

Changes to NSCAC By-laws Summary

Background

The proposed changes to the NSCAC By-laws are triggered by some major changes in the C&MA Constitution for Local Churches adopted in the C&MA Annual Council in 2023. New sections have been introduced to the old Constitution. They are listed below:

1. Membership Expectations (Item 2b)
2. Membership Classifications (Item 2c)
3. Major Revamping of Item 9.4 Licensed Workers, Elders and Deacons in a Church with Multiple Congregations

The local church's By-laws are now required to follow the items in the Constitution so that the By-laws will serve the purpose of providing operational details in line with the Constitution properly, rather than contradicting it.

Major Changes in NSCAC By-laws

The major changes are brought by the changes in Item 9.4 of the Constitution. Item 9.4 provides the structure of a multiple congregation church. NSCAC met the definition of a multiple congregation church and has practised as such for a number of years.

The changes in the Constitution prescribe a more detailed organisational structure in relation to the licensed workers, elders, deacons, and ministry committees for individual congregations.

By-laws 1: Recognition of Multiple Congregations

The Board of Elders decides whether one or more of the congregations is/are mature enough to introduce congregational representation within the leadership structures of the Church. The decision is based on the number of Active Members and potential leaders who are mainly attending the particular congregation. A number of more than 20 Active Members is a minimum requirement. A congregation is based on a language group.

By-laws 2: Congregational Membership

- 2.1 Active Members are assigned to one congregation initially by the Combined Elders Board based on the language congregation which they usually attended. They are only eligible to vote in the congregation they belong to.
- 2.2 Active Members are allowed to change their congregational membership to another congregation if they do not agree with the initial assignment to a particular congregation by the Combined Elders Board.
- 2.3 Active Members are allowed to apply to change their congregation membership to another congregation within the church. The application must be in writing and submitted to the Combined Elders Board during the month of March in a calendar year only.
- 2.4 Active Members, who have elected to change their congregation membership to another congregation within the church but fail to attend services regularly in the new congregation in the last six months before a general meeting, are not qualified to vote for issues relating to the new congregation.

By-laws 3: Combined Elders Board

The Combined Elders Board shall consist of the following members:

- (a) The Senior Pastor
- (b) All Associate Pastors
- (c) All elected Elders

Assistant Pastors, Official Workers, Pastoral Workers, and/or Volunteer Pastors should attend the monthly Board of Elders meeting to report on his/her ministry portfolio as and when required. They have no voting rights in the meeting. They may be excused for the part of meeting which does not involve their ministry portfolio.

The Board of Elders must in any case consist of at least 4 persons. In addition, there must be more persons elected under paragraph (c) than there are Pastors with voting right.

The Combined Elders Board will initially assign existing elders with remaining term to a designated congregation.

Except explicitly specified the otherwise in this By-laws, all By-laws under Item 4 Board of Elders will apply to the Combined Elders Board.

Note 1 So if there is no Senior Pastor or Associate Pastor in the Church, then there must be at least 4 elected Elders.

Note 2 So if the number of elders elected is less than or equal to the number of pastors with voting rights, one or more of the voting pastors may give up their voting rights to meet the requirement of this By-laws.

By-laws 4: Combined Deacons Board

The Combined Deacons Board shall consist of the following members:

- (a) The Senior Pastor
- (b) The Treasurer
- (c) All elected Deacons

Each congregation shall have two deacons and may have one additional deacon for each additional 50 Active Members.

The Combined Deacons Board shall serve under the authority of the Combined Elders Board.

Except explicitly specified the otherwise in this By-laws, all By-laws under **Item 5** Board of Deacons will apply to the Combined Deacons Board.

By-laws 5: Calling Licensed Workers

For congregations wishing to call a Licensed Worker to serve them, the Combined Elders Board shall appoint a Pastoral Search Committee from that congregation.

The Senior Pastor shall be a member of this Pastoral Search Committee. The Pastoral Search Committee will make a recommendation to the Combined Elders Board who will consider the person and make a recommendation to the congregation and the National Board regarding the person to be called.

A vote shall be held by the congregation at a meeting of the Active Members of that congregation. A 75 percent majority is required to confirm the appointment of a Licensed Worker.

By-laws 6: Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee shall consist of:

- (a) the Senior Pastor (Chair),
- (b) another congregational pastor or congregational elder from each congregation,
- (c) one Active Member from each congregation as selected by each congregation.

The Nominating Committee shall be formed in a previous Annual Meeting to allow for sufficient time for praying and approaching potential candidates for the positions of Deacons and Elders.

The Nominating Committee shall nominate two types of positions:

- (a) position confirmed by all Active Members of the church – the Treasurer of the Church. The Nominating Committee shall place in nomination one name for the Church Treasurer to be filled at the Annual Meeting.

(b) position(s) confirmed by Active Members of each congregation – Elders and Deacons of each congregation. Those representing each congregation shall nominate Elder(s) and Deacon(s) to serve in their congregation. They shall place in nomination one name for each office available to each congregation to be filled at the Annual Meeting.

A report from the Nominating Committee should provide name(s) of candidates for the vacant positions. The Nominating Committee shall post its report two Sundays prior to the Annual Meeting.

Nominations in addition to those of the Nominating Committee may be made for the office of Treasurer by an active member. Nominations in addition to those of the Nominating Committee may be made for each office available to each congregation by Active Members from that congregation. Such nominations must be given to the Chairman of the Nominating Committee in such time as to allow him to make known to the congregation the additional nominations on the Sunday prior to the Annual Meeting.

Any additional nominations shall be in writing, duly seconded and contain the consent of the nominee. No nominations to church offices shall be received after the Sunday prior to the Congregational Annual Meeting.

Where there are insufficient elders in a congregation, the Combined Board of Elders will select an active member from that congregation to serve on the Nominating Committee.

By-laws 7: Election of Officers

Except for the Senior Pastor, the election of Licensed Workers, Elders and Deacons (the officers) should be conducted at the congregational level. At the Annual Meeting each congregation's Active Members shall elect their congregation's officers.

Election is to be by a majority of formal votes cast by Active Members present, even when a nomination is unopposed. A majority for election of Deacons is defined as greater than 50 percent while a majority for election of Elders and appointment of Pastors is defined as greater than 75 percent.

By-laws 8: Congregational Ministry Team

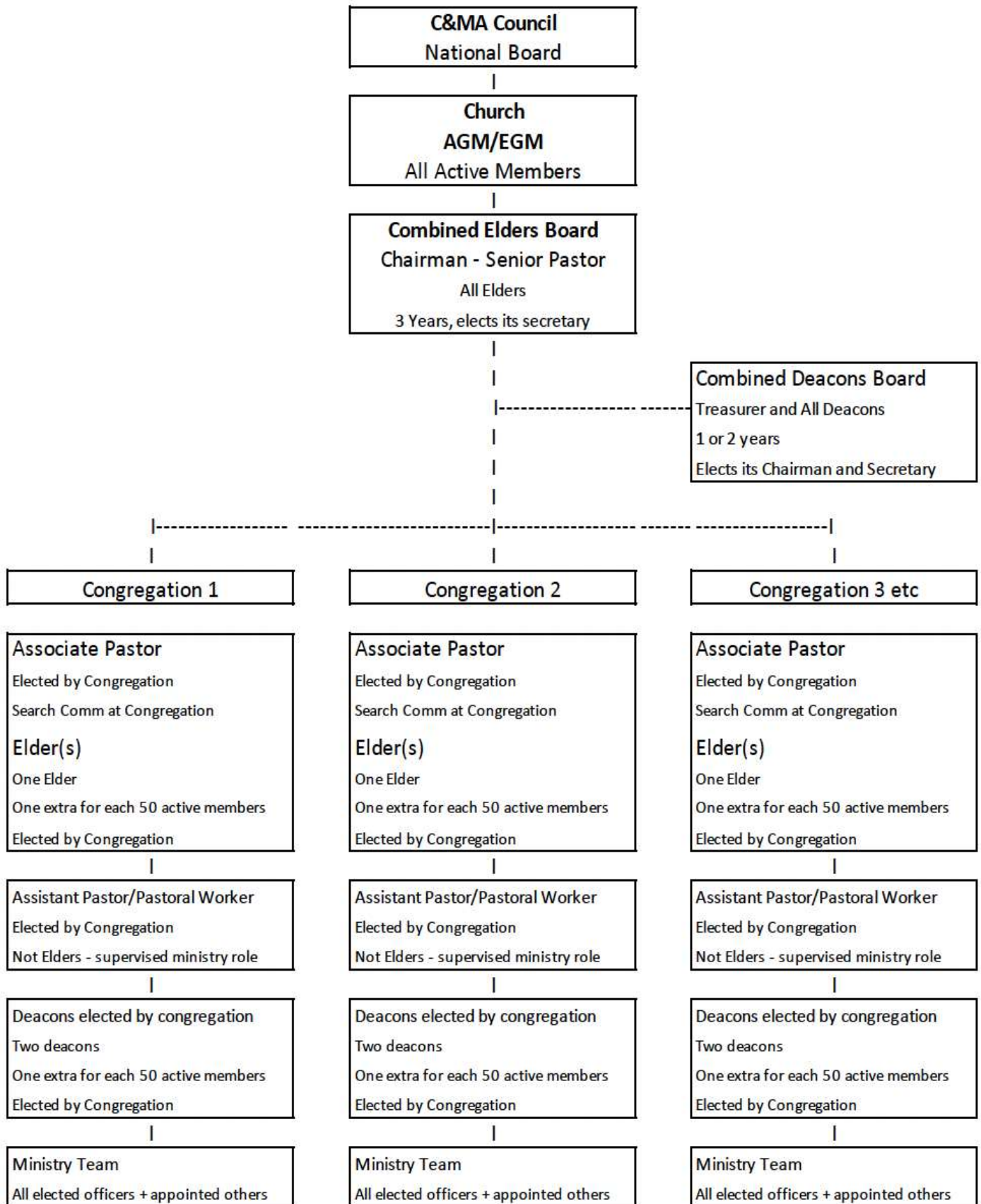
For a recognised congregation, a Congregational Ministry Team will be established. The Congregational Team shall consist of the pastor(s), elected elders and deacons from each congregation, and other such ministry leaders as they determine. The Senior Pastor is an ex officio member of each Congregational Ministry Team.

A Congregational Ministry Team would have the day-to-day responsibility for coordinating the ministry of its given congregation but will always work closely with and remain under the authority of the Combined Elders Board. The pastor or pastoral worker of that congregation or their nominee shall be the chair of the Congregational Ministry Team.

By-laws 9: Dissolution of a Congregation

The Combined Elders Board may dissolve a congregation if there are less than 20 Active Members in a congregation or no Sunday services are conducted for a congregation. The existing Active Members of the dissolved congregation are free to join any other existing congregations.

The chart below shows the intended structure of a multiple congregation church. (Council 2023)



Procedures in Adopting the Revised By-laws

The revised By-Laws will be made available to the members of the church for their review in March 2024 through the church's website (nscac.org.au) or hard copies. Members are encouraged to read the revised By-Laws in detail.

A Consultation (Q&A) Meeting for members will be held in early May 2024 for any questions, comments, and feedback to be heard and answered.

An Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) will be held at the end of June 2024 to approve the adoption of the revised By-Laws.