GRAFITTI VANDALISM MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Date of Adoption: 18 August 2009

City of
Canada Bay

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The City of Canada Bay Council recently developed a Crime Prevention Plan which has been endorsed by the NSW Attorney General's Department as a Safer Community Compact. This enables Council to apply to the NSW Attorney General's Department for funding to support the Plan's implementation. The Plan identifies a number of crime prevention strategies and initiatives to be implemented over a 3 year period.

One of the key recommendations of the Crime Prevention Plan was that Council develop a comprehensive Graffiti Vandalism Management Strategy to take a holistic, coordinated approach to understanding, preventing and responding to graffiti in the Canada Bay Local Government Area (LGA).

This Strategy aims to expand upon Council's existing graffiti management strategies and measures to take a multifaceted, 'whole of Council' approach to reducing graffiti vandalism in the City of Canada Bay. It identifies a number of reactive and proactive strategies to be implemented over the next 3 years.

By incorporating a mix of strategies, including preventative measures, effective removal programs, public art initiatives and community education and engagement strategies, the Strategy aims to reduce the level of graffiti vandalism in the City of Canada Bay.

The five key elements identified by this Strategy are:

- Data Collection and Research;
- Graffiti Removal and Maintenance;
- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Strategies;
- Community Education, Information and Support; and
- Public Art and Engagement Strategies.

Through the consideration of these key areas, Council seeks to strike a balance between the need to reduce graffiti vandalism and associated costs, with the interests of people to express themselves creatively in the community. Part of this approach involves the development of programs which seek to engage potential offenders and deter them from illegal graffiti activity by offering legitimate outlets for creativity.

This Strategy aims to recognise and build upon the work already undertaken by the City of Canada Bay Council in response to graffiti, which includes:

- Managing public complaints on graffiti through Council's electronic data management system and responding to complaints promptly. Council removes graffiti promptly from its own property and offers quotes to remove graffiti on private property at a rate subsidised by 50% by Council;
- Promotion of Council's Graffiti Rapid Removal Program and Hotline to encourage swift reporting of graffiti vandalism by the community; and
- Coordination of youth programs and initiatives by Council's Community Development Team, which aim to engage local young people and prevent their involvement in graffiti vandalism.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

The City of Canada Bay Council Graffiti Vandalism Management Strategy aims to:

Reduce the prevalence of graffiti vandalism in the City of Canada Bay, thereby enhancing public amenity and perceptions of community safety.

This is to be achieved by:

- Facilitating a whole of Council approach to addressing graffiti and related issues;
- Working with the community to identify local solutions to local problems;
- Providing opportunities for community participation and inclusion in the delivery of strategies and initiatives;
- Delivering a range of proactive and reactive strategies incorporating preventative measures, removal strategies, data collection, research and public art.
- Adopting a balanced approach to the issue of graffiti that incorporates both an understanding of graffiti culture, and the impact upon the local urban environment and the community.
- Recognising and building upon existing policies and procedures developed by Council in response to graffiti; and
- Developing programs and initiatives which respect and contribute to the local heritage, cultural identity and environment.

1.3 Definitions and Context

In developing any strategy in response to graffiti, an important first step is to understand the definitions and cultural context.

Graffiti is extremely contentious issue, at the centre of many ongoing public debates. As highlighted by Graycar:

> "Different people respond to graffiti in different ways. Indeed, if beauty is in the eye of the beholder, nowhere is this more evident than in individual responses to graffiti" (Graycar, 2003, p.1).

At one end of the spectrum, graffiti is a viewed as a form of vandalism and scourge on society, a blight on the urban landscape costing governments millions of dollars each year. Indeed, the financial cost of graffiti is high, with the Department of Local Government estimating that graffiti vandalism cost NSW communities around $100 million per year (NSW Government, 2002).

At the opposite end of the debate is the argument that graffiti is a legitimate art form and outlet for artistic expression. For many young people in particular, graffiti forms an integral part of the hip hop subculture, and is a qualified and highly skilled artform. There is overwhelming support from the broader youth sector to legalise some graffiti artforms and programs. A recent submission compiled by Youth Action and Policy Association (YAPA) highlighted the value of legal uses of graffiti in achieving positive outcomes for young people:

> "A more balanced approach is needed between rapid removal initiatives and the pro-social approaches that alleviate the need for illegal tagging. As opposed to the anti-social outcomes of graffiti vandalism, the pro-social outcomes of [graffiti programs can have] great benefit for the community as well. Legal programs, usually coordinated by youth services, provide an invaluable opportunity for community members, such as the local police and local business, to join together with young people and create a positive solution to illegal graffiti" (Review of all legislation to stop graffiti vandalism, YAPA, 2007).

Whilst the line between what constitutes art is often blurry, this Strategy attempts to present a balanced approach that incorporates an understanding of graffiti culture and the impact on the local urban environment and the community. Council aims to take a lead role in addressing the issue of graffiti - balancing the need to reduce vandalism and associated costs of graffiti with the interests of local young people to express themselves in the community.

As such, for the purposes of the City of Canada Bay Graffiti Vandalism Management Strategy, the following terminology will be used to help delineate between graffiti as a form of vandalism, and public art that embraces quality and ethics:

'Graffiti' in its most general sense is commonly understood to mean writing on walls and comes in three main varieties – Hip Hop Graffiti, Political Graffiti and Stencilling. The most prevalent form of graffiti in the City of Canada Bay is hip hop art which incorporates tagging, throw ups, or pieces.

'Graffiti vandalism' refers to any inscription, word, figure or design that is marked, etched, scratched, drawn, sprayed, painted, applied or otherwise affixed to any surface ***without the consent of the property owner.*** Graffiti vandalism is illegal in the State of New South Wales *(N.B. refer to section 1.7 – Legislation, for further details)*.

'Tagging' is a style of writing that depicts the initials or nickname ('tag name') of the person responsible. It is comparatively smaller in dimension from other graffiti and is often written multiple times at the same site.

'Murals' are community art pieces which are generally a more complex work, highly stylised and colourful, usually involving professional artists and community members and often used as place-making opportunities which reflect the cultural make-up and aspirations of an area.

'Graffiti Writers' refers to people who graffiti.

1.4 Understanding Graffiti

There is a wealth of research into the issue of graffiti, and many efforts have been made in an attempt to understand graffiti and what motivates people to engage in illegal graffiti vandalism.

Whilst this Strategy does not attempt to explore the issue of what causes people to graffiti in great depth, a basic understanding graffiti and the hip hop culture from which it emanates is a crucial part in developing a balanced approach to reducing graffiti vandalism.

Graffiti within the Hip Hop context

Graffiti is an inextricable part of Hip Hop Culture. As highlighted by Jones (2003):

> "To be able to meet Graf writers where they are at it is important to place Graf in its context. This context is firmly with Hip Hop Culture. Hip Hop is more than a genre of music. It is a street culture with elements that promote self expression and participation" (Jones, 2003, p1).

Hip Hop is often best referred to as a 'Culture of Kings' whereby status and credibility comes from recognition from your peers. Graffiti is an inextricable part of hip hop subculture, and in the 'graf community', credibility comes by having pieces which are highly visible, and the higher the degree of difficulty or 'risk' in creating the piece, the more credibility is achieved. This explains why graffiti is so often found in high profile, high traffic areas and spaces such as overpasses, near railway stations and in central business districts.

However, graffiti is not solely about being recognised, but for the writers, is an activity that evokes strong feelings of self-esteem, satisfaction and happiness – a sense of joy and pride in what they have created. In their depth of research into the issue, Halsey & Young (2002) found that the causes of graffiti are multiple, but primarily stem from a lack of 'legitimate' activities for young people to be involved in.

As such, there is a great level of responsibility with councils and youth service providers to engage young people in activities which deter young people from being involved in illegal activities such as graffiti vandalism. Iveson (2009) suggests that by making graffiti less accessible does not deter young people and prevents them from developing skills and ethics.

One element of graffiti that must be considered is its anti-authoritarian nature – the idea that the 'thrill' of graffiti vandalism stems from the very fact that it is illegal. As King (2003) points out:

> "We should be mindful of the fact that the anti-authority evident in much graffiti is in many respects an adolescent rite of passage. This may often reflect a degree of cultural alienation associated with the transition from adolescence to adulthood" (King, 2003, p2).

It is for this reason that most successful strategies to reduce graffiti vandalism entail a coordinated approach from the community, including those who are most attuned to youth issues – young people and perhaps most importantly, the Graffiti writers themselves.

Profiling Graffiti Writers

Whilst statistics show that the majority of persons involved in graffiti are young males, research indicates that the socioeconomic status and cultural background of graffiti writers is quite diverse, and despite stereotypes of the 'typical' graffiti writer, they are by no means a homogenous group.

According to statistics from the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BoCSAR), in 2006, among the persons of interest (POIs) whose age and gender was known to the Police:

- 75% were under the age of 18 and 4% were aged 25 and above;
- 86% were male;
- 64% were males aged under 18;
- 12% were females under 18.

Studies conducted by Halsey and Young (2002) indicate that whilst graffiti is most commonly done by teenagers, there is evidence that some graffiti writers continue well into their 30s and 40s. Furthermore, whilst there is a common perception that graffiti writers are from low income families or disadvantaged backgrounds, studies show that this is not always the case, but in fact many graffiti writers are from wealthy families.

There is therefore a need for councils and other youth service providers to develop programs which seek to engage young people from a variety of backgrounds, by providing opportunities for participation in a range of creative and cultural activities that relate to their needs and interests.

Youth and community engagement projects form part of this Strategy, and are referred to in more depth later in this document.

1.5 Graffiti Vandalism in the Canada Bay LGA

Like most modern urban environments, graffiti vandalism is an issue of community concern for those living, working in and visiting the City of Canada Bay.

Council's Community Safety and Crime Prevention Plan (2009-2012) identifies graffiti as a priority issue for the LGA, one which requires a strategic response from Council in conjunction with key stakeholders, including the police, local businesses, residents and the wider community.

Whilst it is difficult to accurately compare the extent of graffiti vandalism in City of Canada Bay in comparison to other LGAs across the State, comparatively speaking, graffiti vandalism is not 'as bad' as in other areas.

Statistically, the City of Canada Bay ranks low for all forms of malicious damage, including Graffiti. When interpreting crime data, graffiti falls under the category of Malicious Damage. In 2006 the recorded rate of Malicious damage to property in Canada Bay Local Government Area was ranked 137 out of the 143 Local Government Areas that have populations greater than 3000 (NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, 2006). Reporting trends for Malicious Damage have also been

stable over the past two years from October 2005 to September 2007, with no substantial increase in reported levels of malicious damage across the period.

Whilst it is unclear which proportion of these offences were graffiti related, analysis of the NSW recorded crime statistics from January 2001 to December 2006 indicates that approximately 8.0% of incidents of malicious damage to property reported to NSW Police over this period related to graffiti vandalism (NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, 2006). It is also important to note that statistics only reflect the level of *reported* crime. Given that many crimes, including malicious damage, are often under-reported, the data does not necessarily provide a true and accurate representation of the extent of the problem. With graffiti in particular, community perceptions must be considered in addition to the official crime data.

Whilst Canada Bay may not be 'as bad' as other areas, this is not to say graffiti is not a problem for the community that needs addressing. In a recent crime survey, graffiti and vandalism were issues that were highlighted as being of major concern by residents and businesses in the LGA (Online Crime Survey for City of Canada Bay residents, 2007). Indeed, for those residents and businesses who are frequently subjected to graffiti vandalism, the issue is one that demands action.

As part of Council's graffiti removal responsibilities, Council's Graffiti Removal Officer logs all graffiti removal actions on the Australian Graffiti Register (www.ausgr.com.au). This is a useful tool to analyse the types of graffiti that are reported to Council, the method/materials used to apply the graffiti, the location and property types most frequently targeted.

To summarise the key findings of recent data, during the period from 1 January 2008 to 31 December 2008:
- 896 incidents (12,267 sq metres) of graffiti were reported across the LGA and 804 were removed;
- 748 (83%) of these were tags;
- 672 (75%) was applied using spray-paint, with 221 (24.6%) applied using permanent marker pens;
- The majority (31%) of graffiti incidents reported to Council was in the Five Dock area, followed by Concord (25%), and Drummoyne (15%).
- Of all sites treated for removal, 67% were Council-owned properties/facilities, followed by commercial properties (16%) and privately-owned properties (15%).

This data provides a brief snapshot of all reported graffiti in Canada Bay LGA, however as aforementioned, the sporadic nature of graffiti and low rates of reporting means that the data does not always reflect the true extent of the problem.

Consultations with Police, Council and the community indicate that while it is difficult to pinpoint any 'hotspots' for graffiti vandalism within the LGA, graffiti tends to be of greater community concern in high profile areas, such as major commercial precincts and parks. Whilst this list is by no means exhaustive, areas identified as those frequently targeted with graffiti vandalism include:

- Great North Road, Five Dock & surrounding streets/back laneways.
- Five Dock Skate Park
- St Lukes Park, Concord
- Edwards Park, Concord
- Majors Bay Road, Concord
- Concord Road
- North Strathfield Station
- Lyons Road, Drummoyne

1.6 Impact of Graffiti Vandalism

At face value, the impact of graffiti vandalism may seem simply to impact upon the visual aesthetic of an environment, having the effect of making an area appear untidy and uncared for. Yet, despite the obvious impact, graffiti vandalism has a number of effects upon the community, and the associated costs – whether real or perceived – can be quite significant. Some of these impacts of can be summarised as follows:

- **Community perceptions of 'disorder' -** Graffiti vandalism often contributes to negative perceptions about an area's safety, adding to the perception of an unsafe environment and a general sense of 'lawlessness' in society. As highlighted by Arcioni (2003) in a conference paper on the issue, negative perceptions of an area attributed to graffiti, whether realised or not, can have a 'real' financial impact on local communities:

  "The existence of graffiti may have perceived and actual negative effects. The perceived effects may be perceptions held by members of the community that the mere existence of the graffiti increases the level of crime in the area and makes the area less safe. Perceptions are important because they can lead to actual effects such as a fall in the desirability of the area as a place within which to live or conduct business and therefore a fall in property prices, despite a lack of empirical evidence to support those views" (Arcioni, 2003, p2).

- **Physical Danger –** Graffiti is often performed in dangerous locations which are difficult to access. In fact, pieces which are harder to create, such as above railway bridges and overpasses, known as 'stay ups' often entail a greater sense of creditability within the 'graffiti community' due to the high degree of difficulty involved.

- Tragedies involving young people losing their lives whilst engaging in graffiti have gained much attention in the media, and increases public demand that more is done to discourage young people in particular from partaking in dangerous behaviours.

- **Financial costs –** As previously highlighted, Graffiti vandalism also has a significant financial impact on the community, with the Department of Local Government estimating that graffiti vandalism cost NSW communities around $100 million per year.

- Costs include resources for removal (time & staff); money for clean-up; money for development of new public spaces; administration and management expenses; insurance premiums and treatment of properties for prevention.

1.7 Legislation

Graffiti vandalism is a crime. In New South Wales, the **Crimes Act 1900** and the **Graffiti Control Act 2008** that amends the **Summary Offences Act 1988** to consolidate existing graffiti laws into a specific Act carry stringent penalties to deal with graffiti vandalism.

Under section 195 of the **Crimes Act 1900** a person who maliciously destroys or damages property belonging to another is liable to a maximum penalty of imprisonment for 5 years, and section 200 allows for imprisonment of three years for being in possession of a non-explosive article, with intent to deface or damage premises or property.

The **Graffiti Control Act 2008** carries a number of penalties for persons found guilty of damaging or defacing property by means of graffiti including fines up to $2,200 and a maximum penalty of up to 6 months imprisonment. The Act expands the definition of graffiti implements to include spray paint, any marker pen and other implements designed or modified to produce a mark and makes it illegal to posses such implements with the intention of using them to damage or deface property. This Act also legislates against the sale of spray paint cans to persons under the age of 18 years and empowers Police and Fair Trading Officers to issue on-the-spot fines to retailers who fail to properly secure spray paint can displays.

Formerly, Local Government's role in Graffiti management was governed sections 67A, 67B and 67C of **Local Government Act 1993.** Council's role is now legislated within the **Graffiti Control Act 2008.** Part 4 of the Act, provides local councils with the authority and responsibility to remove graffiti vandalism where the graffiti can be seen and accessed from a public place. Under this legislation, councils continue to take a lead role in working with the community to reduce graffiti vandalism within their respective LGAs. Specifically council requirements are:

11 – Graffiti removal work—by agreement with owner or occupier (repealed 67A Local Government Act 1993)

A local council may, by agreement with the owner or occupier of any private land, carry out graffiti removal work on the land.

12 – Graffiti removal work—without agreement of owner or occupier (repealed 67B Local Government Act 1993)

1. A council may, without the agreement of the owner or occupier of any land, carry out graffiti removal work to property on that land if the graffiti concerned is visible from a public place.

2. The graffiti removal work referred to in subsection (1) may only be carried out from a public place.

3. The local council concerned is to bear the cost of graffiti removal work referred to in subsection (1).

4. If a local council carries out graffiti removal work in accordance with this section, the council must, within a reasonable period, give the owner or occupier of the land concerned written notice that the work has occurred.

5. A local council must pay compensation for any damage caused by the council in carrying out graffiti removal work in accordance with this section.

(NB: Section 730 of the *Local Government Act 1993* provides for the resolution of claims for compensation relating to damage under this section in cases of dispute between the person claiming the compensation and the council).

13- Register of graffiti removal work (repealed 67C Local Government Act 1993)

1. A local council must keep a register of graffiti removal work carried out in accordance with this part

2. The register is to specify in respect of each incidence of graffiti removal work carried out:

   a. The owner or occupier of the premises on which the graffiti was situated

   b. The nature of the work carried out

   c. The actual cost, or an estimate of the cost at current market rates, of carrying out the work, and;

   d. In the case of graffiti removal work carried out in accordance with section 11 — the actual amount charged by the local council for carrying out the work.

1.8 Roles - Council, Police and Community

It is important that Council adopt a graffiti management structure that plans and implements preventative and proactive approaches to manage graffiti in Canada Bay. Programs that address physical infrastructure and people's activity need to be considered. For example rapid removal and target hardening measures are aimed at protecting and maintaining physical infrastructure. Cultural and artistic programs provide opportunities for cultural and artistic expression in a positive way.

A cooperative and coordinated approach to graffiti management between Council departments, the Police and community is essential to build capacity to change attitudes and behaviour toward graffiti as well as defining roles and responsibilities for graffiti management.

In April 2009 Graffiti was highlighted as a significant community concern at the Inaugural Community Safety Precinct Committee (CSPC). The Committee is administered by the Burwood Local Area Police Command and aims to reduce crime and the perception of crime in the community through action oriented inclusive working groups. Council has appointed representatives to the Community Safety Precinct Committee Graffiti Working Group, which will meet monthly from May 2009.

Through the Community Safety Precinct Committee Graffiti Working Group, Council will actively engage with NSW Police, government agencies and the community to:

• monitor the effectiveness of the implementation of Council's Graffiti Vandalism Management Strategy;

• maintain a system of regular reporting of graffiti incidents recorded by Council to Police to inform trends, identify hotspots and develop and implement graffiti vandalism management strategies; and

- ensure that the capacity for residents and businesses to report graffiti incidents to Council is equitable and accessible.

Following the inaugural meeting consultation with key staff at Burwood LAC including the Intelligence Officer and Crime Prevention Officer identified that a roaming CCTV surveillance camera utilised by Burwood LAC could improve evidence gathering and allow Police to conduct operations to support the process of charging and securing conviction of graffiti offenders.

2. Key Elements of Graffiti Vandalism Management

2.1 Data Collection and Research

Objective

To improve graffiti data collection methods and ensure the availability of accurate and timely data and research to inform the development of effective policies and programs.

Rationale

- Collating accurate data on the frequency, location and type of graffiti vandalism occurring is essential so that evidence-based approaches can be developed in response.
- Swift and accurate reporting of graffiti incidents is essential for ongoing monitoring and to facilitate rapid response removal.
- Council has a role in ensuring data collection methods are ongoing and consistent, and to continue to research best-practice models for effective graffiti management.
- Consultations with Council staff highlighted that a more streamlined approach is required to encourage reporting of graffiti vandalism by the community.

Challenges

- Graffiti is sporadic by nature, hence accurate data is difficult to obtain.
- Low rates of reporting graffiti – there is a perceived level of complacency in the community when it comes to reporting graffiti, with the belief that people have simply 'learned to live with it'.

Actions

1. **Promote Council's Graffiti Removal Hotline (9911 6444) to encourage swift reporting by the community.** This includes promoting the hotline in community newsletters, Mayoral columns, Council website and other local media to encourage members of the public to play an active role in reducing graffiti vandalism.

2. **Continue to record, respond to and manage all graffiti complaints through the Australian Graffiti Register.**

3. **Promote graffiti online reporting form available through Council's website which directly logs all reports to the Australian Graffiti Register.** The form provides an important avenue for the community to report incidents of graffiti via council's website, and assists with collation of details about the location and type of graffiti, and the frequency it is occurring. This on-line database system stores photographic records and can track serial graffiti offenders which may assist with the possible prosecution of offenders.

4. **Continue to log all removal actions for reported incidences of graffiti on the Australian Graffiti Register (www.ausgr.com.au)** Council's City Maintenance staff currently subscribe to this website.

5. **Encourage community members to report graffiti to the PAL** (Police Assistance Line) 131 444 and ask Police to complete an incident report.

6. **Liaise regularly with Burwood Local Area Command to obtain data on reported graffiti, enhance data collection methods and assist in linking graffiti vandalism with offenders.** This includes exchange of information with Burwood Police relating to location, type and frequency of graffiti vandalism in the LGA, and gaining Police input into appropriate strategies that should be developed. Council staff to report incidents to PAL to ensure that major incidents and offender tags are recorded in Police statistics. Establishing a regular reporting structure of graffiti

incidents recorded in the Australian Graffiti Register to the Police to inform trends and well as identify hotspots and serial graffiti offenders.

7. **Investigate the provision of a roaming CCTV camera to be utilised by Burwood LAC to improve evidence gathering** and conduct operations to support the process of charging and securing conviction of graffiti offenders. Discuss the establishment of an agreement and Code of Practice with the Burwood Local Area Command for the management and implementation of the proposed roaming CCTV device.

8. **Conduct regular audits of sites most frequently targeted for graffiti vandalism** to photograph and record the locations, tags present, surface type, and materials used and consider any environmental factors that may contribute to the incidence of graffiti.

9. **Continued research into graffiti management models and monitoring of graffiti legislation** to ensure development of effective strategies which conform with best-practice standards and within respective legislative frameworks.

10. **Develop and implement a removal protocol for infrastructure owned by utility providers** such as Telstra, RTA, Energy Australia, Integral Energy, Australia Post etc.

11. **Encourage members of the community to utilise graffiti reporting lines for other infrastructure providers** and include information on Council website and Graffiti Removal Factsheet.

2.2 Graffiti Removal and Maintenance

Objective

Continue to deliver strategic graffiti removal services to reduce graffiti vandalism in the Canada Bay LGA.

Rationale

- Part 4 of the Graffiti Control Act 2008 provides guidelines for Council to undertake graffiti removal work on visible sites of public, private and commercial properties within their respective LGAs.

- One of the most effective strategies against graffiti vandalism is to remove it as quickly as possible and to persist in removing, either through paint out, chemical removal or pressure cleaners. Research suggests that there is a 10% likelihood of reoccurrence if graffiti is removed within 24 hours, compared with 100% likelihood if the graffiti remains for 2 weeks before removal (Graffiti Tool Kit, Crime Prevention Victoria, 2003).

- The policy of strategic removal of graffiti aims to deter further deterioration of amenities to reduce urban decay and maintain a clean and amenable urban environment. Prompt removal deprives vandals the reward/satisfaction of recognition that their piece is publicly visible.

Challenges

- Swift removal relies heavily on effective data collection and reporting of graffiti vandalism, and can only be as effective as the processes which have been set-up to support it.

- Funding – the costs associated with graffiti removal are quite significant, including equipment costs, wages for staff, materials and administrative costs for coordinating the service.

Actions

1. **Council to deliver targeted removal from premises across the LGA.** The Rapid Graffiti Removal Program is currently delivered in an equitable manner that provides access to Council's removal service and a Council subsidy of 50 percent to the removal costs.

   Council's City Maintenance Team currently coordinates a Graffiti Removal Service which operates on a cost-share basis to remove/paint out graffiti from private and commercial properties in the Canada Bay LGA upon request. This service is currently charged at a price whereby Council supports owners of affected commercial properties by funding 50% of the actual removal costs and only removes obscene graffiti at no-cost.

   The following is not included as part of this service:

- Surfaces above 2.4 metres in height from the ground;

- Areas where the operator needs to enters a private property to achieve removal of the graffiti;

- Large business organisations e.g. banks, petrol stations, supermarkets, shopping malls, etc;

- Infrastructure owned by utility providers e.g. Telstra, RTA, Energy Australia, Australia Post etc;

- Glass etching;

- Where the building is graffiti guarded with a special graffiti protection coating (graffiti guard coatings require the use of specific special chemicals for removal) and

- Areas that are developer owned.

In order to improve service levels and manage increased workload, Council has recently increased the capacity of its rapid graffiti removal program from 1 full time staff member and 1 removal vehicle to 1 full time and 1 part time staff member and 2 removal vehicles (1 vehicle to conduct paint outs and 1 vehicle to clean and paint out sites).

Take up rates of the graffiti removal service have been hindered by cost and the quotation process. If Council were to fully fund the removal, it would negate the quotation process, improving response times; more time could be allocated to removal rather than conducting quotes and take up rates would increase as no cost would be incurred by businesses. It is proposed that Council move away from the current quoting system and offer a free removal service that would operate within the existing parameters of the current service on a zone by zone basis.

2. **Provision of Graffiti Removal kits and vouchers for members of the community** (including residents, sporting and social clubs and community groups). Presently, Council provides the rapid removal service to residents at a subsidised rate of 50% in the same way for business. Council could also seek to pilot the following system for a six month period;

   a. Council to provide sporting, social clubs and community groups with graffiti kits removal/restoration products to ensure the swift removal of graffiti vandalism in instances where Council's Graffiti Removal Team is unable to respond in the required timeframe for example at weekend and evening events.

   b. Providing residents at no cost with vouchers for removal products upon receipt of a graffiti report (via hotline or online form). The voucher would be redeemed through a local paint/hardware retailer who would supply the products. Council to seek external funding or secure sponsorship from businesses to provide products for vouchers.

3. **Continue to remove graffiti from Council properties and facilities**, including community centres, playgrounds, parks, gardens, administrative buildings, toilet blocks and street furniture. Priority should be given to the removal of obscene or offensive graffiti that is highly visible in public areas.

4. **Develop partnership with business in identified commercial areas to remove posters/billboards** to deter acts of graffiti vandalism.

2.3 Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED)

'Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design' (CPTED) principles contend that the considered design of the built environment can lead to a reduction in the fear and incidence of crime. The practices and principles of CPTED are extremely useful for reducing graffiti.

CPTED employs four key strategies. These are:

- **'Territorial reinforcement'** - refers to the use of actual and symbolic boundary markers, spatial legibility and environmental cues to 'connect' people with space, to encourage communal responsibility for public areas and facilities, and to communicate to people where they should/not be and what activities are appropriate.

- **'Surveillance'** – includes natural, mechanical and organised surveillance, and relates to the idea of seeing and being seen. People feel safe in public areas when they can see and interact with others, particularly people connected with that space, such as shopkeepers or adjoining residents. Criminals are often deterred from committing crime in places that are well supervised.

- **'Access Control'** – refers to treatments which restrict, channel and encourage people and vehicles into, out of and around the development. Way-finding, desire-lines and formal/informal routes are important crime prevention considerations. Effective access control can be achieved by using physical and symbolic barriers that channel and group pedestrians into areas, therefore increasing the time and effort required for criminals to commit crime.
- **'Space/Activity Management'** - involves the formal supervision, control and care of the development. All space, even well planned and well-designed areas need to be effectively used and maintained to maximise community safety. Places that are infrequently used are commonly abused. There is a high correlation between urban decay, fear of crime and avoidance behaviour.

Objective

To adopt and implement design principles and guidelines which minimise opportunities for graffiti vandalism in the City of Canada Bay LGA.

Rationale

By maximising the effort and risk involved in committing graffiti vandalism and minimising the perceived rewards, it is possible to discourage graffiti vandals from damaging public and private property. Good lighting, strategic use of surfaces, building and material design and use of defensive vegetation are effective and long-term ways to discourage graffiti.

Challenges

The majority of property in the City of Canada Bay is privately owned, thus Council is limited in its ability to influence design.

Actions

1. **Inclusion of CPTED principles in Council's consolidated Development Control Plan (DCP).** The DCP would include considerations such as:
    - Lighting standards;
    - Access Control measures;
    - Use of graffiti resistant paints and surfaces;
    - Defensive planting/landscaping and
    - Building design and layout which encourages passive surveillance of public spaces and facilities.

    The inclusion of CPTED principles in Council's DCP would help reduce crime risk through the strategic design of public facilities and open spaces, and also assist Council to work with developers to enable the application of CPTED principles are included in building design and layout.

2. **Implementation of CPTED strategies on Council properties/facilities, including**:
    - Application of graffiti barrier paints to Council properties and/or facilities which are frequently targeted by graffiti, such as toilets blocks, brick walls and fences.
    - Use of 'defensive planting' of suitable bushes and/or trees along existing long fence-lines to reduce the availability of blank space for tagging.
    - Use of sturdy graffiti resistant materials in landscaping and design of public spaces and facilities.
    - Minimise the use of porous materials in landscaping and building design, in favour of less permeable materials and surfaces.
    - Commission the creation of public artworks and community art projects such as murals and mosaics on sites regularly tagged with graffiti *(N.B. the use of Public Art as a graffiti reduction strategy is explored in more depth under section 2.5 - Public Art Strategies)*.

3. **Application of CPTED treatments to minimise tagging of the Five Dock Skate Park.** This includes:
    - Regular pruning of trees and shrubs surrounding the skate park and improving lighting to improve visibility of the Skate Park from the street and encourage passive surveillance of the area.
    - Erect signage to clearly state the rules of use for the skate park and safety guidelines for users.

- Erect signage advising that graffiti on the surface of the skate bowl, and subsequent chemical removal, damages the surface of the skate bowl.
- Provide opportunities for young people to create public art features at the Skate Park (excluding aerosol art)

4. Liaise with peak public authorities and service providers to lobby for the use of CPTED in design of public amenities and services in the LGA. This includes such as the RTA, public transport authorities, telecommunications services and energy providers.

2.4 Community Education, Information and Support

Objective

To improve community capacity to prevent and remove graffiti through the preparation and distribution of appropriate information resources.

Rationale

- Increasing community awareness about the complex nature of graffiti is essential to ensure effective graffiti management.
- Increasing awareness about graffiti improves the efficiency and amount of reporting of graffiti vandalism by the public.
- More information is required to increase awareness of legislation relating to graffiti, especially amongst local businesses with relation to restrictions on sale of spray paints to minors.

Actions

1. Develop and distribute graffiti information for local residents and businesses to inform them about graffiti prevention, removal, and reporting. Make available at Council's Customer Services area and libraries.
2. Provide information on Council's website about graffiti prevention, removal and reporting, and Council's role in graffiti management as well as methods of reporting to other agencies.
3. Promote Council's Graffiti Hotline and Graffiti Removal Service on-loop on plasma screens in libraries and Council's customer service area.
4. Conduct regular information forums and sessions relating to graffiti in conjunction with Youth Reference Group, local businesses, schools and residents outlining Council's role in graffiti prevention and how the community can play an active role in reporting and reducing graffiti.
5. Investigate options for implementing a grassroots schools based graffiti education program that aims to decrease incidence of Graffiti within Canada Bay by maximising students understanding of the consequences of illegal graffiti. Implementation of this program would be dependant on securing access to securing external funding or sponsorship.

2.5 Public Art and Engagement Strategies

Objectives

- To provide opportunities for the development and display of Public Art which contribute to the visual aesthetic and local culture of the City of Canada Bay;
- To provide and support programs which seek to reduce the incidents of young people from engaging in illegal graffiti vandalism and to reduce the risk to young people associated with graffiti vandalism.

Rationale

- Providing structured, legal opportunities for youth involvement in and display of public art to express youth culture.
- The development of creative programs provides young people with an opportunity to develop new creative and vocational skills.
- Public artworks such as mosaics and murals are proven CPTED strategies to reduce graffiti vandalism, minimising opportunities for vandalism to occur. Murals (excluding aerosol art) not only minimise the amount of free space available for tagging, but add to the perception that an area has guardianship, is well maintained, and is therefore safe.

- Community art projects provide place making opportunities, and add to the visual aesthetic, community ownership and cultural capital of an area.
- City of Canada Bay's Draft Cultural Plan highlights that many community members have expressed pride and interest in showcasing their local stories in public places and forums, and a desire for Council to provide more facilities and opportunities for public art.
- In July 2007, Council's Youth Reference Group conducted a community forum on graffiti in the LGA titled "Graffiti: Art or Vandalism?" which was attended by local youth, graffiti artists, residents, community group representatives and local businesses. One of the recommendations of this forum was that a greater number of programs and opportunities be developed for young people to participate in and display public art in the City, with specific sites for artists.

Challenges

- Not all graffiti writers are willing to participate in legal art programs for young people, as often, part of the attraction of graffiti is its anti-authoritarian nature.
- Graffiti is highly contentious and some members of the community will object to all forms of graffiti art, even in legal commissioned sites.

Actions

1. **Investigate options for a local mural/mosaic project in the Five Dock Area**, (given that it is the area with the most reported graffiti in the Canada Bay LGA). Entries could be displayed on temporary boards, with winning designs to be painted on permanent walls within the Five Dock business district that are frequently targeted by graffiti vandalism. The project could be launched as part of local festivities such as Youth Week. It would be promoted as an opportunity for emerging local artists from a variety of backgrounds to develop skills and ethics to create publicly accessible art works which reflect and contribute to the culture of the area. Works could be judged by a panel of professional artists and the community.

2. **Implement a Street Art project commissioning the painting of artworks on RTA signal boxes and Telstra utilities, with priority given to boxes in high profile areas.** This project has been run in a number of LGAs across Sydney with great success (including Canterbury, Burwood and Blacktown). Tagging rates to boxes which are painted with artworks are dramatically reduced as there is no longer a 'blank canvas' for graffiti vandalism. This project provides a great opportunity for local artists to have their works permanently displayed in a public setting. The project offers a possibility of involving young people in the design and creating process as part of a community building and skills development project that encourages a sense of pride and ownership of completed artworks.

3. **Promote the inclusion of young people's art and street art in community festivals and events (e.g. Youth Week, Ferragosto Festival & Concord Carnival)**. At the graffiti forum conducted in 2007, young people commented that they felt there was a lack of exposure for young artists to display their art in a public setting. Community festivals, particularly Youth Week, provides a perfect opportunity to showcase young artistic talent, which helps to overcome the negative stereotypes attached to youth culture and offers creative opportunities as an alternative to tagging.

4. **Develop a register of potential sites for exhibition of Public Art in the LGA**. This could include walls of local businesses that may be willing to 'donate' a wall for a mural project, especially if they are frequently experiencing graffiti vandalism.

5. **Continue to support, develop and promote creative and recreational programs for young people living, working and attending school in the City of Canada Bay**. Given that boredom is often a contributing factor to graffiti, by continuing to provide a range of programs and activities for young people Council can assist in reducing the need for young people to engage in negative behaviours and activities. Continued development and consultation with the Youth Reference Group will help ensure programs are relevant and reflect the needs and interests of local youth.

3. City of Canada Bay - Graffiti Vandalism Management Action Plan

1. DATA COLLECTION AND RESEARCH

Objective: To improve graffiti data collection methods and ensure the availability of accurate and timely data and research to inform the development of effective policies and programs.

No.	Action	Lead Agency	Partnership Opportunities	Timeframe	Resource Implications	Performance Indicators
1.1	Promotion of Council's Graffiti Removal Program and Hotline to encourage swift reporting of by the community.	Council (Communications & Public Relations Team)	Local businesses/ residents/schools	Ongoing	Staff time Printing & Advertising costs	• Amount of promotional material • No of graffiti reports to Council
1.2	Continue to record, respond to and manage graffiti complaints through the Australian Graffiti Register.	Council (Customer Services and TS&O Teams)	Community & business	Ongoing	Staff time, graffiti removal van & consumables	• No of graffiti complaints received and resolved • Avg timeframe for complaint resolution
1.3	Promote online reporting form for graffiti available through Council's website, and collate results regularly, as per reports to graffiti hotline.	Council (Customer Services and TS&O Teams)	Police, Community & business	Ongoing	Staff time to develop and collate forms	• Information reported through website database
1.4	Encourage the community to report graffiti to the Police Assistance Line (PAL).	Council (Customer Services)	Police	Ongoing	Staff time	• Levels of graffiti reported to PAL
1.5	Continue to log all removal actions to the Australian Graffiti Register.	Council (City Maintenance)		Ongoing	Staff time Subscription costs	• No. of removal actions logged • Statistics collated
1.6	Liaise regularly with Burwood Police to obtain data on reported graffiti, enhance data collection methods and assist in linking graffiti vandalism with offenders. Establish regular reporting of Council graffiti data to Police to inform graffiti management practice	Council/ Community Safety Precinct Committee	Police	Ongoing	Staff time	• No of graffiti reports referred to Police • No of meetings attended
1.7	Investigate the provision of a roaming CCTV camera to be utilised by Burwood LAC to improve evidence gathering and conduct operations to support the process of charging and securing conviction of graffiti offenders. Develop a Code of Practice with Burwood LAC regarding the use the roaming CCTV camera in the Canada Bay LGA	Council/ Burwood LAC	Police & Community Safety Precinct Committee	Ongoing	$4000 pending budget approval Staff time to develop agreed code of practice	• Level of graffiti in targeted hot spots • Number of operations completed
1.8	Conduct regular Audits of sites most frequently targeted by graffiti.	Council	Police Community Safety Precinct Committee	Ongoing	Staff time	• No of Audits completed • Findings reported

No.	Action	Lead Agency	Partnership Opportunities	Timeframe	Resource Implications	Performance Indicators
1.9	Continued research into graffiti management models and monitoring of graffiti legislation.	Council	Police & Police Community Safety Committee	Ongoing	Staff time	• Levels of awareness of Graffiti management trends and legislation.
1.10	Develop implement a removal protocol for infrastructure owned by utility providers	Council (TS&O Teams)	Telstra, RTA, Energy Australia, Integral Energy, Australia Post	Ongoing	Staff Time, graffiti removal van	• No of graffiti removals on other infrastructure
1.11	Encourage members of the community to utilise graffiti reporting lines for other infrastructure providers	Council (Communications & Public Relations Team)		Community & business	Staff time Printing & Advertising costs	• Amount of promotional material • No of graffiti reports to Council

2. GRAFFITI REMOVAL AND MAINTENANCE

Objective: To rapidly remove graffiti vandalism from properties in the LGA to reduce the likelihood of reoccurrence, improve the aesthetic of the urban environment and improve community perceptions of safety.

No.	Action	Lead Agency	Partnership Opportunities	Timeframe	Resource Implications	Performance Indicators
2.1	Council to continue its Graffiti Rapid Removal Service and offer a fully funded removal program on a zone by zone basis within the parameters of the existing service.	Council (City Maintenance)	Businesses	Ongoing	Cost of removal service (materials, salaries, and other operational costs) Statistics on hot spots	• Number of sites removed • Hours spent on removal • Reduction in hours spent on providing quotations • Levels of community satisfaction
2.2	Pilot the provision of vouchers for Graffiti Removal products for members of the community (including residents, sporting &social clubs and community groups): (a) Council to provide graffiti removal/restoration kits to sporting and social clubs and community groups Residents vouchers at no cost (b) Council provide residents with redeemable vouchers. **(N.B dependent on external funding and/or business sponsorship**)	Council (Customer Service)	Local paint retailers/hardware stores	09/10	$4,000. Pending budget approval. The voucher system would assist to ensure Council does not have an excess supply of products, and would require reimbursing the retailer upon supply of paint/removal products.	• Reduction of graffiti to private properties • Levels of community satisfaction
2.3	Continue removal of graffiti from Council properties and facilities	Council (City Maintenance)	Community, Police & Police Community Safety Precinct	Ongoing		• No of graffiti reports/complaints • Reduction in graffiti on Council property • Staff time spent on removal from Council facilities
2.4	Develop partnership with business in identified commercial areas to remove posters/billboards to deter graffiti vandalism	Council (Community Development)	Businesses	Ongoing	Staff time	• Reduction of graffiti in commercial areas

3. CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN (CPTED) STRATEGIES

Objective: To adopt and implement design principles and guidelines which minimise opportunities for graffiti vandalism in the Canada Bay LGA.

No.	Action	Lead Agency	Partnership Opportunities	Timeframe	Resource Implications	Performance Indicators
3.1	Inclusion of CPTED principles in Council's Consolidated Development Control Plan (DCP).	Council (Planning & Environment/Community Development)	Police	TBC	Staff time	Inclusion of CPTED principles in Council's consolidated DCP.
3.2	Implement CPTED strategies on Council properties/facilities, including: • Application of graffiti barrier paints to Council properties/facilities • Use of 'defensive planting' along long fence lines in parks/reserves • Use of sturdy graffiti resistant materials • Minimise use of porous materials in landscaping and building design in favour of less permeable surface and materials • Commission of public artworks such as murals and mosaics on public sites regularly targeted by graffiti	Council	Utilities providers	Ongoing	Staff time Cost of graffiti resistant materials/resources	• Use of CPTED principles in design • Reduction in graffiti to Council property/ buildings/facilities
3.3	Application of CPTED treatments to minimise tagging of the Five Dock Skate Park, including: • Regular pruning of trees and shrubs surrounding the skate park and improving lighting to improve visibility of the Skate Park from the street and encourage passive surveillance of the area. • Erect signage to clearly state the rules of use for the skate park and safety guidelines for users. • Engage local youth and artists to create public art (see section 5 – Public Art Strategies). • Erect signage warning the graffiti and subsequent removal damages the surface of the skate bowl for all users.	Council (Technical Services & Operations)	Youth Reference Group/Skate Park users	Ongoing	Staff time Materials/equipment costs	• Reduction in graffiti to Five Dock Skate Park
3.4	Continue to liaise with peak public authorities and service providers for the application of CPTED in design of public amenities and services in the LGA	Council	Roads & Traffic Authority, State Transport Authority, Energy Australia	Ongoing	Staff time	• Meetings attended with peak bodies • Reduction in graffiti to public amenities

4. COMMUNITY EDUCATION, INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

No.	Action	Lead Agency	Partnership Opportunities	Timeframe	Resource Implications	Performance Indicators
4.1	Develop and distribute a graffiti information for local residents and businesses to inform them about graffiti prevention, removal and reporting. Make available at Council and local libraries.	Council (Communications & Public Relations/ Community Development)	NSW Attorney-General's Department (have templates/ information available to utilise)	Ongoing	Staff time Print/distribution costs	• No. of Materials developed/distributed • Levels of community awareness on graffiti prevention and reporting
4.2	Provide information on Council's website about graffiti prevention, removal and reporting, and Council's role in graffiti management as well as methods of reporting to other agencies	Council (Community Development/website developer)		Ongoing	Staff time	• Graffiti prevention information on website • Hit-count to information on website
4.3	Promote Council's Graffiti Hotline and Graffiti Removal Service on-loop on plasma screens in libraries and Council's Customer Service area.	Council (Communications & Public Relations/ Customer Services)		Annually	Staff time	• Levels of community awareness on graffiti prevention and reporting
4.4	Conduct regular information forums and sessions relating to graffiti in conjunction with Youth Reference Group, local businesses and residents outlining Council's role in graffiti prevention and how the community can play an active role in reducing graffiti.	Council	Youth Reference Group/ Police Schools	Ongoing	Staff time, promotion, catering costs	• No of forums held • Levels of community involvement in graffiti prevention programs.
4.5	Investigate options for implementing a grassroots schools based graffiti education program that aims to decrease incidence of Graffiti within Canada Bay by maximising students understanding of the consequences of illegal graffiti.	Council (Community Development)	Youth Reference Group Schools Education providers	10/11	Staff time Program costs	• No of programs delivered • Reduction in graffiti

5. PUBLIC ART AND YOUTH ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

No.	Action	Lead Agency	Partnership Opportunities	Timeframe	Resource Implications	Performance Indicators
5.1	Investigate options for a Local Mural Art Project in the Five Dock Area, (given that it is the area with the most reported graffiti in the Canada Bay LGA). - Entries could be displayed on temporary boards, with winning designs to be painted on permanent walls within the Five Dock business district that are frequently targeted by graffiti vandalism. - The project could be launched as part of Youth Week.	Council (Community Development/Cultural Development/Economic Development)	Local artists Schools Local businesses (who could 'donate' a wall)	Aim to launch during Youth Week 2010	Staff time Promotional costs	• No. of entries • Murals painted • Community satisfaction levels • Levels of tagging on mural sites
5.2	Implementation of a Street Art project commissioning the painting of artworks on RTA signal boxes, with priority given to boxes in high profile areas.	Council (Community Development/Cultural Development)	RTA Local Artists Schools Community Groups Young people Employment & Training Agencies	Aim to launch project in 2009	Staff time Paint and equipment Promotion	• No. of artworks commissioned on RTA boxes • Reduction in tagging to RTA signal boxes • Community satisfaction levels
5.3	Promote inclusion of young people's art and street art in community festivals and events (e.g. Youth Week, Ferragosto Festival & Concord Carnival)	Council (Community Development/Cultural Development)	Youth Reference Group Schools Local Artists Youth Services	Ongoing	Staff time	• Display of youth art in community festivals and events
5.4	Develop a register of potential sites for exhibition of Public Art in the LGA.	Council (Community Development/Cultural Development)	City Maintenance Local businesses Community organisations Schools	Ongoing	Staff time	• Database of potential mural sites
5.5	Support and develop creative & recreational programs for young people living, working and attending school in City of Canada Bay area.	Council (Community Development)	Youth Reference Group Schools Local Youth Service Providers	Ongoing	Staff time Program costs	• No. of programs delivered • Youth participation levels • Feedback from young people

4. Evaluation and Monitoring

Evaluation and monitoring mechanisms form a critical part of the Graffiti Vandalism Management Strategy and are designed to measure:

- Performance in the implementation of actions identified; and
- The effectiveness of the Graffiti Vandalism Management Strategy in achieving its intended outcomes.

The performance indicators for each action in the Action Plan will be reviewed and collected on an annual basis to enable monitoring of progress in implementing the Strategy, and to measure the effectiveness of the Strategy in achieving overall objective to reduce graffiti in the Canada Bay LGA.

5. References and Resources

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