

## CONSTITUTION OF THE AUSTRALIAN CHURCH OF ANTIOCH

### STATEMENT OF PURPOSES

The Church shall be known as **THE AUSTRALIAN CHURCH OF ANTIOCH**. The Australian Church of Antioch has been formed to provide a church open to all humanity without question of sexism, race, colour, creed, or sexual persuasion, and includes the right to study all forms of spirituality and esoteric lore if they desire, as long as it does not contravene the rights of the individual and the laws of God, decency or the land. The ACOA also endeavours to teach the truth of religion as near as possible to what our Lord taught, without the corruption of human intervention that has polluted religion over the years. To this end ACOA clergy is open to all of humanity, as long as they be of good character and dedicated to God's work.

### NAME AND JURISDICTION.

1 (a). The name of the church is **THE AUSTRALIAN CHURCH OF ANTIOCH** referred to hereafter as the church or simply **ACOA**.

(b). Corporation name (if necessary) may be held in the name of any of the top senior Bishops who form the synod.

2 (a) This church acknowledges its lineage from the Church of Antioch, Malabar rite in the U.S.A. and while we are joined to and in full communion with them, we do not submit to the authority of them or any other body whatsoever, except to the laws of the land in which it operates.

(b) While we accept the Matriarch or Patriarch of the Church of Antioch U.S.A. (whichever applies at the time) as the Spiritual head of the **A C O A**, we in Australia while taking careful note of any proclamations or recommendations are not bound by any authority from that office.

(c) The **A C O A** recognises its boundaries as all over Australia and any territory under Australian Control, including any Naval ships, any defence force bases or Australian Government embassies .

(d) The **ACOA Synod** reserves the right to authorise the existence of an overseas Diocese, providing that the authorised overseas diocese respects and follows the rules of this constitution and the law of the Land where that said diocese may reside within, providing such law is in accordance with God's law.

3. (a). The church shall exist for the purpose of providing a church open to all without distinction, and following the basic Christian rites, administer the Holy Sacraments, and teach all who wish to avail themselves of spiritual knowledge to the betterment of mankind.

(b) The church shall be run as a non profit organization.

4. (a). Membership of the church shall be by attending any service or function on a regular basis, or any church in full communion with the **A C O A** but any person may apply to their Clergy to be placed upon the church roll which shall be approved or disapproved by the local governing body of their member parish, and in no case need there be a (reason given for any rejection except to confirm the rejection is not on the basis of sex, colour, race or social standing, (this rejection does not bar them from any or all the services).

(b) Any member may resign from the church if they give a letter of resignation in writing, or fail to re-register each year after several warning letters sent to them on

their impending cancellation of membership, or incommunicado for a period of three months without prior notice.

(c) Names on the roll shall be renewed each year to keep records up to date, and members not re-registering shall be dropped from the roll, unless by prior arrangement with the clergy of the concerned parish. \*

(d). Only registered members on the roll shall be able to become members of any committee with any authority in the church. \*

(e). Each member parish shall keep an up to date as possible register of its parishioners, which will be available to their Bishop or the Synod upon request.

(f) No person under the age of 13 years shall be placed upon the church rolls if there is any objection by that person's parent/s or Legal guardian.

#### **THE SYNOD OF ARCHBISHOPS.**

5. There shall be a synod to govern, control and administer the affairs of the church consisting of all the Archbishops of the church, (excepting certain bishops in separate orders within the church as per rule 86), in active duty or retired, also excepting those who voluntarily resign this privilege upon retirement, or those who are expelled for any reason, and this synod will govern the affairs of the church with the following powers.

(a) To exercise all powers that the church has, to control and manage the affairs of the church, subject to this constitution, and the law, for the proper management and running of this church.

(b) To enthrone the presiding Archbishop

(c) To nominate and consecrate Bishops.

(d) To define provinces and dioceses and to install Bishops in said areas.

(e) To have the power to initiate and carry through proceedings for the amendment or variations to this constitution, as per the will of the members as provided in rule 68.

(f) To act as a court of appeal on matters within the church.

(g) To authorise all liturgies used in the church *as per rule 28*.

(h) To over-rule any decision by any Archbishop or Bishop (including the presiding Archbishop) if deemed in the best interests of the church.

6. The synod shall pass a resolution upon a majority of the vote from voting members, present or proxy, except for:-

(a) Voting the presiding Archbishop out of office, which shall be two thirds of the vote of the Synod.

(b) Any other exemptions to the majority vote within this constitution.

7. A Quorum shall be no less than two thirds of the synod.

8. The Presiding Archbishop may allow a vote to be conducted via email, phone or the normal mails, if said Archbishop believes it is the most expedient manner at the time.

#### **PRESIDING ARCHBISHOP.**

9. (a) The presiding Archbishop shall be the supreme head of the ACOA within the Australian boundaries, and shall preside over the synod of the church until his/her demise, resignation, or being voted out of office, which must be by no less than two thirds of the vote of the Synod.

(b) Presiding Archbishop can only be voted out of office due to mental incapacity, immoral behaviour, or some other conduct unbecoming to the church that may bring it into disrepute.

(c) The Enthroned Presiding Archbishop shall have at least nine years within the Clergy of the ACOA, but in extreme emergency where there is no designated successor, a special meeting of the Synod (and Archpriests (monsignor/a s if the number is under six ) may vote for an exception of the nine years rule, by a majority of two thirds of the vote.

10. Upon the office of the Presiding Archbishop becoming vacant for whatever reason, will a new Presiding Archbishop be installed as bequeathed by the previous Presiding Archbishop.

11. If no designated successor has been named, and no suitable candidate is in the Archbishop or Bishop's ranks, then a suitable candidate can be chosen from the ranks of the priesthood and consecrated to the episcopate, but this priest must have at least five years in the priesthood, but this should only be in dire emergency.

12. (a).When the position of presiding Archbishop becomes vacant the Vicar General if there be one and if not the senior Archbishop will caretaker the position, or appoint an Archbishop caretaker, until a new presiding Archbishop is enthroned which shall be no more than three calendar months.

(b) The date for the enthronement of a new Presiding Archbishop shall be decided by the Synod, not the caretaker, and the caretaker shall not have the power to delay this enthronement without the approval of the Synod, and this Synod shall be at least six members consisting of all the Archbishops, and if there are not enough Archbishops within the Synod, then the most senior Bishops or if necessary Priests shall take the number to six.

(c). If a new Presiding Archbishop is not enthroned within three months, the caretaker of the position will automatically become the new Presiding Archbishop.

13. The Presiding Archbishop can over-rule all decisions made at any time, by any Bishop or committee (except the synod) in the ACOA if said Presiding Archbishop deems it in the churches best interest, or to correct any injustice.

14. (a) The Presiding Archbishop reserves the right to appoint any Bishop of the church as a Vicar General of any area, or province to exercise any powers, for any length of time, and such powers and time will be designated by the Presiding Archbishop.

(b). The Presiding Archbishop reserves the right to appoint any Bishop of the Church to the level of Archbishop.

15. The Presiding Archbishop reserves the right to consecrate all Archbishops and Bishops if such is his/her desire, or shall nominate the consecrating Archbishops to perform these consecrations.

#### **ARCHBISHOPS AND BISHOPS.**

16. (a). No person shall be consecrated Archbishop or Bishop without the consent of the Synod and any Bishop who knowingly does so shall be ex-communicated from the church along with the newly consecrated bishop who will not be recognised as a bishop within this church..

(b). If the church be with less than three Archbishops at any time then urgent steps must be taken to bring the number back to three

(c) No priest shall be consecrated to the post of Bishop without at least five years in the priesthood, except by special meeting and resolution of the Synod.

17. Any Bishop assigned to an area by the synod, will be with due regard for the churches best interests and the members of said area.

18. All Bishops within their own territories reserve the right to admit to Holy orders up to the level of Priest, any person they deem qualified and fit, but subject to the laws of this constitution, the synod and the church.

19. (a). All Bishops requested by a parish to supply a priest may recommend any priest member to that parish, but any recommendation shall be with due regard for all parties concerned,

(b) The parish members shall retain the right of non acceptance of the Bishop's recommendation in this matter.

(c). Any Bishop may appoint a Priest to be Bishop's Advocate, with powers and time limits of such a position as designated by the Bishop and this constitution.

20. All Bishops shall see that no person under their jurisdiction shall exceed their authority in any way to the detriment of the church.

21. All Bishops will enforce the use of correct liturgy as nominated by the synod for use in the ACOA as per rule 28.

22. In the event of the Bishop being indisposed, a Vicar general may be appointed by said Bishop or the regionary Archbishop until such time as the indisposed Bishop returns to duty, or a new Bishop is installed.

23. In the event of sudden unforeseen circumstances and the office of any Bishop becomes vacant, the senior clergy shall become acting Vicar General reporting the situation to the Archbishop, and assume office until the Archbishop appoints a new Bishop, or a new Vicar General.

24. The Bishop may remove from office any Clergy member in their jurisdiction who disregards the obligation of canonical obedience, acts in a manner not befitting a member of the church or clergy, or in any way harmful to the church; but this person retains the right to appeal to higher office, and finally to the synod which is the highest court of appeal in the church.

25. Any Archbishop or Bishop may be suspended by the Presiding Archbishop, or completely removed from office by the synod in the event of disregarding their vow of canonical obedience or doing any act which can bring the Bishops and/or the church into low esteem.

26. Canonical obedience is understood to be obedience in all matters where the person concerned acts in representing the church, whether it be in writing, speaking or conducting any function of the church, and where any connection to the church is made open to the public; but they retain perfect freedom if they make it clear that they act as a private individual and not as a representative of the church.

## **CLERGY.**

27. (a) All of the clergy are under an obligation of canonical obedience to the canon law of the church, but upon Cessation of being a member of the clergy this obligation is no longer valid.

(b) If a clergy member wishes to resign from the Church then they shall have the right to expect a letter of excommunication from their Bishop stating that they have resigned, and if the following be true it shall also state that said member still remains in good and proper standing within the church and of good character.

(c) No one may be Clergy within the church if they are consuming any substance of addiction (tobacco excepted but not approved of), have any prison record, history of violence, or engaged in any illegal act of any sort.

(d) If any Clergy member after their ordination takes up any trait as described in the rule 27(c), then they shall be removed from their position of trust and judged before the Synod as to their suitability to remain as Clergy within the church.

(e) Any Clergy member found guilty of breaching rule 27(c, d) by the Synod shall be liable to be defrocked and expelled from the Clergy of the ACOA.

(f) Medication prescribed by a legally qualified and recognised health practitioner (be they natural or orthodox) shall not come under the classification of rules 27(c).

(g) In the case of predatory moral misbehaviour, by any Clergy member towards any person be they adults or minors, it shall be mandatory and without exceptions that the Clergy member shall be defrocked and expelled from the Clergy of the ACOA, and this shall also apply if found that such behaviour occurred before their ordination.

(h) All Clergy shall be registered with the headquarters of the ACOA and a small fee, (the amount of which shall be set by the Synod), shall be paid annually in re-registering clergy within the Church.

28. Service Liturgy:-

(a) All Eucharistic services conducted shall be strictly conforming to the proper liturgy as authorised by the synod, but any other service than the Eucharistic service may be used at times if deemed proper and permitted by the local Bishop.

(b). Any form of Liturgy or service may be submitted to the Synod for approval to become authorised for use within the church.

(c) Almost any form of service will be approved unless the Synod believes it contains material that is deemed harmful, against the Christian belief, indecent or in any way unsavoury or leaning towards the black arts.

29. The Bishop of any diocese within and under the name of The Australian church of Antioch has the right to license the clergy of that area, and to have renewal of such every twelve months, and if such license is not renewed, then the affected Clergy may appeal to higher authority of the Synod.

**CLERGY MEMBERSHIP AND POWERS.**

30. (a). Any Clergy of another church is not entitled to be Clergy in the ACOA, but if that Clergy person applies to the Bishop for recognition, that Clergy person may be granted recognition and incardination if said Bishop and his Archbishop agree to do so, but they cannot be higher than Priest until they undergo consecration to the episcopate within the ACOA unless---

( I) The Synod grants a special exemption to this rule via a special meeting,

or (II) Another Church in its entirety is accepted under the jurisdiction of the ACOA and thus any or all of its Clergy as decided by the Synod.

(b).Holy orders in this clergy consists of six minor orders-- Cleric, Doorkeeper, Reader, Healer/Exorcist, Acolyte, Subdeacon; and three major orders---Deacon, Priest and Bishop, and varying degrees of the last three as designated by the Synod.

(c) Clergy orders shall be open to all regardless of gender, race, colour, creed, marital status or social standing and this will apply to all offices from the lowest position of Cleric, to the highest position of Presiding Archbishop within the ACOA structure.

(d) Candidates cannot assume they have the right to automatically become a Priest upon completion of studies as this will depend entirely upon results of studies, attitude, adherence to these rules, and have shown themselves to be honest and of reasonable and decent principles, and behaviour as determined by the Synod.

(e) Duties of all clergy up to and including Subdeacon will be guided by the Minister, Priest or Deacon in charge at the time.

(f) Unless an exemption to this rule is granted by the Synod, or as under the rule 42 (c) (d) (e), all Clergy serve in a voluntary capacity and are not employees of the ACOA and therefore the ACOA has no duty to supervise clergy as an employer and is not responsible for their conduct, and the ACOA has no obligation to provide any form of insurance, or compensation of any sort.

(g) Freely given donations of appreciation may be given to Clergy, but any such gift/s must in no way be a condition by Clergy of any services rendered.

### **31. Deacons---**

(a) Shall be 21 years of age or older unless by special decree of the Synod.

(b) Can dispense the reserved sacrament, conduct morning and evening prayer, funerals, marriages if licensed to do so but not the Mass.

### **32. Priests---**

(a) Shall be 25 years of age or older unless by special decree of the Synod

(b) Can conduct the Mass, (ordinations to Acolyte level if archpriest) plus all a deacon can do, but not confirmations or consecrations.

(c) No priest shall have the right to enter a parish other than their own and conduct services without the permission of the priest of that parish, or the Diocese Bishop if the parish priest is indisposed by ill health or any other such situation.

(d) Any performing of service in a parish by Clergy other than their parish priest or clergy under the tutelage or control of the parish priest, may be challenged by the congregation of that parish if they consider said Clergy to be unsuitable for their needs, and this situation shall be brought to the attention of the Bishop who will then do what needs to be done to rectify the situation.

(e) All priests shall endeavour to perform the Mass at least once a week.

### **33. Bishops--**

(a) Shall have attained the age of 33 years or older unless by special decree of the Synod.

(b) Bishops---can conduct confirmations, ordinations, the blessing of Holy oils, consecration of objects for the church, but only with approval of the Synod can they also co-consecrate bishops.

(c)The Bishop of any area can over rule any and all decisions, on all matters made in his/her area by any committee or member in the Church's name if said Bishop deems it necessary for the well being of the church, or considers an injustice has been done, but an appeal can be lodged to the Archbishop.

(d) All Bishops shall endeavour to perform the Mass at least once a week.

**34. Archbishops----**

(a) Are the direct representative of the Presiding Archbishop for the designated area, and (being mindful of their bishop's recommendations) they have the power to nominate recommendations for the episcopate to the synod, and duly consecrate Bishops with the approval of the Presiding Archbishop.

(b) An Archbishop can over-rule all decisions made at any time by any member or committee in said Archbishop's jurisdiction if deemed in the churches best interests or to correct any errors or injustices, but appeal can be made to the synod.

**FINANCE and LIABILITY.**

**35. (a).**All member parish churches shall donate a nominal amount to the Synod, but a maximum of one tenth of income is the highest limit, but this donation is subject to being waived partly or fully by the Bishop in charge of the diocese according to the situation of the parish churches finances.

(b). Funds shall be from collections from church services and any other donations to the church, or from fetes, organised social gatherings, or any other functions as sanctioned by the vestry of the parish; providing it is honourably obtained and does not contravene these rules, the law and the bounds of decency.

**36.** The synod shall provide for their own expenses, and those of the Diocese Bishops from the income derived from the parishes, and from any other donations submitted for that purpose.

**37.** No income of any part of the church shall be paid directly or indirectly in any fashion at all, to any member or members of the church, excepting for agreed stipends with the approval of the Archbishop.

**38.** No member parish shall have the authority to engage in any transaction which will render the church liable to any responsibility, and no building or property owned by the church shall be used for any form of security, in any venture, unless with the written permission of the Archbishop of the area, who will ensure it is the will of the majority of the parish members.

**39.** All member parishes shall be responsible for their own finances, and for legal liability protection insurance, which shall be handled by the elected vestry of the parish concerned, and the treasurer of this vestry will keep sound records of all financial matters which shall be open for inspection at any time on demand by the Bishop, the parish Priest or upon request of any three members of the parish concerned.

**40.** At the parish annual general meeting all books shall be available for the inspection of all members, according to the law of the land, and they shall be presented with an auditors report, or audited by a capable panel of the parish members elected by members prior to the meeting, but preferably not members who are on the vestry, unless no one else is available.

**41.** In the synod, parish vestry or any other committee under the churches name, all cheques, drafts, bills of exchange, promissory notes and other negotiable instruments shall require at least two signatures out of three appointed

signatories, and these signatories shall be the treasurer and any other two committee members elected by the committee (but in the event of a parish vestry not the Priest).

#### **PARISH COMMITTEES AND POWERS**

42. (a) Each member parish retains the right to pray, believe and follow their own path to God and retain the right to do this in any manner they desire providing they are within the bounds of Christian ethics, the law, the bounds of decency and this constitution.

(b) Each member parish has the right to select its own priest if for any reason this office becomes vacant, and this shall be by a majority vote of all the members of the concerned parish, but this priest must be a member of the ACOA or prepared to be incardinated into this Church.

(c) Any Priest brought into the parish with full approval of the members of the parish, by a majority vote, shall not be able to be removed without the approval of another majority vote of all members of that parish.

(d) Any parish vestry has (with the approval of the members of that parish by a majority vote) the power to grant their priest a stipend, but that priest shall not be classed as an employee of the Australian Church of Antioch, but of the parish concerned, and the parish shall be responsible for their conduct.

(e) Such a stipend as per rule 42 (d) shall be classed by the Australian Church of Antioch as an honourable method of finding one's own living.

43. (a) Each member parish shall have an elected vestry of six members of the laity plus the parish Priest forming the governing vestry of seven members for that parish.

(b) The vestry officers shall be President, Secretary, Treasurer and Vice President.

(c) No person shall be part of any committee or vestry bearing the name of the Australian Church of Antioch if they are consuming or addicted to any substances deemed unsuitable by the Synod.

(d) Medication prescribed by a legally qualified and recognised health practitioner (natural or orthodox) for any member shall not be included under rule 43(c).

44. The parish Priest shall not bear the office of Treasurer or Secretary on the vestry, but may bear either of the other two offices.

45. (a) The vestry will govern for twelve months when a new vestry will be elected at the annual general meeting.

(b) There is no limit to how many times a person may be re-elected to the vestry, providing they remain in good standing within the Church.

46. The parish vestry will have the powers to make all decisions necessary to carry out the normal running of the parish according to these rules, and the law of the land.

47. (a) In the event of a sudden vacancy in the vestry, the vestry members may appoint a parish member to fill the vacancy, provided there is no objection upon the announcement of this, or for a period of seven days after.

(b). In the event of objection as in rule 47 (a).the matter can be decided by a vote of the parish members, or use the area Bishop as judge if the matter is still unresolved.

(c) Any vestry member removed from office cannot object to the appointment of a new member in their stead.

48. A vestry member may be removed from office by a majority vote (which will be by secret ballot) by the vestry, but said member has the right of appeal to the members of the parish.

49. (a) In the event of any question of unethical behaviour, or any accusation against any vestry member, or any other abnormality in any parish or order bearing the name of Australian Church of Antioch, the Bishop may (if he/she thinks it necessary) freeze all powers or over-rule any decision, and then govern the parish until the matter is resolved to the satisfaction of the parish members, and this can be resolved according to the desires of the parish members -- in one of two ways –

1. By the Bishop acting as a magistrate or mediator.

2. By convening a meeting of all members of the parish and voting on the issue, and then applying to the Bishop for the freeze to be lifted.

(b) Any parties having a dispute between themselves or between a member and the church shall do their utmost to resolve it, but if they cannot resolve it within 14 days then the rule 49 (a) shall come into effect, carefully noting the following:-

. (I) All parties must be given a chance to be heard or to submit evidence of any kind.

(II) All concerned parties shall attend the meeting, which shall be held within 14 days of notification that the problem cannot be resolved by other means.

The time and place of the meeting shall be convened by the bishop with due regard for all those needing to attend the meeting.

Any person failing to attend the meeting without good and valid reason as determined by the Bishop presiding over the matter shall forfeit their chance of being heard at the hearing.

If the Bishop of the area normally attends and worships at the parish, and is involved in the dispute, then another person shall be appointed by the Archbishop to preside over the matter.

50. The vestry may appoint, employ workmen/women or other persons, or remove said people as may be necessary for the well being of the parish.

51. The vestry will be responsible for maintaining all properties in use by their parish in good condition.

52. The vestry may control and invest any moneys not required immediately by the parish, subject to the law.

#### **ELECTION AND VACANCY OF OFFICERS OF PARISH.**

53. Nominations for vestry

(a) Shall be in writing signed by two members of the parish.

(b) Shall be delivered to the secretary not less than 14 days before the date fixed for the annual general meeting.

(c) The Candidates names together with the two proposers shall be posted on the notice board in the parish church at least seven days before the election.

(d) If insufficient nominations are received further nominations can be received at the annual general meeting.

**54. (a) No person shall hold a position on any parish vestry unless their name has been on the parish roll, and a reasonable attendance for a period of at least six months, except under the conditions of 54(b).**

**(b) The rule 54 (a) may be waived if at the annual general Meeting a majority of the parishioners vote by a two third majority to do so.)**

**55. The office of a member becomes vacant if the member**

**(a) Becomes bankrupt.**

**(b) Becomes prohibited from being a director of any company under the legal act.**

**(c) Becomes of unsound mind or limited mental ability that their affairs must be managed for them.**

**(d) Resigns in writing to the secretary or president.**

**(e) Is absent for more than six months without prior arrangement.**

**(f) Holds any office of profit under the church.**

**(g) Has any connection with any contract with the church in any way whatsoever, unless such contract connection be made public to the parishioners at least 14 days prior to the signing of such a contract in which time any parishioner may object.**

**(h) If there is any objection via the rule 55(g), then such a contract must not be signed or go ahead until the matter is resolved by special meeting of the parishioners.**

#### **PROCEEDINGS OF VESTRY/AND OR COMMITTEE.**

**56. The vestry shall meet at least four times each year at a convenient time and place as the vestry shall determine.**

**57. Special meetings may be determined by any four members or the president of the vestry, and only the business that necessitated the special meeting shall be conducted.**

**58. Any four of the members shall constitute a quorum.**

**59. A decision shall be made upon a show of hands (unless otherwise determined by one of these rules or requested by a member) and unless otherwise stated in these rules a majority shall constitute the motion passed.**

**60. If a stalemate is reached with even votes then the person presiding may then, and only then, cast a second vote.**

**61. A notice of every normal meeting must be issued to every member of the vestry a reasonable time before the meeting, and every reasonable effort will be made to serve notice to members in the event of a special meeting.**

#### **SECRETARY.**

**62. The secretary shall keep minutes of all that transpires at the meetings in books provided, and shall keep a record of all members present at such meetings.**

**63. Unless otherwise provided in these rules, the secretary shall keep in his/her custody or under control all books, documents and securities of the parish.**

#### **TREASURER.**

**64. (a) The treasurer shall collect and receive all moneys due to the parish, and make all payments authorised by the parish, and shall keep sound records of all transactions.**

(b). The treasurer shall be ready at all times to present the books to the area Bishop should said Bishop, or parish Priest call upon them to do so at the behest of any three members of the parish .

#### **REMOVAL FROM THE ROLL.**

65. (a). A Bishop may expel a person from the roll if said Bishop has evidence of misconduct.

(b). For the parish to expel a member there must be a two thirds majority vote of members to pass the resolution at a meeting specially convened for the purpose of deciding this matter, where the member or members facing expulsion shall be given every chance to present their case to the members present, who will then decide by secret ballot.

(c). No proxy votes will be taken at any meeting of expulsion as all voting members must hear any evidence stated by all parties.

66. Any member expelled from the roll will not be barred from any church service, but will be barred from taking part in any other activity within the church.

#### **PROPERTIES.**

67. (a) All properties owned by the Central main\_church shall be in the control of the Archdiocese Archbishop of the area that encompasses the property, and said Archbishop shall retain all deeds and titles in his/her keeping.

(b) Properties owned by a member parish shall remain in the control of the parish committee, unless the committee members wish otherwise and place the deeds in the hands of the local Archbishop.

(c) If a member parish places its property in the hands of the Archbishop, then the property shall not be available for release without the consent of the majority vote of all members of the parish at a special meeting called for that purpose.

#### **ALTERATION OF CONSTITUTION AND STATEMENT OF PURPOSES.**

68. (a) These rules and objects may be amended, added to or varied by the synod with a three quarter majority vote of all synod members on the church rolls, but at all times bearing in mind the wishes of the ordinary people.

(b) Any alteration to the Constitution shall be with due regard for any effect on separate orders under the ACOA, and consultation with the affected order shall take place on every alteration that affects that said order.

#### **WINDING UP**

69. (a) In the event of winding up the assets of this church shall be donated to an organization having similar ideals as our own, and this organization shall be determined by the remaining Bishops or senior Clergy.

(b) Separate orders may decide to separate and become completely independent from the Church in the event of the church closing down, and they shall retain this right to do so.

#### **THE SEAL.**

70. (a). The seal of the church shall be kept in the custody of a member of the Synod who will be elected as custodian of the seal.

(b). The common seal shall not be affixed to any instrument except by the authority of the Synod, and the fixing of the seal shall be witnessed by the signatures of two members of said Synod.

#### **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.**

71. Each parish will every year as near as possible after the financial year, hold an annual general meeting, of which the exact date will be set by the vestry; with the proviso that it is within two months after the financial year.

72. The annual meeting shall be clearly listed as such on the notice of meeting, and shall include:-

(a) The reading of the minutes of the last general meeting (if any) and the last annual general meeting.

(b) The publishing and receiving of all reports from all office holders and committees.

(c) The election of vestry and officers for the coming year.

73. No meeting shall take the place of the annual general meeting.

#### **SPECIAL GENERAL MEETINGS.**

74. All other general meetings shall be special general meetings and shall be called only for special business, and by the following method:-

(a). By the vestry calling a special meeting at the request of not less than 5% of the total number of members.

(b). The requisition for a special general meeting shall state the objects of the meeting, and shall be signed by the members making the request and be sent to the secretary; and every sheet of documents shall be signed by one of the members making the requisition.

(c) If the vestry does not call a special meeting within one month after the date of the requisition being dispatched, the members may apply to the diocese Bishop who will if necessary freeze all powers as per rule 49.

(d) The vestry may convene a special general meeting on its own account if it deems it necessary for the members to be present for special business.

#### **NOTICE OF MEETING.**

75. (a). The vestry shall notify all members of meetings, (14 days being deemed reasonable for special general meetings, and 21 days for the annual general meeting) stating the time and place, and the nature of the business to be transacted at the meeting.

(b). No business other than that set out in the notice convening the meeting shall be transacted at the meeting.

(c). A member desiring to bring business before a meeting must give notice of such to the vestry secretary, who shall include said business in the agenda of the next annual general meeting, or if of a most urgent nature convene a special general meeting if the full vestry thinks it necessary.

#### **PROCEEDINGS AT MEETINGS.**

**76. (a).** All business transacted at any general meeting with the exception of that specially referred to in these rules as being ordinary business of the annual general meeting shall be deemed special business.

**(b).** No business shall be conducted unless a quorum of members entitled under these rules to vote is present at the meeting.

**(c)** Five members present and eligible to vote shall be considered a quorum for a general meeting.

**(d).** If within half an hour after the appointed time for the commencement of the meeting, a quorum is not present, the meeting if convened upon the requisition of members shall be dissolved, and in any other case shall stand adjourned to the same day of the next week at the same time and place, (or another place and time as the chair announces as to be convenient), and if at the adjourned meeting the quorum is not present within half an hour of commencing time, the members present if not less than three shall be a quorum.

**77. (a).** The president or in his/her absence the vice president, shall preside as chairing member at each meeting.

**(b).** If the president and the vice president are absent from the meeting, the members shall elect a member to chair the meeting.

**78. (a).** The chairman of a general meeting at which a quorum is present may, with the consent of the meeting adjourn the meeting from time to time and place to place, but no business shall be transacted at an adjourned meeting other than the business that was left unfinished at the meeting at which the adjournment took place.

**(b).** Where a meeting is adjourned for 14 days or more, a like notice of the adjourned meeting shall be given as in the case of the general meeting.

**(c)** If the adjournment is under 14 days it is not necessary to give notice of business to be transacted.

**79.** A vote at a general meeting shall be determined by a show of hands and unless before or on declaration of the show of hands a poll is demanded, a declaration by the chair that a resolution has, on show of hands, been carried unanimously or carried by a particular majority or lost, and an entry to that effect in the minute book is evidence of the fact, without proof of the number or proportion of the votes recorded in favour of, or against, that resolution.

**80. (a).** Each member shall have only one vote per question.

**(b).** All votes shall be given personally or by proxy (if the person is entitled to proxy vote).

**(c)** In the case of an equality of voting on a question, the chair is entitled to cast a second vote.

**81.** If at a meeting a poll on any question is demanded by not less than three members, it shall be taken at that meeting in such a manner as the chair directs and the resolution of the poll shall be deemed to be a resolution of that meeting on that question.

**82.** A member is not entitled to vote at any meeting unless they are on the church roll and in good standing.

**83. (a)** Each member shall be entitled to appoint another member as his/her proxy by notice given to the secretary no later than 24 hours before the time of the meeting in respect of which the proxy is appointed; but no member shall be entitled to proxy votes until they have been a member for one year.

(b) The notice for proxy shall be in the standard form set out by the corporate affairs office.

#### **SEPARATE ORDERS WITHIN THE CHURCH.**

**84. (a) Any separate order granted within the ACOA shall be answerable only to the Synod of the Church via the Presiding Archbishop's office, or to the Bishop appointed by the Presiding Archbishop to represent him/her as the protector of all the religious orders.**

**(b) Any Bishop responsible for religious orders as in 84 (a) shall be deemed to be representing, or be in actual fact, the Bishop Protector of the orders.**

**(c) Any submission for approval to form religious order within the ACOA must be through the Bishop Protector for orders.**

**(d) Any order (if accepted by the Bishop Protectors office,) must obtain a letter or certificate of approval from the Presiding Archbishop's office as proof of their acceptance by the ACOA before they can claim any rights under the name of the ACOA.**

**(e) To comply with legal requirements, any order within the church shall place on its official stationery, a statement in readable size print that they are within the bounds of the ACOA.**

**(f) Any Order applying (requesting) to be under the protection of ACOA MUST forward (send) a copy of their rule of life together with their application of protection, and this rule must be approved by the Presiding Archbishop and/or the Bishop Protector of Orders before the Synod of Bishops can accept the order under the ACOA.**

**85. (a) Any separate order granted within the ACOA shall be exempted from the following rules 29, 30(b,c,d), 33(c),34(b), 37? 43(a,b), 44, 53(a,b,c,d), 54, 83(b), as they will be free to be self governing as long as they remain within the bounds of decency and the rest of this constitution and the law of the land.**

**(b) Other exemptions to this constitution may be granted to an order by the vote of the Synod (which must be minimum of six sitting members or made up to six by senior priests of the church), providing they are not mandatory by the Law of the land or outside the guidelines of Christian decency, and the situation is covered to the satisfaction of the Synod by their own rules and laws.**

**(c) The Synod retains the right to revoke these exemptions if any order is found to :-**

**(I) be using them to contravene the law, the rights of the people, or the bounds of decency.**

**(II) Changing their own constitution to circumvent rules and regulations agreed to by the ACOA Synod and that order.**

**(III) Failing to notify the ACOA Synod of any change in their constitution that may be relevant to the harmony of the order and the ACOA Synod.**

**86. Any separate order under the Name of The Australian Church of Antioch may carry one or more Bishops within their ranks, but only one Archbishop of any order can become a member of the Synod of the ACOA unless the Synod invites another bishop of that order to join the ACOA Synod..**

## **RIGHTS OF MEMBERS.**

**87. (a) Member on request may inspect free of charge:-**

**(I). The register of Members.**

**(II). The minutes of all general meetings.**

**(III). All documents relating to:-**

- 1. financial records,**
- 2. books,**
- 3. securities,**
- 4. minutes of meetings,**
- 5. any other document of the association,**

**(b). The Committee retains the power to refuse inspection of confidential, personal, employment, commercial or legal matters if thought to be not in the best interests of the ACOA. or detrimental to any member.**

**(c). This Constitution of Rules shall be available to all member free of charge, but non-members may be charged a fee for printing.**

**(d). Members are entitled to a copy of any document covered by rule 87, but the ACOA retains the right to ask a fee covering the cost to print them.**

**(e). No member may obtain these copies more than three times in any given year.**

**The above rule 87 is to bring this constitution into line with legal requirements.**