

## CHIEF MINISTER'S SUPPORT AND PROTOCOL

# ACT FLAG GUIDELINES

### BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ACT FLAG

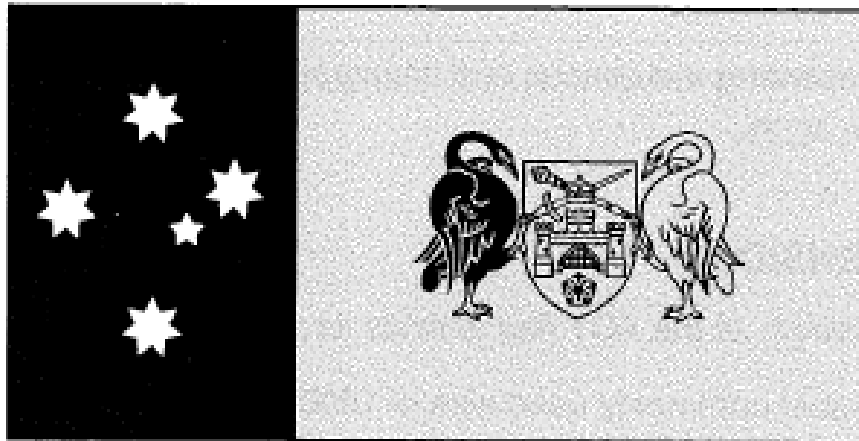
In competitions held in 1988 and 1992 artists, and other interested ACT citizens, provided a large range of designs for consideration as the proposed Australian Capital Territory flag. Although there was no general agreement within the community on a particular design, there were some features in common amongst the entries. These elements were incorporated into four design options presented by Members of the Legislative Assembly to the ACT community for its consideration in February/March 1993.

The ACT Electoral Office reported that the most popular choice among ACT citizens who expressed preferences on any of the four options was a design featuring the Southern Cross and a modified form of the City of Canberra Coat of Arms.

As a result, the Chief Minister, Rosemary Follett MLA, put forward the following motion which was passed by the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory on 25 March 1993:

*“That this Assembly, noting the outcome of community consultation on a flag for the ACT, adopts the design featuring the Southern Cross and a modified form of the Canberra City Coat of Arms as the official flag for the Australian Capital Territory.”*

The ACT flag has been flown outside the Assembly building since that day.



### COLOURS

The colours of the ACT flag are blue, yellow and white. For publishing purposes they are:

Yellow – PANTONE 123 or PMS 116

Blue – PANTONE 293 or PMS 287

## **SIZE**

The most commonly used flag size is 1800mm x 2400mm (6ft x 3ft).

## **LOCATION OF FLAGPOLES IN THE ACT**

There are approximately 133 flagpoles in the ACT which are the responsibility of City Operations in the Department of Urban Services. Two flagpoles located at the Member's entrance to the Legislative Assembly building are the responsibility of the Legislative Assembly Secretariat.

Additionally, there are a number of flagpoles located around the ACT that are the responsibility of the Commonwealth.

There are 16 flagpoles located on Anzac Parade, 12 flagpoles located at the eight memorials along Anzac Parade, 40 flagpoles around Old Parliament House and the single Canadian flagpole at Regatta Point. These flagpoles are the responsibility of the National Capital Authority.

There are 50 flagpoles located around Parliament House. These flagpoles, together with the large pole located on top of Parliament House, are the responsibility of the Department of Parliamentary Services.

There are an unknown quantity of flagpoles situated on or outside Commonwealth occupied and/or owned buildings. These flagpoles are managed by the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.

From time to time requests may be received from organisations seeking to fly flags or banners from flagpoles located around Canberra. If the request includes flagpoles that are the responsibility of the Commonwealth the request should be referred to the relevant agency (outlined above). If the request includes ACT managed flagpoles they should be directed to either Mr Steve Amos (Ext. 75974) or to Mr Jost Stellar (Ext. 72283) of City Operations in the Department of Urban Services.

## **MANAGEMENT OF ACT FLAGS**

The management of flags in the ACT is currently undertaken by Department of Urban Services (City Management). They undertake the raising and lowering of flags, including contract work from the National Capital Authority and half-masting arrangements.

Any requests to use any ACT controlled flagpoles will be closely scrutinised by the Department of Urban Services. The assessment criteria will include the purpose and/or significance of the occasion, the suitability of the flag/banner to be flown, timing and resource implications. If the request relates to, or has implications for an ACT Government agency, advice will be sought from that agency prior to agreeing to the request.

Before approval is given to fly flags on ACT Government managed flagpoles the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet should be contacted to ascertain if there will be any VIP visitors to the ACT. The flying of the country of origin flag for VIPs will always take priority over other events, the only exception being the observance of national commemoration days.

The ACT flag is the only flag authorised to be flown from City Hill however the Chief Minister has final discretion over any requests to fly other flags on the hill. Instructions for any changes to the flag flying on City Hill will be provided by Chief Minister's Support and Protocol in the Chief Minister's Department.

Chief Minister's Support and Protocol provides protocol advice upon request to the Department of Urban Services, other agencies and the public. Chief Minister's Support and Protocol is also responsible for advising ACT Government agencies of half-masting of flags.

## **ISSUING OF FLAGS**

### National flags

Under the Constituents' Request Program, the Australian national flag, the Australian Aboriginal flag and the Torres Strait Islander flag can be obtained free of charge from the electorate offices of Senators and Members of the House of Representatives (*stipulated in the publication 'Australian Flags', page 60, issued by the Awards and National Symbols Branch*).

The flags are available to all schools, local councils, churches and other non-profit or benevolent community organisations, associations and groups that have occasion to display a flag from flagpoles on their premises or whom display the flag on special public occasions, in halls or in meeting rooms. Flags are also available to community organisations, exchange students and humanitarian aid workers undertaking official visits or duties overseas.

The flags are not available under this program to businesses, commercial enterprises or private individuals, with the exception of exchange students and humanitarian aid workers, as mentioned.

### The ACT flag

Totalcare hire ACT flags to certain organisations in the community for a nominal fee (approx. \$15.00 per flag). These organisations may include:

- Benevolent and welfare organisations, such as the Red Cross and Legacy;
- Boy Scouts, Girl Guides and other recognised youth organisations;
- Church and religious bodies;
- Community service groups, such as Apex, Lions, Rotary, Senior Citizens, ex-service groups;
- Employer organisations;
- Multicultural groups;
- Show societies;
- ACT sporting clubs and sporting bodies; and
- The Trades and Labour Council.

The organisation will be required to complete a form agreeing to certain conditions for the use of the flag. If the flag is damaged beyond repair, lost or not returned the organisation must pay the replacement cost of the flag. The current cost of an ACT flag is \$65.00.

## **FLAGS AS GIFTS**

The ACT Government has, on occasion, donated flags on request with the approval of the Chief Minister or the Chief of Staff. Each request is assessed on a case by case basis.

A small number of ACT flags are held with the store of gifts managed by the Functions Coordinator in Chief Minister's Support and Protocol to supply the Chief Minister with gift flags for official occasions. Gift flags are available to Ministers where they are representing the Chief Minister.

When a Minister, not representing the Chief Minister, wishes to give a flag as a gift then the cost of the flag must be met by the appropriate agency.

## **SECURITY**

The security of flags/banners is the responsibility of the requesting agency/organisation. Where flags/banners are stolen the requesting body should bear the loss and the ancillary costs of any necessary repairs to the flagpole.

## **FLYING THE ACT FLAG**

As a general rule the ACT Government adheres to Commonwealth policies and protocols in relation to all flag related matters.

### When to fly the ACT flag

ACT flags should be flown, where feasible, outside all ACT Government buildings. The flag should be flown during normal business hours on all working days. It should be raised briskly and lowered ceremonially. It should be lowered no later than sunset, unless illumination enables the flag to be identified.

However when more than one flag is being flown the Australian National Flag takes precedence over all other flags when flown in Australia.

### When a building only has one flagpole

When displaying a flag outside a building with only one flagpole:

- For ACT Government buildings, the ACT flag should be flown;
- For buildings not owned by the ACT Government the choice between flying the Australian National flag and the ACT flag is left to the owner's discretion, subject to the protocol requirements set out in this information booklet.

### When a building has two flagpoles

When a building has more than one flagpole, both the ACT flag and the Australian national flag may be flown.

When an ACT Government building has two flagpoles, the Australian national flag must be flown with the ACT flag.

When a building has three flagpoles

**When flying only one national flag**

When the Australian national flag is to be flown with the ACT flag and house flags or club pennants, the Australian national flag must be flown from the flagpole on the left of an observer facing the building; the ACT flag in the centre; and the house flag or pennant on the right hand flagpole.



**When flying more than one national flag**

In front of a building with three flagpoles of the same height, the Australian national flag is flown from the pole on the left of an observer facing the building. Any other national flag is flown from the centre flagpole, and the ACT flag is flown on the right.



Flag Order of Precedence

When the Australian national flag is displayed with the ACT flag, other state flags, house flags or club pennants, it should be flown on the flagpole on the left of an observer facing the building, or at each end of the a line of flags. If there are three flagpoles and the centre one is taller, the national flag should be flown from the centre pole, the ACT flag from the pole on the left as seen when facing the building, and the house flag or pennant on the right.

Wherever possible, flying the Australian national flag and the ACT flag on the same rope (halyard) should be avoided. If this is not possible the Australian national flag should always be at the peak.

When the flag is raised or lowered, or when it is carried past in a parade or review, all present should face the flag and remain silent. Those in uniform should salute.

Two flags should not be flown on the same flagpole.

The flag should not be flown upside down, not even as a signal of distress.

Consultation should be undertaken with Chief Minister's Support and Protocol when considering any variation to existing policy and protocol arrangements for the ACT flag. The Chief Minister's approval must be sought to any variation prior to the implementation of any proposed arrangements. Following the Chief Minister's approval, all ACT agencies and City Operations, Department of Urban Services, should be advised of the amendments.

#### When flagpoles are of different heights

When flagpoles are of a different height with the centre pole the tallest, the Australian national flag must be flown in the centre with the ACT flag on the left of an observer facing the flags.



#### Display of the ACT flag

**On a staff** the top left (or first) quarter should be placed in the position nearest the top of the staff. When being carried, the flag should be aloft and allowed to fly free.

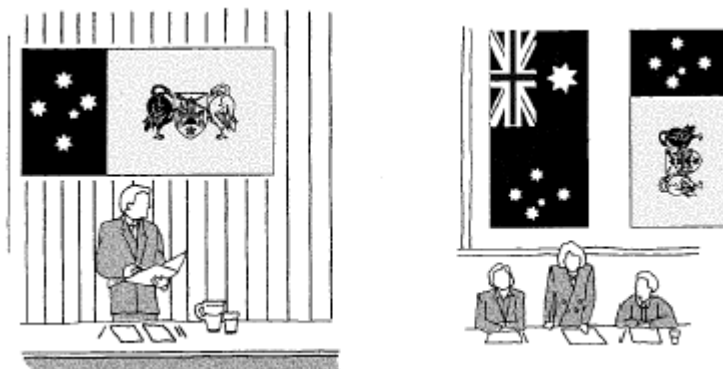
**On a flag rope (halyard)** the top left (or first) quarter should be placed as high up as possible, and raised as close as possible to the top, with the flag rope tight.

**Displayed from crossed staff** the Australian national flag should be on the left of the observer when facing the flags. The staff should be in front of the staff of the other flag.

The ACT flag is flown on the other staff (see example).



**On a wall – horizontally or vertically** – the top left (or first) quarter should be placed uppermost on the observer’s left (see example below). The flag may appear to be in reverse, but this is correct.



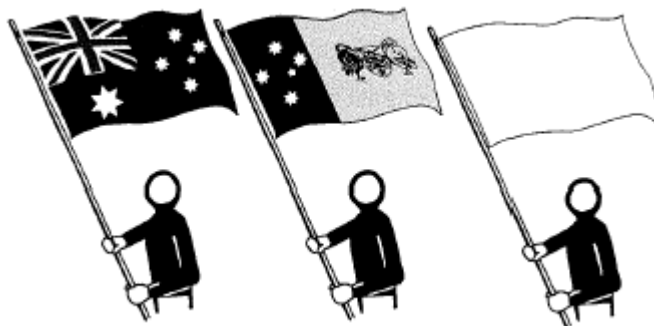
**Suspended vertically in the middle of the street** the top left (or first) quarter should be on the observer’s left when facing north on an east-west street, or east in a north-south street (see example below).



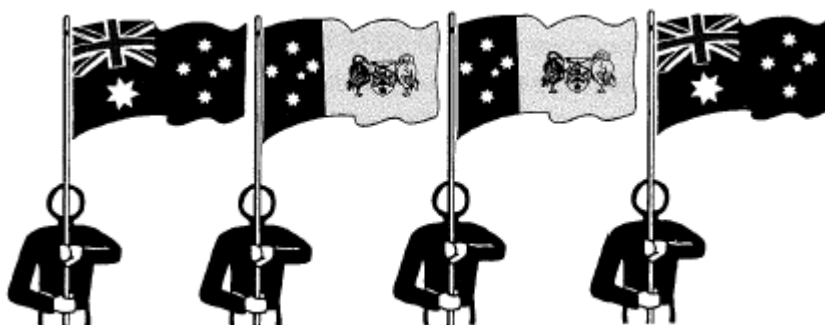
**As a covering for a casket in a funeral ceremony** the flag should be placed so that the top left (or first) quarter lies in a position over the left shoulder of the deceased (see example below). The flag should be removed from the casket before it is lowered into the grave or cremated.



**In a procession** when carried single file in a procession with state and club flags and pennants, the Australian national flag should lead, followed by the ACT flag (see example below). For ceremonies commemorating an ACT event, it is not mandatory to carry the Australian national flag.



When carried in line abreast, the Australian national flag should be carried at each end of the line, with the ACT flags in between (see example below). For ACT commemorative events, the ACT flag may be carried at each end of the line, in place of the Australian national flag.



If only one Australian national flag is available it should be placed in the centre of the line of flags carried abreast. The ACT flag should be carried to the right of the Australian national flag, when the observer faces the procession (see example below).



When the number of flags is even and the Australian national flag cannot be carried in the centre of a line of flags being carried abreast, it should be positioned on the left hand end of the line when the observer faces the procession. The ACT flag should be carried to the right of the Australian national flag when the observer faces the procession (see example below). For local events, the ACT flag may (optionally) be carried in place of the Australian national flag.



In a semi-circle of flags representing a number of states/territories, the ACT flag should be in the centre. If the Australian national flag is also flown it should become the central flag and the ACT flag should then be flown to the right of the Australian national flag as the observer faces the flag.

The aforementioned display information was arranged for 'The Australian Capital Territory Flag' handbook which can be found at ACT Government shopfronts for general sale.

## **FLAG RESPECT**

### Dignity

Both the Australian national flag and the ACT flag should always be displayed in a manner befitting a national and Territory emblem. When more than one flag may be flown the Australian national flag takes precedence over any other state/territory flags, and so should not be displayed in a position inferior to any other flag or ensign.

In the ACT, the ACT flag normally takes precedence over any other state/territory flag, and so should also not be displayed in a position inferior to any other flag or ensign.

Flags should always be flown freely and should not be allowed to fall to, or lie upon, the ground.

It is undignified to use the ACT flag in any of the following ways:

- As a table or seat cover
- As a masking for boxes, barriers or intervening space between floor and ground level on a dais or platform

### Defacement

Protocol prohibits the defacement of national and state/territory flags. This convention is also applied to the ACT flag. A flag is said to be defaced when a 'Badge of Office' or any other object is superimposed on an authorised flag.

## Use for advertising/commercial purposes

The ACT flag may be used for advertising or commercial purposes provided:

- The design is not defaced by way of illustrations, or masked by other objects or lettering;
- All symbolic parts of the flag are identifiable (ie. Must be shown in its entirety); and
- It is shown, represented or used in a dignified manner.

## **HALF-MASTING FOR MOURNING**

The Australian national flag and ACT flag are flown at half-mast as a sign of mourning. Half-mast position is usually when the top of the flag is about one-third of the way down the flagpole, depending on the size of the flagpole.

On these occasions the Chief Minister's Support and Protocol unit will receive instructions from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet or the Chief Minister himself/herself to fly the ACT flag at half-mast. All ACT agencies will subsequently be informed by Chief Minister's Support and Protocol of the half-masting arrangements.

The costs of half-masting procedures are borne by individual agencies.

To bring the flag to the half-mast position, it should first be raised to the top of the mast, and then immediately lowered slowly to the half-mast position. Before being lowered for the day, the flag should first be raised to the peak and then immediately brought down again. Where both the Australian national and the ACT flags are being flown, the Australian national flag should be raised first and lowered last.

The Federal Government may give instructions for the Australian national flag to be flown at half-mast on any of the following occasions:

- On the death of **the Sovereign**:
  - From the time of the announcement of the death up to, and including, the funeral. It is customary on the day that the Accession of the new Sovereign is proclaimed for the flag to be raised to the top of the mast from 11:00am until the close of business.
- On the death of the current, or a former, **Governor-General**:
- On the death of a **distinguished Australian citizen**:
  - Normally this is done on the day of the funeral, unless directed otherwise.
- On the death of a **foreign Sovereign, or Head of State of a foreign country** with which Australia maintains diplomatic relations:
  - Normally this is done on the day of the funeral, unless directed otherwise.

- On the death of a **prominent local citizen**:
  - The flag should be raised to the peak after the funeral or memorial service has taken place.

## **DAYS OF NATIONAL COMMEMORATION**

There are a number of days of national commemoration when the Australian national flag and the ACT flag will be flown in the ACT and will take precedence over other events. These include:

**Australia Day – 26 January**

**Canberra Day – 12 March**

**ANZAC Day – 25 April**

(flags are to be flown at half-mast until noon, then at the peak until close of business)

**Queen’s Birthday – 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday in June**

**Remembrance Day – 11 November**

(flags should be flown at the peak from 8:00am to 10:30am, at half-mast from 10:30am until 11:03am and at the peak from 11:03 until close of business)

There are also a number of other occasions when flags may be flown, for example on United Nations Day and during NAIDOC Week. The Department of Urban Services undertakes the raising and lowering of flags on these occasions for the ACT Government and under contract for the National Capital Authority.

## **NATIONAL CAPITAL AUTHORITY GUIDELINES FOR FLAGS AND BANNERS**

Subject to traffic safety assessment by the relevant ACT Government agency flags and banners may be displayed within road reserves. Such signs should generally comply with the following:

- Approval may be granted by the National Capital Authority for the display of event banners and flags where these are of a standard which is consistent with the values of the National Capital and are not in the form of a commercial advertising sign;
- Banners may be suspended across Northbourne Avenue and London Circuit from vertical supports;
- Banners on light poles are not permitted in ANZAC Parade;

- The use of light poles for the flying of banners is to meet the requirements of the ACT Government's policy in respect of the use of its assets;
- When erected on Territory Land flags and banners may only be installed by direct arrangement with an agency or contractor of the ACT Government;
- The erection of flags in any location is not to be in conflict with the flag protocols administered by the Commonwealth Government's Award and National Symbols Branch;
- Flags and banners identifying the ACT Visitor Information Centre are permitted in the road verge adjacent to the centre, but not in the median;
- Banners on light poles should not compromise existing landscapes;
- The use of commercial wording or sponsorship acknowledgement is limited to no more than 20 per cent of the banner, the appropriateness of the sponsor should be assessed in light of national/ACT considerations;
- Artwork must be in good taste, harmonise with the environment and have artistic merit;
- All costs associated with the design, manufacture, installation and removal of banners or flags are to be met by the applicant;
- Materials used in flags and banners must be able to withstand the effects of rain, sun and wind without colours running or fading or fabrics tearing due to wind loads;
- Material used in flags and banners are not to be highly reflective; and
- Flags and banners may be displayed for up to two weeks before an event, during an event and for no more than 48 hours after the event.

## **FURTHER FLAG PROTOCOL ASSISTANCE**

The following organisations may be helpful in providing assistance should this guideline be unable to answer a particular query:

Chief Minister's Support and Protocol  
Chief Minister's Department  
Ph: 02 6205 0192

Flag Society of Australia  
Ph: 03 9884 4434  
[www.flagsaustralia.com.au](http://www.flagsaustralia.com.au)

Awards and National Symbols Branch  
Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet  
Ph: 02 6275 3914

Australian National Flag Association  
Ph: 02 9264 8118

The Heraldry and Genealogy Society of Canberra  
Ph: 02 6282 9356