



Flag Control Policy and Guidelines



Flag Control Policy and Guidelines

Yarriambiack Shire Council encourages a working environment which promotes gender equality and models non-violent and respectful relationships.

Contents

1	Objective	3
2	Responsibility	3
3	Policy Statement and Scope	3
3.1	Flying the Australian Flag on Government Buildings	3
3.2	Flying the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flag	3
3.3	Flags of other significance	3
4	Flags are flown in the half-mast position as a sign of mourning	4
5	Australian National Flag Guidelines	4
6	Flag Procedure	5
7	Flag Disposal	5
8	References	5
9	Consistency with Governance Principles Local Government Act 2020	5
10	Review of Policy	8

1 Objective

This policy identifies the basis upon which Council enables the flying of flags at the Yarriambiack Shire Council office. It also gives guidance with respect to flags flown as an expression of Council's governance responsibilities, including the requirements for the flying of flags at half-mast.

2 Responsibility

The Manager People and Culture is responsible for the implementation of this policy. Direction from the Manager will be for the raising and lowering of the flag on various occasions.

Yarriambiack Shire Council is only responsible for flags flown at the Shire Council Office site.

3 Policy Statement and Scope

Yarriambiack Shire Council will ensure the flags displayed are acknowledged with due diligence, dignity and attention to position.

3.1 Flying the Australian Flag on Government Buildings

The Commonwealth Government has directed that the national flag be flown on its buildings during normal working hours on normal working days. This varies on days of mourning, when the flag is flown at half-mast and on days of national commemoration.

All organisations and individuals are encouraged to fly the Australian flag, particularly post offices and principal government buildings. It is important to observe correct protocol when flying the Australian National Flag. The flag should always be flown aloft and not used to cover a statue, monument, or plaque for an unveiling ceremony. It should not be used to cover a table or seat or to mask boxes, barriers or the space between floor and ground level on a dais or platform.

Currently Yarriambiack Shire Council flies the flag 24 hours per day and 7 days per week all year round. It is only moved to half-mast position on receipt of an email message which comes from Protocol & Special Events Branch – Department of Premier and Cabinet and on occasions such as Anzac Day and Remembrance Day or the passing of significant person.

3.2 Flying the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flag

Council flies both the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags along with the Australian flag. Council recognises the significance and diversity of culture within the community and is committed to learning and better understanding the attributes and variable that impact on Aboriginal communities and culture today.

All three flags are being flown from poles of the same height. The Australian National Flag is displayed on the flag pole to the far left (when looking at the building) with the other two flags to the right as per the Australian National Flag Protocols.

3.3 Flags of other significance

Yarriambiack Shire Council installed a fourth flagpole to acknowledge and recognise other periods of significance, these include events such as;

- a) Flying the Yarriambiack Shire Council flag when Councillors are sitting. For example; Scheduled and Unscheduled Meetings of Council and Forums.
- b) The Rainbow Flag during International Days recognising Homophobia, Biphobia, Interphobia and Transphobia (IDAHABIT) and International LGBT Pride Day.

4 Flags are flown in the half-mast position as a sign of mourning.

Times when flags are flown at half-mast:

- a) Death of Sovereign (King or Queen) – from the time of the announcement of the death up to and including the funeral.
- b) Member of Royal Family dies.
- c) Governor-General dies (or a former Governor-General).
- d) Distinguished Australian Citizen (as directed by Government).
- e) Death of Head of State of another country with which Australia has diplomatic relations (as directed by Government).
- f) On the death of a local citizen or on the day, or part of the day, of their funeral (eg a past Councillor).
- g) Anzac Day (25 April) Flag to be flown at half-mast until noon then raised to the peak.
- h) Remembrance Day (11 November) Flag should be flown at the top of the flagpole 8:00am to 10:30am then at half-mast 10:30am to 11:30am, after 11:30am raise to top of flagpole.

5 Australian National Flag Guidelines

The following guidelines apply to the Australian National Flag:

- a) The flag should be raised briskly and lowered ceremonially.
- b) The flag should be treated with the respect and dignity it deserves as the national emblem.
- c) The flag should not normally be flown in a position inferior to that of any other flag or ensign. Nor should its size be smaller than that of any other flag or ensign.
- d) In Australia, the Australian National flag takes precedence over all other national flags.
- e) The flag should always be flown aloft and free and not allowed to fall or lie on the ground.
- f) The flag should not be used to cover a statue, monument, or plaque for an unveiling ceremony; to cover a table or seat; to mask boxes, barriers or the space between floor and ground level on a dais or platform.
- g) When the flag is raised or lowered, or when it is carried past in a parade or review, all persons present should face the flag and remain silent. Those in uniform should salute.
- h) Do not fly the flag upside down, not even as a signal of distress.
- i) When the flag is presented, for example, as an illustration for commercial or advertising purposes:
 - i. it should be used in a dignified manner and reproduced accurately,
 - ii. it should not be defaced,
 - iii. it should not be covered by other objects, and
 - iv. all symbolic parts of it should be identifiable,
- j) The National flag may be displayed at night, but only when properly illuminated. Street lighting or outside house lighting may be adequate.

6 Flag Procedure

- a) National Symbols notices regarding the lowering of flags are emailed to the Manager Community Strengthening and Engagement, Governance Officer and Leading Customer Support and Libraries Officer. Alternatively, a directive may come from the Chief Executive Officer (in regards to former Councillors etc).
- b) As a rule all notices are honoured, however at times a decision may be made by the three (3) Officers not to lower the flags if the person is considered unknown to the local community. This is quite rare and should be confirmed with the Chief Executive Officer.
- c) The Governance Officer liaises with the Leading Customer Support and Libraries Officer to ensure Customer Services staff are aware of the requirements and reminders are placed in Outlook to ensure the flags are lowered and raised accordingly. The National Symbols notice is circulated by the Leading Customer Support and Libraries Officer to the Customer Services Team so they are aware of why the flags are being lowered and then can advise the community should there be any enquiries.
- d) The Governance Officer shares the National Symbols Notice with the Chief Executive Officer who will instruct the Media Team if Social Media advertising is required.
- e) The Chief Executive Officer will share the National Symbols notice with the Governance Support Officer to arrange an email to Councillors and Staff in regards to the flags being lowered and for whom Council is showing respect.

7 Flag Disposal

When a flag has worn out, it should be disposed of privately and in a dignified manner. Cutting into small unrecognisable pieces is one method. Beware of burning, as most modern flags are made from polyester which could be toxic when burnt.

8 References

- a) *Equal Opportunity Act (2010)*
- b) *Human Rights Charter*
- c) Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet
<https://pmc.gov.au/government/australian-national-flag/australian-national-flag-protocols>

9 Consistency with Governance Principles Local Government Act 2020

Governance Principle	Section of policy where covered
a) Council decisions are to be made and actions taken in accordance with the relevant law;	Section 1 - Objective
b) priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations;	Policy as a whole.

Governance Principle	Section of policy where covered
c) the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, is to be promoted;	Policy as a whole.
d) the municipal community is to be engaged in strategic planning and strategic decision making;	Policy as a whole as community discussions led to the fourth pole being installed
e) innovation and continuous improvement is to be pursued;	Section 3.3 – Flags of Significance. Fourth flag pole has been installed for the use of flags of significance to be flown at special times.
f) collaboration with other Councils and Governments and statutory bodies is to be sought;	Policy as a whole.
g) the ongoing financial viability of the Council is to be ensured;	Policy as a whole.
h) regional, state and national plans and policies are to be taken into account in strategic planning and decision making;	Policy as a whole.
i) the transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured.	Policy as a whole.

In giving effect to the overarching governance principles, a Council must take into account the following supporting principles—

Community Engagement Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A community engagement process must have a clearly defined objective and scope. Participants in community engagement must have access to objective, relevant and timely information to inform their participation. Participants in community engagement must be representative of the persons and groups affected by the matter that is the subject of the community engagement. Participants in community engagement are entitled to reasonable support to enable meaningful and informed engagement. Participants in community engagement are informed of the ways in which the community engagement process will influence Council decision making.

Comment:	<i>Ensuring the Community is aware of Council's flag protocols and are informed via Customer Services staff and social media as to when and why the flags are lowered</i>
Public Transparency Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council decision making processes must be transparent except when the Council is dealing with information that is confidential by virtue of this Act or any other Act. • Council information must be publicly available unless— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) the information is confidential by virtue of this Act or any other Act; or (ii) public availability of the information would be contrary to the public interest. • Council information must be understandable and accessible to members of the municipal community. • Public awareness of the availability of Council information must be facilitated.
Comment:	<i>Providing transparency to the Community regarding Council's flag control protocols</i>
Strategic Planning Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An integrated approach to planning, monitoring and performance reporting is to be adopted. • Strategic planning must address the Community Vision. • Strategic planning must take into account the resources needed for effective implementation. • Strategic planning must identify and address the risks to effective implementation. • Strategic planning must provide for ongoing monitoring of progress and regular reviews to identify and address changing circumstances.
Comment:	<i>Not Applicable</i>
Financial Management Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revenue, expenses, assets, liabilities, investments and financial transactions must be managed in accordance with a Council's financial policies and strategic plans. • Financial risks must be monitored and managed prudently having regard to economic circumstances. • Financial policies and strategic plans, including the Revenue and Rating Plan, must seek to provide stability and predictability in the financial impact on the municipal community. • Accounts and records that explain the financial operations and financial position of the Council must be kept.
Comment:	<i>Not Applicable</i>

10 Review of Policy

This policy is to undertake a review cycle every three years.

From time to time, circumstances may require minor administrative changes to be made to this Policy. Where an update does not materially alter this Policy, such a change may be made administratively and need not be considered and adopted by Council.

Where any change or update may materially change the intent of this policy, or the legal responsibilities of any member of the community, it must be considered and adopted by Council, or by the Chief Executive Officer in reliance on delegated authority.

Council Approved Policy

Policy Adopted:	Ordinary Meeting 25 July 2018	Minute Book Page 27
Policy Reviewed:	Ordinary Meeting 28 July 2021	Minute Book Page 50
	Ordinary Meeting 24 July 2024	Item 15.6 Minute page number 38
	Administrative Update 15 September 2025	