



Council Policy

18.12 FLAG POLICY

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to govern the flying of flags at Council's municipal offices including at the Colac Otway Performing Arts and Cultural Centre precinct.

SCOPE

The Colac Otway Shire Council has three flag poles located at its Rae Street customer service centre.

Council has an additional flagpole installed outside the Colac Otway Performing Arts and Cultural Centre (COPACC).

This policy applies to the flags and flagpoles at the abovementioned locations. At other Council-owned locations where only one flagpole is located, when in use, the Australian National Flag will be flown.

STATEMENT OF POLICY

The Colac Otway Shire Council recognises that the flying of flags demonstrates pride of place and spirit, and acknowledges that the flying of flags should be undertaken with the utmost importance, respect and dignity.

This policy outlines the way Council will fly flags. A flag policy aims to ensure that Council's flying of flags adheres to federal protocols, and also aligns with Council Plan objectives around building a healthy and inclusive community. The general principles associated with this policy are:

- That Council acknowledges that the Australian National Flag, Aboriginal Flag and Torres Strait Islander Flag should be treated with respect and dignity. These flags will, as far as practicable, be flown in accordance with the Australian Government's flag protocols.
- Council will continuously fly the Australian National Flag, Aboriginal Flag and Torres Strait Islander Flag on the Ceremonial Flagpoles outside Council's Rae Street customer service centre if they are illuminated. Under circumstances where they are not illuminated, the abovementioned flags will be flown during standard business hours.
- The Community Flagpole shall generally be used to fly flags of significance, generally other than the Australian National Flag, Aboriginal Flag and Torres Strait Islander Flag.
- Council and COPACC may use the Community Flagpole to display flags when the flagpole is not being used for purposes outlined in this policy's flag schedule. On those occasions, approval from the Chief Executive Officer shall be sought first.

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- The Community Flagpole will be used to accommodate community requests to fly flags. Community requests to fly flags on the Community Flagpole other than those outlined in this Policy shall be referred to the Chief Executive Officer for a decision to be made. In considering community requests, the Chief Executive Officer will have regard to Council resolutions, the Council Plan and any other relevant positions of Council. The Chief Executive Officer may consult the Mayor and Councillors and/or present a report at a Council meeting should they consider the matter is complex and a prevailing Council position is not clear.
- Flags other than those referred to in the Australian Flags Booklet will not fly any longer than seven consecutive days.
- Council will fly the national flags of other countries on the Community Flagpole during Council-sanctioned visits by dignitaries of the country or when directed by the federal or state government.
- In general, Council will not approve requests to fly other flags where a request is linked to:
 - Views that do not align with Council's views on promoting a diverse and inclusive community.
 - Are associated with activities for commercial gain or individual advancement.
 - Programs that may present a hazard to the community.

Flying flags at half mast

Under Australian Government protocols, flags are flown at half-mast position as a sign of mourning. The principles associated with flying flags at half-mast are:

- Council shall comply with directions given by the relevant federal and state departments to fly flags at half-mast; and under the conditions described in the Federal Government's Australian Flag Booklet.
- Examples of occasions when Council will be directed by the federal or state government to fly flags half-mast include the death of a Sovereign; the death of a member of the royal family; the death of the Governor-General or former Governor-General; on the death of a distinguished Australian citizen and on days of commemoration such as ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day.
- The Australian Flag Booklet states that "flags in any locality may be flown at half-mast on the death of a local citizen or on the day, or part of the day, of their funeral without the direction of the Australian Government", however unless specifically instructed to do so by the Chief Executive Officer, flags will only be lowered to half-mast on occasions where direction is received from the state or federal government.
- A flag should not be flown at half-mast at night, whether or not the flag is illuminated, unless direction to half-mast the flag for an extended period of time has been issued.
- When flying the Australian National Flag with other flags, all flags in the set should be flown at half-mast, with the Australian National Flag being raised first, and lowered last.

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.

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RESPONSIBILITIES

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for:

- Considering requests to fly alternative flags/flags of significance on the Community Flagpole in line with this policy. This includes considering community requests that may on occasion overlap with the flying of flags as outlined in Council's adopted Flag Schedule.
- Determining when it is appropriate to refer a request to fly an alternative flag to Council for a decision.
- Determining when it is appropriate to fly a flag at half-mast on the death of a local citizen or on the day, or part of the day, of their funeral.
- Ensuring flags flown under Council's control are never flown when in damaged, faded or dilapidated condition.

DEFINITIONS

Federal Government Australian Flags Booklet: The protocols for the appropriate use and flying of the Australian flag as published by the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. The booklet can be viewed here:

<https://www.pmc.gov.au/publications/australian-flags-booklet>

Council office: The Council building and surrounding areas at 2-6 Rae Street Colac.

Ceremonial Flagpoles: The three flagpoles located outside of Council's Rae Street customer service centre.

Community Flagpole: The flagpole to be located outside the main entrance of the Colac Otway Performing Arts and Cultural Centre (COPACC), at 95-97 Gellibrand Street, Colac.

Flag: A piece of cloth, typically oblong in shape, attachable by one edge to a pole or rope and used as a symbol or emblem of a country, group or institution.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Federal Government Australian Flags Booklet: <https://www.pmc.gov.au/publications/australian-flags-booklet>

REFERENCES

Federal Government Australian Flags Booklet: <https://www.pmc.gov.au/publications/australian-flags-booklet>

The Flags Act 1953

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Policy owner	Manager Connected Communities	Division	Community and Economy
Adopted by Council	22 May 2024	Policy Number	18.12
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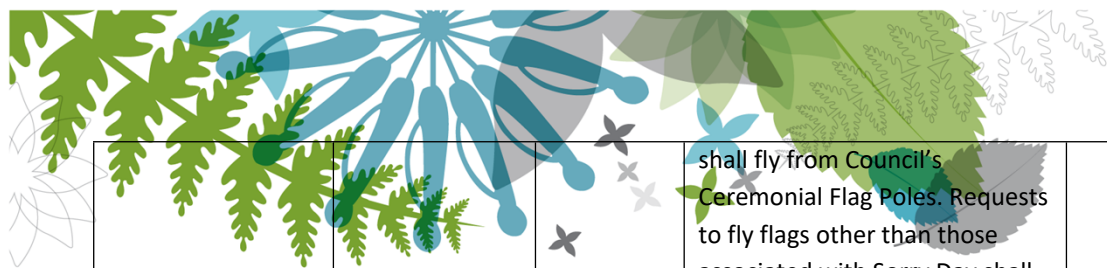


Appendix 1: Flag Schedule

Title	Date(s) flag flies	As per National Protocols	Further information	Flag images
International Women's Day Flag	8 March	n/a	Acknowledges a global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women, and raises awareness of gender discrimination.	 *indicative image only
Transgender Pride Flag – International Transgender Day of Visibility	31 March	n/a	Signifies International Transgender Day of Visibility which is an annual international celebration of trans pride and awareness, recognising trans and gender diverse experiences and achievements.	
Flags at half-mast – ANZAC Day	25 April	Yes	All flags are flown at half-mast until noon then at the peak until the usual time for closure of business or flags lowered.	All
RSL Flag to signify ANZAC Day	In the five days leading up to, and on, ANZAC Day	n/a	Flown for five days leading up to, and on, ANZAC Day in April.	
Pride Flag for IDAHOBIT (17 May)	Up to seven days during May	n/a	Flying the Pride Flag for up to seven days during May to show extended support to our LGBTQIA+ community.	
National Sorry Day	26 May	n/a	Acknowledges the history and continued effect of the forced removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from their families, communities and culture. On this day, the Australian National Flag, Aboriginal Flag and Torres Strait Islander Flag	n/a

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			shall fly from Council's Ceremonial Flag Poles. Requests to fly flags other than those associated with Sorry Day shall not be considered.	
National Reconciliation Week	27 May – 3 June	Yes	In recognition of 27 May as the anniversary of the 1967 Referendum which successfully removed from the Constitution clauses that discriminated against Indigenous Australians and 3 June as the anniversary of the High Court decision in the Eddie Mabo land rights case of 1992. During this week, the Australian National Flag, Aboriginal Flag and Torres Strait Islander Flag shall fly from Council's Ceremonial Flag Poles. Requests to fly flags other than those associated with National Reconciliation Week shall not be considered.	n/a
NAIDOC Week	From the first Sunday in July for one week	Yes	NAIDOC Week is held annually to celebrate and promote a greater understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and culture. During this week, the Australian National Flag, Aboriginal Flag and Torres Strait Islander Flag shall fly from Council's Ceremonial Flag Poles. Requests to fly flags other than those associated with NAIDOC Week shall not be considered.	n/a
Pride Flag flown for Wear It Purple Day	Last Friday in August	n/a	Wear It Purple strives to foster supportive, safe, empowering and inclusive environments for rainbow young people.	

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United Nations Flag flown for United Nations Day	24 October	n/a	Acknowledging the anniversary of the Charter of the United Nations.	
Remembrance Day – flags at half mast	11 November	Yes	Flags flown in accordance with national flag protocols. Flags are flown at the peak from 8am; at half-mast from 10.30am to 11.02am; and at the peak again from 11.02am.	All
RSL Flag – Remembrance Day	In the five days leading up to, and on, Remembrance Day, November 11.	n/a	RSL Flag flown for the five days leading up to, and on, Remembrance Day to signify armed forces members who have died in the line of duty.	
Transgender Pride Flag flown for Trans day of Remembrance	20 November	n/a	Flying the Transgender Flag to signify Trans Day of Remembrance which is an annual observance that honours the memory of the trans lives lost to acts of transphobia and discrimination.	
Colac Otway Shire Council standard	On days when the Community Flagpole is not in use for other flags	n/a	Colac Otway Shire Council flag indicates arrival at the shire's main municipal precinct.	 Colac Otway SHIRE *indicative image only

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