

NEWLIFE CHURCH



THE ONE WHO
CALLS YOU
IS FAITHFUL

GOVERNANCE CHARTER

Version 5.0

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1. INTRODUCTION

This charter outlines the governance model of the Newlife Family of Churches and adopts a cooperative approach expressed as one church made up of multiple congregations with a substantial level of interdependence. It outlines the responsibilities of elders, leaders and staff (which are carried locally or shared together) and how these are managed within the polity and regulations of the Uniting Church in Australia. It is based on a firm belief that the local congregation is the embodiment in one place of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, worshipping, witnessing and serving as a fellowship of the Spirit in Christ, and that in matters of strategic focus, education, administration, finance and compliance, we can do more together than we can do on our own.

2. STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE

The Newlife Family Governance Charter was birthed out of the recognition that Newlife has grown beyond a single geographic location and is now a movement of churches best understood as the 'Newlife Family of Churches'. As Newlife grows in number of locations and size, it is imperative that the health of each local congregation does not come at the expense of church-planting efforts. However, if we are able to adapt our governance, this inherent challenge is resolved. In 2021 the Newlife Family approved the movement of our governance model to include both a Newlife Family Council and Local Leaders/Elders. It enabled the empowerment of church pastors in caring for, shepherding and leading their local congregation well. This shift was pivotal in providing spiritual and pastoral accountability to localised ministry leadership that has a contextualised missional focus and understanding.

This Charter will be reviewed every two years to ensure that the governance model supports the health of localised congregations and the continued vision of planting churches do not come at the expense of each other, but rather are the mutual fruit of healthy spiritual growth.

Newlife is dedicated to seeing more people more like Jesus. The Charter predominantly prioritises two important values for the Family of Churches - the ongoing health and life of local churches whilst empowering and forwarding the overall strategic direction and governance of the wider family of churches. This approach cites a multi-church, cooperative model expressed as one church made up of multiple interdependent congregations.

This Charter ensures that our governance model supports the health of localised congregations and the continued vision of planting churches do not come at the expense of each other, but rather are the mutual fruit of healthy spiritual growth.

Should Newlife not plant any more churches, we still believe this model will best serve the function, form, vision and purpose of Newlife as it currently exists.



3. MISSION

*Newlife Church
is passionate about seeing
more people more like Jesus
by planting and leading
thriving local churches.*

4. MULTI-CHURCH STRATEGY

Newlife pursues multi-church ministry because we believe we can do more together than we can do on our own. A multi-church model enables leaders to learn from one another, affords the opportunity to develop leaders using a broader range of resource and experience, shares resources between congregations, and increases influence across a wider community.

This multi-church strategy has the capacity to expand and develop as new church plants are added. We acknowledge the need to be always open to the leading of God's Spirit and to renew and adjust this model as future changes or growth demands unfold. The defining features of the multi-church model strategy are:

Locally resourced:

- » Bearing witness to that unity that is both Christ's gift and his will;
- » Building up the members and adherents in faith and love;
- » Sustaining the members and adherents in hope;
- » Nurturing the members and adherents in their growth in grace;
- » Equipping the members and adherents for engagement in worship, witness and service in the world as they participate in the mission of Christ;
- » Maintaining pastoral oversight;
- » Encouraging each member and adherent to participate in the life of the Congregation and endeavouring to provide opportunity for that participation;
- » Providing means whereby the members and adherents may be sustained in fellowship, in prayer and in confession, in baptism and in the Lord's Supper, in mutual reception of and mutual exertion in the Gospel proclamation and service.

Newlife pursues multi-church ministry because we believe we can do more together than we can do on our own.



Centrally supported:

- » Shared mission, values, vision, beliefs and strategic direction;
- » Shared governance of the Newlife Family Council;
- » An understanding that assets are the responsibility of the Family of Churches and are entrusted to then be utilised by local congregations;
- » Access to Central Services in areas of Creative Leadership, Generational Resourcing, Pastoral Systems, Administration, Finance, IT, Workplace Health and Safety, Human Resources and Property Management and Maintenance;
- » Strategically supported by and a physical representation of Newlife Care;
- » Resourced by Newlife College for vocational, missional and ministry leadership training.

This approach is supported by Regulation 3.4.2 which states that with Presbytery approval, congregations may relate to one or more other congregations for the better exercise of their mission, and 3.4.5 that one church council can be appointed where congregations are related to each other and that Church Councils of related congregations may act conjointly in respect of all or some of the responsibilities.

5. GOVERNANCE MODEL

The Uniting Church recognises that responsibility for government in the Church belongs to the people of God by virtue of the gifts and tasks which God has laid upon them. The Uniting Church therefore so organises its life that locally, regionally and nationally government will be entrusted to representatives, men and women, bearing the gifts and graces with which God has endowed them for the building up of the Church.
(Basis of Union Paragraph 15)

5.1 Newlife Family Council

The organisational model for the Newlife Family of Churches is a best practice approach supported by the polity and regulations of the Uniting Church of Australia. The approach ensures Newlife emphasises its theological belief that the localised church is the best expression of the body of Christ and the incarnational Gospel. Therefore, the local church must have local leadership, shepherding and accountability to Leaders/Elders who are representatives of that local congregation. The structure of the Newlife governance model stems from the recognition that as our family of congregations continues to grow, so will our need to organise our accountability, governance and pastoral structures. We believe the model is not only one which aligns with and fits within the polity and life of the Uniting Church of Australia but also promotes best practice theologically, pastorally and missionally for the Newlife Family of Churches. It is intended to always increase clarity and transparency while providing checks and balances for decision-makers that protect the church as well as those in leadership.

The Newlife Family Council serves Newlife Local Leaders/Elders and Members by providing spiritually led strategic direction for the Newlife Family of Churches. The Local Leaders/Elders will be a locally elected Leadership/Eldership who will help

to appoint pastoral locations, affirm strategic direction and provide prayerful discernment as to the spiritual health and vitality of the Newlife Church they oversee. Leaders/Elders from all congregations will meet for a full Leaders'/Elders' Meeting across the family twice a year. This governance structure serves the members of the Newlife Family of Churches to see more people more like Jesus. Newlife Family Council fits within the governance model of the Uniting Church, which is not about hierarchy but inter-related councils.



5.2 Governance within the Uniting Church

The Uniting Church is governed by non-hierarchical, inter-related councils, each with different responsibilities.

The Uniting Church is organised by groups of women and men, lay and ordained, consulting together, usually making decisions by consensus, in each area of the church's life. The church is committed to this model of collaborative leadership – each council with its distinct tasks, recognising the limits of its responsibilities in relation to other councils.

Among other things, the Basis of Union provides for the structure of government of the church through inter-related councils as specified in Paragraph 15:

- a. The Congregation
- b. The Elders and the Councils within a congregation or group of congregations
- c. The Presbytery (the district council)
- d. The Synod (the regional council)
- e. The Assembly (the national council)

Paragraph 15 of the Basis of Union outlines the framework in which these councils will operate.

The Uniting Church recognises that the responsibility for government in the Church belongs to the people of God by virtue of the gifts and tasks which God has laid upon them. The Uniting Church therefore organises its life so that locally, regionally and nationally, government will be entrusted to representatives, men and women, bearing the gifts and graces with which God has endowed them for the building up of the Church.

The Uniting Church acknowledges that Christ alone is supreme in His Church, and that He may speak to it through any of its councils. It is the task of every council to wait upon God's Word, and to obey God's will in the matters allocated to its oversight. Each council will recognise the limits of its own authority and give heed to other councils of the Church, so that the whole body of believers may be united by mutual submission in the service of the Gospel.

Government of the Uniting Church is unlike that of other churches, including its own predecessor denominations. Three particular features are noteworthy:

- i. It is a non-hierarchical form of government.
- ii. Decisions taken in one Council may bind the whole church (e.g. the decision of a presbytery to ordain a person must be accepted by the whole church) notwithstanding that in some areas more than one Council can make some aspect of the decision (e.g. property dealings).
- iii. Decisions are made by councils, not individuals.

Whilst the Newlife Family Council offers lines of accountability, it is in no way outside the form and function that has guided the governance of the Uniting Church and also that which is currently experienced by Newlife's Eldership Council.

5.3 Brief Descriptions

5.3.1 Members

The local expression of the body of Christ is made up of committed members who invest in and identify with the vision, mission, values and beliefs of the local church. Newlife Family of Churches exists because of members who are invested in the call and mission of God. The members of the Newlife Family of Churches shall be those who are recognised as members by

baptism or on transfer in the manner prescribed (Regulation 1.5.b and 1.6). Members are baptised persons recognised by the Church Council as being within the pastoral responsibility of the Church or members-in-association who participate in the life of a Congregation or Faith Community while maintaining membership in another denomination.

Members will:

- a. Support and adhere to the Basis of Union;
- b. Have opportunity to affirm/appoint local Leaders/Elders;
- c. Approve budget for Newlife Family;
- d. Affirm annual reports; and
- e. Affirm/approve appointments of localised ministry agents through the process of a Joint Nominating Committee where required.

The leadership structure exists because Newlife Family of Churches have members who identify this as their church home in one of our localised Church expressions of the Newlife Family of Churches.

The structure of the Newlife governance model stems from the recognition that as our family continues to grow, so will our need to organise our accountability, governance and pastoral structures.

5.3.2 Ministry agents, pastors and team members

Ministry agents, pastors and team members are those who are employed as staff to assist in the leadership, pastoring and administration of the local Newlife Church and/or Central Services. These are internally appointed positions allocated to people – whether by external interview process or internal appointment – who demonstrate that the appropriate gifts, skills and calling in an individual line up with an opportunity on the Newlife Family of Churches staff team.



Ministry agents and team members will:

- a. Be affirmed members of a church within the Newlife Family of Churches.
- b. Work within the Vision, Beliefs, Values and Strategy of the Newlife Family of Churches.
- c. Work within the Constitution¹, Code of Ethics² and Basis of Union³ of the Uniting Church.

¹The Uniting Church Constitution, also known as the Regulations – is a document that provides structural, procedural and policy clarity for the whole Uniting Church denomination. It is a document of depth and breadth dealing with many issues across the life of the Uniting Church.

²The Uniting Church in Australia believes that all people are made in the image of God and as such we accept every individual regardless of race, creed or gender. As a community of faith we are committed to providing a place in society where human beings can explore what it means to be made in the image of God. As an expression of this commitment, the Uniting Church in Australia recognises its responsibility to provide worshiping and pastoral communities that are free from abuse. We seek to provide a safe environment for all people to explore and express their faith in Jesus Christ.

³Three denominations came together in 1977 to form the Uniting Church in Australia. The Basis of Union is the document that set the platform for how these churches came together. It outlines the roles of the different councils of the Church including the presbyteries, the synods, and the Assembly. It states the central affirmations of the Christian faith and is a guide to what is central in the life of the Uniting Church.

5.3.3 Local Ministers/Pastors

The local Ministers and local Pastors of the Newlife Family of Churches work under the leadership of the Lead Minister of Newlife Church, to undertake activities and leadership in one of the Newlife local church communities and to manage other employees and volunteers to fulfil the mission of the Church.

Local Ministers will, in accordance with the Regulations 2.2.1.a:

- a. Preach the word.
- b. Preside at the celebration of the sacraments.
- c. Provide for other persons to preside at worship and/or preach within the pastoral charge where the mInister is in placement.
- d. Witness in the community to the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- e. Guide and instruct the members of the Church and equip them for their ministry in the community.
- f. Nurture candidates for baptism and confirmation.
- g. Provide pastoral oversight and counsel wherever needed.
- h. Serve in the community, especially among those who are hurt, disadvantaged, oppressed or marginalised.
- i. Pay careful attention to administrative responsibilities.
- j. Provide appropriate observance to the discipline of the Church.
- k. Enhance the Minister's own gifts for the work of ministry.
- l. Pioneer new expressions of the gospel and encourage effective ways of fulfilling the mission of the church.
- m. Participate fully and regularly in the public worship of God and the mission and fellowship of the Congregation with which the Minister is enrolled.

Local Pastors will:

- a. Undertake responsibility for a range of functions and various activities including to lead, shepherd and provide oversight for the local church and liaise with the Lead Minister and Newlife Family Council through their local Leadership/Eldership in the planning and coordination of its services or programs.
- b. Provide assistance to the Lead Minister of Newlife Church in planning, coordinating, implementing and administering the activities and policies including preparation of budgets for the local Church.
- c. They will, in accordance with the Regulations 2.2.2.a:
 - iv. teach the belief and practices of the Church;
 - v. provide pastoral oversight of members and/or groups operating under the auspices of the church;
 - vi. lead worship in congregations or faith communities of the Church; and
 - vii. ensure evangelism or service beyond a gathered congregation is exercised under the auspices of the Church.

5.3.4 Lead Minister

The Lead Minister will provide visionary, strategic, theological and pastoral leadership to Newlife Family of Churches – one family, many churches, a multiplying movement seeking to see more people more like Jesus. The Lead Minister will serve this purpose in a manner consistent with the espoused values of the Newlife Family of Churches. The Lead Minister is the senior leader of Newlife, as well as the CEO of Newlife Care. The Lead Minister leads the ministry and staff teams, and works closely with the Newlife Family Council and elected Leaders/Elders in exercising spiritual oversight for the Newlife Family of Churches.

5.3.5 Local Leaders/Elders

Regulation 3.1.2 (a) states the Church Council shall give priority in its life to building up the Congregation in faith and love, sustaining members in hope, and leading the Congregation to a fuller participation in Christ's mission in the world. A selection of the responsibilities of the Newlife Family Council (under Regulations 3.1.2) will be delegated to a group of Local Leaders/Elders in each church (congregation/faith community) [Constitution 70 (g)] and will include:

Delegated responsibilities:

- a. sharing with the Minister(s) in mission and in the pastoral care and spiritual oversight of the Congregation;
- b. nurturing the members and adherents in their growth in grace;
- c. making decisions in accordance with the Regulations concerning baptism, confirmation and membership, and the keeping and reviewing of the rolls of the Congregation (this can be delegated to central services administration team as well);
- d. assisting the Minister(s)/Pastor(s) in the conduct of worship and in the administration of the sacraments; and
- e. determining the time and place of services of public worship.

The Local Leaders/Elders group will report to the Newlife Family Council which ultimately holds responsibility for (a) to (e). All Leaders/Elders are required to be faithful members and regular attendees of a local Newlife Church.

The Newlife Family Council model enables local Leaders/Elders to focus upon the health, pastoral vitality and spiritual direction of their local congregation whilst also aligning with the wider family under the oversight of the Newlife Family Council.

5.3.6 Newlife Leaders/Elders Meeting

All Local Leaders/Elders will meet twice a year and will be responsible for the care and collaborative spiritual oversight of the Newlife Family of Churches. The Newlife Family Leaders'/Elders' meeting will seek to align itself with the vision and strategic direction of the family. The primary purpose of these meetings is for relational and spiritual unity across the church.

They will also serve to provide:

- Missional, strategic and family-wide alignment and relational health;
- Approval of nominations for Newlife Family Council; and
- Adherence to budget, doctrine, bylaws and governance.

5.3.7 Newlife Family Council

The Newlife Family Council is the governing body that oversees the vision, strategy, compliance and direction of the Newlife Family of Churches as a whole. The Newlife Family Council model enables local Leaders/Elders to focus on the health, pastoral vitality and spiritual direction of their local congregation while also aligning with the wider family under the oversight of the Newlife Family Council.

The core responsibilities of the Newlife Family Council includes:

1. Oversight of the responsibilities delegated to the Local Leaders/Elders Group;
2. Carrying out its functions in accordance with the Regulations concerning applicants for the specified ministries;
3. Managing the financial affairs and the general administration of the Congregation including the reception, preparation and presentation of all necessary budgets, statements and reports;

4. Arranging for audit, presentation and examination of the accounts of all the funds of the Congregation; (See Reg. 3.8.7)
5. Managing and controlling property in accordance with the Regulations; (See Reg. 4.4.1)
6. Preparing and presenting to a meeting of the Congregation an annual report concerning the life and work of the Congregation including its worship, mission and service, and making recommendations with regard to the program for the ensuing year;
7. Exercising oversight of the appointment of officers and leaders of Congregational organisations;
8. Referral of matters to Presbytery as prescribed;
9. Discipline of members (See Reg. 5.1.2 – 5.2.5);
10. Carrying out its functions in relation to Ministers-in-Association (See Reg. 2.11.1);
11. Reporting annually to the Synod or a body determined by the Synod [See Reg. 3.9.1.(d)].

5.4 Committees

The Uniting Church Regulations allow for a Congregation(s) to form other committees or agencies as may be necessary or desirable for the effective exercise of their responsibilities and for the better ordering of the life of the Congregation [Constitution Part A 24 (c)].

The Committees forseen for the Newlife Family Council are:

1. Governance
2. Finance
3. Risk, Legal and Occupational Health and Safety
4. Strategy
5. Property
6. Discipleship and Formation
7. Newlife Care and Overseas Missions
8. Human Resources
9. Church Plants

The Newlife Family Council, who oversees these committees, holds ultimate responsibility for the delegated responsibilities. [Regulation 3.8.2]. The committees are to be made up of skilled members of the Newlife Family of Churches discerned by the chair of the community and approved by the Newlife Family Council to operate in this function in accordance with their charter. Each of the committees come under annual review of both charter and membership by the Newlife Family Council.

5.5 Congregations and Faith Communities

Most church plants will commence as Faith Communities (Regulation 3.9.2). Such communities will be groups of people seeking to explore the implications of faith in God, gathering in order to serve the community and/or nurturing one another in faith worshiping together and in relationship with Newlife for nurture and support.

Regulation 3.9.2 (c) establishes the ordering of the life of a Faith Community under the oversight of the Presbytery. The Regulations allow a Presbytery to delegate these responsibilities to the Newlife Family Council for the “better fulfilment of those responsibilities” (Constitution Part B 30). Thus, the Newlife Family Council would have responsibility to encourage the faith community members, resource the development of its mission, and be accountable for its resources.

In planting new churches, it is proposed that foundational and core ministries are identified.

Foundational ministries are those ministries that will be provided by every new church plant in the Newlife Family of Churches from the commencement of the launch. If these ministries

cannot be adequately resourced by people, facilities or finances, then launch will be delayed until they can be provided.

It is anticipated that for Newlife Church plants the local Ministries will be:

- Weekly worship
- Children's ministry
- Small groups

Core Ministries are those that are not essential to launch, but must be provided as soon as practicable after launch. In a similar way to foundational ministries, core ministries together express the heart, vision, values and culture of the Newlife Family of Churches.

Core Ministries will be:

- Care ministry (Local mission)
- Youth ministry
- Engagement with overseas mission

Under Regulation 3.9.2 (a) it is the Presbytery that recognises a Faith Community and Newlife will make application to the relevant Presbytery for recognition of each new church plant. In each case, the establishment of faith communities will be negotiated with the relevant presbytery and the relationships documented in a memorandum of understanding. While the regulations allow for confirmed members of the Church who are part of the faith community to have their membership recorded with the Presbytery, in the case of Newlife Church plants, members will be encouraged to place their membership with the Newlife Family Council [Regulation 3.9.2.(b)].

The relevant presbytery may invite leaders from the Faith Community to attend meetings of the Presbytery [Regulation 3.9.2 (d)]. At an appropriate time in its development, a Faith Community may apply to Presbytery to be recognised as a

Congregation, or the Presbytery (or Newlife Family Council as the designated body) may request a Faith Community to make such an application [Regulation 3.9.2 (e)]. In such cases, with the approval of the Presbytery and unless the Faith Community requests otherwise, the new Congregation would be a part of the Newlife Family Council [Constitution Part A 24 (b)].

It is the hope of this charter that the Newlife Family Council will empower the Local Faith Communities to decide when they are ready to move towards Congregations and have that conversation when appropriate with Presbytery. It is our hope that all Newlife Churches will grow and progress towards maturity in their life and witness.



6. APPOINTMENT OF LOCAL LEADERS/ELDERS AND COUNCILLORS

6.1 Membership of Local Leaders/Elders

Eldership is the primary model of government that was instituted by the apostles in the early church. Key scripture passages indicating eldership include Titus 1:5 and 1:9, 1 Peter 5:1-4, Acts 20:28-31 and James 5:14. Women and men both served in leadership roles in the early church and the Uniting Church has a clear understanding that women and men are eligible to be Elders.

6.2 Appointment of Local Leaders/Elders

6.2.1 Election of Local Leaders/Elders

In electing Local Leaders/Elders and Newlife Family Councillors, the Congregation will recognise and appoint confirmed members or members-in-association who are endowed with gifts fitting them for the responsibilities of the office. Election will be by written ballot or by an approved online form in a meeting of the Congregation. The meeting shall declare to be elected only those persons who receive the support of a majority of those participating in the ballot [Regulations 3.3.2]. A Faith Community may appoint leaders from its participants [Regulation 3.9.2 (d)].

6.2.2 Election of Offices with Leadership/Eldership

The Leaders/Elders will annually elect one of its members as chairperson. This will be done through this process [Regulation 3.6 (b)]:

1. Members of Local Leaders/Elders express interest in nomination for Chairperson.
2. Members of Local Leaders/Elders vote on presented names.
3. The votes reveal Chair and Deputy Chairpersons.
4. The Local Leadership/Eldership will aim to select someone with a healthy working relationship with the Lead Minister.

6.3 Membership of Newlife Family Council

In determining the composition of the council the appointing body shall have regard to the principle that in accordance with the call and gifts of the Spirit each member shall have a part in the ministry of the Church, and that government of the Church will be “entrusted to representatives, men and women, bearing gifts and graces with which God has endowed them for the building up of the Church”. (Basis of Union Paragraph 15).

6.4 Appointment of Newlife Family Council (ongoing)

6.4.1 The Election of the Newlife Family Council

The Newlife Family Council will be made up of positions:

1. The Lead Minister
2. Chairperson (elected from the councillors below)
3. Deputy Chairperson (elected from the councillors below)

Councillors who represent skills in the following:

1. Governance
2. Finance
3. Risk, Legal and Occupational Health and Safety
4. Strategy
5. Property
6. Discipleship and Formation
7. Newlife Care and Overseas Missions
8. Human Resources
9. Church Plants

Newlife Family Council will be made up of Newlife Membership.

6.4.2 Qualifications of Councillors

1. A member of the Newlife Family of Churches, or – in the event of a qualified person for the role of councillor be someone not in membership of Newlife – they will be an associated person who is willing to uphold the values, beliefs, mission and vision of Newlife Family of Churches whilst serving on the Newlife Family Council. (Reference App. 1&2 sec. 3.3)
2. They will supply written consent of their ability to act as a councillor of the Newlife Family Council.

6.4.3 Terms and Retirement of Councillors

1. Councillors are elected for a period of 3 years.
2. At each Annual General Meeting, any Councillor who has held office for three years or more since last being elected, must retire from office, but is eligible for re-appointment immediately (subject to an appointment process).
3. The members may move to increase or decrease the time for which a Councillor can hold office.
4. The members are able to remove any councillor before their term of office is completed through general consensus. In this case, a new appointment process would be undertaken. It is important to note that any cessation of a councillor's term will follow Regulations 3.3.3.

6.4.4 Reappointment of Councillors

Councillors are eligible to seek reappointment to the Newlife Family Council on three occasions provided that a Councillor's period of service shall not exceed a period of nine (9) years consecutively, unless a need for an extension of this period has been determined by council consensus.

6.4.5 Casual Vacancy of Councillors

The Newlife Family Council is able to appoint a casual Councillor in the event that a certain skill, wisdom or ability is needed for a season of the Council's leadership. This position will cease to exist at the following Annual General Meeting unless it is ratified by the members of Newlife Family of Churches.

6.5 Following the initial appointment of Newlife Family Council

Following the initial placement, the new Newlife Family Council will stagger their terms of service to ensure effective turnover while their experience is retained to continue wisdom in decision-making.

A Chairperson and Deputy Chair Person will be elected each year at the first meeting following the Annual General Meeting.

6.5.1 Skills Matrix and Nominations of Councillors

A skills matrix has been developed to ensure members of the Council appointed are equipped to add value in the following areas:

1. Governance
2. Finance
3. Risk, Legal and Occupational Health and Safety
4. Strategy
5. Property
6. Discipleship and Formation
7. Newlife Care and Overseas Missions
8. Human Resources
9. Church Plants

The Lead Minister, Chair of Council and one other member of Council will form a nominating committee who will short-list names through an interview process and present a final list to the current Council for endorsement and affirmation. These names will be presented to congregations for election and ratification.

7. POLICY FORMATION

It is recognised that over the life of the church, policies will need to be established, developed and implemented to guide the form and function of the Newlife Family of Churches. These policies will include:

- Delegations of Authority
- Conflict of Interest
- Central Services
- Human Resources
- Grievance/Dispute Management
- Financial Accountability

This is a list of examples, not an exhaustive list of policies. It should be noted that most policies already exist within the life of the Uniting Church and can be found in the Basis of Union, Code of Ethics and Uniting Church Constitution and Regulations. Our current governance structure is already guided by these policies. However, where policies need to be strengthened or applied – this will be the role of the Newlife Family Council to discern, lead and establish necessary changes or policies for the life and witness of the church.



APPENDIX 1. NEWLIFE FAMILY COUNCIL CHARTER

1. Authority

The Newlife Family Council operates as the authority and governance body of the local church including taking responsibility for interfacing with the Presbytery on matters of property, finance and pastoral accountability. The Newlife Family Council acts under the elected authority of the Newlife Family of Churches to oversee the governance, vision, strategy and spiritual oversight of the Newlife Family of Churches.

2. Appointment

The appointment of Newlife Family Councillors will occur at the end of a Councillor's three year term and will be a process of nomination according to the required skill set required by the vacant seat on the Newlife Family Council. The Lead Minister, Chair of Council and one other member of Council will hold interviews to bring a selected nominee before the Newlife Family Council members for endorsement and affirmation. Following the initial appointment of the new Newlife Family Councillor, the council will then stagger their terms of service to ensure effective turnover while ensuring that experience is retained to continue discernment and wisdom in decision-making. It is important to note the Newlife Family Council nominations will be endorsed by the Council and brought before membership for affirmation.

3. Membership

3.1. The Newlife Family Council will be made up of **ten** positions that will consist of:

3.1.1 The Lead Minister

3.1.2 A Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson (elected from the councillors below)

3.1.3 Councillors who represents skills in the following:

- Governance
- Finance
- Risk, Legal and Occupational Health and Safety
- Strategy
- Property
- Discipleship and Formation
- Newlife Care and Overseas Mission
- Human Resources
- Church Plants

3.2 Councillors will:

- Hold a current and valid Blue Card or relevant Working With Children check;
- Be a committed follower of Jesus Christ;
- Be an active and regularly attending member of the Newlife Family of Churches;
- Be an effective leader with demonstrated capacity to build a team around them;
- Have an entrepreneurial spirit, infused with a passion for evangelism and mission;
- Have specialised gifts which bring diversity to the council's skill set;
- Support the charism, culture and beliefs of the Newlife Family of Churches; and,
- Commit to adherence of the Uniting Church Regulations, Code of Ethics, Basis of Union and other essential documents.

3.3 If a councillor's nomination should successfully proceed to the interview stage, they will need to declare conflicts of interest pertaining to:

- Membership of another church;
- Familial relationship with Staff, Local Leaders/Elders or

- other Councillors;
- Any business partnership that may benefit from their successful election; and
- A membership to a different council, committee or group which would jeopardise their prioritisation of the health of the Newlife Family of Churches; and
- The interviewers/Newlife Family Council will discern appropriate treatment as to any conflict of interest which arises in relation to business.

4. Purposes

The Newlife Family Council will be the governing body that oversees vision, strategy, compliance and direction of the Newlife Family of Churches as a whole. A Newlife Family Council model allows Local Leaders/Elders to focus upon the health, pastoral vitality and spiritual direction of their local congregation while also aligning with the wider family under the oversight of the Newlife Family of Churches. While Newlife currently has one Council of Elders, separating the role into Newlife Family Council and Local Leaders/Elders ensures both the family and the local churches are thriving due to the intentional focus of able leadership.

The core responsibilities of the Newlife Family Council includes:

- Oversight of the responsibilities delegated to the Local Leaders/Elders Group;
- Carrying out its functions in accordance with the Regulations concerning applicants for the specified ministries;
- Managing the financial affairs and the general administration of the Congregation including the reception, preparation and presentation of all necessary budgets, statements and reports;

- Arranging for audit, presentation and examination of the accounts of all the funds of the Congregation; (See Reg. 3.8.7)
- Managing and controlling property in accordance with the Regulations; (See Reg. 4.4.1)
- Preparing and presenting to a meeting of the Congregation an annual report concerning the life and work of the Congregation including its worship, mission and service, and making recommendations with regard to the program for the ensuing year;
- Exercising oversight of the appointment of officers and leaders of Congregational organisations;
- Referral of matters to Presbytery as prescribed;
- Carrying out its functions in relation to Ministers-in-Association; (See Reg. 2.11.1);
- Reporting annually to the Synod or a body determined by the Synod; [See Reg. 3.9.1.(d)] and
- Forming and defining the charter of all committees that report to the Newlife Family Council.

5. *Quorum*

5.1 A Quorum will be achieved with 50% of councillors present plus 1.

6. *Voting and Minutes*

6.1 It will be the discretion of the chair person whether voting on matters for council approval will be passed by consensus or a majority, or majority vote by secret ballot.

6.2 The minutes of the council will be taken by the Secretary of Council.

7. *Independent Professional Advice*

7.1 Should the council determine it necessary to seek independent professional advice, this advice must be shown due cause and approved through council vote.

8. Annual Review of Goals

8.1 Newlife Family of Churches will assist the lead minister in the setting of and reviewing of annual goals.

9. Delegated Authority

The Newlife Family Council will delegate the authority to Newlife Local Leaders/Elders to:

- 9.1 Share with the Minister(s) in mission and in the pastoral care and spiritual oversight of the Congregation;
- 9.2 Nurture the members and adherents in their growth in grace;
- 9.3 Make decisions in accordance with the Regulations concerning baptism, confirmation and membership, and the keeping and reviewing of the rolls of the Congregation;
- 9.4 Assist the Minister(s)/Pastor(s) in the conduct of worship and in the administration of the sacraments;
- 9.5 Determine the time and place of services of public worship;
- 9.6 Approve of localised church budget to be submitted to Newlife Family Council for approval; and
- 9.7 Provide accountability and care of local ministry agents and staff members.



APPENDIX 2. LOCAL LEADERS/ELDERS CHARTER

1. Authority

Regulation 3.1.2 (a) states the Church Council shall give priority in its life to building up the Congregation in faith and love, sustaining members in hope, and leading the Congregation to a fuller participation in Christ's mission in the world.

2. Appointment

In electing Local Leaders/Elders and Newlife Family Councillors, the local Congregation will recognise and appoint confirmed members or members-in-association who are endowed with gifts fitting them for the responsibilities of the office. Election will be by written ballot in a meeting of the Congregation. The meeting shall declare to be elected only those persons who receive the support of a majority of those participating in the ballot [Regulations 3.3.2]. A Faith Community may appoint leaders from its participants [Regulation 3.9.2 (d)].

2.1 The Local Leaders/Elders will annually elect one of its members as chairperson. This will be done through the following:

- Members of Local Leaders/Elders express interest in nomination for Chairperson;
- Members vote on presented names;
- The votes reveal both Chair and Deputy Chairpersons; and
- This Local Leadership/Eldership will aim to select someone who has a healthy working relationship with the Lead Minister and Local Pastor.

2.2 If a Local Leader/Elder nomination successfully proceed to the interview stage, they will need to declare conflicts of interest pertaining to:

- Membership of another church;
- Familial relationship with staff, Local Leaders/Elders or other Councillors;
- Any business partnership that may benefit from their successful election;
- A membership to a different, council, committee or group which would jeopardise their prioritisation of the health of the Newlife Family of Churches; and
- The interviewers/Newlife Family Council will discern appropriate treatment as to any conflict of interest which arises in relation to business.

2.3. Local Leaders/Elders will:

- Be a holder of current and valid Blue Card or relevant Working With Children check;
- Be a committed follower of Jesus Christ;
- Be an active and regularly attending member of the Newlife Family of Churches;
- Be a strong leader with demonstrated capacity to build a team around them and show commitment to mentoring and supporting the growth of future leaders so as to build the church's missional capacity;
- Have an entrepreneurial spirit, infused with a passion for evangelism and mission;
- Have specialised gifts which bring diversity to the council's skill set;
- Support the charism, culture and beliefs of the Newlife Family of Churches; and
- Adhere to the Uniting Church Regulations, Code of Ethics, Basis of Union and other essential documents.

3. *Membership*

- There will be initially three (3) elected Local Leaders/Elders at each church and then one Local Leader/Elder elected for every 100 persons (members and members in association) after the initial 100 congregants. This shall take place until the Local Leadership/Eldership reaches 10 Local Leaders/Elders inclusive of the Local Pastor;

- The Local Pastor will be the only staff member as a non-elected elder of the local congregation.

4. Purposes

A selection of the responsibilities of the Newlife Family Council (under Regulations 3.1.2) will be delegated to a group of Local Leaders/Elders in each Newlife Church (congregation/faith community) [Constitution 70 (g)] which will:

- Share with the Minister(s) in mission and in the pastoral care and spiritual oversight of the Congregation;
- Nurture the members and adherents in their growth in grace;
- Make decisions in accordance with the Regulations concerning baptism, confirmation and membership, and the keeping and reviewing of the rolls of the Congregation;
- Assist the Minister(s)/Pastor(s) in the conduct of worship and in the administration of the Sacraments;
- The time and place of services of public worship;
- Approve localised church budget to be submitted to Newlife Family Council for approval;
- Provide accountability and care of local ministry agents and staff members; and
- Discipline members (See Reg. 5.1.2 – 5.2.5).

5. Quorum

5.1 A Quorum will be achieved with 50% of Local Leaders/Elders present plus 1.

6. Annual Performance Review

6.1 The Local Leaders/Elders will conduct the performance review of the Pastor/Minister of their church in partnership and agreement with the Lead Minister/proxy of the Lead Minister.

APPENDIX 3. NEWLIFE FAMILY FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

This governance model is not intended to change the vision and values for operation of finances at Newlife Church. The financial management of the Newlife Family of Churches will clearly align with the following:

- » Strategic Plan – The outworking of Newlife Vision
- » Yearly Budgets - Revenue Planning and Expenditures
- » Accountability
- » Communication

Strategic Planning – Business Modelling

The preparation of long range financial forecasts which align with the Newlife Business Plan (5 – 10 years). Modelled to ensure continued health, well-being, ministry and administrative support of each Newlife Faith Community/Congregation.

Revenue Planning and expenditures – Yearly Budgets

The Newlife Family Council and Local Leaders/Elders will approve yearly budgets for Newlife Family of Churches that align with the above values. The yearly budgets will be presented to the Newlife Members for endorsement.

Accountability

The Finance Committee will ensure that financial performance is in line with budget as set and will report back to the Newlife Family Council on any variances to budget.

The Finance Committee as appointed, will possess financial experience and skills to adequately monitor the financial operations of Newlife throughout the year.

The Lead Minister will ensure that Forecasts and Budgets as set by the Financial Managers are in support of Mission, Vision and Values as intended in the Newlife Business Plan, including:


- Adequate provision of Ministry at the local level;
- Adequate provision of Centralised services;
- Growth of the Newlife Family of Churches;
- Adherence to Uniting Church Regulations; and
- Support of local Presbytery.

Communication

The Newlife Family Council will be committed to financial transparency, clearly communicating to the Newlife Family of Churches at all levels about the use of funds and the adherence to the endorsed financial plan.

Disputes should be minimised if the above Financial Management plan is observed. However, if disputes arise on the expenditures of Newlife revenue, refer to dispute resolution process.



A photograph of a woman with blonde hair and glasses, smiling warmly while holding a baby. The baby is wearing a striped shirt. The background is softly blurred, showing what appears to be an indoor setting with a blue wall.

*The one who calls
you is faithful, & HE
WILL DO IT.*

1 THESSALONIANS 5:24



NEWLIFE CHURCH