

Shoalhaven City Council Flag Policy

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1. Purpose

- 1.1 To formalise a policy on the display of flags on flagpoles that are the responsibility of Shoalhaven City Council to ensure that the Australian National, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags are flown with dignity and respect.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 Flags are flown by Council at the Nowra Administration Centre, Ulladulla Civic Centre 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>)

- 2.2 Flying the Australian National, Aboriginal and the Torres Strait Islander Flags aligns with Council’s aim to uphold the 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.

3. Statement

- 3.1 Shoalhaven City Council recognises the significance of flags that are connected to its governance responsibilities and will utilise designated flagpoles within the Shoalhaven to fly such flags. The flags that are to be flown permanently are: (see Appendix 1 for a graphic representation)
 - a) The recognised Australian National Flag (pursuant to the Flags Act 1953, including subsequent Proclamations)
 - b) The Aboriginal Flag - Council recognises the Aboriginal Flag was adopted as an official flag of Australia in July 1971. The flag is flown or displayed permanently at Aboriginal centres throughout Australia. It is popularly recognised as the flag of the Aboriginal peoples of Australia.
 - c) The Torres Strait Islander Flag- Council recognises the Torres Strait Islander Flag was adopted in May 1992 as an official flag of Australia. The flag stands for the unity and identity of all Torres Strait Islander peoples of Australia.
- 3.2 Where circumstances dictate, other flags may be flown as approved for this purpose by specific resolution of Council or by the Chief Executive Officer and/or Mayor where there is insufficient time for a Council resolution without holding a special meeting of Council.
- 3.3 Council’s Administration Centre maintains six flagpoles in total, three flagpoles to the adjacent main entrance of the building and three flagpoles on the corner of Princes highway and Bridge Road which will fly the following flags.
 - a) The Australian National Flag
 - b) The Aboriginal Flag

- c) The Torres Strait Islander Flag

3.4 Council's Bomaderry Works Depot maintains one flagpole used to fly:

- a) The Australian National Flag
- b) The Aboriginal Flag
- c) The Torres Strait Islander Flag

3.5 Ulladulla Civic Centre maintains three flagpoles adjacent to the main entrance

- a) The Australian National Flag
- b) The Aboriginal Flag
- c) The Torres Strait Islander Flag

4. Related Policies

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

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

5. Flying of Flags Guidelines

5.1 The Australian National Flag will be flown on all days of the year in conjunction with the Aboriginal Flag and Torres Strait Islander Flag in accordance with established flag protocol.

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 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.

6.3 The half-mast position shall be when the top of the flag is a third of the distance down from the top of the flagpole

6.4 When lowering a flag from a half-mast position, it will be briefly raised to the peak and then lowered ceremoniously

- 6.5 Flags will not be flown at half-mast at night even if it is illuminated due to the possibility of vandalism

Public Notice

- 6.6 Where flags are flown at half-mast or if a flag not listed in paragraph 3.3 is flown at the Nowra Administration Building then a public notice will be published on Council's website indicating the reason.

ANZAC Day – 25 April

- 6.7 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

- 6.8 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

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

Councillors, Council Staff & Community

- 6.10 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, member of Council staff, on the day, or part of the day, of their funeral.
- 6.11 By a resolution of Council, flags may be flown at half-mast on the death of residents or volunteers who have contributed to the Shoalhaven community on the day, or part of the day, of their funeral.

Discretionary Requests

- 6.12 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. Requests to Fly Community Flags

- 7.1 Upon a formal written request, Council will consider requests from members of staff or the community to fly a flag at the Nowra Administration Building to acknowledge a significant celebration, festival, community organisation or event.

- 7.2 Such requests will not be approved where the flying of the flag is inconsistent with Council's values and provision 5.2 (c)
- 7.3 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. Implementation

- 8.1 The City Performance Directorate has responsibility for implementing this policy.
- 8.2 In regard to Provision 6.9 and 5.2, the City Performance & City Lifestyles Directorates have responsibility for implementing this policy. On the passing of an Elder within the Shoalhaven region Councils Community Capacity Builder - Aboriginal will advise Building Services to implement 6.9 of this Protocol. Communication will then be provided to all customer facing teams and the Senior Leadership Team to inform them as to why the flags are at half-mast.

Roles and Responsibilities

- 8.3 The Chief Executive Officer must:
- a) Approve, in consultation with the Mayor, requests from community organisations to fly flags other than the Australian National, 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.
- 8.4 The Governance Team is responsible for:
- a) Managing enquiries about the Policy and ensuring the Policy is implemented and reviewed;
 - b) Promptly communicating flag notifications to the appropriate staff and advising when the Australian National Flag must be flown at half-mast; and

9. Review

- 9.1 The City Performance Directorate, in consultation with the City Lifestyles Directorate, will review this policy within one year of the election of every new Council.

Appendix 1.

Australian National Flag



Aboriginal Flag



Torres Strait Islander Flag

