

# Evangelical Free Church of Australia

## Membership Policy

### **1 Effective Date**

1.1 1 July 2019

### **2 Purpose**

2.1 This policy sets out the basic requirements for membership at EFCA.

### **3 Authority**

3.1 This policy was first approved by the Board of Deacons (the **Board**) at its meeting held on October 19, 2003. This version has been revised by the Board on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2019.

### **4 Objectives**

4.1 To facilitate the initiation of born-again Christians into the church through baptism.

4.2 To facilitate the initiation into EFCA of baptised Christians who have been attending EFCA but who are non-EFCA members.

4.3 To provide a framework for the proper administration of membership at EFCA.

### **5 Values**

5.1 Baptism is one of the only two sacraments recognised and administered by the church. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to a Christian.

5.2 Baptism is natural consequent of conversion and an open confession of a Christian to the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, a genuinely born-again Christian should seek the earliest opportunity to be baptised.

5.3 Baptism is the way to initiate a born-again Christian into the body of Christ, which is the church. Therefore, a genuinely born-again Christian must seek to be baptised to part-take in the body of Christ.

5.4 The local church is the expression of the Lord's church on earth. Therefore, a baptised Christian must join a local church to stay in the Lord's church. The EFCA strongly encourages fellow Christians who regularly join our service to become EFCA members to fully take part in manifesting the Lord's Kingdom.

5.5 EFCA recognises the efficacy of baptism conducted by mainstream Christian denominations, which include Catholic, Orthodox, Charismatic and Evangelical churches, but not heretic sects. (Catholics can apply for baptism if they opt to.) In this context, baptism also includes official confirmation by a mainstream Christian denomination in adulthood after infant baptism.

### **6 Membership Requirements**

6.1 Christians who have not been baptised following conversion are required to go through the full catechesis induction, which may involve attending classes, studying or listening to induction materials provided. Upon completion of

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induction, he/she may be baptised following a satisfactory interview to ascertain his/her faith in the Lord.

- 6.2 Fellow Christians who have been baptised elsewhere are required to go through an induction on the heritage of EFCA, which may involve attending classes, studying or listening to induction materials provided. Upon completion of induction, he/she may be initiated into EFCA following a satisfactory interview to ascertain his/her faith in the Lord.
- 6.3 All who seek to become members of EFCA must subscribe to and abide by the stipulations in the Constitution of EFCA (the **Constitution**) and all relevant policy of EFCA, including this policy.

### 7 Membership Category

- 7.1 This part serves the following purposes:
- (a) Sets out the nature of the different membership category currently in use; and
  - (b) Outlines the rules governing the administration of the membership category to ensure clarity and transparency.
- 7.2 There are three (3) categories of membership:<sup>1</sup>
- (a) **Member (active)**<sup>2</sup> – This category has voting right at general meeting of EFCA.
  - (b) **Member (inactive)**<sup>3</sup> – Any member who has failed to attend at least one (1) worship service during a recent 12 months period, or, anyone who is uncontactable by the church for a prolonged period of no less than ninety (90) days. This category has no voting right at general meeting of EFCA.
  - (c) **Non-Member** – anyone who ceases to be a member of EFCA (see paragraph 7.7 below) or has never been a member of EFCA.
- 7.3 The membership category of a person is the one stated on the **Church Members Register**.
- 7.4 Any change to the membership category of a person must be authorised by the Board or a person with the delegated authority to do so. For clarity, church office staff cannot change the membership category without express instruction from the Board.
- 7.5 The attendance of a person for the purpose of paragraph 7.2(b) is based on the attendance record maintained by the Cantonese, English and Mandarin Ministry Teams.
- 7.6 In determining whether EFCA is able to contact a person for the purpose of paragraph 7.2(b), the church will use its best effort (subject to available

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<sup>1</sup> The Constitution provides for an addition category called "Associate Member". This category is not currently in used.

<sup>2</sup> This is equivalent to "Full Member" under the Constitution.

<sup>3</sup> This is equivalent to "Non-Member" under the Constitution in terms of voting right, but is slightly different to a Non-Member under this policy for administrative purposes.

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resources) to contact the person using the last known contact details of the person.

- 7.7 Cases in which a person will cease to be a member of EFCA include, but not limited to:
- (a) Anyone who has been a “Member (inactive)” for a continuous period of three (3) years;
  - (b) Membership was formally transferred to another church in Sydney, Australia;
  - (c) Membership was cancelled for reasons permitted under the Constitution.
- 7.8 Any member can choose to become a Member (inactive) or a Non-Member at any time by notifying EFCA in writing.
- 7.9 **Reinstatement of Member (inactive).** Member (inactive) can become a Member (active) at the complete discretion of the Board, but it is generally expected that the person will have started attending at least three (3) consecutive worship services.
- 7.10 **Reinstatement of Non-Member.** Anyone who ceases to be a member of EFCA can become a member again by making a written application (including reasons and any applicable forms) and satisfying any other procedural requirement determined by the Board.
- 7.11 The decision of the Board regarding reinstatement is final.
- 7.12 **Periodic Review.** The category assigned to each person is updated periodically based on attendance and other relevant records of EFCA.
- 7.13 **Notification.** If a person’s membership category needs to be changed following a review, then:
- (a) The person will be notified at least forty-five (45) days before the change will be formalised.
  - (b) The person must inform EFCA within the forty-five (45) days period mentioned above, if they consider that they have been placed in an incorrect membership category.
  - (c) For the purpose of this paragraph 7.13, the person is taken to have been notified if list(s) showing people in the relevant membership category has been made available for inspection.

## 8 Voting at General Meeting

- 8.1 Only Member (active) can vote at a General Meeting of EFCA.
- 8.2 The Board will make available a list containing all the names of Member (active) no later than three (3) days after the issue of notice of general meeting. This list will be provided in a format and make available at location(s) determined by the Board; but will generally include a printed list that can be inspected at each Sunday service location.
- 8.3 Anyone who wishes to vote at a General Meeting of EFCA must ensure that they are recorded as a Member (active), and they must inform EFCA at least

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fourteen (14) days before the day of the General Meeting if they have been omitted but should have been included under the rules in Clause 7.

### **9 Church Members Register**

- 9.1 The Church Members Register refers to the official church record, which may be in paper or electronic format, which contains the membership and related information (e.g. contact details like addresses, phone numbers, email, etc) of all church members and non-members.
- 9.2 It is the responsibility of EFCA to update the Church Members Register periodically based on best available information.
- 9.3 It is the responsibility of each person to inform EFCA if their contact details have changed or if they are aware of any other inaccuracy on the Church Members Register.