

2.5 FLAG REPORT

(Author: JT/TE)

Responsible Director: Russell Hopkins, Director Community Services

RECOMMENDATION

That Council approves to change the flag flown on dates of LGBTIQ+ significance across the municipality from the Rainbow Flag to the Intersex Inclusive Progress Pride Flag.

INTRODUCTION

Council currently flies the Rainbow Flag (see attachment 1, figure 1) across the municipality to support and recognise the LGBTIQ+ communities on dates of LGBTIQ+ significance. Council is being requested to approve the change in which flag is used, from the Rainbow Flag to the Intersex Inclusive Progress Pride Flag, which includes People of Colour, Trans and Gender Diverse and Intersex representation (see attachment 1, figure 2).

BACKGROUND

At its Meeting of 15 December 2020, Monash Council resolved in part:

“4. ... to display the rainbow flag at the Civic Centre and to fly the rainbow flag at a minimum of 4 prominent locations around Monash on LGBTIQ+ awareness days throughout the year including the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia, Wear It Purple Day, World AIDS Day, Bi Visibility Day, and Intersex Awareness Day.”

In November 2022, Monash Council endorsed the LGBTIQ+ Action Plan which includes ‘Goal 1.2’ which requires Council to develop a calendar and actively support, acknowledge and celebrate LGBTIQ+ dates of significance internally and externally.

Community feedback was provided during the consultation phase of the LGBTIQ+ Action Plan seeking Council to update the Rainbow flag to be more inclusive of our LGBTIQ+ communities. We heard from the LGBTIQ+ community that representation through symbols have meaning and it is very important to feel inclusive in Monash. With the substantial work Monash Council has done in recent years for LGBTIQ+ inclusion, it is important to use the most progressive and inclusive flag for the LGBTIQ+ community to feel safe and valued, be seen, and recognised in Monash.

DISCUSSION

The current calendar of dates of significance will be reviewed as outlined in the LGBTIQ+ Action Plan whilst continuing to fly the rainbow flag (or as proposed, the Intersex Inclusive Progress Pride Flag) across the municipality on the minimum dates outlined in the resolution passed in December 2020.

Over recent years, there has been several variations to the Rainbow Flag. In 2017, under the leadership of American civil rights activist Amber Hikes, Philadelphia's Office of LGBT Affairs designed the Philadelphia Pride Flag, incorporating black and brown stripes to include black, brown, and people of colour. Building on that in 2018, Daniel Quasar redesigned the flag to include trans people, creating the Pride Progress flag. In 2021, Valentino Vecchiotti of Intersex Equality Rights UK adapted the Pride Progress Flag design to incorporate the intersex flag, creating this Intersex Inclusive Pride flag 2021.

The Intersex Inclusive Progress Pride Flag is the most progressive and inclusive flag which illustrates the evolution of ensuring that all LGBTIQ+ communities are recognised and visible.

In acknowledgement that best practice evolves over time, changing our use of the flag to the Intersex Inclusive Progress Pride Flag would ensure Council is up to date with the most inclusive flag for the LGBTIQ+ communities. The Intersex Inclusive Progress Pride Flag ensures that more people, including those who are trans and gender diverse, intersex, and people of colour, are reflected in the flag and feel more welcome and represented in Monash. It therefore better promotes intersectional gender equality.

CONSULTATION

Feedback was provided during the consultation phase of our LGBTIQ+ Action Plan asking Council to update the flag used to be more inclusive of the LGBTIQ+ communities.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This report is in line with Council's LGBTIQ+ Action Plan and Monash Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Intersex Inclusive Progress Pride Flag includes LGBTIQ+ people of colour, trans and gender diverse and intersex in addition to the rainbow colours. The flag was designed to include the traditional rainbow flag and to highlight groups that have sometimes been underrepresented. It will have a positive impact on the lives of LGBTIQ+ people, their families and the community more broadly. The flag will promote human rights, gender diversity and a reduction in gender-based violence and discrimination.

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

The Intersex Inclusive Progress Pride Flag is directly seeking to improve human rights outlined in The Charter of *Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* which centres broadly into the four themes of Freedom; Respect; Equality; and Dignity. While all international human rights are relevant, some rights are particularly relevant to the LGBTIQ+ community:

The right to non-discrimination

Equality and freedom from discrimination are fundamental human rights that belong to all people. Under international law, you cannot be discriminated against because of your sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Flying of the flag is considered to have a direct and significant impact on the Monash community and as such, a gender impact assessment has been undertaken as part of this work. The current rainbow flag does not fully represent everyone in the LGBTIQ+ communities. We had feedback through our community consultation for the LGBTIQ+ Action Plan that the Intersex Inclusive Pride Flag should be used. This flag ensures that more people, including those who are trans and gender diverse, intersex, and people of colour, are reflected in the flag and feel more welcome and represented in Monash. It therefore better promotes intersectional gender equality.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The purchase of six new flags as required can be met within existing budgets.

CONCLUSION

Council is being requested to approve the change in which flag is used, from the Rainbow Flag (see attachment 1, figure 1) to the Intersex Inclusive Progress Pride Flag, which includes People of Colour, Trans and Gender Diverse and Intersex (see attachment 1, figure 2) to be more inclusive for our LGBTIQ+ communities to feel safe, valued, be seen and recognised in Monash.

Attachment 1



Figure 1 (Rainbow Flag)



Figure 2 (Intersex Inclusive Progress Pride Flag)