

Flag Protocol

Approved by Executive 9 May 2018



**MORNINGTON
PENINSULA**
Shire

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1 Introduction

Flags are flown by the Shire at Council Offices and other locations across the Mornington Peninsula.

The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet releases flag notifications for special occasions or occasions when flags should be half-mast and publishes *Australian flags – Part 2: The protocols for the appropriate use and the flying of the flag*.

The Department of Premier and Cabinet notifies Victorian organisations when there is an occasion that involves the flying of the national flag or state flag.

2 Purpose

The policy outlines the proper use of flags, providing guidance to Shire employees who manage the flying of flags at Council Offices and other locations.

3 Objectives

The policy guides the flying of flags at civic and Council owned flagpoles in the municipality. The flying of flags must be consistent with guidance in *Australian flags – Part 2: The protocols for the appropriate use and the flying of the flag* and notifications from the Department of Premier and Cabinet when there is an occasion to half-mast flags or fly specific flags.

4 Owner

The owner of the protocol is the Chief Executive Officer.

All enquiries regarding the protocol should be initially directed to the Governance team.

5 Scope

The protocol applies to flags flying at Council Offices at Hastings, Mornington and Rosebud and Council owned flagpoles at war memorials and other locations across the municipality.

6 Definitions

Terms	Definitions
Australian flag booklet	<i>Australian flags – Part 2: The protocols for the appropriate use and the flying of the flag</i> available at https://www.pmc.gov.au/resource-centre/government/australian-flags-booklet-part-two
Ceremoniously	Taking time to handle the flag formally, carefully and respectfully and avoiding sudden movements
Victorian Flag Notifications Network	Network of Victorian organisations that are notified by the Department of Premier and Cabinet when there is an occasion that involves the national or state flag

7 Policy

7.1 Flying flags at Council Offices

Council Offices are located at:

- 21 Marine Parade, Hastings;
- 2 Queen Street, Mornington; and
- 90 Besgrove Street, Rosebud.

Each Office has four flagpoles and must fly the following flags during business hours:

- Australian National Flag;
- Victorian State Flag;
- Australian Aboriginal Flag; and
- Mornington Peninsula Shire Council Flag.

7.2 Flying Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flags

The Aboriginal Flag will be flown at Council Offices throughout the year in recognition of Aboriginal people as the traditional owners of the land on which the Mornington Peninsula is located.

The Torres Strait Islander Flag will be flown during Reconciliation Week and National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) Week, replacing the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council Flag.

National Reconciliation Week commemorates the referendum on 27 May 1967 to make laws for Aboriginal peoples and include Aboriginal people in the Census and the Mabo High Court decision on 3 June 1992. NAIDOC Week is held in the first week (Sunday to Sunday) of July.

7.3 Requests to fly other flags

Requests by community organisations to fly flags other than those listed in 7.1 and 7.2 above will be considered by the Chief Executive Officer in consultation with the Mayor.

Such requests will not be approved where the flying of the flag may cause offence to sectors of the community or if highlighting an issue, cause or group would be inconsistent with Council's values and commitment to inclusiveness.

The Governance team will manage requests from community groups to fly other flags, including seeking the approval of the Chief Executive Officer and communicating the Chief Executive Officer's decision to hall keepers.

7.4 Flying flags at half-mast

The Department of Premier and Cabinet is responsible for notifying Victorian organisations when there is an occasion that involves the Australian National Flag and the Victorian State Flag.

Flag notifications relate to the half-masting of flags or an instruction to fly specific flags.

Notifications from the Department of Premier and Cabinet are mandatory and must be followed by the Shire.

7.4.1 Anzac Day

On 25 April each year flags would normally be flown at half-mast until noon then at the peak of the flag pole until the usual time for close of business. As this would require hall keepers' attendance at Council Offices during a public holiday flags will not be raised at Council Offices on Anzac Day.

7.4.2 Remembrance Day

On 11 November each year flags must be flown at the peak of the flag pole from 8.30am to 10.30am, lowered to half-mast from 10.30, and raised back to the peak from 11.02am until the usual time for close of business. When Remembrance Day falls on a weekend flags will not be raised at Council Offices on Remembrance Day.

7.4.3 Commemorating local elders

Following a request from the relevant local Aboriginal community organisation and after consulting with the Mornington Peninsula Shire Warringinee Group, the Aboriginal Flag will be flown at half-mast as a sign of mourning after the death of a local Aboriginal elder or significant community member.

The Governance team will advise hall keepers when Aboriginal Flags must be flown at half-mast to commemorate the death of a local elder or significant community member.

It is usual practice in Aboriginal culture that the name of the deceased person is not spoken out loud for a period after their death. This practice will be adopted by Shire employees communicating about any commemoration.

7.4.4 Commemorating employees, councillors or community leaders

The Chief Executive Officer may direct that the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council Flag be flown at half-mast on the day of the funeral of a former employee, Councillor or community leader.

The Governance team will advise hall keepers when the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council Flag must be flown at half-mast for such a commemoration.

8 Procedure

8.1 Dignity of the flag

The Australian Flag should be treated with respect and dignity as it is the nation's most important national symbol. Protocols for flying and handling the Australian Flag are detailed in the Australian flag booklet. These protocols must be applied to other flags flown at Council locations in the municipality.

Flags must be handled ceremoniously at all times which means taking time to handle them formally, carefully and respectfully and avoiding sudden movements when raising and lowering flags. Flags must never fall to or be laid on the ground.

Flags must never be flown if they are damaged, faded or dilapidated. When the material of the flag deteriorates to a point where it is no longer suitable for use, it should be destroyed privately in a dignified way. For example, it may be cut into small unrecognisable pieces then disposed of with the normal rubbish collection.

8.2 Council Offices

Each Council Office has four flag poles and will fly the Australian, Victorian, Aboriginal and Mornington Peninsula Shire Council flags during business hours.

During Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week the Torres Strait Islander Flag will be flown, replacing the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council Flag.

When flying the Australian Flag with other flags in a line of flag poles the Australian Flag should always be flown on the far left of a person facing the flags. In a single line of flag poles arranged at right angles to a building the Australian Flag must be flown on the far left flag pole closest to the kerb.

Thereafter, the order of precedence is:

- National flag of another nation;
- Victorian State Flag;
- Australian Aboriginal Flag; and
- Mornington Peninsula Shire Council Flag.

The national flag of another nation may be flown at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer during officially sanctioned visits of representatives of the nation or to acknowledge a significant event of that nation.

Where there are three flag poles the Australian Flag must be flown on the centre flag pole with the Victorian State Flag and the Australian Aboriginal Flag on either side.

8.3 Flying the Australian Flag with the flags of other nations

Where the flags of other nations are being raised and there is an odd number of flag poles the Australian Flag must be flown in the centre. Where there is an even number of flag poles and one Australian Flag is available it should be flown on the far left of a person facing the building. Where there is an even number of flag poles and two Australian Flags are available they should be flown at each end of the line of flag poles.

8.4 Raising and lowering the flag

Protocols for handling the Australian Flag are set out in Australian flag booklet. The protocols will be applied by Shire employees to the handling of all flags flown at locations in the municipality:

- Flags must be raised briskly and lowered ceremoniously;
- The Australian Flag must be raised first and lowered last;
- Flags must be flown as close as possible to the top of the flag pole and the rope tightly secured;
- Flags must not be flown upside down;
- Each flag pole will fly one flag only;
- Flags must not be allowed to fall to the ground or lie on the ground;
- Flags must be raised no earlier than first light and lowered no later than dusk; and
- Flags may only be flown at night when illuminated.

The *Australian flags – Part 2: The protocols for the appropriate use and the flying of the flag* is available at <https://www.pmc.gov.au/resource-centre/government/australian-flags-booklet-part-two>.

Flags must not be used to cover a statue, monument or plaque for an unveiling ceremony or to cover a table, seat or other structure.

8.5 Flying flags at half-mast

To bring a flag to half-mast, it must first be raised to the top of the flag pole then immediately lowered slowly to the half-mast position with the top of the flag one third of the distance from the top of the flag pole.

When lowering a flag from half-mast it must first be briefly raised to the top of the flag pole then lowered ceremoniously.

8.6 Public notification

Where flags are flown at half-mast or a flag not listed in 7.1 and 7.2 above is flown at Shire Offices then a notice will be published on the Shire’s website indicating the reason.

8.7 Flags – requests for new/changed locations

The Governance Manager must be consulted about any requests from members of the community or reports being drafted for Council resolution to erect additional municipal flag poles or relocate municipal flag poles. This includes any reports to Council seeking resolution to locate new flag poles, change the location of flag poles and/or associated lighting and plaque arrangements.

8.8 Management and maintenance

The Governance team is responsible for managing Shire flag poles and arranging repairs and maintenance as required.

Replacement of worn and damaged flags is managed by the Governance team.

9 Roles and responsibilities

The following table sets out the key roles and responsibilities under the protocol:

Roles	Responsibilities
Chief Executive Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve, in consultation with the Mayor, requests from community organisations to fly flags other than the Australian, Aboriginal, Victorian and Council flags • Direct that the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council Flag be flown at half-mast on the day of the funeral of a former employee, Councillor or community leader • Direct that the national flag of another nation be flown during officially sanctioned visits of representatives of the nation or to acknowledge a significant event of that nation
Governance Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the protocol is implemented • Manage enquiries about the protocol • Review the protocol • Manage any requests for new flag poles or changes to flag flying at Shire offices or other locations across the municipality
Governance team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promptly communicate flag notifications to hall keepers • Advise hall keepers when the Aboriginal flag must be flown at half-mast • Manage enquiries about the protocol • Management and maintenance of flag poles and replacement of flags

Roles	Responsibilities
Hall keepers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shire hall keepers at Hastings, Mornington and Rosebud are responsible for flying flags and complying with the Australian flag booklet and flag notifications

10 Communication

The Governance team will regularly inform relevant Shire employees about the protocol and ensure it can be accessed by all Shire employees through Our Shire.

11 Approved

The protocol was approved by the Executive on 9 May 2018.

12 Review

The protocol will be reviewed within 12 months of the next Council general election in October 2020.