

**REFORMATION PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, AUSTRALIAN PRESBYTERY**  
**Moderator: Rev C Tuck    Clerk: Pastor N van der Wel**  
**C/O 206 High Street, Berserker, QLD 4701**

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**CHANGE OF PRESBYTERY NAME:**  
**FROM ‘COMPOSITE PRESBYTERY OF EASTERN AUSTRALIA’**  
**TO ‘REFORMATION PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, AUSTRALIAN PRESBYTERY**

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**EXTRACT MINUTE**

The Composite Presbytery of Eastern Australia met on the Third of August 2018 and was constituted. It was Agreed, among other things, THAT:

**The Name of the Presbytery.**

As per the resolution of the Presbytery at its previous meeting, Mr van der Wel presented a proposal concerning the name of Presbytery (See Appendix A).

It was Moved, Seconded, and Agreed THAT:

The name of the ‘Composite Presbytery of Eastern Australia’ be changed to ‘Reformation Presbyterian Church, Australian Presbytery’.

The Presbytery resolved that this change of name will take place after the close of this meeting.

Extracted from the Records of the Presbytery by the Clerk on the Sixth of August 2018.

Neil van der Wel  
Clerk of Presbytery

206 High Street  
Berserker, QLD 4701

**APPENDIX A**

**Proposal Concerning a New Name for the Composite Presbytery of Eastern Australia**

**I. Principles regarding the taking of a particular name for a particular Church:**

**A. There is no absolute need for a distinguishing name.**

There is no absolute necessity for a particular Church, whether considered locally or regionally, to take an identifying name other than some recognition of its location (For example, 1 Corinthians 1:2; Galatians 1:2; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; Revelation 2-3).

**B. There is a relative need for a distinguishing name.**

However, since there has always been a need, even from Biblical times, to distinguish the true Church of God from the claims of bodies falsely called Churches (Revelation 2:9; 3:9), and since there is a need to identify particular branches of Christ's Church which hold different forms of doctrine, worship and government (which differences are most regrettable, but nonetheless exist because, though the Word of God be infallible, men be fallible interpreters, and they must act according to their conscience as it is informed by the Word of God), it is beneficial that particular Churches take distinguishing names.

C. There are certain benefits of taking a distinguishing name.

- i. To distinguish a particular Church, local or regional, from false Churches, which are characterised by the preaching of false gospels and heresy.
- ii. To identify the doctrinal distinctions of one particular Church, local or regional, in relation to other particular Churches which continue as Churches of Christ but in some or many details have not yet attained, or have departed from, the Biblical form of doctrine, worship and government. Any distinction made ought only to be on the basis of Biblical conviction rather than from tradition or mere preference, and with humility of mind.
- iii. To enable a particular Church to acknowledge that, while there are certain important matters that, in its view, require separation from certain other Churches of Christ, yet these various bodies, so long as they maintain the Gospel of Christ, remain 'denominations' within the catholic visible Church of Christ. It should be realised that when a particular Church decides to reject 'denominationalism' and form a 'non-denominational' Church, then they have actually formed a new denomination, and sometimes can be in danger of 'unchurching' all, or many, true Churches of Christ.

D. When a particular Church takes an identifying name, it is important that pride and exclusivity be eschewed. Furthermore, while the jurisdictions of the Courts of particular Churches ought to be honoured, artificial boundaries must be avoided. As per the Protocols of the Composite Presbytery of Eastern Australia (CPEA):

- i. Artificial boundaries are to be avoided. Denominational boundaries are not to be an hindrance to the exercise of Discipline and oversight.
- ii. Formal relations with the Presbytery are not to be made a prerequisite of assistance from the Presbytery.

## **II. Reasons to change the name of the CPEA:**

A. The CPEA is no longer a Composite Presbytery, seeing that all the Ministers who have a seat on that Presbytery are also under the government and oversight thereof, and that all the Governing Elders who have a seat on that Presbytery belong to Congregations which are associated with, and under the government and oversight of, the CPEA. While a Presbytery is always free to associate other Presbyters with the Court, and while this Presbytery might in the future still receive assistance from Assessor Elders who belong to another Presbytery, yet the CPEA itself is no longer a Composite Presbytery.

- B. The work of the CPEA is no longer confined to Eastern Australia and there are ongoing activities in other parts of Australia presently carried out under the auspices of the CPEA, as well as other opportunities. While a Presbytery which has its seat in one region may have opportunity to promote the work of the Gospel in other regions (for example, Acts 13:1-3), nevertheless, it would only promote clarity in communication if the name of the Presbytery reflected this wider sphere of labour and oversight.

### **III. Proposed Name: ‘Reformation Presbyterian Church, Australian Presbytery’.**

- A. The CPEA currently has two Congregations under its government and oversight, these congregations therefore being associated together by being under the same Presbytery. Since both Congregations have taken the name, ‘Reformation Presbyterian Church, [Place name]’, and since these names have been allowed by the CPEA as appropriate, a potential name for the Presbytery that governs this branch of Christ’s Church, considered regionally, would be, ‘Reformation Presbyterian Church, Australian Presbytery’.
- B. While reference will almost certainly be made to ‘Reformation Presbyterian Church, Australia’ in a ‘denominational’ way, the current proposal concerns the name of the Presbytery. It is suggested that the use of ‘Reformation Presbyterian Church, Australian Presbytery’, with the acronym RPCAP, would serve the purpose of identifying the point of contact between the associated Congregations, while also allowing the name and acronym to be sufficiently distinguished from those of other Reformed and Presbyterian Churches in Australia. While the CPEA and its members are at this time separate from these other bodies for reasons of Biblical conviction, we recognise that the Church of Christ is far broader than us and do not wish to cause unnecessary conflict or confusion.
- C. Another advantage of this name is that, if the Lord would so bless in the multiplication of associated Congregations and Officers, the various Courts would easily be identified, but also distinguished, merely by changing the regional reference (for example, ‘Reformation Presbyterian Church, Eastern Australian Presbytery’; and ‘Reformation Presbyterian Church, Western Australian Presbytery’).
- D. Concerning the name itself, while it is clear from history that a particular name is no safeguard from apostasy, yet the name ‘Reformation Presbyterian Church, Australian Presbytery’ does adequately serve the purpose of distinguishing from error and making a stand for a particular understanding of the Truth of God’s Word.

*i. Reformation:*

Identifies this Church as confessedly standing in the heritage of that period of Reformation in Christ’s Church in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, and expresses the desire for continued Reformation in accordance with the Scriptures.

Distinguishes this Church as Protestant in contrast to the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches, and in being Reformed in doctrine rather than ‘broadly evangelical’.

ii. *Presbyterian:*

Identifies this Church as being governed by Presbyters / Elders, and as holding to Reformed doctrine as summarised in the Westminster Standards.

Distinguishes this Church governmentally, from such systems as Popery, Episcopacy, Independency and Congregationalism, and also doctrinally, from a wide range of heretical and unbiblical doctrinal positions.

iii. *Church:*

Identifies this Church as being a particular branch of the Church of God in the world, and also represents an understanding of Christ's Church as being evident in local, regional and universal expressions.

Distinguishes this Church from other religions in the world, and also from other particular Churches (for example, some of 'Continental Reformed' heritage), which at a regional or national level do not see the 'Church' in a broader expression, but rather a federation of local Churches.

iv. *Australian Presbytery:*

Identifies that this Court in Christ's Church has its seat and is promoting the work of the Gospel in Australia.

Distinguishes this Court from both local and wider Church Courts (Sessions and Synods etc.) and from branches of Christ's Church in other lands that might have similar names.

**IV. Recommendation.**

- A. That the name of the Presbytery be changed to 'Reformation Presbyterian Church, Australian Presbytery', and that the acronym RPCAP be commonly used.