

Purpose

To outline the Council's position on graffiti management for the municipality using a 'Whole of Community' approach.

Scope

The 'whole of community' approach includes a comprehensive set of options for graffiti management encompassing removal, a strong advocacy role, public arts, place management, community education, diversion, planning and law enforcement. It encourages partnerships between Council and law enforcement agencies, utility owners, owner/occupiers and graffiti artists.

This policy applies to all officers and councillors of the City of Yarra.

The *Yarra City Council and Local Policing Priority Committee* has provided strategic advice to Council on the direction and development of the Strategy. The Committee is a collaborative network of key stakeholders that includes local businesses, residents, schools, Victoria Police and Council Officers.

Definitions

Graffiti refers to the illegal painting or spraying of paint onto a surface without the permission of the owner. Graffiti takes various forms including traditional spray-art, stencilling and tagging. Graffiti differs from legal public art forms (including forms of spray art, mural art, stencilling) as the artist has permission from the owner of the infrastructure to undertake the work.

Place Management involves the participation of all relevant parties/stakeholders in the development of specific responses to address local issues. This includes urban design elements, heritage overlays, activity centre review, physical infrastructure (e.g. planting, and lighting access to the particular site).

Council Policy

Preamble

The Yarra City Council recognises the aspirations of property owners to have their properties free from defacement and broader community desires for well-maintained local streets and neighbourhoods. At the same time Council supports the right to and importance of freedom of political and artistic expression, including the rights of street artists. Yarra City Council respects both of these sets of values, and seeks to balance them in the context of a corporate philosophy valuing inclusion and diversity.

Graffiti is a problem for the some sectors of our community because it can have a significant impact on people's perception of safety. Some people feel that an area with graffiti is unsafe and therefore they may avoid areas where graffiti presents. It can increase feelings of fear and disorder in the local community and distort perceptions around the actual level of crime and safety. Graffiti can have a negative impact on the amenity and general sense of safety in our community.

Responsible officer	Document No.	Approval date	Page
Vivienne Hadj			1 of 4

Effective prevention and management of graffiti is of importance in creating and maintaining quality open and public space in Yarra

Graffiti on private property without consent is illegal. Council currently does not have the right to enter private property or do anything to clean graffiti from property it does not own. Council does have a responsibility to the community to compel property owners to maintain their assets to appropriate standards. It commits to a range of initiatives to assist residents, local businesses and utility owners in dealing with graffiti on their properties.

Council will educate and advocate for the municipality to be maintained more appropriately by all asset owners by promoting awareness of graffiti, planning requirements and graffiti removal measures.

Council's approach to graffiti incorporates *Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design* (CPTED) principles. CPTED contends that the considered design of the built environment can lead to a reduction in the incidence of crime. The practices and principles of CPTED are extremely useful for reducing graffiti, for example target hardening (painting surfaces with dark colours hardens the target and reduces the likelihood of graffiti occurring).

Council views the development of a vibrant public art program as an essential component in managing public spaces and creating a sense of space. Council encourages the production of legal artworks in public spaces as a positive design treatment and potential diversionary tactic for graffiti management.

Policy

1. Graffiti Removal and Prevention

- *Council Property and Assets*
 - a) Council commits to more effective management of graffiti on its assets through effective environmental design and the application of "place management" principles.
 - b) Council will seek to remove offensive graffiti from Council property within 48 hours of notification;
 - c) Council will seek to remove inoffensive graffiti from Council property within 5 days of notification;
- *Private Property*
 - d) Council commits to providing information on options to residents and property owners regarding graffiti management and removal;
 - e) Council will investigate and support practical enterprises and programs to operate within the municipality for graffiti removal on private property.

Responsible officer	Document No.	Approval date	Page
Vivienne Hadj			2 of 4

- f) Council will develop an advocacy strategy to engage the State Government and the owners of public utilities in graffiti management on their properties.

2. Place Management

- a) Council will work with building owners in designated hot spots, identified through monitoring and integrated municipal audits, to identify practical measures to remove graffiti and implement preventative measures.
- b) Council will consider social, physical, artistic, political issues, and include all of the relevant stakeholders in finding solutions to each prioritised place.

3. Public Art Response

- a) Council aims to divert those doing graffiti to art based opportunities where individual and group participation and artistic expression is encouraged and programs are managed in a tolerant and inclusive manner.
- b) The identification of sites for public art may require planning approval and/or community consultation processes.

4. Community Education and Information

- a) Council will provide community information and education material on graffiti including steps that residents and local businesses can take to remove graffiti from private property.
- b) Council will develop and work in partnership with local agencies and other levels of government to reduce the incidence of graffiti and transform associated anti-social behaviours through the provision of vocational and skills development.

5. Planning and Enforcement

- a) As part of the review of the Municipal Strategic Statement, Council will consider graffiti management and its links to precinct planning, public space, urban character and neighbourhood amenity.
- b) Council will advocate to the State Government for legislative changes in relation to the asset management of public utilities and the direction and initiatives of CPV in relation to graffiti management.
- c) Council will work with developers to ensure that CPTED principles are included in their building designs.
- d) Council will develop a staged enforcement response, following consideration of all other responses, in a review following implementation of the Strategy in Year 1.

Responsible officer	Document No.	Approval date	Page
Vivienne Hadj			3 of 4

- e) Council will work closely with the State Government and the owners of public utilities (with a direct focus on the private companies operating public transport system) to ensure that their assets are maintained appropriately.

6. Monitoring and Evaluation

- a) Council will actively promote graffiti reporting and monitor graffiti in the City through a series of interactive tools designed to document the extent of reported graffiti.
- b) Council will undertake evaluation of its overall approach to graffiti management and associated place management strategies annually.

Consultation

The Strategy has been developed following extensive engagement and consultation with key stakeholders. This engagement process has included:

- *Whole of Community Graffiti Management. Possibilities for Yarra* Discussion Paper (August 2003)
- *Graffiti and Private Property in Yarra. Community Consultation Paper* (November 2003)
- Web-based survey of residents and Community Forums.
- Information from the Annual Community Survey.
- *Yarra City Council and Local Policing Priority Committee.*
- Crime Prevention Victoria.
- Cultural Vitality and Public Space Symposium.

Related documents and attachments

The "Whole of Community' Graffiti Management Strategy" is attached to this policy and establishes a framework for Council to respond to its own property, and to working with private and public property owners, community organisations and graffers, taggers and stencillers in the public domain.

Associated documents:

- *Whole of Community Graffiti Management. Possibilities for Yarra* Discussion Paper
- *Graffiti and Private Property in Yarra. Community Consultation Paper* (November 2003)
- Feedback - Consultations on Graffiti.

Responsible officer	Document No.	Approval date	Page
Vivienne Hadj			4 of 4