

Flag Flying Policy

Responsible officer:	Director Community and Planning
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1. Introduction and Purpose

Towong Shire Council (Council) is seeking to enhance the display and recognition of its connection and inclusiveness to the nation, its First Nations Peoples, and other community cohorts.

The demonstration of Council's commitment to nationhood, and inclusiveness can be seen through the flying of flags at the Tallangatta and Corryong Council offices.

This policy specifies the flags to be flown at each of the flagpole sites and sets the organisational framework to ensure that Council complies with the Australian National Flag Protocols issued by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and this is also an action from Council's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) which is the framework to guide Council's commitment towards reconciliation across the Shire

As an expression of its governance responsibilities, Council flies the Australian Flag at both the Tallangatta and Corryong Council offices. Council is responsible for ensuring that the flags are displayed with due diligence, dignity and attention to position.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to Council's two main flagpoles sites:

- Tallangatta Council Office at Towong Street, Tallangatta.
- Corryong Council Office / Elyne Mitchell Library, Hanson Street, Corryong.

3. Objectives

Council must strictly adhere to Government flag protocols and as such, will display and fly official flags during daylight hours during the business week (Monday to Friday) at the Tallangatta and Corryong Council Offices.

Civic flags provide an important vehicle for people to express identity and pride and tell a story through their colours, badges and symbols.

The policy does not include the display of promotional flags or banners around the towns nor flags and ensigns displayed on private or commercial property.

4. Policy Details

When more than one flag is flying, the Australian National flag must be flown at all times and takes precedence in Australia over all other flags when it is flown in company with other flags. However, according to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet protocols, the other flags may be interchanged with alternative flags as appropriate.

The correct precedence or order for flying flags in the community is:

1. Australian National Flag.
2. National flags of other nations.
3. State and territory flags.
4. Aboriginal Flag and Torres Strait Islander Flag, or other flag prescribed by the Flags Act 1953.
5. Ensigns or pennants (including local government, private organisations, sporting clubs and community groups).

Council's two main flagpole sites are being established on a flag stand where the centre flagpole is highest. In line with the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet protocols when displaying the Australian National Flag, the Australian Aboriginal Flag and the Torres Strait Islander Flag, the Australian National Flag should be placed on the highest pole, as correct precedence or order, as per the following examples:

4.1 Normal Days

On normal days the Australian Aboriginal flag, the Australian National flag and the Torres Strait Islander flag will be flown in that order.

This is the default position for Towong Shire Council.



On certain days, the order and type of flag may be changed as detailed below and governed by the protocols issued by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

4.2 IDAHOBIT Day, Pride Month (June) and Wear Purple Day

At these times Council will fly the Australian Aboriginal flag, the Australian National flag and the Progress Pride Flag.



4.3 Other Occasions

From time to time there may be the need to display other flags temporarily (visiting dignitary, Victorian Government elected representative or other unique event not covered in this policy), or to make minor variations to this policy.

This will be authorised at the discretion of the CEO and will follow the protocols as issued by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet - Protocol and the Australian Flags Act (1953).

For example, a visiting Victorian Premier, Government Minister or elected representative may require the need or request for the Victorian State flag to be flown, and the order of flags flown would then be as follows:



4.4 Flying Flags at Half-Mast

Flags are flown in the half-mast position as a sign of mourning. The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet provides notices to Council when all flags must be flown at half mast, such as on the death of a member of the Royal family, the head of state, Governor-General or distinguished Australian citizen. Set dates of mourning where flags are flown at half-mast include:

- 25 April (Anzac Day) – Flags to be flown at half-mast until noon then returned to the peak position.
- 11 November (Remembrance Day) – Flags to be flown at the peak until 10.30am, at half-mast from 10.30am – 11.02am and moved back to the peak from 11.02am.

When flying the Australian National flag at half-mast with other flags, all flags in the set will be flown in the same position. Unless all flags on display can be raised and lowered simultaneously, the Australian National Flag should be raised first and lowered last.

At the discretion of the CEO, flags can be flown at half-mast on the death of a local citizen or on the day, or part of the day of their funeral.

Towong staff are to ensure that the requirements of the Protocol and the Australian Flags Act (1953) of the day are followed in respect of commemorative and ceremonial events according to the nature of the activity and other special requests.

5. Responsibilities

Responsibility	Role/Position
Oversee that this Policy is communicated and distributed across all Directorates and functions of Council.	Directors
Oversee effective implementation of the Policy throughout departments including specific communication on the tasks associated with changing, raising and lowering of flags.	Director Corporate and Organisational Development
Oversee the tasks associated with changing, raising and lowering of flags.	Delegated staff within the Customer Service and/or Library teams.
Advice for changing, lowering or raising flags as per details outlined in Section 4.3 (Other Occasions) of this Policy.	Chief Executive Officer
Continually improve this policy and advise on its implementation as relevant.	Director Community and Planning

6. Human Rights

The policy gives regard to relevant legislation, principles of natural justice and procedural fairness, community values and Council's resource capacity. It is considered that this policy supports the rights identified in the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act (2006)*.

7. Relevant Legislation and Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with all other relevant Council policies and procedures, as well as relevant legislative requirements.

Related legislation includes:

- *Local Government Act 2020*
- *Australian Flags Act 1953*

Other related guidelines or policies include:

- *Policy Management Procedure*
- *Towong Shire Council Reconciliation Action Plan – 2025*



Authorised by:

Juliana Phelps
Chief Executive Officer

Appendix 1 – Elements of the Flags

The Australian National Flag



The Australian National Flag flew for the first time on 3 September 1901. The Australian flag consists of three elements:

1. The Union Jack – The Union Jack is the flag of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. On the Australian flag it is placed in the upper left-hand quarter nearest the flagpole to acknowledge the history of British settlement in Australia.
2. The Commonwealth Star – Also referred to as Federation Star is situated under the Union Jack and has seven points representing Australia's six states and one (which was added in 1908) to represent Commonwealth territories.
3. The Southern Cross – On the right-hand side of the Australian flag, four seven-pointed stars arranged in a cross, together with a smaller five-pointed star represent the Southern Cross. The Southern Cross is a constellation that can be easily seen in the night skies of the Southern Hemisphere. It was a common feature of many of the early unofficial Australian flags.

The Australian Aboriginal Flag



The Australian Aboriginal Flag was first raised on 9 July 1971. The flag was designed by Mr Harold Thomas, an aboriginal artist from the Northern Territory. In January 2022, the Prime Minister announced the copyright of the Australian Aboriginal Flag was transferred from My Harold Thomas to the Commonwealth of Australia.

The flag is divided horizontally into equal halves of black (top) and red (bottom) and has a yellow circle in the centre. The black symbolises the Aboriginal people, the red represents the earth and the colours of ochre used in Aboriginal ceremonies, and the circle of yellow represents the sun, the constant renewer of life.

The flag is flown throughout Australia. It is popularly recognised as the flag of the Aboriginal peoples of Australia.

The Torres Strait Islander Flag



The Torres Strait Islander Flag was adopted in May 1992 and its origin is attributed to the late Mr Bernard Namok of Thursday Island.

The flag has three horizontal panels, the top and bottom panels are green representing the land the middle blue panel represents the sea, and the black symbolises the people. In the centre of the flag is a white Dhari (traditional headdress), which is a symbol for all Torres Strait Islanders. Underneath the Dhari is a white five-pointed star, which represent the island groups and the white represents peace.

The flag stands for the unity and identity of all Torres Strait Islander peoples of Australia.

Victorian State Flag



The Victorian flag was proclaimed by the Governor in 1870. The flag includes the Union Jack in the top-left corner and the five stars of the Southern Cross. An imperial crown was added above the Southern Cross in 1877 and in 1901 with the accession of Edward VII, this crown was replaced with the crown of St Edward and not changed since.

The Southern Cross stars differ from those on the Australian National Flag as they have differing numbers of points to show their varying brightness.

Source

Australian Flags Booklet – Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
Australian Government - 2022

The Pride Progress Flag



The LGBTQ+ Progress Pride flag is an updated version of the traditional rainbow flag. It was designed in 2018, in response to a need for a more inclusive symbol that acknowledges the diversity within the LGBTQ+ community.

The Progress Pride flag features the traditional rainbow stripes but includes movement and a few new colours.

Pink and turquoise re-appear in this flag, but they have a different significance than they did in the original Pride Flag. The chevron of light blue, pink, and white stripes represents transgender and nonbinary individuals. Meanwhile, the black and brown stripes represent people of colour within the LGBTQ+ community.

These new additions are in the shape of an arrow on the left pointing to the right, which represents forward movement and the need for continued progress.