



Moreland
City Council

Civic Flag Policy

Date Authorised by Council:	10 March 2021
Commencement Date:	11 March 2021
Review Date (4 years from authorised date):	March 2025
Responsible Department	Governance and Strategy

This policy has been adopted by Council.

1 INTRODUCTION

The flying of flags is a visible symbol of respect and acknowledgement. Every sovereign nation flies its own national flag as the symbol of the country, of the people, of the ideals and beliefs that those people live by and proclaim. Flying the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags demonstrates Council's recognition of First Nation peoples and demonstrates our respect and acknowledgement.

The flags that are to be flown permanently pursuant to this policy are the Australian National Flag, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flags and the Moreland City Council Flag. The Moreland City Council Flag will be substituted with other flags of significance as required by the Community Flag Schedule.

Flags flown in accordance with the Community Flag Schedule will be flown in accordance with the relevant protocol and Council resolution.

2 CONTEXT

2.1 Alignment

- The Flags Act 1953
- Australian National Flag protocol

3 OBJECTIVES

To clearly outline Council's approach to the flying of the flags at Council's Town Halls and other facilities and to establish a mechanism to consider requests for flying of flags of significant to the Moreland community.

4 POLICY DETAILS

4.1 AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL FLAG

The Australian National Flag is the chief national symbol and was raised for the first time on 3 September 1901 in the presence of the first Australian Prime Minister, the Hon. Edmund Barton. This symbol of nationality stands for the democracy which allows Australians to discuss its meaning and origins.

The flag has three elements on a blue background: the Union Jack, the Commonwealth Star and the Southern Cross. The Union Jack in the upper left corner represents the history of British settlement. Below the Union Jack is a white Commonwealth, or Federation, star. It has seven points representing the unity of the six states and the territories of the Commonwealth of Australia. The star is also featured on the Commonwealth Coat of Arms. The Southern Cross is shown on the flag in white. It is a constellation of five stars that can only be seen from the southern hemisphere and is a reminder of Australia's geography.

The Australian National Flag may be flown everyday throughout the year.

4.2 THE ABORIGINAL FLAG

The Australian Aboriginal flag was proclaimed as a flag of Australia under Section 5 of the Flags Act 1953 on 14 July 1995. The symbolic meaning of the flag colours (as stated by its designer and aboriginal elder Mr Harold Thomas) are:

Black: Represents the Aboriginal people of Australia

Red: Represents the red earth, the red ochre and a spiritual relation to the land

Yellow: Represents the Sun, the giver of life and protector.

The Aboriginal Flag may be flown everyday throughout the year.

4.3 THE TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER FLAG.

The Torres Strait Islander Flag was created as a symbol of unity and identity for Torres Strait Islander peoples, designed by the late Bernard Namok from Thursday Island.

The flag was recognised by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission in June 1992 and given equal prominence with the Aboriginal flag. The flag was proclaimed as a flag of Australia under Section 5 of the Flags Act 1953 on 14 July 1995.

The Torres Strait Islander Flag may be flown everyday throughout the year.

4.4 ORDER OF PRECEDENCE

The Australian National flag takes precedence in Australia over all other flags when it is flown in company with other flags. Thereafter when flown in the community, the order of precedence of flags is:

- The Australian National Flag.
- State and Territory flags.
- Other flags prescribed by the *Flags Act 1953* including:
 - The Australian Aboriginal flag.
 - The Torres Strait Islander flag in either order.
 - Ensigns and pennants including local government; Commonwealth, state and territory agencies; and non-government organisations.
 - Ensigns and pennants of Council supported causes.

4.5 EXTERIOR TOWN HALL FLAGPOLES

The exterior flagpoles at Council's Town Halls at Brunswick and Coburg shall be used for the flying of the Australian National Flag, the Australian Aboriginal Flag and the Torres Strait Islander flag.

4.5.1 Coburg Civic Centre and Town Hall

At the Coburg Civic Centre and Town Hall, the following flags shall be used (including those prescribed by the Flags Act 1953):

1. The Australian National flag.
2. The Australian Aboriginal flag.
3. The Torres Strait Islander flag.
4. Flags of significance to the Moreland Community as detailed in the Community Flag Schedule or otherwise determined through Council resolution. When not in use through the Community Flag Schedule, the Moreland City Council flag will be flown.

4.5.2 Brunswick Town Hall

At the Brunswick Town Hall the following flags shall be used (including those prescribed by the Flags Act 1953):

1. The Australian National flag.
2. The Australian Aboriginal flag.

In all respects, flying of these flags shall accord with Australian National Flag protocol as published by the Commonwealth Government.

4.6 INTERIOR TOWN HALL FLAGPOLES

The Australian National Flag, the Australian Aboriginal Flag and the Torres Strait Islander Flag shall be flown at all public Council Meetings and Citizenship Ceremonies.

4.7 PORTABLE FLAGPOLES FOR CIVIC EVENTS

The portable Flag poles may be used to fly the Australian National Flag, the Australian Aboriginal Flag and the Torres Strait Islander Flag at a Civic Event where this is deemed appropriate for the event.

4.8 COMMUNITY FLAG SCHEDULE

Upon the adoption of this policy and upon every subsequent policy review, Council shall adopt a Community Flag Schedule which sets out which flags shall be flown, when they shall be flown, and which flagpoles shall be used. The schedule is to be considered a living document, and can be added to by one of the following mechanisms:

- By Council resolution, either for a one-off occasion or on an ongoing basis.
- By the Chief Executive Officer for a one-off occasion where a resolution from Council is not practicable.
- Upon request by a bona fide organisation at least one calendar month prior to the proposed flag flying date and following approval by Council resolution or by the Chief Executive Officer (where a resolution from Council is not practicable). The flag(s) is to be provided by the organisation making the request.

In considering the addition of flags to the Community Flag Schedule, regard shall be given to whether the flying of the flag will cause offence to sectors of the community or whether highlighting a particular issue, cause or group would be inconsistent with Council's values and commitment to inclusiveness. The Schedule will expire upon every subsequent policy review, but any flag is eligible to be included again in the Schedule.

4.9 HALF MASTING

The Australian National flag on the Town Hall flag poles shall be flown at half-mast in accordance with national flag protocol and as directed by the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet's Office. The national flag protocol allows for the of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags to be half-mast as a sign of mourning

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags will be flown at half mast on January 26 and May 26 each year. These are considered to be days of mourning by First Nations peoples.

Following a request from the relevant Aboriginal Community and at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer or in their absence the Director Business Transformation, the Australian Aboriginal Flag will be flown at half-mast to mark the passing of an Aboriginal person who has contributed significantly to the community of the City of Moreland.

Following a request from the relevant Torres Strait Islander Community and at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer or in his/her absence the Director Business Transformation, the Torres Strait Islander Flag will be flown at half-mast to mark the passing of a Torres Strait Islander person who has contributed significantly to the community of the City of Moreland.

4.10 NOTIFICATION

Where any flag is flown on the exterior Flagpoles, or where a flag is flown at half mast, the public should be made aware through one or more of Council's communication channels indicating the reason.

4.11 VARIATION TO POLICY

The Chief Executive Officer or in his/her absence the Director Business Transformation shall be authorised to permit departures from this policy where adherence to the policy:

- would have has financial and staffing implications due to a need to raise or lower a flag outside business hours;
- could cause offence to sectors of the Moreland community;
- results in a conflict between different policy requirements; or
- is warranted due to extraordinary or unforeseen circumstances.

5 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Party/parties	Roles and responsibilities	Timelines
Flag Master	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maintaining a subscription to the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet's Commonwealth and acting on notices relating to flag arrangements.• Implementation of this policy.	Ongoing

6 MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

The implementation of this Policy will be overseen by the Civic Protocols Team Leader, in conjunction with the Flag Master.

The policy will be reviewed upon change to legislation, national flag protocols or Council direction.

7 DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
Bona fide organisation	An organisation that is properly constituted and registered as a charity.

8 ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

Community Flag Schedule

Civic Flag Procedure

9 REFERENCES

- The Flags Act 1953
- Australian National Flag Protocols
<https://www.pmc.gov.au/government/australian-national-flag/australian-national-flag-protocols>
- Flag Schedule D20/56473