



POLICY REGISTER

Flying of Flags on Council Buildings

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POLICY OBJECTIVE:

To provide a policy to guide Council staff on how to fly the Australian flag or other flags on Council buildings.

POLICY:

Flying and Use of the Flag

The Australian National Flag may be flown on every day of the year. The following guidelines apply to the Australian national flags and flags generally.

Dignity of the Flag

The flag should be treated with the respect and dignity it deserves as the nation's foremost national symbol. The flag should not be allowed to fall or lie on the ground. The flag should not be used to cover a statue, monument or plaque for an unveiling ceremony; to cover a table or seat; or to mask boxes, barriers or the space between the floor and the ground level on a dais or platform.

The flag should never be flown when in damaged, faded or dilapidated condition. When the material of a flag deteriorates to a point where it is no longer suitable for use, it should be destroyed privately, in a dignified way.

Flying and Handling

When flown in Australia or on Australia territory the Australian national flag takes precedence over all national flags.

The flag should not normally be flown in a position inferior to that of any other flag or ensign.

The flag should not be smaller than that of any other flag or ensign.

The flag should be raised briskly and lowered ceremoniously.

The flag should always be flown aloft and free as close as possible to the top of the flag mast, with the rope tightly secured.

When the flag is raised or lowered, or when it is carried in a parade or review, all present should face the flag and remain silent. Those in uniform should salute.

The flag should be raised no earlier than the first light and should be lowered no later than dusk.

The flag may only be flown at night when illuminated.

Two flags should not be flown from the same flagpole.

The flag should not be flown upside down, not even as a signal of distress.

Displaying the Australian National Flag

Whether the flag is displayed flat against a surface (either horizontally or vertically), on a staff, on a flag rope, or suspended vertically in the middle of a street; the canton should be in the uppermost left quarter as viewed by a person facing the flag. In the case of the Australian national flag, the Union jack should be seen in the top left quarter of the flag.

Even when the flag is displayed vertically, this rule must be followed, although to the casual observer the flag appears to be back to front. The reason for this is that the canton is the position of honour on the flag.

When the Australian national flag is displayed alone on a speaker's platform, it should be flat against the wall or a staff on the right of the speaker as he or she faces the audience.

When displayed on flag rope (a 'halyard'), the flag should be as close as possible to the top, with flag rope tight.

If the national flag is vertically suspended in an east-west street, the canton should be towards the north. In a north-south street the canton should be towards the east.

Use of Flags on conference tables

Should it be decided to place the flags of nations on a conference table, a single flag representative of each nation present should be placed in front of the leader of that country's delegation.

Flying the Australian National Flag alone

When the Australian national flag is flown alone on top of or in front of a building with two flagpoles, it should be flown on a flagpole to the left of a person facing the flag.

When flown alone on top of or in front of a building, with more than two flagpoles, the Australian national flag should be flown in the centre or as near as possible to it.

Flying the Australian National Flag with other National Flags

When the Australian national flag is flown with the flags of other nations, all the flags should, if possible, be the same size and they should be flown on flagpoles of the same height. National flags should never be flown together on the same flagpole. According to the international practice, no national flag should fly above another in peacetime.

The Australian national flag must however, take the position of honour. Further, unless all the flags can be raised and lowered simultaneously, the Australian national flag should be raised first and lowered last.

When flying with only one other national flag, the Australian national flag should fly on the left of a person facing the flags.

In a line of several national flags, and where there are an odd number of flags and only one Australian national flag is available, the Australian national flag should be flown in the centre

Flying of Flag at Half-Mast

Flags are flown in the half-mast position as a sign of mourning. To bring the flag to the half-mast position, the flag must first be raised to the top of the mast (the 'peak') then immediately lowered slowly to the half-mast position. (This position is estimated by imagining another flag flying above the half-masted flag – in European mythology, the flag flying above is the flag of death.) The flag must be lowered to at least a position recognisably half-mast so that it does not appear simply to have slipped down from the top of the flagpole. An acceptable position would be when the top of the flag is a third of the distance down from the top of the flagpole.

When lowering the flag from a half-mast position, it should first be briefly raised to the peak, then be lowered ceremoniously. Under no circumstances should a flag be flown at half-mast at night, whether or not the flag is illuminated.

There are occasions when direction will be given by the responsible Commonwealth government minister for all flags to be flown at half-mast. Some examples of these occasions are:

- On the death of the Sovereign (King or Queen) – the flag should be flown from the time of announcement of the death up to and including the funeral. On the day the accession of the new Sovereign is proclaimed, it is customary to raise the flag to the top of the mast from 11 a.m. until the usual time for closures of business;
- On the death of a member of a royal family – by special command of the Sovereign and/ or by direction of the responsible Commonwealth government minister;
- On the death of the Governor-General or a former Governor-General;
- On the death of a distinguished Australian citizen, in accordance with protocol;
- On the death of the head of state of another country with which Australia has diplomatic relations – the flag would be flown on the day of the funeral or as directed.

Flying of the Australian flag at half-mast on the occasion of the death of a local citizen.

Authority should be delegated to the Mayor and General Manager to determine at what times the Australian flag or another flag will be flown at half-mast on the occasion of the death of a local citizen.

These instances would be at the discretion of the Mayor and General Manager but would be on the occasion of the death or funeral of a current Mayor, former Mayor, current Councillor, former councillor, current local member of Parliament former local member of parliament, local resident who has been a recipient of an Australian honour or any other citizen that the Mayor of the day would determine has been of such prominence that would warrant the flying of the flag at half-mast.

Flying of the Aboriginal flag

Council will raise the Aboriginal flag on the same days as it flies the Australian flag. At the discretion of the Mayor and General Manager the flag will fly at half-mast on the occasion of the death of an Aboriginal person or community member who has contributed significantly to the Balranald Shire community.