



Yarra Ranges Council Flag Policy

Version:	1.0
Adopted by Council:	14 December 2021
Responsible Officer:	Director Corporate Services
Department:	Financial Services
Contact Officer:	Governance Coordinator
Review:	This policy will be reviewed within 12 months of a Council election

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Flags are flown by Council at the Civic Centre, Lilydale and other Council facilities in accordance with the Flags Act 1953 and the *Australian Flag Booklet - Part 2: The Protocols*, administered by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

“As one of Australia’s most important symbols, the [Australian National] flag should be used with respect and dignity.”

(Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet – Australian National Flag Protocols website - <https://www.pmc.gov.au/government/australian-national-flag/australian-national-flag-protocols>)

- 1.2 Flying the Australian, Aboriginal and the Torres Strait Islander Flags re-affirms Council’s 1997 Statement of Commitment to Indigenous Australians. It gives respect for their customs, tradition and acknowledges their spiritual relationship and custodianship across millennia to the Country we all now call home.

2. Purpose and scope of policy

- 2.1 This policy is to inform and guide Council on the applicable protocols for flying the Australian National Flag and other flags.
- 2.2 This policy applies to flagpoles managed by Yarra Ranges Council, but excludes those flags managed by other organisations.
- 2.3 There are four flagpoles located at the Civic Centre, Lilydale. The flags to be flown from this location and in this order are:
- Australian National Flag;
 - Aboriginal Flag;
 - Torres Strait Islander Flag; and
 - Municipal Flag.

The fourth flag pole at the Civic Centre, Lilydale is also available for various Community Flags to commemorate or celebrate important dates, events and festivals, or for flags of other Nations during officially sanctioned visits of representatives of the nation or to acknowledge a significant event of that nation.

- 2.4 There are two flagpoles located at the MEMO, Healesville. The flags to be flown from this location and in this order are:
- Australian National Flag; and
 - Aboriginal Flag.

2.5 This policy applies to:

- Councillors;
- Chief Executive Officer and Executive Leadership Team; and
- Members of Council staff.

3. Related policies and supporting materials

3.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with the following:

- *Flags Act 1953*; and
- Australian Flags Booklet – the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

4. Definitions

Act	means <i>Flags Act 1953</i> .
Australian Flag Booklet	means the Australian flags Booklet – which contains the protocols for the appropriate use and the flying of the flag administered by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.
Civic Centre	means Yarra Ranges Council, Civic Centre, Lilydale.
Commonwealth Flag Network	means a network established by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet to distribute up-to-date advice on how to fly the flag on special occasions.
Community Flags	mean flags representing a local community event, charity days, or celebrations, festivals and events.
Community Organisation	means an organisation established by the community with an aim to making desired improvements to a community's social health, well-being, and overall functioning.
Council	means Yarra Ranges Shire Council.

5. Flying of Flags Guidelines

- 5.1 In accordance with the Act and the Australian Flag Booklet, the Australian National Flag will be flown on every day of the year.
- 5.2 Subject to paragraph 5.1 the following guidelines will also be considered when flying the Australian National Flag and other flags listed in this policy or as requested by the community:
- (a) All flags should be treated with respect and dignity and the Australian National Flag must always be flown in a position superior to that of any other flag or ensign;
 - (b) All flags flown at the Civic Centre must be of standard size, in good repair and capable of being flown on Councils flagpoles; and
 - (c) Any requests to fly Community flags on days or events listed under Section 6 will not be considered.

6. Flying of Flags at Half-Mast

- 6.1 As directed by the Commonwealth Flag Network and in accordance with the protocols stated in the Australian Flag Booklet, Council will fly its flags at half-mast as a sign of mourning or in the case of an event which requires the Australian National Flag to be flown at half-mast.
- 6.2 When flying the Australian National Flag with other flags, all flags in the set should be flown at half-mast. The Australian National Flag should be raised first and lowered last.

Public Notice

- 6.3 Where flags are flown at half-mast or if a flag not listed in paragraph 2.2 is flown at the Civic Centre then a public notice will be published on Council's website indicating the reason.

ANZAC Day – 25 April

- 6.4 Anzac Day is a day of special significance to Australians, particularly for serving military personnel and returned veterans. In accordance with Australian flag protocols, flags will be flown at half-mast on 25 April, from dawn until noon, at which time the flag should be raised to the peak of the flag mast for the remainder of the day.

Remembrance Day – 11 November

- 6.5 Remembrance Day is a day of special significance to Australians, commemorating the loss of Australian lives in all wars, conflicts and peace operations. Flags will be flown on this day at the peak of the flagpole until precisely 10:30 am (local time) when they should be adjusted to the half-mast position.

At 11:02 am the Australian National Flag should be moved back to the peak of the flag mast for the remainder of the day. This protocol allows for the traditional ceremonial duties to be carried out, including a minute of silence from 11:00 am.

Commemorating Local Elders

- 6.6 On request from relevant Aboriginal community members (in consultation with Council's Indigenous Development Coordinator) all flags may be flown at half-mast on the death of an elder or significant community member on the day, or part of the day, of their funeral.

Councillors and Council Staff

- 6.7 On request and in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer and the Mayor, all flags may be flown at half-mast on the death of a current or former Councillor or member of Council staff or on the day, or part of the day, of their funeral.

Discretionary Requests

- 6.8 At the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer and in consultation with the Mayor, the Australian National Flag may be flown at half-mast.

7. Request to Fly Community Flags

- 7.1 Upon formal application (online form on Council's website), Council will consider requests from members of staff or the community to fly a flag at the Civic Centre to acknowledge a significant celebration, festival, community organisation or event.

National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) Week - July

- 7.2 NAIDOC week celebrates the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. NAIDOC is celebrated not only in Indigenous communities, but also by all Australians from the broader community. The Aboriginal Flag and the Torres Strait Islander Flag are already flown at the Civic Centre.

International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Intersexism and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT) Day – 17 May

- 7.3 The Progress Pride Flag will be flown from the fourth flagpole on IDAHOBIT Day, and for the duration of the Midsumma Festival.

Community Requests

- 7.4 Requests by community organisations to fly a flag other than those listed in 7.2 and 7.3 will be considered by the Chief Executive Officer, in accordance with this Policy and after consultation with the Mayor.
- 7.5 Such requests will not be approved where the flying of the flag is inconsistent with Council's values and commitment to inclusiveness.
- 7.6 The Governance team will manage requests from the community to fly community flags, including seeking the approval of the Chief Executive Officer and communicating the Chief Executive Officer's decision to those responsible for the execution of new flags.

8. Procedure and Protocols

- 8.1 Procedures and protocols for flying and handling the Australian Flag are detailed in the Australian Flag Booklet. These protocols must be adhered to by Council staff when managing flags flown at the Civic Centre and other Council facilities.

9. Roles and Responsibilities

Chief Executive Officer

- 9.1 The Chief Executive Officer must:
- (a) Approve, in consultation with the Mayor, requests from community organisations to fly flags other than the Australian, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags, in accordance with this Policy and the protocols as outlined in the Australian Flag Booklet;
 - (b) Direct that the flags be flown at half-mast on the day of the funeral of a current or former Councillor, member of Council staff, or any other significant funeral at their discretion; and
 - (c) Direct that the national flag of another nation be flown during officially sanctioned visits of representatives of the nation or to acknowledge a significant event of that nation.

Governance Team

- 9.2 The Governance Team is responsible for:
- (a) Managing enquiries about the Policy and ensuring the Policy is implemented and reviewed;
 - (b) Manage requests for new flags (including supply and budget allocation) or changes to flag flying as indicated by the Commonwealth Flag Network;

- (c) Promptly communicating flag notifications to the appropriate staff and advising when the Australian National Flag must be flown at half-mast; and
- (d) Ensuring the appropriate staff are maintaining the flagpoles, area surrounding and replacement of flags in accordance with the Australian Flag Booklet and Commonwealth Flag Network notifications.

10. Administrative amendments

- 10.1 From time to time, circumstance may require minor amendments be made to this Policy. Where this does not materially alter the Policy, such amendments may be made administratively by the Chief Executive Officer.
- 10.2 Any amendment which materially alters the Policy must be approved by resolution of Council.