

THE
AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL FLAG



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THE HISTORY OF THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL FLAG

Prior to Federation, Australia's six colonies principally flew the flags of the United Kingdom. From 1869 the colonies began to develop their own flags, culminating in the use of the British blue ensigns with significant symbols utilised in the fly of the flags, the symbols different and significant for each colony.

With Federation and the joining of all Australians under the Commonwealth of Australia on 1st January 1901, there came a real need for a flag to unite the people of the six colonies. In the year, a worldwide competition was held to find two new flags: one suitable for official and naval purposes and a second suitable for the Merchant Navy Service. The Commonwealth, "The Review of Reviews", (a newspaper of the day), and the Havelock Tobacco Company forwarded prize money totalling £200. The response to the competition was excellent, with entries received from all over the world.

Over 32,000 entries were received and presented for display in the Royal Exhibition Building in Melbourne in September, 1901. From the thousands of entries the choice was narrowed to five almost identical submissions. It was decided that the five entrants would share the prize money. The winners were Mrs. A. Dorrington of Perth, Mr. E. J. Nuttall of Melbourne, Mr. I. Evans of Melbourne, Mr. L. Hawkins of Leichhardt and Mr. W. Stevens of Auckland.

A flag embodying the winning design was ceremonially unfurled and flown on the Royal Exhibition Building in Melbourne on September 3rd, 1901, the day on which the Prime Minister, Mr. E. Barton announced the winners.

In the upper hoist of the new flag was the Union Jack, made up of the crosses of St George, St Andrew and St Patrick. Beneath the Union Jack in the lower hoist was a large six pointed star and the Federation Star, representing the six States within the Commonwealth of Australia. In the fly of the flag, five stars symbolised the Southern Cross.

The Union Jack reflected our heritage, the Federation Star symbolised the unity of the six States within the Commonwealth of Australia and the Southern Cross symbolised Australia's place in the universe. It was a flag showing our history, our unity and our independent position.

In 1903, King Edward approved the design for the flags of Australia and the flag of the Merchant Navy. The flags were formally gazetted and became known as the Commonwealth Blue Ensign and the Commonwealth Red Ensign. The design elements were the same, but one flag was created with a blue background and the second with a red background.

In 1908, the six pointed Federation Star in the lower hoist became a seven pointed star, the seventh point included to represent the Territories of the Commonwealth. The new seven pointed star conformed with the star in the Crest of the Coat of Arms.

Keeping in mind that the blue ensign had been intended for official and naval purposes only, some members of the public began to use the red ensign on land, seeking a symbol to represent them. A degree of confusion ensued with blue and red ensigns, and even the Union Jack being flown inappropriately. In 1941, Prime Minister Menzies publicly recommended the use of the blue ensign on public buildings, in schools and by private citizens. Prime Minister Chifley supported this broader use of the flag as appropriate in 1947. The flying of the Commonwealth Blue Ensign was now encouraged provided it was flown in a manner befitting the national emblem of our country, but still there were official procedures to complete before our flag was given its title, the Australian National Flag.

King George VI endorsed the Commonwealth Blue Ensign as the national flag in 1951, in line with the Australian Government's recommendation. In November of 1953 the Australian Government passed the Flags Act 1953 proclaiming the Commonwealth Blue Ensign as the Australian National Flag and the Commonwealth Red Ensign as the Australian Red Ensign. On February 14th 1954, Queen Elizabeth II opened the Australian Parliament and signed a Flags Act 1953 into law.

Of note: September 3rd was officially recognised as Australian National Flag Day in 1996 and this day is now celebrated across the nation with many flag raising ceremonies.

The Royal Australian Navy has as its official ensign the Australian White Ensign and the Royal Australian Airforce has its official ensign, the ensign of the Royal Australian Airforce. The Australian Army does not have its own official ensign, but note that the Army is the protector the Australian National Flag.

DESCRIPTION OF THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL FLAG

The flag that Carroll and Richardson Flagworld is so proud to manufacture is red, white and blue with the Union Jack in the upper hoist, a large white seven pointed star directly below the centre of the Union Jack in the lower hoist, and five white stars representing the Southern Cross in the fly of the flag.

The large white star in the lower hoist represents the States and Territories with its seven points.

Four of the stars of the Southern Cross, Alpha, Beta, Gamma and Delta have seven points on the flag to uniform the design, and for aesthetic appeal. Epsilon, the fifth star, is represented by a five-pointed star because it is not as bright as the others in the constellation.

The length of the flag is always twice the width of the flag. For example a flag 180cm long is always 90cm wide.

The Australian Red Ensign, the flag for merchant vessels registered in Australia, is predominantly red. In all other respects it is the same as the Australian National Flag.



The Australian National Flag



The Australian Red Ensign

THE LIFE OF A FLAG

A flag is a measure of fabric that is raised anywhere between 6m & 60m in the air. Some flags are flown to exhibit patriotism and National feeling and engender community spirit. Others like to advertise their business, club or organisation. Many government departments and councils all fly flags.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

1. Flags are subjected to the elements when left out. The weather causes breakdown of fibres, particularly the fly ends of flags and this will determine the life of your flag.
2. When the winds are strong or the weather is inclement, its best to take your flag down.
3. The taller the flagpole, the faster they tend to wear out.
4. It is suggested your flag is flown from dawn to dusk where possible to lengthen the life of the flag.

We have two types of fabric we generally use. Light weight knitted polyester, which flies in the slightest of winds, or heavy duty woven polyester, which is more durable, but needs stronger winds to fly. We offer screen printed & digitally printed flags in many sizes and finishes. We also have our own sewing department which allows us to provide fully sewn flags (also known as bunting) Flags can last anywhere from 3 months to 2 years depending on weather conditions and the areas they are displayed. Flags must be able to fly freely and must be attached to the rope correctly as to not wrap itself around the pole.

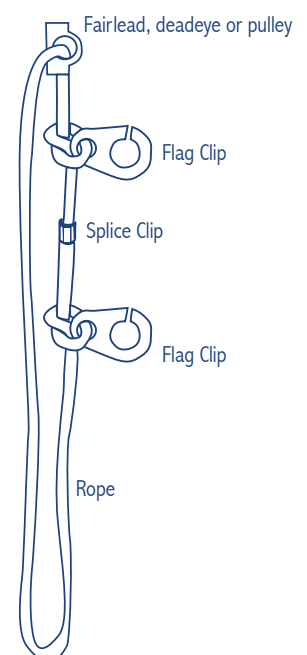
ATTACHING A FLAG WITH CLIPS

Rope attachment to flagpole and flag clips

1. Thread the rope through the fairlead or pulley on flagpole
2. Take one end of the rope, thread through the flag clip and tie a knot as per drawing
3. Take the other end of the rope and repeat step 2
4. Join the rope together with a splice clip or tie together with a reef knot
5. Space the flag clips apart to suit the depth of your flag

Flag clip attachment to your flag

1. Thread the loop on the flag header through eye in the flag clip
2. Place the loop over the top of the Flag
3. Push it all the way down and pull tight
4. Hook the clips on the flag to the clips in the rope and hoist Flag
5. Twist the rope at least once around the flagpole before tying it off



PROCEDURE FOR THE DISPLAY OF THE AUSTRALIAN FLAG

The Australian National Flag must be accorded the dignity required by a national symbol, and as such, we should carefully adhere to correct procedure. Below are a few points worthy of note in reference to the flying of the flag. Following these is an illustrated guide designed to help those who wish to display the flag correctly and effectively.

1. The flag should be flown aloft and free, with all parts of the flag able to be readily seen.
2. It should be raised quickly and lowered slowly and ceremonially.
3. It should be well illuminated if it is to be flown at night.
4. It should be flown on all Commonwealth Government buildings during working hours.
5. It is encouraged that companies and private citizens also fly the Australian National Flag.
6. When the Australian National Flag is flown with flags of other sovereign nations, it should be the same size and fly at the same height as all other flags.
7. If more than one flag is flown, each flag should fly on a separate flagpole with the Australian National Flag taking place of honour.
8. The Australian National Flag should be the first flag raised and the last flag lowered unless the number of flags and attendants allows them to be raised and lowered together.
9. When a flag becomes dilapidated and is no longer in a suitable condition for use, it may be destroyed in a dignified manner by burning privately. Some modern fabrics are not suitable to burn, so it has become acceptable to cut flags made from such fabrics into small, unrecognisable pieces before disposal.

When the Australian National Flag is flown alone in front of an establishment where there are two flagpoles, it should be flown on the flagpole on the left as one faces the flag.



If there are more than two flagpoles it should be flown in the centre or as near to it as possible. This is so whether the flagpoles are positioned in the grounds or on the top of buildings.



When the Australian National Flag is flown with those of other sovereign nations, the Australian National Flag takes the prime position.

If it is flown with one other flag of a sovereign nation the Australian National Flag should be on the left as one faces the flags.



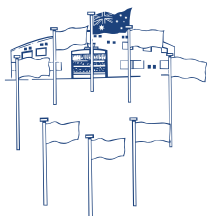
If the total number of flags flown is even, the Australian National Flag should be flown on the left as one faces the flags in front of an establishment. If the total number of flags flown is odd, the Australian National Flag should be flown in the centre.



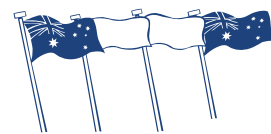
If the flagpoles are arranged in a semi-circle, the Australian National Flag should fly in the centre of those of other sovereign nations.



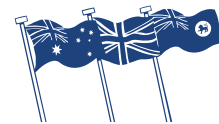
If the flagpoles are arranged in a complete circle the Australian National Flag should fly opposite the entrance of the building, the arena, or other structure responsible for the display.



If there are two Australian National Flags available, one should be flown at either end of those of other sovereign nations.

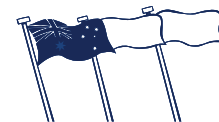


If the Australian National Flag is flown with flags that are other than those of sovereign nations, it should fly on the left as one faces the flagpoles. For example, it could be flying with State flags, pennants, flags representing clubs and so on. If there are two Australian National Flags available they should fly at either end of the other flags, each on its own separate flagpole.



In a procession, the Australian National Flag should always take the lead, or have the prime position.

If the Australian National Flag is carried in a single file procession, it should be the first flag, carried by the first flag bearer.



If carried in a line, the Australian National Flag should be carried at either end.



If there is only one flag available, then the Australian National Flag should be carried in the centre if the total number of flags is odd. If the total number of flags is even, it should be carried by the marcher on the left as one faces the marchers.



If the Australian National Flag is to be displayed on a wall, the upper hoist of the Australian National Flag should be on the top left as one faces the flag, no matter whether the flag is suspended horizontally or vertically.



If the Australian National Flag is to be displayed on a horizontal rope across a street, it should face north in an east-west street, and east in a north-south street. The flag will thus be on the left of one facing east or south respectively.



If it is desired that the Australian National Flag cover a casket or a coffin the upper hoist should be draped over the left shoulder of the deceased. The flag should be taken from the casket before burial or cremation.



IMPROPER USE OR DISPLAY OF THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL FLAG

1. The Australian National Flag should not be flown with another flag on the same pole.
2. It should not be flown together with the Australian Red Ensign.
3. The Australian National Flag should not be permitted to lie upon the ground. It should be correctly fastened so that it will not fall to the ground.
4. It should not be used to hide spaces that may exist between the floor and the lower level of a desk, dais or platform.
5. The Australian National Flag should not be employed as a cover for a statue or a monument, or as a cover for a plaque at an unveiling ceremony. It should not be used as a cover for a table, a chair or other furniture.
6. The Australian National Flag should not be defaced by any object or badge attached to it or superimposed upon it.
7. The Australian National Flag should not be flown upside down. It is a myth that it should be flown upside down as a signal of distress.

THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL FLAG AT HALF MAST

The Minister for Administrative Services directs that the Australian National Flag be flown at half mast as a sign that the country is in mourning. To achieve that half mast position, the flag should be raised to the top of the flagpole, then in a continuing movement lowered slowly to the half mast. It is important that the flag appears to be at half mast, and not to have fallen away from the top of the flagpole. This will generally be attained when the top of the flag is one third of the total length of the flagpole from the top.

Before lowering the flag for the day, it should be raised once again to the top of the flagpole and then lowered slowly to the ground. If a period of mourning is desired by local authorities in particular municipalities or towns, it is correct for the Australian National Flag to be flown at half mast on the building within which the deceased is lying in state. It should be raised when the deceased is no longer in state.