



Wyong  
Shire  
Council  
CENTRAL COAST

# Wyong Shire **GRAFFITI** Management Strategy

*Montage of Graffiti at Fishermans Wharf*



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## GRAFFITI STRATEGY SUMMARY

The term 'Graffiti' generally refers to illegally defacing private and public property with markings and/or graphics without the owners consent. Graffiti is a crime, it is illegal and there are consequences and penalties to those who deface property without the consented permission of the owner.

There has been a growing concern in Wyong Shire about increased amounts of graffiti in our neighbourhoods. This strategy is built around the partnership between Police, Council, business and community to address graffiti. Representatives of these four groups therefore have met to work together in developing this document.

This initiative aims to contribute to neighbourhoods and public areas having minimal levels of crime, enabling residents to feel safe. It purposes to build a level of public pride where residents have a respect for property and each other, and to reduce signs of vandalism and graffiti.

The approach of rapid removal is considered Best Practice in combating graffiti. Council's current procedure is the removal of graffiti using offensive language within forty eight hours. Council removes general graffiti on Council premises within two weeks.

Council's graffiti maintenance team are responsible for recording all instances of graffiti. This includes photographs of 'before and after' and location details of graffiti. This information is stored in Council's database and provided to NSW Police.

The literature on crime prevention is convincing in the claim that property crime can be prevented through manipulating the design of individual dwellings and their relationship to one another and to the surrounding neighbourhood. This process is called Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED).

By incorporating CPTED principles into organisational culture we can reduce the incidences of graffiti and make removal easier when it does happen. Construction and design materials used in areas vulnerable to graffiti vandalism should be easy to clean. Porous materials should be sealed or an anti-graffiti coating used. Other initiatives that have proved successful include planting trees and shrubs along walls and fence lines. Graffiti is created to be seen, and the planting of trees and shrubs does not allow this, therefore discouraging the offender.

Community members are encouraged to report Graffiti in the following ways:

|  |                                      |              |
|--|--------------------------------------|--------------|
| Private Property                                 | Contact Police Assistance Line (PAL) | 131 444      |
| Council Property                                 | Wyong Shire Council                  | 4350 5555    |
| Major Roads including Street Signs & Sound Walls | Roads & Traffic Authority            | 1888 816 770 |
| Post Boxes                                       | Australia Post                       | 131 318      |
| Electrical Boxes                                 | Energy Australia                     | 131 535      |
| Trains   | Rail Corporation Hotline             | 1300 656 999 |

This document is intended to be utilised to develop annual work plan and programs by each of the partners - Police, Council, business and community. It is imperative that regular reviews and evaluations occur to review the impact of current initiatives in the reduction and prevention of graffiti.

# 1 GRAFFITI TERMINOLOGY

1. & 3.



Graffiti PP SBD NSW Police

## BOMBING

Tags, throw ups and pieces are done in a spree. As much as possible is done as quickly as possible.



<http://vancouver.ca/ENGSVCS/streets/graffiti/images/acidetch.jpg>

## ETCHING

There are two types of etching graffiti vandalism. The first, acid etching involves graffiti using paints containing acid or other chemicals that can eat into the surface. The paints are those primarily used to create frosted glass. The second is 'Dutch' graffiti which involves scratching graffiti into the surface with a sharpened tool or object.



## PIECES

Short for the word 'masterpiece', pieces are large-scale, multi-coloured features which may include characters, backgrounds and letters. Pieces are intended to be complete art works and are most often done with spray paint.



## TAGGING

A tag is the writer's signature. Written in one colour, it is done with curves and letter deformations. Tags are not confined to spray paint; they may be written in marker pens or etched on glass.



Graffiti PP SBD NSW Police

## THROW-UPS

A throw-up is usually writing with solid or bubble style lettering. It is similar to a tag in that it showcases the writer's 'signature'.

## CREW

A crew is a group of writers who share a common tag. By painting in a crew with the crew name, there is a smaller risk of being held responsible for the works if a member is arrested. This is because from a legal point of view the name could have been painted by anyone in the group.

## KINGS OR PROS

Those who have gained respect from peers for their particular style.

## KNIGHT

A knight is a respected graffiti writer whose skills are still progressing. They are not as good as a king, but are much better than a toy.

## RUN

The length of time graffiti remains up before being covered or removed. If a piece has been up for a year, it is said to have 'run for a year'.

## SLAM

To paint in an extremely conspicuous or dangerous location.

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| SLASH    | A line through, or tag over, another's graffiti. This is considered a deep insult. It is also known as 'marking', 'dissing' and 'capping'.   |
| STAY-UPS | Graffiti placed in high or hard to access locations.   |
| TOYS     | Used as an adjective to describe poor work, or as a noun meaning an inexperienced or unskilled writer. Graffiti writers use this as a derogatory term for new writers in the scene or writers that are old to the scene and still do not have any skill or reputation. |
| UP       | Writers become 'up' when their work becomes widespread and well known. Usually the more spots a writer can hit the more respect he or she gains. A writer 'ups' is determined by how much prolific graffiti he/she has accomplished and that is actively running.      |

## 2 INTRODUCTION

This strategy has been developed in response to the proliferation of graffiti within the Wyong Shire Local Government Area. Graffiti incurs substantial social and economic costs to the community.

By developing this strategy Council, in collaboration with business and community groups, hopes to create and maintain neighbourhoods that are effective in preventing and managing graffiti for residents, businesses and visitors.

### 1.1 Definition

The term 'Graffiti' generally refers to illegally defacing private and public property with markings and/or graphics without the owner's consent. <sup>2</sup>

Graffiti is a crime, it is illegal and there are consequences and penalties to those who deface property without the consented permission of the owner. <sup>3</sup>

Graffiti vandalism can take multiple forms including designs, words or images using chalk, paint, scratching, textas, acid etching or other material such as stickers and billposters. <sup>2</sup>

### 1.2 Community Concerns

There are different reasons why people put graffiti on walls and other infrastructure. These include: <sup>4</sup>

- People seeking recognition from peers (especially people who mostly do tagging; e.g. gangs.
- A response to boredom or social outlet.
- Thrill seeking linked to risk-taking behaviour.
- An outlet for artistic expression.

### 1.3 Community Facts

There are many community concerns about the presence of graffiti: <sup>4</sup>

- It has a negative impact on the presentation of a suburb. The majority of people would agree that most graffiti is unattractive and detracts from the feel of a sense of community pride.
- The cost of removal - Graffiti is a particular problem for business and residents who find repetitive cleaning leads to frustration and higher costs.
- It can create fear in the community, particularly amongst the elderly, where residents believe that our streets are not safe. Unchecked graffiti in a neighbourhood can send a signal that the authorities (such as police and local councils) are not managing the environment properly. <sup>M3</sup>

## 2 A SNAPSHOT - GRAFFITI IN WYONG SHIRE

Representatives of the Police, Council, business and community have met to develop this document, in order to address graffiti in terms of:

- Reporting
- Recording and monitoring
- Rapid removal information including Council/Police/business/community - responsibilities and rewards offered
- Crime prevention through environmental design
- Engagement
- Community education.

### 2.1 Context / Background

There has been a growing concern in Wyong Shire regarding increased amounts of graffiti in the Shire's neighbourhoods. As a result it has become evident that a strategic approach to Graffiti Management was required.

Research shows that when residents take action against vandalism and graffiti, social order will usually follow. However if it is ignored, more serious attacks/consequences can occur. As a result the following initiatives and study have been undertaken: 5.

### 2.2 Council Initiatives

Council embarked on an extensive consultation process, which was consolidated with a CSIRO 'Quality of Life' survey, to form the Community Plan (2008). The consultations and surveys highlight residents' need for a safe community as we move towards the future.

A key initiative of the Wyong Shire Strategic Vision (2009) is that "communities are safe and will have a clear perception of security". 6

In 2008, in response to the many incidences of graffiti throughout the Shire, a report on graffiti management was tabled to Council. Recommendations included a full-time dedicated resource, with offensive wording to be removed within forty eight hours. 7

### 2.3 Community Initiatives

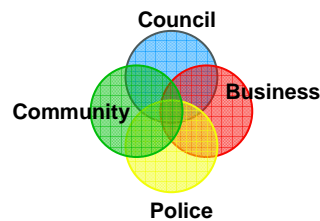
In late August 2008 Toukley Senior Citizens Centre representatives approached Council regarding vandalism issues. Graffiti had occurred at their Centre and the adjacent Community Health Centre, and at various shops in the town centre. Community & Cultural Development officers facilitated a meeting of agencies identified as key stakeholders in the Toukley Town Centre, with the aim of identifying strategies that they believed could be actioned to promote and develop a safe and connected neighbourhood for Toukley town centre. This group has come to be known as 'Together for Toukley'. Members have recognised the need to consider a range of strategies when looking for solutions to any given problem. These have developed in line with the concept of "Safety by Design" following a "Safety Audit" carried out by Police, along with Council, Greater Toukley Vision, Toukley Chamber of Commerce (now known as Northlakes Regional Business Chamber), Senior Citizens' and residents.

In March 2009 the San Remo Neighbourhood Centre invited various precinct representatives, Northlakes Regional Business Chamber representatives and Links Youth Service to form The

Northern Wyong Graffiti Forum. These meetings were also attended by a representative of The Entrance Precinct, Police, Council Councillors and Council staff.

The purpose of the forum was to present current strategies and programs which aim to minimise graffiti, and to discuss future initiatives. Communicating what Council is doing in regards to rapid removal and rewards, how the Police would like businesses and residents to report incidents and what responsibility lies with individual organisations such as schools, electricity companies (electricity boxes), shops and private property, was all raised. The message that graffiti is everyone's responsibility came through strongly.

As a result of the development of the Northern Wyong Graffiti Forum it was decided that Council cannot resolve the Graffiti issue alone, nor is it exclusively a Council issue. Rather it was agreed that graffiti was a whole of community problem that should be tackled as a partnership: Council, Police, business and community.



In April 2009, at the Northlakes Regional Business Chamber monthly meeting, a presentation to Council, Community Groups and Service Clubs was undertaken by Turrumurra Rotary. As a group, Rotary has developed a community-based approach to graffiti removal in partnership with Turrumurra Council. They are equipped with a trailer and high pressure hose and have partnered with paint companies for subsidised resources. Their volunteers remove the graffiti reported.

The Northlakes Regional Business Chamber has received funding to purchase and establish Wyong Shire's first community run and led Graffiti Removal Trailer. Issues around governance and operation are still being finalised. In particular these include insurance and chemical handling.



### **3 PURPOSE**

This initiative aims to contribute to neighbourhoods and public areas having minimal levels of crime, enabling residents to feel safe. It also plans to build a level of public pride where residents have a respect for property and each other, and to reduce signs of vandalism and graffiti.

The Graffiti Management Strategy is the first step of a partnership between Council, Police, business and community towards reducing the incidence of Graffiti within the Wyong Shire. The strategy covers the main aspects of a multi-faceted approach and includes the following:

#### **3.1 Reporting**

Council will set up a graffiti page, attached to Council's website, and will encourage people to report graffiti to Council and Police (PAL). Council will also create a Shire Map of Graffiti removal sites to assist monitoring purposes.

#### **3.2 Recording and Monitoring Graffiti**

A register has been set up within Council, providing the location, size and cost of removal.

#### **3.3 Rapid Removal**

The approach of rapid removal is considered Best Practice in combating graffiti. Council policy is to inspect all main roads and streets regularly to identify incidents of graffiti on Council buildings and infrastructure and remove it within two weeks from sighting. Offensive graffiti removal reports on Council's buildings or structures have priority. If the graffiti is offensive it is removed within forty eight hours of identification by Council's Graffiti Removal Resource Officer, who circulates around entire Shire.

3.3.1 Business will remove graffiti from its property as soon as possible (within two weeks).

3.3.2 Community groups will explore programs for volunteer graffiti removal groups to remove graffiti from private property.

#### **3.4 Rewards**

Council currently offers a reward for up to \$10,000 for information leading to a conviction of a graffiti offence. It is recognised that this incentive should be widely promoted

#### **3.5 Community Education**

The community is often uncertain as to what actions individually or as a group they can take. Council will provide information which highlights building design, graffiti facts and general information about reporting.

3.5.1 Community Information includes:

- Messages to encourage the community to remove graffiti as quickly as possible and if it persists, continue to remove it.
- Graffiti Prevention Fact Sheets.
- Development of Graffiti Prevention Resources for community members and business owners. The purpose is to provide a basic resource to community members on best methods of removal on any surface. This information is provided by the Attorney General's Department.

- Awareness-raising messages, including the processes of reporting to Police and to Council.
- Rewards available for information that leads to a conviction of graffiti vandalism.
- Provision of information on methods to remove graffiti.

### 3.5.2 *Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED)* 8.

There is a set of principles for reducing the incidence of repeat graffiti which includes;

- Surveillance and lighting
- Access Control
- Coating and surfaces
- Murals
- Planting

### 3.5.3 *Links to explore School-Based Education.* Educating young people about the costs, legal consequences and health risks of graffiti, e.g. Warner Awareness Education are contracted to run school programs in Melbourne. 4.

## **4 PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTIVES**

### **4.1 Strategy Principles**

The Wyong Shire's Graffiti Management Strategy is based on the following principles:

- The need for approaches which consider a broad range of community interests, including removal of graffiti from private property.
- Residents' concerns regarding graffiti vandalism in their built and natural environment.
- Graffiti management strategies must be efficient and cost effective and use environmentally friendly products and practices.
- The importance of community input into the formation of Council's graffiti document.

### **4.2 Objectives of the Strategy**

- Clear communication with residents regarding the law on graffiti and consequences for those caught tagging.
- Monitoring of areas where graffiti vandalism is most likely to occur (e.g. public spaces, walls, noticeboards and windows) and reporting graffiti vandalism to facilitate removal as soon as possible.
- Rapid removal of graffiti.
- Council, community and business awareness of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) strategies.

Further, encouragement of community members to:

- Create a climate of respect and pride in the community and its resources amongst community members.
- Respect other people and their property.
- Report graffiti vandalism and graffiti vandals to NSW Police through the Police Assistance Line on 131 444 or anonymously to Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000 or at [www.police.nsw.gov.au](http://www.police.nsw.gov.au).
- Remove graffiti from their own property quickly (within 24-48 hours) as rapid removal significantly reduces the chance of graffiti vandalism reoccurring.
- Use Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) strategies to minimise the likelihood of their property being damaged by graffiti vandalism.
- Participate in volunteer programs to remove or manage graffiti vandalism.

## 5 REPORTING

Community members will be encouraged to report graffiti to affected property owners. The community is also encouraged to contact the police and report graffiti vandalism via the Police Assistance Line (PAL) on 131 444. Ask the police to complete an incident report.

|                                |   |              |
|--------------------------------|---|--------------|
| Private property               | Contact Police Assistance Line (PAL)                | 131444       |
| Council property               | Wyong Shire Council                                 | 4350 5555    |
| Roads & Traffic Authority      | Major roads including street signs and sound walls. | 1888 816 770 |
| Australia Post                 |   | 131 318      |
| Energy Australia               |   | 131 535      |
| Rail Corporation               | Hotline   | 1300 656 999 |
| State Rail                     |   | 131 500      |
| Telstra General Infrastructure |   | 132 203      |
| Public Telephones              | Telstra   | 180 2244     |

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## **6 RECORDING AND MONITORING**

### **6.1 Statistics**

6.1.1 Council's graffiti maintenance team will be responsible for recording all instances of graffiti. This includes photographs of 'before and after' and location details of graffiti.

6.1.2 This information will be stored in Council's database and provided to NSW Police.

6.1.3 In addition to the schedule of recording incidences, Council will develop a map showing the location of Graffiti incidents in order to inform stakeholders regarding of the worst effected areas. This will assist Police target their police patrols and also help community groups and businesses willing to monitor CCTV screens daily, to negotiate where they are needed. Clearer focus for community education programs in rapid removal will also be provided.

## 7 RAPID REMOVAL

### (Including Responsibilities)

#### 7.1 Legislation: Crimes Act 1900 and Summary Offences Act 1988 Graffiti Control Act 2008, Graffiti Control Regulation 2009 and The Graffiti Control Amendment Act 2009

11.

Stringent penalties under the Crimes Act 1900 and Summary Offences Act 1988 Graffiti Control Act 2008, Graffiti Control Regulation 2009 and The Graffiti Control Amendment Act 2009 have been introduced to deal with graffiti vandalism. The Act states that *'Graffiti vandalism' is the wilful marking, spraying or writing of a surface without the owner's consent. It doesn't matter whether the property is privately owned or belongs to the community; wilfully marking property without permission is a crime punishable by a jail term, monetary fine, and/or community service.*

The *Graffiti Control Act 2008* (the Act) consolidates past graffiti legislation into a specific Act that deals solely with graffiti vandalism.

#### 7.2 Legislation: Graffiti Control Regulation 2009 and The Graffiti Control Amendment Act 2009

The Graffiti Control Regulation 2009 and The Graffiti Control Amendment Act 2009 Section 12 empowers local councils to remove graffiti on private property without the owner or occupier's consent if the graffiti is visible from a public place. Removal without consent must be carried out from public land at the council's own expense. This replicates and replaces the scheme previously set out under sections 67A-67C of the *Local Government Act 1993* for the carrying out of graffiti removal work by local councils.

Under the scheme a local council may remove graffiti from a property by agreement with the property owner or occupier.

If graffiti is visible from a public place, a local council may remove graffiti from the property without the agreement of the property owner or occupier. **Such graffiti removal is at the cost of the local council** and may only be carried out from a public place. The local council removing the graffiti must, within a reasonable period, give the property owner or occupier written notice of the removal work.

When carrying out graffiti removal a local council must keep a register of the work. The register must include specific details about who owns/occupies the property vandalised by graffiti, the nature of the work carried out, the actual cost (or an estimate) of the graffiti removal and, if any charge is levied, the actual amount charged by the council for removing the graffiti.

Some councils have taken on these actions. Wyong Shire Council is observing what outcomes and costs are incurred from these actions, given the geographical size of Wyong Local Government Area.

#### 7.3 Premier's Anti-Graffiti Policy

On 8 November 2009 the Premier announced the NSW Government's anti-graffiti policy targeting ([http://www.graffiti.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/cpd/ll\\_graffiti.nsf/pages/graffiti\\_law](http://www.graffiti.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/cpd/ll_graffiti.nsf/pages/graffiti_law)). The policy includes new measures to target graffiti vandals and prevent graffiti through better building design and hotspot targeting:

- *Designing out graffiti:* make planners of all new State Government buildings take graffiti and crime prevention measures into consideration.

- *Graffiti hotspot funding*: \$1 million annual grants program to fund the implementation of anti-graffiti design treatments in identified hotspots.
- *Banning possession of spray paint cans*: an offence for juveniles to possess spray paint cans unless for education, employment or legal art.
- *Doubling penalties*: A doubling of penalties for graffiti vandalism to 12 months in prison and six months for possession of a graffiti implement.
- *Clean up orders*: More vandals to clean up graffiti instead of paying fines (most offenders are currently fined) and increasing the use of clean-up for offenders sentenced to a Community Service Order.
- *Graffiti Removal Action Day*: Dedicated days each year for community-based graffiti clean up in partnership with Keep Australia Beautiful.

Possessing a graffiti implement with the intention to damage or deface property may attract a fine of up to 10 penalty units (the offender is liable to a maximum fine of \$1,100\*) or three months imprisonment under Section 5 of the Act. The Act also expands the definition of graffiti implements so that it includes spray paint, any marker pen and other implements designed or modified to produce a mark.

Bill posting and other marking offences may attract a fine of up to four penalty units (the offender is liable to a maximum fine of \$440\*) under Section 6 of the Act.

Other legislation to include:

- New access-to-information laws known as the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (GIPA) - Graffiti Removal Register to be on Council's website.
- Sale and confiscation of spray paint cans.
- Local Government Act 1993 - Graffiti removal work by Councils - Summary Offences Act 1988.
- The Children (Community Services Orders) Act 1987.

For further information on Penalties see Section 11 (Enforcement)

#### **7.4 Council Graffiti Removal**

Council's web page will provide information regarding graffiti, Council's approach to graffiti removal, how to report graffiti, and some safety by design tips. This will inform the community what actions they can take both to reduce the incidence of vandalism, as well as reporting graffiti vandalism.

Offensive graffiti is currently being removed within two working days. Residents are able to call Council's Customer Contact (4350 5555) to report graffiti for removal or to ask advice on managing graffiti on private property.

- Council will investigate making Memorandums of Understanding with the various State and Federal departments that are land owners within Wyong Shire, to encourage all repeated graffiti to be reported to Police and removed from these premises at the cost of the owner.
- Council will work towards building stronger relationships with RTA, Railway, Telstra, schools and other government departments with sites in the Wyong Shire LGA, in order to provide feedback on those identified as vandalised by graffiti for removal.

For further information about Council's Vandalism Reward see Section 11 (Enforcement).

## 8 CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN

The literature on crime prevention is convincing in the claim that property crime can be prevented through manipulating the design of individual dwellings, their relationship to one another and to the surrounding neighbourhood. This process is called Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED).

By incorporating the following CPTED principles into organisational culture we can reduce the incidences of graffiti and make removal easier when it does happen.

### 8.1 CPTED Principles 8.

Below is a brief outline of CPTED Principles that can be used in relation to graffiti.

- 8.1.1 Graffiti Resistant Materials. Planners, builders and architects can play a vital role in reducing graffiti vandalism by designing places that are attractive, foster a sense of ownership, have excellent sightlines and are comprised of graffiti-resistant materials.
- 8.1.2 Materials. Construction and design materials used in areas vulnerable to graffiti vandalism should be easy to clean. Porous materials should be sealed or an anti-graffiti coating used. Options include: vitreous-enamel panels or glazed ceramic tiles from which graffiti washes off, wired glass that can be cleaned with scrapers, polyester film over glass, plastic laminates which make for easier cleaning and signs with surfaces resistant to marker pens and spray paint.
- 8.1.3 The texture of potential canvases can reduce attractiveness as a surface for graffiti vandalism. By incorporating open form designs the size of available canvas is reduced and surveillance may be increased. Pool style fencing, steel mesh and latticework are examples of this. Irregular texture finishes such as roughly rendered brick can deter graffiti vandalism when used in combination with other strategies; however maintenance can be more difficult.
- 8.1.4 Surface colour. Although graffiti vandalism can occur on any coloured surface, the application of light coloured paint over a dark colour is more difficult and expensive for the offender and easier to effectively paint over. The use of standard colours will provide for more effective and rapid maintenance.
- 8.1.5 Appropriate lighting. Lighting in well used areas may deter offenders by increasing the risk of apprehension. Lighting should be uniform and not create glare. It should also be placed at a height and location to reduce graffiti vandalism. In some cases additional lighting may actually attract graffiti vandalism in isolated or remote locations, as it provides lighting for the offenders to see their work. Lighting that works on motion detectors may increase the chances of detection and further deter graffiti vandalism in these locations.
- 8.1.6 Planting of Trees and Shrubs. Natives and other plants which are spiky may improve access control. Planting trees and shrubs along walls and fence lines is a successful graffiti prevention strategy. Graffiti is created to be seen and the planting of trees and shrubs does not allow graffiti to be seen, therefore discouraging the offender.

Certain varieties of plants are also better than others. There are three types of plants that could be considered for screening purposes:

- Climbing plants (these may need a surface to assist coverage): Clematis or Travellers Joy, Kennedia or Running Postman, Hardenbergia or Purple Pea, Cissus or Kangaroo Vine, Pandorea or Wonga Vine.



- Screening Plants (choose a plant suitable to the height of the fence and available space surrounding the affected area): Grevillia, Banksia, Callistemon or Bottlebrush, Casuarina or She Oak, Acacia or Wattle, Leptospernum or Tea Tree, Melaleuca or Honey Myrtle, Eucalyptus, Lomandra or Hakea.
- Spiky Plants (choose a plant suitable to your circumstance): Acacia, Banksia, Bursaria, Grevillea, Hakea, Lomandra, Melaleuca or Solanum.

NB: There are some species in each genus (e.g. Banksia, Acacia etc) that will grow best in local soil types and conditions. The easiest way to check which ones are local is to go to your nursery and ask.

- 8.1.7 Murals. Murals are a proactive strategy in minimising graffiti. Murals can also brighten up a dull area or wall. Mural projects aim to protect the wall in question, reduce the level of illegal graffiti within the area and redirect participants through education and training. Murals need to be professionally developed and engage the local community to create ownership.

Community Based Arts Practice acts as a stimulus to open dialogue and provide innovative, creative solutions and methodologies to issues regarding public space. The consultation process results in a number of proposals which are then explored for feasibility. Invitations are extended to the whole community, with specific strategies to ensure young people feel comfortable to attend and actively participate in a process that will explore possible visions for the community. This process results in achievable community safety solutions, central to public space.

#### 8.1.8 Other Prevention Strategies

- Painting walls or fences a dark colour does not provide a good base coat for most colours of paint used by the tagger.
- Long expanses of fencing or walls that are hidden or have no opportunities for surveillance are attractive to taggers. In their eyes they are blank, fresh canvases.
- Increasing security patrols.
- Encouraging community surveillance through Neighbourhood Watch or Volunteer groups.
- Providing Landcare Groups/Tidy Towns Groups with trees/shrubs to plant out exposed walls.

- 8.1.9 Ensure Safety by Design principles are incorporated into new developments. Council can design places that are attractive, foster a sense of ownership, have excellent sightlines and are comprised of graffiti resistant materials. Council Town and Open Space Planners are already trained in these concepts so these can be implemented immediately.

- Council Staff involved in Planning and Development Applications need to be trained in Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) strategies in order to assist the community with their enquiries.
- Council maintenance crew could plant out blank wall areas with natives or prickly plants such as "Bougainvillea".
- Council will aim to apply an anti-graffiti coating to its facilities as part of future maintenance programs.
- These strategies can be used by both private residential and commercial/business property owners. Prevention is the best cure for graffiti. There are a number of things listed above you can do to stop people vandalising your property.

## 9 ENGAGEMENT

Council/Police/business and community can all make contributions to improve our local environment. Following are some possible actions for each group.

### 9.1 Council Actions

- 9.1.1 Council to explore funding opportunities to employ a Community Safety Officer. This would then enable Council to develop a Community Safety Plan which in turn would render it eligible to apply for Attorney General's Crime Prevention Funds. This position would enable better co-ordination between Council and Police in various safety issues, including graffiti.
- 9.1.2 Building Relationships. Council will work towards building stronger relationships with the community regarding its concerns about graffiti. This will be implemented through:
- Informing the community via fact sheets:
    - Graffiti prevention techniques
    - The Shire's removal program
    - Options regarding removal or retention of graffiti including CPTED principles
    - Reporting.
  - Consulting by means of gathering feedback on Council's Rapid Removal Process and other strategies.
  - Involving the community through strategies initiated by Council at local levels.
  - Partnering groups developing anti-graffiti projects, either in time, expertise or funds.
  - Encouraging local communities/groups to develop their own goals and strategies, such as creating local anti graffiti working groups.
- 9.1.3 Council will provide community members with graffiti removal kits once a year. This initiative would be promoted via Shirewide and Council's website.
- 9.1.4 Council support could include providing free paint vouchers instead of graffiti removal kits once a year. This initiative would require a partnership with a paint/hardware company to be established.
- 9.1.5 Council explore promoting a 'Graffiti Small Grants Scheme' as part of the Community Benefits funding rounds, to encourage residents to be active and take responsibility for a rapid removal approach/action. The scheme could allow for grants up to \$500 for property owners to undertake preventative measures such as anti-graffiti coating and climbing plants.
- 9.1.6 Community Art as an Engagement Strategy. Council has a budget to engage a community artist when it constructs facilities such as community halls. It uses Community Based Arts Practice as a stimulus to open dialogue and provide innovative, creative solutions and methodologies to issues regarding public space. The consultation process results in a number of proposals, which are then explored for feasibility. Invitations are extended to the whole community, with specific strategies to ensure young people and various groups that are harder to engage feel comfortable to attend and actively participate in a process that will explore possible visions for the community. This process results in achievable community safety solutions, central to public space.
- 9.1.7 In the first 12 months Council to convene a quarterly meeting to review the implementation of the graffiti management strategy across the Shire with its stakeholders, Police, Community and Business representatives.

## 9.2 Business Actions

Businesses might consider partnering together to address graffiti on business areas.

- 9.2.1 *Graffiti Removal Trailers.* Community service groups such as Rotary have agreed to form a Graffiti Removal Group as part of the services they provide to the community. Different Rotary branches (such as Turrumurra) have a trailer with gurney, chemicals and paints which it moves around its local suburb and removes or paints out graffiti.

Northlakes Regional Business Chamber has negotiated with Bunnings the donation of a trailer and gurney to be used for graffiti removal. Council has contributed funds to purchase materials. The Northern Wyong Graffiti Forum received a grant from Federal MP, from which they are purchasing supplies for the trailer.

- 9.2.2 *Businesses might contact a community graffiti removal group to keep their walls clean.* Alternatively they may identify walls where a mural would assist to reduce graffiti. Perhaps where there are town managements they can discuss joint measures. If feasible, the community may be involved in the process so local Graffiti Groups can participate. As a result any mural painted or foliage planted in has some ownership by the community. This has resulted in less graffiti in various areas around the Shire. Budget to be determined.

- 9.2.3 Letters from Precinct Committees to businesses. Letters have been written to local businesses informing them of the benefits of rapid removal and where to find information about graffiti removal methods. Committees have encouraged business to be proactive in removing graffiti.

### Letter Example from The Entrance Community Precinct Committee



## THE ENTRANCE PENINSULA COMMUNITY PRECINCT

ENCOMPASSING: THE ENTRANCE; THE ENTRANCE NORTH; LONG JETTY TOOWOON BAY; BLUE BAY & SHELLY BEACH

RTA  
PO Box 766  
Woy Woy  
NSW 2256

Dear

**SUBJECT: GRAFFITI - TAGGING OF RTA ASSETTS**

Part of the charter of Wyong Shire Council's Community Precinct Committees is to enhance the amenity of the area and to encourage social interaction within the community to establish participation and pride in local areas. The Entrance Peninsula Community Precinct (TEPCP) devised a community based plan to combat "Tagging" in our Precinct.

We have commenced a two pronged approach:

1. On public land we notify Wyong Shire Council whenever we see graffiti. (This has had a good response from WSC which has one dedicated team removing graffiti from Council controlled parks and buildings.)

2. On private land we write to the owner urging a rapid removal response. (The letters started going out in April 2009 and in this time we have had a ninety percent and rising success rate of removal of Tagging.)

I would like to draw your attention to "tagging" on the southern abutment of The Entrance Bridge on the Central Coast Highway. The Entrance.



It would be appreciated if you would please bring this to the attention of RTA maintenance and arrange for these tags to be removed as soon as possible.

Yours Sincerely

Secretary

The Entrance Community Precinct Committee

9.2.4 Informed businesses could advise new businesses that under the Graffiti Prevention Act they could be prosecuted if they sell spray paint cans to minors.

### 9.3 Community Actions

#### 9.3.1 *Community Members Reporting and Removing Graffiti.*

1. Removing graffiti from one's own residential property.
  - Council will be providing a Graffiti Removal Kit to residents once a year to assist removal of tags etc from their properties. The materials will be in a kit form and will include safety goggles, gloves, graffiti remover, spray bottle and instruction sheet.
  - The community is invited to contact the police and report graffiti vandalism. Ask the police to complete an incident report.
  - It is permissible to anonymously report graffiti vandals or people acting suspiciously, to Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000.
2. Removing graffiti from neighbouring properties in one's local neighbourhood.

Council will encourage residents to take control of graffiti in their local areas by either working together with their neighbours (using Council's free Graffiti Removal Kit) or encouraging them to contact a local Graffiti Removal Group (see details below).
3. Reporting graffiti in the community
  - Reporting graffiti on private residential properties is done by contacting the property owner (see handy table in Section 5 Reporting).
  - The community is invited to contact the police and report graffiti vandalism via the Police Assistance Line (PAL) on 131 444. Ask the police to complete an incident report.
  - To report graffiti vandals or people acting suspiciously, contact Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000. This can be done anonymously.

9.3.2 *Graffiti Removal Groups.* Interested community members can form or be involved in Graffiti Removal Groups, and adopt a wall/street/area they recognise as a problem site within their neighbourhood.

Graffiti Removal Groups can assist in a number of ways:

- i. If residents are unable to remove graffiti from their own residential property, they might contact the Graffiti Removal Group in the area to remove the graffiti (where this is a Community Service Group perhaps this could be done for a donation).
- ii. Community members could ask their local businesses to contact the local Graffiti Removal Groups to remove the graffiti from their business property (for an appropriate fee).
- iii. Report graffiti in the community:
  - The Community Removal Groups are invited to contact the police and report graffiti vandalism via the Police Assistance Line (PAL) on 131 444. Ask the police to complete an incident report.
  - To anonymously report graffiti vandals or people acting suspiciously, Crime Stoppers can be contacted on 1800 333 000.

9.3.3 Participation from Landcare Groups. Landcare/Bushcare Groups could assist along similar lines as the Graffiti Removal Groups. Some locations would benefit from having trees / bushes planted at the targeted area.

- The Community Landcare/Bushcare Groups are invited to contact the police and report graffiti vandalism via the Police Assistance Line (PAL) on 131 444. Ask the police to complete an incident report.
- To anonymously report graffiti vandals or people acting suspiciously, Crime Stoppers can be contacted on 1800 333 000.

#### **9.4 Police, Council, Business and Community Actions**

9.4.1 Crime Prevention through Environmental Design. As recommended by the Attorney General's Department, Council, Police, businesses and community members can apply CPTED principles when planning and building (See Section 8 for details).

- Murals are a proactive strategy in minimising graffiti that can also brighten up a dull area or wall. Business or commercial property owners can commission artists to have the mural designed in a way that promotes the business to the public.
- Council also has Community Artists who work in with community engagement projects. Some of these engage the community around art projects around murals and other structures that may also contribute towards graffiti reduction.

9.4.2 Street Art. Street art is artistic work done with the permission of the business or person who owns the wall that the work is being done on. Wyong Shire Council considers street art as a preventative tool that should be used in partnership with a rapid removal approach.

# 10 EDUCATION

## 10.1 Council Actions

- 10.1.1 Communication and Information. Council will improve its communication regarding its approach to graffiti management. This will concentrate on educating people about reporting graffiti on public or private property.
- Council's main telephone number (4350 5555) will be actively promoted for residents to report graffiti for removal and to obtain further information.
  - The Police Assistance Line (PAL) on 131 444 will also be actively promoted as the number to call to report graffiti as a criminal activity. Reporting graffiti vandals or people acting suspiciously can be reported anonymously to Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000.
- 10.1.2 Promotion of Existing Graffiti Removal via Website and Posters on Bus Shelters and Notice Boards. Council will provide information to the community via posters at bus stops as a means of communicating what actions the community can take to reduce the incidence of vandalism, as well as reporting graffiti vandalism.
- 10.1.3 Graffiti School Education Program. Council will investigate the benefits of the Melbourne City Council's Graffiti Education Program. Melbourne City Council has offered a Graffiti Education Program to all primary and secondary schools within the municipality. 12.

Should the program continue to provide positive feedback and a funding source is found, a submission will be placed to trial this approach.

## 10.2 Community Actions

- 10.2.1 Communication and Information. The Northern Wyong Graffiti Forum, The Entrance Precinct and the Northlakes Regional Business Chamber have taken on different strategies to communicate information regarding graffiti management to the community. These concentrate on educating people about reporting graffiti on public or private property and removing graffiti. These strategies, as previously outlined, include: regular meetings, posters and brochures, consistent communication regarding rapid removal with businesses and government organisations experiencing graffiti vandalism. Other community groups might wish to adopt this educational approach as part of their services to their local community.
- 10.2.2 Graffiti School Education Program. Community organisations could familiarise themselves with various education programs and seek partnerships with schools in their local areas. Various funding sources, including Council's Community Benefits Grant, are available for community organisations to make a submission.

# 11 ENFORCEMENT

## 11.1 Crimes Act 1900 and Summary Offences Act 1988, Graffiti Control Act 2008, Graffiti Control Regulation 2009 and The Graffiti Control Amendment Act 2009 Penalties and Rewards:11.

Damaging or defacing property by means of a graffiti implement may attract a penalty of up to 20 penalty units (the offender is liable to a maximum fine of \$2,200\*) or six months imprisonment under Section 4 of the Act. Section 195 of the Crimes Act 1900 provides for up to five years imprisonment for maliciously damaging property.

Possessing a graffiti implement with the intention to damage or deface property may attract a fine of up to 10 penalty units (the offender is liable to a maximum fine of \$1,100\*) or three months imprisonment under Section 5 of the Act. The Act also expands the definition of graffiti implements so that it includes spray paint, any marker pen and other implements designed or modified to produce a mark.

## 11.2 Council Vandalism Reward 13

11.2.1 *Objective.* To encourage and reward public reporting of the vandalism of Council property and any environmental damage that occurs throughout the Shire.

11.2.2 *Requirements.*

- Council offers a reward up to a maximum of \$10,000 to persons providing information leading to the apprehension of vandals, and:
  - i the offender(s) being convicted by the courts; or
  - ii the courts finding the case against offender(s) proven but not proceeding to conviction; or
  - iii the offence is not proceeded with due to agreement being reached to pay appropriate restitution costs to Council; or
  - iv the offender(s) is a juvenile too young to be prosecuted but the offence is admitted.
- The maximum amount of the reward will only be paid where the restitution exceeds twice the maximum reward that can be paid under this policy.
- The amount of the reward payable under this policy will be determined by any two of the Mayor, the General Manager and the Director Corporate Services acting together.
- All sources of reporting will be kept on a confidential basis.

## 11.3 Goods and Services Tax

Where any charge, fee, supply of products or services under this policy is subject to a goods and services tax (GST), an amount equal to the GST paid or payable in respect of the charge, fee, supply of products or services, shall be included in the amount of consideration paid or payable under this policy. LEGISLATION: Local Government Act 1993 -Sections 24 & 356(1)

#### **11.4 Audits**

Council will continue to photograph all graffiti as part of its graffiti register and make the images and other information, such as location, available to the Police. Photographs of the tagging signature of persistent offenders will also be sent to the Police. Data sent to the police is used for detection and evidentiary purposes.

Council works in partnership with the Police to identify perpetrators. For example, where there is continuous and repeated graffiti on a particular site, Council will clean the graffiti and inform the police of the problem location and Police will, when possible, conduct surveillance.

Council will inform businesses that under the Graffiti Prevention Act they could be prosecuted if they sell spray paint cans to minors.



# 12 EVALUATION

## 12.1 Evaluating the Success of This Strategy

The ultimate goal of this plan is to achieve a Graffiti free Shire via rapid removal of all attacks. The success will be determined by the involvement and ownership of all stakeholders.

The Graffiti Management Strategy will be evaluated every 12 months with the overall success of the Strategy measured three years after its adoption. Agreed measures for this evaluation are listed below. It is recognised that there are factors outside the control of the groups that influence whether or not there is a reduction in graffiti within the Shire. The measures below will still provide a strong indication of the success of this Strategy.

- The first measure of success will be to meet a target of reducing the amount of graffiti within the town centres and specified pedestrian routes by 40% in the first 12 months following the adoption of the removal program outlined in the Strategy and 80% over a three year period. To support the measurement of the target, an annual graffiti audit will be taken using the town centres and major pedestrian routes outside the town centres as the relevant area.
- The second measure of success will be a reduction in the rate of graffiti needing to be reported and removed, as gained from Councils statistics.
- The success of the strategy will also be measured by:
  - The same or less amount of graffiti being present in the area immediately surrounding a sample of five sites. Before and after photographs will be taken of each site and the immediate surrounding area to compare the amount of graffiti present.
  - Measuring the amount of graffiti not removed from Council assets longer than seventy two business hours after it has been reported if offensive and longer than two weeks in general. The target is zero.

## 13 CONCLUSION

### Strategy Statement

The partnership between Council, Police, businesses and community seeks to enhance the overall appearance of the built and natural environments by minimising the incidents of graffiti on both public and private property by prompt removal.

Council will need to seek funds to implement the above strategies, in order to reduce the reoccurrence of illegal graffiti through rapid removal. Council to establish partnerships with Police, business and community, in order to work together to reduce graffiti and the fear of crime in the community.

Through addressing graffiti vandalism it is hoped to increase the community's participation, pride and perception of community safety within the Wyong Shire Local Government Area.

# 14 APPENDIX

## Preventative Measures

### Graffiti Coatings

There are two types of protective coatings, sacrificial and non-sacrificial (or permanent).

- Sacrificial coatings are protective, but come off when graffiti vandalism is removed and must be reapplied.
- Non-sacrificial or permanent anti-graffiti coatings are unaffected by the graffiti removal process and remain on the surface; however they are more hazardous and difficult to apply.

### How to Remove Graffiti<sup>1</sup>

There are three key steps for effective removal:

1. Identify the surface type and substance to be removed;
2. Select a removal method;
3. Apply preventative measures.

### Removal Methods

#### *Paint Out*

Paint is used to cover over graffiti vandalism on smooth, painted surfaces. It is fairly low cost, easy to apply and a relatively safe product compared to chemical solvents used to remove graffiti vandalism. When painting out graffiti vandalism, be aware of the following issues:

- Avoid a patchwork effect by either correctly matching the old and new paint, or repainting the entire surface.
- Prepare the surface well to reduce 'bleed-through' of the graffiti and to ensure a long lasting and professional finish.
- Ensure that the process is safe and environmentally friendly, including the clean up of brushes and disposal of paint.

#### *Pressure washing*

Pressure washing equipment uses water or water in combination with a solvent to remove graffiti from a surface. A solvent may first be applied and then the surface is washed with pressurised water. Sometimes a blasting media, such as baking soda or sand, is used to remove graffiti. While pressure washing is effective, it can wear down or damage the surface being treated.

#### *Chemical removers*

Chemical removers vary, but typically the stronger the solvent, the faster it will dissolve or remove paint. In some cases, stronger solvents may require an increased focus on safety and personal protection. A solvent or cleaner that is poorly matched to a particular construction material, however, may create aesthetically unappealing results and may damage the surface.

Successful product selection is critical. When using any chemical remover, keep in mind:

- who will be using the product,
- the safety precautions to follow, and
- any training required for the product user.

Secure a material safety data sheet (MSDS) from the distributor of any hazardous chemical. The MSDS will show chemical make-up and any health and safety risks associated with use.

| Easy Graffiti Removal  |  |   |   |   |  |
|--|--|---|---|---|--|
| Surface  | Step 1   | Step 2  | Step 3  | Step 4  | Step 5   |
|  Traffic Signs  |  Apply Methylated Spirits               |  Rag                   |  Wash Off                          |   |  |
|  Steel & Aluminium<br><small>(Including Steel Structural Equipment)</small> |  Apply Methylated Spirits               |  OR                    |  Wash Off                          |   |  |
|  Plastic Garbage Bins  |  Apply Methylated Spirits              |  OR                   |  Wash Off                         |   |  |
|  Plastic Playground Equipment   |  Apply Graffiti Remover               |  OR                  |  Wash Off                        |   |  |
|  Colorbond Fence  |  Apply Graffiti Remover to SMALL AREA |  Very soft Brush     |  <b>WARNING</b>                  |  Wash Off Straight Away |  Paint Over                   |
|  Unpainted Brick  |  Apply Graffiti Remover               |  5 MM                |                                  |  Wash Off               |  Repeat Steps 1-4 until clean |
|  Painted Brick  |  Paint Over                           | OR  |  Methylated Spirits + soft brush |  Wash Off               |  |
|  Telstra, RTA Control Boxes   |  Apply Methylated Spirits             |  Rag                 |                                  |  Wash Off               |  |
|  Footpaths, Besser Bricks   |  Apply Methylated Spirits             |  OR Graffiti Remover |                                  |  Wash Off               |  |
|  Unpainted & Painted  |  Paint Over                           |   |   |   |  |

Chart developed by Blacktown City Council

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