prioritised
 - Where an Affiliated Church does not accept or require CCE support to achieve compliance, a timeframe for reviewing compliance with these minimum standards will be agreed between CCE and the Affiliated Church. If minimum standards are still not met after this agreed period, CCE team support will be offered again

MINIMUM GOVERNANCE STANDARDS FOR AFFILIATED CHURCHES POLICY

Risk Rating: HIGH

- Where an Affiliated Church (with or without CCE support) continues to be non-compliant with these minimum standards after an agreed timeframe, they will be referred to the Conference Council. Council may:
 - meet with the Affiliated Church Governance Group to discuss the areas of non-compliance
- Where an Affiliated Church continues to fail to meet minimum standards, or indicates at any point that they are not willing to meet minimum standards, Conference Council may choose to raise this at the Annual General Meeting for discussion and may move a motion to disaffiliate the Church.

Reporting and Records Management

- 4.9 No additional reporting is required.
- 4.10 Staff must maintain all records relevant to administering this policy in a recognised Churches of Christ in Queensland record keeping system.

5. DEFINITIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

Term	Definition
Abuse	Child sexual abuse, physical injury; emotional or psychological harm; an unreasonable and non-consensual denial of financial, social or personal autonomy; damage to property in the ownership or possession of the person or used or otherwise enjoyed by the person.
Accountable	The person who has ultimate ownership of a policy. Ownership cannot be transferred.
ACNC	Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission: https://www.acnc.gov.au
ACNC Guideline	ACNC guidelines for constitutions for unincorporated associations: https://www.acnc.gov.au/tools/templates/rules-charitable-unincorporated-association
Affiliated Church	Affiliated church means a Church of Christ which has been admitted into membership of Churches of Christ in Queensland (CofCQ) as a member congregation pursuant to CofCQ's constitution.
Church	A CofCQ Affiliated Church.
Conference Council/Council	Conference Council (Council) is the representative body of all affiliated churches that have been admitted into membership of CofCQ pursuant to its constitution.
Consulted	The people who contribute valuable subject matter expertise to the development/review of the policy.

MINIMUM GOVERNANCE STANDARDS FOR AFFILIATED CHURCHES POLICY



Risk Rating: HIGH

Elders	The group of people appointed or elected according to the church constitution who are most often the Governance Group of the church.
Eldership and Governance Framework	https://www.cofc.com/au/church-resources/eldership-and-church-governance
Governance Group	The Elders, along with certain pastoral staff as defined by the church's constitution, form the Governance Group of the church. This group may be variously called the Eldership, Board, Management Committee, Leadership Team or other similar term
Informed	The people expected to remain informed and knowledgeable of the policy.
MAEG	Ministerial Appointment and Employment Guide – produced annually by CofCQ and outlining employment guidelines and remuneration levels for endorsed Ministering Persons within CofCQ Affiliated Churches.
Ministering Person	A Minister, any person who undertakes the role of Minister on a voluntary basis, and any other person employed to undertake, or engaged to undertake, Pastoral Duties; This may be a pastor, chaplain, someone in a ministry position, or a religious marriage celebrant.
Organisation	Means Churches of Christ in Queensland Group of Entities including Churches of Christ in Queensland, Churches of Christ Housing Services Limited and all Churches of Christ subsidiary entities.
Pastoral Duties	Duties associated with the spiritual care of the members of the congregation of a Church of Christ. The following are examples of pastoral duties: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. communication of religious beliefs; ii. teaching and counselling adherents and members of the surrounding community; iii. providing adherents and members of the surrounding community with spiritual guidance and support; and iv. meeting with and visiting adherents, the sick, the poor, or persons otherwise in need of emotional and spiritual support.
Privacy	https://www.cofc.com.au/CofCQ/media/publications/Example-Privacy-Policy.pdf
RACI	A matrix describing the participation by various roles in completing tasks or deliverables in support of business processes.
Records Management	https://www.cofc.com.au/CofCQ/media/publications/Record-Keeping-for-Churches.pdf
Responsible	The person who is implements the process and monitors compliance.

MINIMUM GOVERNANCE STANDARDS FOR AFFILIATED CHURCHES POLICY

Risk Rating: HIGH

Responsible Person	<p>“the term Responsible Person refers to those responsible for governing the charity. Generally, a charity’s Responsible Persons are its board or committee members, or trustees (including insolvency trustees or administrators).”</p> <p>(https://www.acnc.gov.au/tools/factsheets/responsible-persons-board-or-committee-members).</p> <p>“Charities to take reasonable steps to be satisfied that its Responsible Persons (its board or committee members, or trustees) are not disqualified from;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• managing a corporation under the Corporations Act 2001 (Cth) (the Corporations Act), or• being a Responsible Person by the ACNC Commissioner, within the previous 12 months.” <p>https://www.acnc.gov.au/for-charities/manage-your-charity/governance-hub/governance-standards/4-suitability-responsible</p>
Strategic Management Team	Refers to all Executives and General Managers
Subject Matter Expert	The person/s with definitive sources of knowledge who contribute their expertise to enhance organisational efficiency.

6. RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

Category	Related Reference Document(s)
Related Churches of Christ in Queensland Policies	CofCQ Safe Church Policy CofCQ Persons of Concern Policy
Related Legislation, Industry Standards and Care Standards	Queensland Criminal Code Refer definitions for referenced standards
Related Churches of Christ in Queensland Procedures, Supporting Documents and references	N/A

7. FEEDBACK

7.1 Affiliated Churches may provide feedback about this document by one of the following mechanisms;

— Email: churchsupport@cofcqld.com.au

— Call the Church Support Hotline: 1800 193 438

MINIMUM GOVERNANCE STANDARDS FOR AFFILIATED CHURCHES POLICY



Risk Rating: HIGH

8. REVIEW AND APPROVAL DETAILS

Approval and Review	Details		
Policy Author and Position	Tim McMenamin, Director, Church and Community Engagement		
Accountability (endorsed)	Conference Council		
Responsibility (approved)	Board of Churches of Christ in Queensland		
Consulted – Executives Only	No.	Name	Date
	1	Tim McMenamin	9/2/22
	2	Rue Masunungure	9/2/22
	3	Gary Edwards	9/2/22
Informed	The workforce of the organisation known as Churches of Christ in Queensland.		
Date Endorsed	09/02/2022		
Next Review Date (calculate from the date endorsed and risk category)	09/02/2023		

Signatories	Please sign here
Accountable Owner/Endorser	
Name:	
Responsible Approver	
Name:	

Revision History	Details
Previous Endorsed Date	None
Amendment History	New policy
Notes (if any)	N/A