

Flags Policy & Protocols

Council Policy

Policy Name	Flags Policy & Protocols		
Type	Council Policy		
Owner	Director Technical Services		
Responsible Officer	Manager Technical Services		
Decision Number	21504	Approval Date	09/3/2021
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1 Purpose

This policy identifies the basis upon which Council enables the flying of flags in public locations throughout the Alice Springs municipality. 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 Policy Statement

Alice Springs Town Council recognises the significance of certain flags connected to its governance responsibilities and will utilise designated flagpoles within the municipality to fly such flags.

Civic Centre

The flags that are to be flown ordinarily from the flag poles at the Civic Centre are the Australian National Flag, Northern Territory Flag, Aboriginal Flag, Torres Strait Islander flag and the Council pennant. On ceremonial occasions flags of other countries or other flags may also be flown.

Anzac Hill

The flags that are to be flown ordinarily from the flag poles on Anzac Hill are the Australian National Flag, Northern Territory Flag, Aboriginal Flag and Torres Strait Islander flag.

Flags flown in response to Council's governance responsibilities will be flown in accordance with the relevant legislation and protocol guidelines in force at the time.

2.1 Flag Protocols

2.1.1 Australian National Flag

Protocols for flying the Australian National Flag including flying the flag at half-mast, are provided in section 2.3 of this policy (developed in accordance with the Australian Flags Booklet, Commonwealth of Australia 2006).

The Australian National flag may be used for commercial or advertising purposes without formal permission, subject to published guidelines:

<https://www.pmc.gov.au/government/australian-national-flag/commercial-use-australian-national-flag>

2.1.2 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flags

The Australian Aboriginal flag was proclaimed as a flag of Australia under Section 5 of the Flags Act 1953 (14 July 1995). Mr Harold Thomas, an Aboriginal elder was later recognised as the designer of the Aboriginal Flag by the Federal Court and was given a backdated copyright to the design in 1971. In 1998 Mr Thomas awarded an exclusive licence for the manufacture and marketing of Aboriginal flags, banners and bunting to Carrol and Richardson Flags. The Australian Aboriginal flag is not a privately controlled and commercialised product. It is a

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proclaimed flag of Australia that differs from other flags of Australia in that the individual holder of the copyright of the design is recognised.

Any commercial use of the Australian Aboriginal flag would be subject to the restrictions imposed by the Harold Thomas copyright and licence agreement.

The Torres Strait Island flag, designed by Islander Mr Bernard Namok, was adopted in 1992. The Federal Government initiated steps in 1994 to give the flag legal recognition. After a period of public consultation, the Government decided in July 1995 that the flag should be proclaimed a "Flag of Australia" under section 5 of the Flags Act 1953. The flag was so proclaimed by the Governor General of Australia, William Hayden, on 14 July 1995.

2.1.3 Flying of flags protocols

- Order of precedence – Australian National Flag; national flag of other nations, state and territory flags, other Australian flags prescribed by the Flags Act 1953 e.g. Australian Aboriginal Flag and Torres Strait Islander Flag, ensigns and pennants
- When flying the Australian National Flag and any other flags in a line of flagpoles the Australian National Flag should always be flown on the far left of a person facing the flags.
- The placement of other flags after the National Australian Flag is generally determined by the number of people they represent within the municipality.
- When flying the Australian National Flag with other flags in a line of flagpoles, the order of the flags should follow the rules of precedence e.g. the Australian National Flag should always be flown on the far left of a person facing the flags, or in the centre where there are three flag poles and the centre pole is higher. Note that no other flag should be flown above a national flag.
- In a semi-circle of flags, the Australian National Flag should be in the centre.
- The Australian National flag should only be flown at night if illuminated.
- 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 etc.
- The flag should not be flown when in damaged, faded or dilapidated condition.
- 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.
- The flag should be raised no earlier than first light and should be lowered no later than dusk.
- 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.

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2.1.4 Protocol for flying of flags at half mast

- Flags are flown in the half-mast position as a sign of mourning.
- 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.
- 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. 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, and then lowered ceremoniously.
- Under no circumstances should a flag be flown at half-mast at night, whether or not the flag is illuminated.

Notices issued by the Department of Premier and Cabinet's Office Protocol Unit requesting that all flags be flown at half-mast will also be carried out.

2.2 Procedures

Official flags flown in the municipality of Alice Springs must be done so in accordance with Council's operating procedures.

3 Responsibilities

Director Technical Services is responsible for implementation of this policy and appropriately disseminating notifications of "Flag Marshall Advice" received from the Northern Territory Government Department of the Chief Ministers Office.

The Manager Works is responsible for flying of flags and ensuring that flag protocol is followed.

Registry is responsible for storage of flags not currently in use.

4 Related Documents

- *Flags Act 1953*
- *"Australian Flags" booklet, Commonwealth of Australia 2006*

5 Version History

Title/Version	Date	Action/Description of changes made	By
Flags Policy and Protocols	09/03/21	Amalgamation of two superseded policies with the inclusion of legislated protocols and adopted resolution to include flying of Torres Strait Islander Flag at the Civic Centre.	Governance
Anzac Hill Flags	13/10/2020	Adopted – resolution to include flying of Torres Strait Islander Flag on Anzac Hill	Council
Anzac Hill Flags	26/8/2019	Adopted – resolution to permit permanent flying of Aboriginal Flag on Anzac Hill	Council

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Title/Version	Date	Action/Description of changes made	By
Anzac Hill Flags	26/11/2018	Adopted – resolution to permit flying of Aboriginal Flag on Anzac Hill during specific ceremonial occasions	Council
Civic Centre Flags	24/9/2007	Adopted	Council

6 Communication and Training

Will this policy be communicated through internal communications?	Yes
Where will this policy be available?	ASTC Website
Will training needs arise from this policy? If yes, who will be responsible.	No