

SCS-035 – Flag Policy

TRIM Reference:	D22/27482	Due for Review:	March 2025
Responsible Officer:	Manager Community Support		

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure that the flags displayed at the Surf Coast Shire Council office are flown in accordance with the flag protocols as determined by the Australian Government.
- Establish guidelines for flying other flags which are significant to the Surf Coast Shire community.

Policy Principles

- National flag protocols provide guidance for the flying of flags, particularly the Australian National Flag
- The acts of flying and lowering a flag are signs of respect and acknowledgement
- Community requests for the flying of flags will be considered in accordance with this policy

Scope

This policy applies to flying flags at the Surf Coast Shire Council office, 1 Merrijig Drive Torquay.

This policy does not apply to other Council owned community facilities or public facilities not owned by Council.

Policy

This policy outlines the way Council will fly flags. The Policy and attached Schedule aim to support the delivery of the themes of the Council plan and help achieve Council's purpose to 'help the community and environment to thrive'.

- Flags will be flown in accordance with the Australian Government Flag Protocols.
- Council will continuously fly the Australian National Flag and the Australian Aboriginal Flag on the Ceremonial flag poles and on the Front Entrance flag poles apart from on 26 January when the Aboriginal Flag and Torres Strait Island flag will be flown at half-mast on the Front Lawn flag pole (Aboriginal Flag) and Pond flag pole (Torres Strait Island Flag).
- Council will usually fly the Surf Coast Shire Flag on the Ceremonial flag poles and on the Front Entrance flag poles.
- When a flag needs to be removed to accommodate a celebration or event as noted below or when directed to fly an alternative flag by the Federal or State Government, the Surf Coast Shire flag will be replaced with the relevant flag for the specified event or timeframe. The order of precedence in the Australian Government Flag Protocols will continue to be observed in this case.
- The Front Lawn flag pole and the Pond flag pole will be used to fly flags in accordance with Council's events calendar and to accommodate community requests to fly flags. It should be noted that it is not relevant for all Council events to have a flag flying.
- Flags other than those referred to in the Australian Government Flag Protocols will not fly longer than a calendar month or a maximum of 31 days.

- Council will fly the national flags of other countries during Council sanctioned visits by dignitaries of the country or when directed by the federal or state government.
- Council will fly flags at half-mast as a sign of mourning or sorrow on occasions. This will include occasions as advised by the Department of Premier and Cabinet – Victoria or Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and under the conditions described in the Australian Government Flag Protocols.
- The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) will approve flags to be flown in accordance with Council's annual events calendar and this policy.
- The CEO will consider and make determinations in relation to requests from community groups or organisations to fly flags other than those relevant to Council's annual events calendar. In doing so, the CEO will have regard to Council resolutions, the Council Plan and any other relevant positions of Council. The CEO may consult the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors and/or present a report at a Council meeting should they consider the matter is complex and a prevailing Council position is not clear.
- This policy informs the Flag Flying Schedule attached as Appendix 1.

Principles	Applicable to policy	If yes, provide details
Governance Principles (Consideration of the Governance Principles under s.9 of LGA 2020)	Yes	By supporting the community through flying flags, Council is pursuing the best outcomes for the municipal community.
Community Engagement (Consideration of Community Engagement Principles under s.56 LGA 2020)	Yes	The extensive community engagement conducted to create the Council Plan recently has informed the Schedule for flying flags.
Public Transparency (Consideration of Public Transparency Principles under s.58 of LGA 2020)	Yes	Adopting this policy at a Council meeting gives the public visibility of Council's approach
Strategies and Plans (Consideration of Strategic Planning Principles under s.89 of LGA 2020)	No	
Financial Management (Consideration of Financial Management Principles under s.101 of LGA 2020)	No	
Service Performance (Consideration of Service Performance Principles under s.106 of LGA 2020)	No	

Definitions

Australian Government Flag Protocols – as outlined in “Australian flags – Part 2: The protocols for the appropriate use and the flying the flag’ or equivalent document as published by the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. The protocols can be viewed here:

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

Council office – the Council building at 1 Merrijig Drive, Torquay

Flag pole locations are described visually in Appendix 2 – Council Office flag pole locations

Pond flag pole – the flag pole adjacent to the pond and its viewing platform

Front Lawn flag pole – the flag pole on the grassed area adjacent to the car park

Front Entrance flag poles – the three flag poles at the main or southern entrance to the Council office building.

Ceremonial flag poles - three flag poles on the northern side of the Council office building

Annual events calendar – Council's adopted calendar of events and awareness raising activities.

Responsibilities

CEO

The CEO is responsible for:

- Considering and approving community requests to fly flags at the Civic Centre
- Determining when to refer a request to fly flags to Council for a decision

Community Support Department

- Receiving and considering requests for the flying of flags
- Preparing Council Reports where a Council decision is required
- Conducting periodic reviews of the Flag Policy

Council Facilities Staff or Customer Service Staff

- Maintaining supply of relevant flags to ensure they are in good condition
- Based on direction from the Community Support Department, fly the flags in accordance with the Schedule and Australian Government protocols

Related Procedure

Nil







References







Australian National Flag Protocols - <https://www.pmc.gov.au/government/australian-national-flag/australian-national-flag-protocols>

Document History

Version	Document History	Approved by – Date
1	<i>First flag policy</i>	<i>Council resolution - 28 March 2018</i>
2	<i>Amended version</i>	<i>Council Resolution – 22 March 2022</i>

Appendix 1 – Flag Schedule 2022-2025

Title	Date(s) flag flies	As per National Protocols	Flag Pole(s)	Information on Cause/Request	Flag image(s)
Transgender Pride Flag - International Transgender Day of Visibility	31 March		Front Lawn	Flying to signify International Transgender Day of Visibility which is an annual international celebration of trans pride and awareness, recognising trans and gender diverse experiences and achievements.	
Flags at half-mast - Anzac Day	25 April	✓	Ceremonial and Civic Centre Front Entrance	Flags are flown at half-mast until noon then at the peak until the usual time for closure of business or flags lowered.	All
RSL Flag in April to signify Anzac Day	Month of April		Front Lawn	Flown for the month to signify Anzac Day in the month of April. Requested by Torquay RSL each year since 2018.	
Rainbow Flag in May for IDAHOBIT Day (17 May)	Month of May		Front Lawn	A Council adopted event. Flying the Rainbow Flag for the full month of May to show extended support for the various sections of the LGBTIQ+ community.	
National Sorry Day - Torres Strait Island Flag replaces Surf Coast Shire Flag	26 May	✓	Ceremonial and Civic Centre Front Entrance	In accordance with Australian Flag Protocols. Acknowledges the history and continued effect of the forced removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from their families, communities and culture.	
Reconciliation Week - Torres Strait Island Flag replaces Surf Coast Shire Flag	27 May - 3 June	✓	Ceremonial and Civic Centre Front Entrance	In accordance with Australian Flag Protocols. The dates commemorate two significant milestones in the reconciliation journey—the anniversaries of the successful 1967 referendum and the Mabo lands rights decision in 1992.	
NAIDOC Week Torres Strait Island Flag replaces Surf Coast Shire Flag	From the first Sunday in July for 1 Week.	✓	Ceremonial and Civic Centre Front Entrance	In accordance with Australian Flag Protocols. NAIDOC Week is a celebration of the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.	

Title	Date(s) flag flies	As per National Protocols	Flag Pole(s)	Information on Cause/Request	Flag image(s)
RSL Flag - Vietnam Veterans Day (18 Aug)	Month of August		Front Lawn	Flown for the month to signify Vietnam Veterans Day. Requested by Torquay RSL each year since 2018.	
United Nations Flag - United Nations Day	24 October	✓	Civic Centre Front Entrance	In accordance with Australian Flag Protocols. United Nations Day marks the anniversary of the commencement of the U.N. Charter.	
Remembrance Day. Flags at half-mast	11 November	✓	Ceremonial and Civic Centre Front Entrance	In accordance with Australian Flag Protocols. Flags are flown at the peak from 8am, half-mast from 10.30am to 11.02am and then at the peak after 11.02am.	All
RSL Flag - Remembrance Day	Month of November		Front Lawn	Flown for the month to signify armed forces members who have died in the line of duty. Requested by Torquay RSL each year since 2018.	
Transgender Pride Flag at Half Mast – Trans Day of Remembrance	20 November		Pond	Flying the transgender flag at half mast to signify Trans Day of Remembrance which is an annual observance that honours the memory of the trans lives lost to acts of transphobia and discrimination.	
Flying Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Flags at half-mast	26 January		Front Lawn (Aboriginal Flag) and Pond (Torres Strait Island Flag)	Flying the Aboriginal Flag and Torres Strait Island Flags at half-mast to stand in solidarity with First Nations people on this day.	 

Appendix 2 - Council office flag pole locations

