

Seventh-day  
Adventist Church  
*Australia*

**SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST  
CHURCH MANUAL  
- Matters Relevant to Membership  
Procedures**

**Australian Union Conference**

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## **AUTHORITY & FUNCTION**

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Pages 16-17

Describes operation and functions of local churches.

Describes relationship of local churches to denominational structures.

Expresses Seventh-day Adventist understanding of Christian life, church governance, discipline and authority of GC Sessions.

Of worldwide value and applicable to every church organization, congregation and member. In addition are notes (pages 173-185) that are explanatory in nature (guidance and examples rather than mandatory).

There is a process (p.17) whereby changes can be recommended to both the manual itself and the notes material. Final authority rests with the GC Session and GC Executive at Annual Council respectively.

“No attempt should be made to set up standards of membership or to make, or attempt to enforce, rules or regulations for local church operations that are contrary to these decisions... that are set forth in this *Church Manual*. (p.16-17)

Where to get advice – see statement on page 18.

## **RISK PROTECTION STATEMENT**

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“No Church organization or institution assumes responsibility for the liabilities, debts, acts, or omissions of any other Church organization simply because of its Church affiliation. (Page 28)

## ORGANISING, UNITING, AND DISSOLVING CHURCHES AND COMPANIES – IMPLICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP

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Organising a church - see p.36-37. See more detail in Guidelines as agreed for Australia.

Organising a company - see p.37-38. See more detail in Guidelines as agreed for Australia.

Uniting churches – see p.39.

Dissolving or expelling churches – see p.39-42.

## BAPTISM, REBAPTISM AND PROFESSION OF FAITH

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Appropriate rebaptism (p.49-50) – recorded in membership statistics

- From another Christian communion where a person has been baptized by immersion but feels a conviction for rebaptism when joining the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
- Where a person has previously been a baptized Seventh-day Adventist but their name has been removed from the church rolls and they have experienced reconversion.

Inappropriate rebaptism (p.50) – not recorded in membership statistics

- Emotional basis and/or where spiritual experience has just become cold and needs refreshing.

Profession of Faith (p.50-51)

- A committed Christian of another communion who has already been baptized by immersion.
- A member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church who, because of world conditions, is **UNABLE** to secure a letter of transfer from their home church – see also p.53 for more detail.
- A member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church whose request for membership transfer has received **no response** from the church where their membership is held. (The local church should seek assistance from their local conference and the conference of the other church.)
- An individual who has been a member, but whose membership has been misplaced or has been withdrawn because they were a missing member. Note: the current membership online database provides a method of reversing the “missing” designation and thus no need for use of profession of faith.

Note the counsel and warnings in regards to these processes, as found at the bottom of page 50 and top of page 51.

## MEMBERSHIP TRANSFERS

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A number of important matters are addressed on pages 51 – 55.

[See more detail in supporting document.]

## DISCIPLINE

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Two types of disciplinary measures:

- By vote of censure (p.63,65) – name remains on church roll; terminates person’s election or appointment to all offices or the privilege of election while censure is in effect; the person shall not be transferred while censure is in effect.
- By vote to remove from membership (p.63-68) – proper process shall be followed, including right to natural justice (see also p.67-68); except in the case of death of members, the clerk can remove a name from the records only after a vote of the church in a business meeting or, in the case of a person’s resignation from membership, the church board; non-attendance shall not be considered sufficient cause for removal from membership.

## MISSING

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After two years of effort to locate members, the church may certify those efforts but without success and the members be removed by a vote of the church business meeting. The church clerk shall record in the minutes the final action as follows: “Whereabouts unknown. Voted to designate as missing: *[full name]*” (See page 66.)