



## **Where Safety Matters**

FRANKSTON CITY

### **Graffiti Management Plan**

#### **1. Vision**

The Community Safety Plan vision is for a proud, caring and vibrant community, that is safe and secure for all people to live, work and visit.

This plan contributes to the achievement of this vision by increasing community pride and improving perceptions of safety.

#### **2. Aims**

The aims of the Graffiti Management Plan are to:

- Increase community pride in areas that are prone to graffiti
- Reduce the amount of graffiti in the Frankston community
- Assist ratepayers in the removal of graffiti on their properties
- Lead by example in graffiti removal on Council property

### **3. Rationale**

Frankston City Council recognises it has a primary role as a leader in developing and fostering a safer community that will reinforce Frankston as an exciting, vibrant and safe place to live, work and play.

In 1998, Frankston City Council received seed funding from the Department of Justice under the Safer Cities and Shires program, to develop and implement a Community Safety Plan. The plan was to incorporate strategies that:

- Address community safety and crime prevention issues through a strategic, planned, whole of government, whole of council, whole of community approach;
- Prevent problems before they emerge;
- Set achievable targets to gain sustainable reductions in particular forms of crime and violence;
- Develop and utilise performance measures to assess accurately and objectively the outputs and outcomes of this work;
- Develop and implement innovative, best practice strategies to tackle safety and crime issues in the local community; and
- Create partnerships and project teams at the local level to implement strategies.

The development of the Frankston City Community Safety Plan is the result of community participation, effort and commitment. The development and implementation of the plan is guided by the Frankston City Community Safety Management Team (CSMT) which was established in December 1998. The CSMT is made up of high level representation from police, State Government, education, community organisations, the private sector and council.

Key strategic issues in the Community Safety Plan were developed following extensive research and consultations. The issues that relate to the Graffiti Management plan are

1. Improved Community Perceptions; and
2. Physical Environment

#### **4. Definition of the problem**

Graffiti is defined as words or drawings that are placed on public or private property without permission.

Graffiti is a problem to property owners because it damages their property and is costly to remove. The removal process can also create costs through damage to the original surface.

Graffiti is a problem for the community because it has a significant impact on people's perceptions of safety. Many people, particularly the elderly, feel that an area with graffiti is unsafe, and that the graffiti is symbolic of a society that is "out of control". They will therefore avoid areas where graffiti is present, which can lead to a decline in commercial areas.

There are also links between graffiti and the associated deterioration of an area, and an increase in other types of vandalism and crime. The "Broken Windows" theory makes strong links between disorder, including graffiti and the incidence of more serious crime. This is based on the idea that, if a window in a building is broken and not repaired, this is a signal that no-one cares about or is responsible for that property, and there is no reason not to break other windows.

Property which has deteriorated and appears uncared for is therefore seen as an easy target for vandalism, which leads to further deterioration of the property. This in turn leads to perceptions of the area being one which is unsafe, and people will try to avoid it, or will reduce their interactions with others in the area. This leads to a situation where criminal activities are more likely to take place.

#### **5. Context**

##### *The Nature of the Problem in Frankston*

Considerable research is available on the types of graffiti and the motivations behind them. It is generally accepted that there are three distinct types of graffiti.

These are:

- "tagging", or the writing of a signature;
- political graffiti; and
- "piecing" or the painting of large images or murals.

It is estimated that 90% of the graffiti in Frankston City is in the form of tagging. There is a small component of mural style graffiti, notably around the Seaford area, in close proximity to the railway line.

Research undertaken in the development of the Community Safety Plan, showed that perceptions of safety are a significant issue for residents of Frankston. The Local Safety Survey undertaken by the Department of Justice indicates that residents of Frankston City indicate more concern about graffiti and vandalism than residents in other metropolitan areas.

For these reasons, it is important to remove graffiti in Frankston, to improve perceptions of safety and to reduce the concern of residents. It is therefore appropriate to concentrate graffiti prevention and removal efforts on tagging, as this is the most significant problem.

## **6. What is effective?**

Despite the quantity of research that has been undertaken on the causes of graffiti, there have been few evaluations undertaken on what measures are effective in prevention of graffiti. Two measures that have been used in other municipalities are the use of aerosol art, and education programs for young people. The reasons for excluding these measures from this plan are outline below.

### *Aerosol Art*

There has been considerable debate in the development of this Plan about aerosol art and how this area relates to Graffiti Management.

There are no evaluations demonstrating that legal aerosol art activities have an impact on the level of graffiti in the environment.

Aerosol art is a legitimate art form in its own right. An impressive exhibition of aerosol art titled "Out of the Hole" was held at Cube 37, as part of the Frankston International Guitar Festival 2002.

In fact, the promotion of aerosol art for the purpose of reducing graffiti may serve to detract from it as a legitimate art form, and may unfairly reflect on participants as being suspected of involvement in criminal activity through damage to property.

It is not proposed therefore to pursue the development of strategies in relation to aerosol art as a part of this Plan. It may be more appropriate for these to be developed as part of Council's Arts development activities.

### *Education Programs*

Significant numbers of people are involved at some point in graffiti. A Department of Human Services survey of 9000 Victorian Secondary Students found that 17% stated that they had been involved in graffiti. It is therefore possible that a number of students in Frankston are involved in graffiti at some time. Any education program targeting large numbers of students would be costly. It is also not known at this time whether such a program can be effective.

### *Tag Register*

A number of municipalities have put in place a tag register so that they can link a particular tag, and the associated costs of removal, with an individual. This person, if caught, can then be charged with a large number of offences and the removal costs may be able to be recovered from them. This option is not considered to be cost effective at this time.

### *Cost Effective Mechanisms*

Frankston City is focusing on cost effective mechanisms to address the most prevalent types of graffiti. In order to make the best use of resources, the strategies in this plan have been selected from among those that have been demonstrated to be effective elsewhere. It is noted that other municipalities are devoting considerable resources to this activity with several budgeting over \$400,000 per annum to their Graffiti Management Plans.

The progress of these plans will be monitored and information on best practice will continue to be gathered, so that actions that are demonstrated to be cost effective can be incorporated into Frankston Council's Graffiti Management Plan.

## **7. Trials**

In the development of this plan, several approaches have been trialed.

### *Free Paint Offer*

As part of the Chamber of Commerce pre-Christmas clean up of the Central Activities District an offer of 4 litres of free paint was made to traders who wished to paint out graffiti. This offer was taken up by 35 business premises, with some excellent results. Mitre 10 assisted this trial by providing free brushes or rollers and advice.

### *Use of the Magistrates Court Diversion Program*

The Court diversion program offers volunteers to undertake work. These people are first offenders who have pleaded guilty to a minor offence. A number of volunteers were involved in painting the back walls of shops in Young St. The shops co-operated by using the same colour paint throughout the laneway, so that any further graffiti can be easily painted out. A number of murals that had been produced by the "Work for the Dole" program were then fixed to the walls to form what is now being referred to as "Gallery Lane".

### *Use of Community Corrections Services*

A work crew from Community Corrections has been undertaking painting works in parks to brighten up areas and paint out graffiti. This project has received excellent feedback and media coverage.

## **8. Research and Consultation**

A considerable amount of research and consultation was undertaken in the development of this plan. Details are at Attachment A.

## **9. Strategies**

### **9.1 Improve areas that attract graffiti**

- Establish a program with schools to clean up and decorate public areas that are particularly graffiti prone – priority to be given to highly visible locations
- Utilise the services of Community Correctional Services in the removal of graffiti and in making improvements to targeted areas that are on public property
- Utilise the services of the Magistrate’s Court Diversion program in removal of graffiti and in making improvements to targeted areas that are private property (eg “Gallery Lane”)
- Involve Work for the Dole programs in improvements to targeted areas
- Develop a system to maintain improvements in targeted areas
- Work with the Frankston High School “Station Facelift Group” to improve Frankston Train Station

### **9.2 Establish a simple reporting mechanism**

- Set up a well publicised hotline number (1800) for members of the public to report graffiti – all calls will be dealt with on this number and details passed on to the appropriate organisation for attention

### **9.3 Remove all graffiti on council property within 5 working days of notification**

- Remove any offensive graffiti within 24 hours of notification
- Link the graffiti hotline to the internal customer request tracking system
- Review performance standards in contracts to ensure that an appropriate standard is specified.
- Utilise anti-graffiti coatings or murals in highly graffiti prone areas

#### **9.4 Facilitate graffiti removal on non-Council property**

- Provide free materials for people who wish to remove graffiti on their property. This will include a voucher for 4 litres of paint and information on graffiti removal.
- Investigate the inclusion of a safe graffiti removal spray in this kit
- Provide information on graffiti removal on the Council website
- Investigate the establishment of a graffiti removal trailer, for use by volunteers for the removal of graffiti on private property, with the assistance of the Police Community Consultative Committee
- Investigate the feasibility of a requirement on permits for signs, clothing bins, rubbish skips etc, that they must remove graffiti within 48 hours of notification
- Report all graffiti on train stations, trains and along train lines to National Express
- Investigation of feasibility of agreements with utilities, so that Council can bill back for removal
- Investigate the feasibility of a local law to enforce the graffiti removal policy on private property, and utility assets.

#### **9.5 Crime Prevention through Environmental Design**

- Utilise Crime Prevention through Environmental Design principles to reduce the incidence of graffiti on new structures

#### **9.6 Future Development**

- Monitor best practice and incorporate cost-effective actions into future activities.

## **Research and Consultation**

In the development of this Plan, a significant amount of research and consultation has been undertaken.

### *Consultations*

- Youth Safety Management Team
- Frankston Chamber of Commerce
- Residents Against Graffiti Everywhere (RAGE)
- Council staff with graffiti management responsibilities

### *Information Sessions for Community Safety Management Team*

- Kealy Smith, City of Yarra
- Steve Fletcher, operator of DAHUB website

### *Discussions with*

- Don Bone, City of Greater Dandenong, Graffiti Prevention Program
- Jan Ryan, Crime Prevention Victoria
- Lisa Armstrong-Paine, City of Geelong
- Tomas Lopata, Knox City Council
- Kealy Smith, City of Yarra
- Brendan Fitzsimmons & Melanie Sanders, City of Casey
- National Power Services
- National Express
- South East Water
- VicRoads

### *Approaches by companies:*

- YingYang Pty Ltd - graffiti removal towels and services
- Urban Maintenance Systems – graffiti management programs
- The Graffiti Solution - graffiti management programs
- Smart Graffiti Kill - products

### *Forums attended*

- Department of Justice – graffiti forum
- Frankston City Council forum “Graffiti and Volatile Substance Abuse”
- City of Casey forum with neighbouring Councils.

### *Documents used in research*

- “Graffiti Tool Kit” (Draft) Crime Prevention Victoria
- “Graffiti Prevention Program, Achievements Report”, City of Greater Dandenong
- City of Greater Dandenong, Graffiti Prevention Policy, 1996
- Preventing Crime: What Works, What Doesn’t, What’s Promising, Sherman, Gottfredson, MacKenzie, Eck, Reuter, Bushway
- Geelong City – Policy on Graffiti Management
- WA Graffiti Prevention and Control Program
- “Deciphering Graffiti”, Tomas Lopata
- Report of Youth Activities Services and Family Liaison Worker
- Articles by Professor Alison Young, Department of Criminology, Melbourne University
- “How to Beat Graffiti Vandalism”, Residents Against Graffiti Everywhere
- Documents on Council’s Graffiti and Vandalism file, dating back to 1990.
- City of Onkaparinga policies
- Graffiti Hurts website, including case studies at [www.graffitihurts.org](http://www.graffitihurts.org)
- [www.dahub.com.au](http://www.dahub.com.au)
- “Graffiti Strategy Pilot Project, Maroondah City Council
- “Graffiti/Vandalism Eradication Management Program for Local Government”, The Graffiti Solution
- City of Gosnells Anti Graffiti Campaign
- “Preventing Illegal Graffiti”, NSW Government in association with NSW local Government and Shires Associations
- “NSW Graffiti Solutions Handbook for Local Government, Planners, Designers and Developers”, Premier’s Department, New South Wales, July 2000
- “The Writing on the Wall”, The Age, January 30<sup>th</sup> 2002
- “Graffiti Prevention”, Maroondah City Council
- “The Price of Aerosol Art is Too High”, Christopher Bantick, The Age 7/1/02
- “Volunteers Answer the Call to Wage War on Graffiti”, Carolyn Rance, The Age 2/2/02
- Graffiti Strategy and Progress Reports, Warringah Council, NSW
- “Home is Where the Art is for Streetwise Crew”, The Australian, 1/6/2000
- “GS38 & Future Four, Early Melbourne Graffiti, [www.geocities.com/g38\\_f4/html/g38\\_story.html](http://www.geocities.com/g38_f4/html/g38_story.html)
- “Vandal to pay \$25 for 20 years”, Sunday Mail- Adelaide, 6/11/2000
- “Retailers become Watchdogs Against Graffiti”, AAP General News, 3/12/2000
- “Graffiti Fight Lost”, Sunday Mail – Brisbane, 6/11/2000
- “Discovering Graffiti”, Christopher Heathcote, Art Monthly Australia, September 2000
- “A Scream from their Art”, Blanche Clark, Herald Sun, 10/6/2000
- “The Handwriting’s On the Wall: Cities Can Win the Graffiti War”, Tom Black, The American City and Country, Pittsfield, March 1997
- “RAGE Gives Graffiti a Spray”, The Age, 12/1/02
- “Stopping the Suburban Scrawl”, Steve Rotherham, Local Government News, April 2002