



# Civic and Community Flag Protocol

Policy outcome	<p>To ensure clear guidance on the flying of civic flags in line with Federal and State government directives as well as the flying of other flags agreed by Council.</p> <p>The Protocol will serve as an instrument to eliminate uncertainty in the flying of flags at Council premises and will be a source of good guidance for Council Officers and the community.</p>
Responsible area	Governance
Version	Two
Date approved/adopted	June 2025
Planned review date	Full protocol review: 2029

## 1. Purpose

This protocol guides the flying of flags on Council controlled civic and community flagpoles within the City of Port Phillip and applies to the Australian National Flag, other official civic flags and community flags.

The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet releases flag notifications for special occasions or occasions when flags should be flown at half-mast and publishes a booklet for the guidance of flying the Australian National Flag.

This protocol also includes guidance on town hall façade illumination.

## 2. Scope

The scope of this protocol covers all staff, contractors or volunteers who manage the display of flags on Council controlled flagpoles on behalf of the City of Port Phillip.

The scope also includes the illumination of the façade at the St Kilda, Port Melbourne and South Melbourne town halls.

## 3. Protocol

### 3.1. Civic Flag Poles

Civic Flagpoles: Civic Flagpoles are located in key positions of prominence on council's town halls. They are used to display official flags such as the Australian National Flag, Aboriginal Flag, and Torres Strait Islander Flag in accordance with the Australian National Flag Protocols. These flagpoles represent formal government recognition and respect and are not subject to community request.

#### 3.1.1. Australian National Flag



The [Australian National Flag Protocol](#) outlines the proper ways to display and handle the flag with respect and dignity.

When flown in Australia or on Australian territory, the Australian National Flag should always be flown in the position of honour.

Any person may fly the Australian National Flag; the flag should be treated with the respect and dignity it deserves as the nation's most important national symbol.

The Australian National Flag will be flown at council offices on all business days during normal working hours and shall take precedence over all other flags.

When flown alongside other official flags, the flag should not be flown in a position inferior to that of any other flag or ensign. [Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Flag](#)

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flags will be flown from Council controlled flagpoles, where available, throughout the year in recognition of Aboriginal people as the Traditional Owners of the land on which the City of Port Phillip is located.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags are subject to the order of precedence, outlined in the [Australian Flags Booklet](#).

### 3.1.3. [Flag Locations](#)

Flags will be at the following Council controlled locations:

- Port Melbourne Town Hall
- South Melbourne Town Hall
- St Kilda Town Hall
- Alfred Square

Each location has a differing number of flagpoles and, as a standard, will fly the following flags during business hours:

*Table 1: Location and number of flagpoles*

Location	Flagpoles	Flags Flown
<b>Port Melbourne Town Hall</b>	1x civic masthead flagpole 1x civic/community flagpole	Australian National Flag (3600 x 1800) Australian Aboriginal Flag (1800 x 900)
<b>South Melbourne Town Hall</b>	2x civic ground level flagpoles 1x community flagpole	Australian National Flag (1800 x 900) Australian Aboriginal Flag (1800 x 900) City of Port Phillip Flag (1800 x 900)
<b>St Kilda Town Hall</b>	1x civic masthead flagpole 2x civic ground level flagpoles 1x community flagpole	Australian National Flag (3600 x 1800) Australian Aboriginal Flag (1800 x 900) Torres Strait Islander Flag (1800 x 900) City of Port Phillip Flag (1800 x 900)
<b>Alfred Square – St Kilda</b>	3x civic flagpoles	Australian National Flag (3600 x 1800) Australian Aboriginal Flag (1800 x 900)



Torres Strait Islander Flag (1800 x 900)

### 3.1.4. Standard and Replacement of Flags

The Australian National Flag and other official civic flags should always be of fully sewn quality. The flags set-out in *Table 1* will be replaced annually on the Monday preceding 25 April (if required).

Should a request to replace civic flags be received either internally or by community member before the annual replacement date, the Coordinator Councillor and Executive Support will review and action the request.

Flags that fly on community flagpoles can either be fully sewn or printed.

#### Flying Flags at Half-mast

The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet is responsible for notifying organisations when the Australian National Flag is to be flown at half-mast. Notifications from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet are mandatory and must be followed.

The Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) is responsible for notifying Victorian organisations when there is an instruction to fly the Australian National Flag at half-mast that is specific to Victoria. Half-masting instructions from the office of Premier and Cabinet will only be observed if the deceased person was a local State MP or in the event of a state funeral.

A flag should not be flown at half-mast at night, whether or not the flag is illuminated, unless direction to half-mast the flag for an extended period of time has been issued.

All civic flags flying from Council controlled flagpoles will be flown at half-mast according to the below schedule, in line with Federal protocol:

*Table 2: Half-masting schedule*

Date/Occasion	Instruction
<b>Anzac Day – 25 April</b>	All flags flown at half-mast until noon.
<b>Remembrance Day – 11 November</b>	All flags flown at half-mast until 11:02am.

### 3.1.5. Flying Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flags at Half-mast

A request (either internally or externally) to fly the Aboriginal Flag and/or Torres Strait Islander flags at half-mast (that is not a Commonwealth or State Government directive) to recognise the passing of a member of the First Nations community must be made in writing to the Director Governance & Performance no later than 24 hours (faith dependent) prior to the requirement for the flag to be lowered.

The Director Governance & Performance will generally take into consideration the deceased persons standing within the community and their contribution to provide a positive impact on the lives of others.



The Director Governance & Performance will consult with First Peoples staff and the Mayor before making their final decision.

### 3.1.6. Flying Flags from St Kilda Town Hall Masthead Flagpole

The City of Port Phillip is committed to ensuring that flag positioning at St Kilda Town Hall (SKTH) reflects both official guidance and the expectations of the community. Recognising the significance of flags as symbols of identity and unity, the Council seeks to uphold a policy that is balanced, respectful, and responsive.

In recognition of Aboriginal people as the Traditional Owners of the land on which the City of Port Phillip is located as well as a significant LGBTIQ+ community presence within the City, the Australian National Flag will be displaced from the masthead flagpole at St Kilda Town Hall (SKTH) at the following times throughout the year only:

*Table 3: SKTH masthead flag schedule*

Date/Occasion	Flag
<b>The week leading up to Pride March along Fitzroy St (usually the first week of February) and taken down the day following Pride March.</b>	Rainbow Pride Flag (either traditional rainbow pride flag, inclusive rainbow pride flag or progressive inclusive rainbow pride flag).
<b>National Sorry Day and Reconciliation Week: 26 May – 3 June</b>	Australian Aboriginal Flag
<b>NAIDOC Week: 2 – 9 July (dates may vary)</b>	Australian Aboriginal Flag

When the Australian National Flag is displaced from the masthead flagpole at the SKTH, the Australian National Flag shall be flown from the far left, ground level civic flagpole, alongside either the Australian Aboriginal Flag or Torres Strait Islander Flag.

## 3.2. Community Flagpoles

Community Flagpoles, on the other hand, are designated for community groups to display flags that represent local events, cultural celebrations, or awareness campaigns. Flags flown on Community Flagpoles are subject to the Community Flagpole and Illumination Scheme 2025 (the Scheme).

There are three community flagpoles controlled by the City of Port Phillip, one at each town hall. The City of Port Phillip flag will be flown from the community flagpole at SKTH and South Melbourne Town Hall on every day of the year unless otherwise stipulated in the Community Flagpole Schedule (appendix A).

As there is currently only one ground-level civic/community flagpole at Port Melbourne town hall, the Australian Aboriginal Flag will be flown from the community flagpole at this location



every day of the year unless otherwise stipulated in the Community Flagpole Schedule (appendix A).

The Community Flagpole Schedule is subject to amendment in response to requests received under the Scheme and to respond to Council's requirement to add days of significance (subject to Director Governance & Performance and Mayoral approval) which may not already be listed in the schedule.

#### 3.2.1. Community Flagpole – Community Requests

Applications by community organisations to fly flags other than those listed in the Community Flagpole Schedule will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Coordinator Councillor and Executive Support in line with the Community Flagpole and Illumination Scheme.

Based on the merit of the application, a recommendation will be provided to the Director Governance & Performance who will have final approval.

Port Phillip professional sporting clubs who win their respective competition finals can request to have their club's flag flown on the flagpole nearest their club's location (for example Port Melbourne Football Club flag flown on Port Melbourne Town Hall community flagpole).

Any request will need to consider the eligibility under the Scheme, availability of space, and competing requests at the time of the request. The decision to approve or reject any application will be final.

#### 3.2.2. Flying the City of Port Phillip Flag at Half-mast

A request to fly the City of Port Phillip community flag at half-mast on the day of a funeral is to be made in writing to the Chief Executive Officer no later than 24 hours (faith dependent) prior to the requirement for the flag to be lowered.

The Director Governance & Performance will generally take into consideration the persons contribution to the Port Phillip local community, their positive impact on the lives of others and their contribution to make the City of Port Phillip a better place to live.

The Director Governance & Performance will consult with the Mayor before making their final decision.

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.

Where requests have been approved, the Coordinator Councillor and Executive Support will inform Councillors and ASSIST as to the reason for the half-masting.

#### 3.2.3. Flags of other Nations

Flags of other nations will not be flown on external Council controlled flagpoles unless otherwise resolved by Council.

### 3.3 Town Hall Illumination



### 3.3.1 Town Hall Façade Illumination – Department mandates and internal requests

The SKTH is fitted with coloured, programmable façade lighting. As default, the SKTH façade will be illuminated in a warm white colour.

Council will follow façade illumination notifications for the SKTH which are issued by the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

Internal requests to illuminate the SKTH façade in a particular colour/s to represent a cause will be approved by Director Governance & Performance (or their delegate), in consultation with the Mayor with consideration to the Scheme. Illumination requests should allow for sufficient time for the requested colour/colours to be programmed.

The Port Melbourne town hall and South Melbourne town hall are not fitted with permanent façade lighting infrastructure (for coloured, programable lighting).

### 3.3.2 Town Hall Façade Illumination – External Requests

External requests may be received to illuminate the façade of a Council town hall building in certain colours to mark days of significance for example International Holocaust Remembrance Day. The façade will be illuminated for a maximum of 48 hours or two (2) periods of dusk - midnight.

Based on the merit of the external application, a recommendation will be provided to the Director Governance & Performance (or their delegate), who will consult with the Mayor, before making their final decision.

Should a request from a third-party organisation to illuminate the Port Melbourne or South Melbourne town hall be approved, the cost of hiring temporary lighting, and all associated costs, will be the responsibility of the requestor. Council does not have a budget allocation for the hire of temporary lighting infrastructure and will not be responsible for any façade illumination costs.

Council accepts no responsibility for the care and maintenance of temporary lighting and any agreement to hire temporary lighting for the purpose of lighting a town hall façade is strictly between the applicant and the temporary lighting hirer.

There are no costs associated with a request to illuminate the SKTH façade.

As any approval will need to consider competing requests, the decision to approve or reject any application will be final.

### 3.3.3 Town Hall Façade Illumination – Other Nations

Colours representing or symbolising other nations will not be displayed on Council buildings unless otherwise resolved by Council.



### **3.4 Banners**

Council recognises the display of banners, affixed to the façade of a town hall, as another way to observe days of significance or celebrate achievements within the community.

Internal requests to erect a banner on a town hall facade must be approved by Director Governance & Performance (or their delegate), in consultation with the Mayor.

#### **3.4.1 Banner Display Requests**

Applications by community organisations to display banners on a town hall façade will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Coordinator Councillor and Executive Support in line with the Community Flagpole and Illumination Scheme.

Based on the merit of the application, a recommendation will be provided to the Director Governance & Performance (or their delegate) who will consult with the Mayor before making their decision.

Any request will need to consider the eligibility under the Scheme, availability of space, and competing requests at the time of the request. The decision to approve or reject any application will be final.

Where an application is approved, officers will coordinate with council contractors to facilitate the display of the banner. Council will bear the contractor costs for the erection and removal of a banner that is approved for display.

Banners may be displayed for up to two weeks.

#### **3.4.2 Communication to community**

Council's flag, banners, illumination and half-masting program will be communicated to the community via a live schedule on councils' website, that includes details of Council's flag and illumination program.

### **3.5 Governance and Approvals**

The Director of Governance & Performance serves as the delegated authorizing authority for flag protocols and the Scheme, ensuring compliance and governance standards are upheld in accordance with official guidelines.

Where a request, or recommendation, is made to half-mast the Australian National Flag that is not a Commonwealth or State Government directive, the Director Governance & Performance will consider the request and will consult with the Mayor.

When an external request has been received for a flag to be flown on a community flagpole, Coordinator Councillor and Executive Support will undertake a review as far as reasonably practicable on the background of the organisation / flag and make a recommendation to the Director Governance & Performance.





Where a request has been received to half-mast the City of Port Phillip flag in recognition of a community member who has passed, Coordinator Councillor and Executive Support will take all reasonable steps to research the background of the person to ensure that they are of good character and positive standing within the community. This will not extend to police check or other such formal checks but will encompass open-source research such as Google internet searches.

*Table 4: Requests and approvals*

	Request	Approvals
Half-masting	Half-mast Australian Flag (not a Commonwealth or State Government directive)	Director Governance & Performance in consultation with the Mayor.
	Half-mast Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islands Flag (not a Commonwealth or State Government directive)	Director Governance & Performance in consultation with First Peoples staff and the Mayor.
	Half-mast City of Port Phillip Flag.	Assessment and Recommendation: Coordinator Councillor and Executive Support.
Community Flags requests	External Community flagpole request	Approval: Director Governance & Performance in consultation with the Mayor.
Illumination requests	Community façade illumination request.	
Banner requests	Display of a banner on the façade of a town hall.	

### 3.6 **Exemptions**

Councillors, by resolution, can grant exemptions from the policy. It is recommended that exemptions remain consistent with relevant Federal and State protocols (i.e. Flag Protocols)





#### **4. Supplementary policy documents**

Appendix A – Community Flagpole Schedule

Appendix B – St Kilda Town Hall Illumination Schedule

Appendix C – Civic and Community Flagpole locations

#### **5. Related legislation and documents**

##### Child Safe

The City of Port Phillip is a Child Safe organisation and has a legal and moral responsibility to understand and activate their role in preventing, detecting, responding and reporting any Child Safety concerns. Council has zero tolerance for child abuse and is actively committed to embedding a culture of safety, wellbeing and inclusion for children and young people.

Consideration has been given to the Child Safe Standards in the development of this policy.

##### Gender Equality

Under the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, Council has a positive duty to advance gender equality in our organisation and our community.

Through the development of this policy, Council have assessed any impacts for people of different genders (women/girls, men/boys and people who are gender diverse). While gender impact assessment starts with gender, it also has considered impacts of other social factors such as age, Aboriginality, race, religion, (dis)ability, sexual orientation and socio-economic status.

##### Other

- Flags Act 1953 (Commonwealth)
- Australian Flags Booklet (Dept Prime Minister & Cabinet)
- City of Port Phillip Community Flagpole and Illumination Scheme (2025)



## 6. Document history

Version	Date of approval/adoption	Changes made	ECM record
Two	2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inclusion of 'Purpose' and 'Scope'.</li> <li>- Inclusion of number of flagpoles and their location.</li> <li>- Inclusion of standard and replacement of flags</li> <li>- Inclusion half-masting schedule.</li> <li>- Inclusion of masthead flag schedule.</li> <li>- Inclusion of community flagpoles and community flagpole requests.</li> <li>- Inclusion of town hall façade illumination and façade illumination requests.</li> <li>- Inclusion of banner display and banner display requests.</li> <li>- Inclusion of Governance and Approvals</li> <li>- Inclusion of Community Flagpole Schedule.</li> <li>- Inclusion of St Kilda Town Hall Façade Illumination Schedule</li> </ul>	
One	2004	N/A	TBA



## Appendix A – Community Flagpole Schedule

Date	Significance	Flag	Comments
<b>Week leading up to, and including, Pride March (date fluid and will vary annually)</b>	Melbourne Midsumma Festival – Pride March	Inclusive Progressive Rainbow Pride Flag	Flown at all three locations (PMTH, SMTH, SKTH)
<b>31 March</b>	Transgender Visibility Day	Transgender Flag	Flown at SKTH
<b>26 April</b>	Lesbian Visibility Day	Lesbian Pride Flag	Flown at SKTH
<b>17 May</b>	International Day against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia	Inclusive Progressive Rainbow Pride Flag	Flown at SKTH
<b>Last Friday in August</b>	'Wear it Purple' Day	Inclusive Progressive Rainbow Pride Flag	Flown at SKTH
<b>Last Weekend in September (only IF prescribed teams make AFL Grand Final)</b>	AFL Grand Final	St Kilda FC Flag Sydney Swans (South Melbourne FC) Flag	Flown at SKTH Flown at SMTH
<b>24 October</b>	United Nations Day	United Nations Flag	Flown at SKTH
<b>20 November</b>	Annual Transgender Day of Remembrance	Transgender Flag	Flown at SKTH.
<b>25 November – 10 December</b>	16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence	Orange 'RESPECT' flag.	Flown at all three locations (PMTH, SMTH, SKTH).
<b>1 December</b>	World AIDS Day	Inclusive Progressive Rainbow Pride Flag / Red Ribbon Flag	Flown at SKTH.
<b>3 December</b>	International Day of People with Disabilities (IDPwD)	IDPwD Flag	Flown at SKTH And PMTH (only 2x IDPwD flags in stock).
<b>December (date TBA) (only IF prescribed teams make AFLW Grand Final)</b>	AFLW Grand Final	St Kilda FC Flag Sydney Swans (South Melbourne FC) Flag	Flown at SKTH. Flown at SMTH.



## Appendix B – St Kilda Town Hall Façade Illumination Schedule

Date	Significance	Colour	Summary of event/colour significance
<b>Week leading up to, and including, Pride March (date fluid and will vary annually)</b>	Melbourne Midsumma Festival – Pride March	Rainbow	Celebrates LGBTQIA+ pride and inclusivity, with the rainbow symbolizing diversity and unity.
<b>8 - 9 March</b>	International Women's Day	Purple	Represents justice and dignity, recognizing women's achievements and advocating for gender equality.
<b>16 - 17 May</b>	IDAHOBIT Day	Rainbow	International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia, promoting LGBTQIA+ rights and inclusion.
<b>25 May - 3 June</b>	National Sorry Day and Reconciliation week	Red, Yellow	Acknowledges the Stolen Generations and promotes reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. The colours reflect those of the Aboriginal flag.
<b>2 - 9 July</b>	NAIDOC Week	Red, Yellow	Celebrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, culture, and achievements, using flag colours to highlight Indigenous identity.
<b>27 - 28 August</b>	Wear it Purple Day	Purple	Supports LGBTQIA+ youth, reinforcing a message of acceptance and empowerment.
<b>28 – 29 September</b>	Police Remembrance Day	Dark blue, light blue	Honors police officers who have lost their lives in the line of duty, with blue representing law enforcement.
<b>25 – 26 November</b>	International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women	Orange	Symbolizes a brighter future without gender-based violence and raises awareness of the issue.
<b>3 December</b>	International Day of People with Disabilities (IDPwD)	Colours TBC	Aims to promote the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities in all spheres of society.
<b>Week leading up to Christmas Day (25 December)</b>	Christmas Day	Red, Green	Traditional Christmas colours, representing warmth, joy, and festive spirit.

## Appendix C – Civic and Community Flagpole Locations

SKTH civic flagpoles



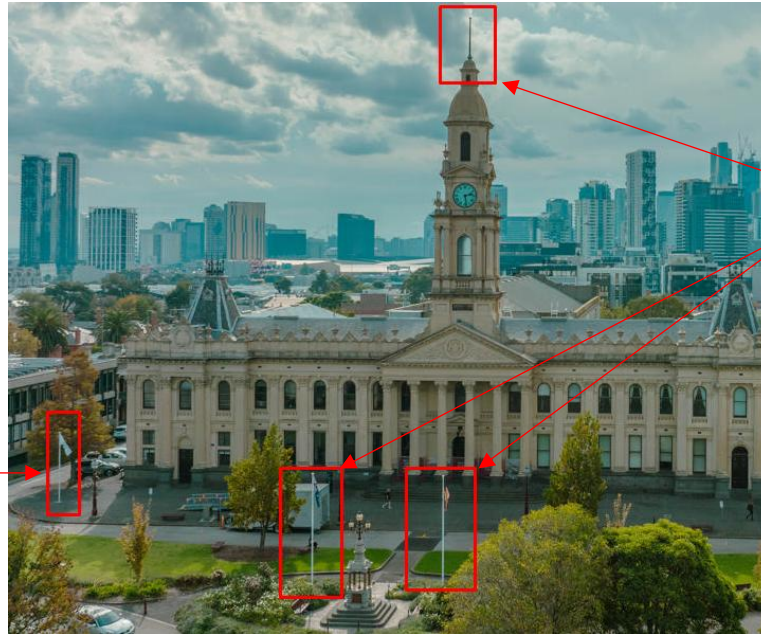
SKTH community flagpole







SMTH community flagpole



SMTH civic flagpoles

PMTH civic flagpole



PMTH community flagpole