

NEWCASTLE TOMORROW – CLEAN, SAFE and FUN

City Centre Committee – A Graffiti Free Public Domain



Date: August 19, 2008

Researcher: Petra Hilsen

NEWCASTLE TOMORROW – CLEAN, SAFE and FUN

City Centre Committee – A Graffiti Free Public Domain

Our Message – ACT!

This city needs to deal with the escalating damage bill caused by young men being allowed the run of our streets every night of the week and the passive permission we give to them to trash our property.

We need to stop saying we can't afford to address it and start saying we can't afford not to.

We need a comprehensive management plan to deal with the problem.

We need all the stakeholders to sign on to a common purpose.

We need the resources to do it properly because to do it with less means our efforts will be temporary and, in the end, wasted.

We need those in authority to take it seriously, to address it intelligently, to take responsibility and to provide the leadership for community participation and pride.

We need our political leaders to work with us to provide the legislative and regulatory frameworks to solve the problems and to provide funding that helps us to do the job.

This paper highlights options for a city-wide approach to graffiti management and hopefully for the development of a coordinated **Graffiti Management Plan** led by Newcastle City Council and supported by State and Federal agencies, community groups, residents, business and property owners.

What HAS to be done...

1. Prevention

There is evidence that graffiti vandalism is reduced through:

- rapid removal,
- ongoing property maintenance,
- installation of fencing that won't attract graffiti,
- careful colour choices for buildings and fences,
- improved lighting,
- improved security measures,
- consistent reporting of graffiti through a single graffiti reporting line, and
- a centralised recording system.

2. Graffiti Removal

It is widely accepted that graffiti removal should occur as soon as possible after the vandalism occurs with the goal being to ensure the vandal gets no satisfaction from the crime.

Furthermore, when the responses by different organisations are inconsistent and public and private buildings are treated differently and in different time cycles, it means that areas of the city can never be free of the ugliness.

There are also significant issues surrounding the legal position of people attempting to remove or paint over graffiti, and issues of ongoing liability for damage to surfaces or contravention of environmental regulations.

Our responses to the crime need to be unified and there should be agreed mix of simple cleaning, emerging technology, community art, broad brush painting and computer-generated colour-matching to support an efficient and cost effective program.

3. Community Engagement

This crime affects every member of our community and impacts on our sense of safety, prosperity and well being.

It creates perceptions that we take no pride in our city, that we are disinterested in our place.

It destroys business and people go elsewhere where it is clean and pleasant.

The task is beyond the individual.

But by sharing information and shouldering the task together - property owners, managers and occupiers can make an impact.

Information on graffiti prevention and removal through fact sheets, removal kits and a comprehensive web page will give people the tools to make their own contribution.

A concerted community-driven graffiti reporting system would allow Council to respond with a proactive graffiti removal program rather than an ad-hoc one dependent on random information.

Heighten public awareness of programs through media support and by a school education programs.

4. Authorised Graffiti

Despite varying views on the use of authorised spots for graffiti there is an argument for extending the current approach. We need to confirm that it is not the youth culture of aerosol art that is objectionable, but the mindless destruction of our civic environment.

5. Prosecution

The detection, prosecution and suitable sentencing of vandals is inadequate.

The significance of this crime seems to be understated because it is the accumulation of multiple attacks on a wide range of property types and poor reporting systems.

Local strategies could incorporate:

- tasking police to monitor peak vandalism periods and locations
- increased surveillance through night time ranger patrols funded by local government
- CCTV in trouble spots
- Sensor lights
- Collaboration with schools and TAFE Colleges to identify writers.
- Rewards.

Relevant laws should also be reviewed to ensure that the punishment is suitable and takes into account the cost to society of treating the matter lightly.

6. Funding

It is estimated that illegal graffiti costs the Australian community in the order of \$100 million per year.

In Newcastle Council, business, private owners, RTA, Telstra, State Rail and others pay money to cover up the problem. This money, sunk into a cooperative, jointly-managed fund, should be able to be used to better purpose.

Matching grants for pilot projects with well-planned evaluation and gathering of research data needs to be asked for from government.

7. Coordination

In Newcastle there are a number of groups who could take leadership roles or contribute to finding solutions within a broader plan.

The appropriate leadership entity is Newcastle City Council through the Community Safety Plan.

Through Council's leadership, coordination of the development of a graffiti management plan should be dealt with through the Community Safety Panel and referred to the Crime Prevention Partnership.

However, a whole-of-government approach will be necessary to make any significant advances.

This includes commitment and cooperation by local, State and Federal agencies.

Contents

Our Message

1. Introduction
2. Background
3. What is graffiti?
4. Graffiti in Newcastle
5. Other organisations with assets in Newcastle and how they deal with graffiti.
6. The approach of other Local Government Areas
7. The role of State Government
8. Discussion and Analysis
9. Conclusions and Recommendations
10. References

Newcastle City Centre Committee

1. Introduction

Graffiti is defined as words or images, painted, drawn or etched onto property. Graffiti is considered criminal damage when created without the consent of the property owner and is widely perceived as an unwanted eyesore.

However, graffiti is also a significant element of contemporary youth and street art culture that can be utilised as a form of creative expression

The Australian Institute of Criminology states “Graffiti is a multi-faceted practice requiring a multi-faceted response from law enforcement, state and local Governments and the community ... tailored to specific local areas”.

It is therefore necessary to consider the diversity of graffiti and those who create it in order to make informed graffiti management decisions.

Purpose

This report is written to review the current situation on graffiti in the East and West Business Precincts of the City of Newcastle. It will offer the precinct committee options on how to deal with graffiti in the precincts and with whom to partner. It will provide a basis on which to determine appropriate budget allocations.

Scope

This report focuses on the damage being done by graffiti vandalism in the City Centre of Newcastle.

Consultation

Successful graffiti management programs from, federal, state/territory and local Governments have been utilised as benchmarks for the report.

Consultation was sought from representatives both within Council and the broader community as follows.

- The NSW Police: Council has formed partnerships with the police working towards reducing illegal graffiti in Newcastle through law enforcement and crime prevention initiatives.
- The Loft Youth Venue contributed towards an understanding of young peoples' perception of illegal graffiti and the alternative legitimate art programs available.
- Local Community: Consultation was undertaken with local traders and other organisations and corporations with assets in Newcastle.
- Information from the Attorney General's Department and other local governments was gathered through web searches and interviews with relevant Council staff.

2. Background

The City Centre Precincts are Committees of Council.

Their work is funded through a Special Benefit Rate collected by Council and the projects are undertaken on their behalf by a Service Provider.

The Newcastle Alliance is a business and local government coalition formed to revitalise the Newcastle City Centre. Until June 30, 2008 the Newcastle Alliance was the service provider for the City Precinct Committee and had subcontracted the removal of graffiti in the East and West Business Precinct to a graffiti removal contractor.

The objective of the City Centre Graffiti Abatement Project was to provide a service to the owners of buildings, ensuring that privately owned buildings within the city centre were kept relatively free of graffiti.

The Precincts, through the Alliance, had expended between \$100,000 and \$120,000 per year for over three years to the project. The work had been carried out under delegated authority from Council as the administrative work involved in other options would be very expensive.

Because of the ever escalating cost of the work because of growing levels of property damage, the Precinct Committees decided to make no further allocations for the 2007/2008 financial year and stopped all graffiti removal programs until a report on other options had been prepared.

In addition to the money spent by the Precincts, Newcastle City Council advises that it spent \$85,000 in the 2007/2008 financial year on the removal of graffiti from its own properties.

Relevant Policies and Documents of Newcastle City Council

The Council has developed the following documents relating to graffiti.

- Newcastle City Council Safety Policy
- Newcastle City Council Position Statement on Graffiti
- Website entry on Managing Graffiti

The objectives of the Position Statement are to:

- enhance the overall appearance of Newcastle's built and natural environments by reducing, with the aim of eliminating, unauthorised graffiti;
- increase perception of Community Safety by reducing unauthorised graffiti;
- reduce unauthorised graffiti by developing opportunities for potential perpetrators to participate in, and see the benefit of, participating in authorised activities;
- encourage the artistic development of young aerosol artists through provision of space for authorised graffiti and community murals; and
- raise the awareness of the community to the problems associated with unauthorised graffiti and how they can contribute to the solutions.

The underlying principles are as follows.

- Council recognises that the best method of deterring unauthorised graffiti is to remove it as quickly as possible from public view.
- Council recognises the need for a program that targets the prompt removal of unauthorised graffiti from its own property and recognises the need to liaise with

private property owners concerning the removal of unauthorised graffiti from their property.

- Council recognises that offering opportunities for practitioners to participate in authorised activities will act to divert them from unauthorised graffiti.
- Council recognises that all measures aimed at the removal of unauthorised graffiti be efficient but also cost effective.
- Council recognises that the cooperation with retailers, NSW Police Service and the community is essential for the effective implementation of this policy; and
- Council recognises the benefits the provision of space for authorised graffiti can bring to a community.

3. What is graffiti?

The word *graffiti* comes from the ancient Greek *grafa*, meaning *to write* and from Latin *graffito* meaning *to scratch* (Ganz 2004; Young et al 2005). Graffiti is drawings, names and/or words written on the walls of public buildings, infrastructure and equipment, such as railway rolling stock, and on private property such as billboards, walls of buildings, fences, etc, using such mediums as felt markers and aerosol paint (New South Wales Government 2006; Young et al 2005). It may be obscene or political, or it may not make any sense at all to the casual observer. Those who do graffiti are called *writers* (Halsey & Young 2005).

There are a number of different types of graffiti vandalism.

1. **Tags:** 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.
2. **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'.
3. **Pieces:** Short for the word masterpiece, pieces are large-scale, multicoloured features, which may include characters, backgrounds and letters. Pieces are intended to be complete art works and are most often done with spray paint.
4. **Bombing:** Tags, throw ups and pieces are done in a spree. As much as possible is done as quickly as possible.
5. **Etching:** There are two types of etching graffiti. 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. (New South Wales Government 2006)

Graffiti is a crime

In NSW, all graffiti on public or private property, unless the property owner has given permission, is a criminal offence.

The NSW Attorney General's Department is reviewing all legislation to stop graffiti vandalism including consideration of a complete ban on the sale of aerosol paint. The report should be available early next year. The review will also assess and examine the operation, effectiveness and implications of relevant legislation.

The aim of the review is to determine:

- whether the policy objectives of the legislation to reduce graffiti remain valid
- whether the terms of the legislation remain appropriate for securing those objectives, and
- the costs and benefits of the legislation.

The review will assess and examine the operation, effectiveness and implications of the following legislation.

Crimes Act 1900

- Section 195 - Maliciously destroying or damaging property

Summary Offences Act 1988

- Section 7 - Damaging Fountains
- Section 8 - Damaging or desecrating protected places
- Section 9 (b) - Wilfully mark, by means of chalk, paint or other material, any premises within view from a public place, without the consent of the occupier or person in charge of the premises.
- Section 10A - Damaging and defacing property by means of spray paint.
- Section 10B - Possession of spray paint.
- Section 10C - Sale of spray paint cans to persons under 18
- Section 10D - Unsecured display by retailers of spray paint cans
- Section 30A - Compensation
- Section 33 - Payment towards cost of repairing damage

Local Government Act 1993

- Section 67A - Graffiti removal work by agreement with owner or occupier
- Section 67B - Graffiti removal work without agreement of owner or occupier
- Section 67C - Register of graffiti removal work
- Section 631 - Damaging, defacing or polluting public bathing place
- Section 667 - Wilful destruction of notices and signs

Rail Safety (General) Regulation 2003

- Section 36 - Graffiti and vandalism

Children (Community Service Orders) Act 1987

- Section 5 - Making of children's community service orders
- Section 17 - Obligations of persons subject to children's community service orders

Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999

- Section 112 - Performance of community service work

Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act 1999

- Section 91 - Removal of graffiti

The Crime Prevention Division has done a considerable amount of work on graffiti over the last couple of years. The Premier has prioritised graffiti under section R3. Following that the Anti Graffiti Action Team was established to address graffiti vandalism in NSW.

The Crime Prevention Division has:

- Surveyed local Councils, government utilities and other stakeholders to determine the extent of graffiti vandalism and existing management practices.
- The Division reviewed graffiti prevention literature and observed that rapid removal and crime prevention through environmental design appeared to be effective means of preventing graffiti vandalism. A number of high graffiti Councils were funded over 2007-08 to run graffiti prevention programs - these grants were of an experimental nature with a view to building an evidence base for prevention measures i.e. determining if these measures actually work. An evaluation of those grants is under way.
- Persons who do graffiti - the Division is currently interviewing and surveying persons who do graffiti to find out how and why they do graffiti. This research will help to inform strategies to manage and prevent graffiti.

The review will also assess and examine the feasibility, effectiveness and potential implications of a complete ban on the sale of aerosol paint in NSW, including its usage, points of purchase and any impacts on business and employment such as loss of sales, loss of jobs and costs to date.

A copy of these Acts and Regulation can be accessed at www.legislation.nsw.gov.au

Who does graffiti?

It is difficult to develop a typical offender profile as the majority of crime committed by juveniles, including graffiti crime, goes unreported and frequently undetected.

Most profiling shows that offenders are usually aged between 15 and 25 years (75%) and overwhelmingly male (86%).

Of these males aged under 18 made up 64% while females account for little more than 12% of offenders.

The majority of graffiti incidents reported to the police do not have an identified person on interest. This was the case for 74.2% of recorded graffiti incidents in 2005 and 73.6% in 2006. (New South Wales Government 2006)

Why do young people get involved in graffiti?

People get involved in graffiti crime for a variety of reasons. Rebellion is a key motivation, but there may also be a desire to be recognised, to be part of a group. Other reasons may include: for a dare, boredom, to make a statement (social or political expression), to get back at someone, to compete, to annoy others (particularly adults), for self-expression, peer pressure, and vandalism.

Where does graffiti occur?

Graffiti can occur anywhere but historically one of the main targets has been railway rolling stock or train carriages, stations, platforms, other railway property, and property adjoining railway property. Graffiti occurs on fences, walls, buildings, and property visible to the community or to other graffiti artists.



When does graffiti occur?

Most graffiti usually is done under the cover of darkness, there is less chance of the graffitist being discovered and identified.

How much does graffiti cost?

In NSW the dollar cost of juvenile crime, including illegal graffiti, is well in excess of \$250M annually.

It is thought by some that illegal graffiti alone may cost the Australian community as much as \$100M per year.

Who pays?

Property and environmental damage has been estimated to account for between 3.1% and 6.1% of crime costs in Australia; the second largest crime cost category. Much of this cost is borne by the victims of the crime, both public and private.

Newcastle City Centre Committee

4. Graffiti in Newcastle



Where does it happen?

The Newcastle City Guides have been recording graffiti since May 2007 and reports have been presented on the appearance of graffiti to the city precinct committees. The main areas affected according to those reports are on Hunter and King Streets (the guides are not required to monitor the backs of buildings or small lanes).

According to logs from David Brealey from Allsweep (the contractor who until recently removed the graffiti) all areas of the City Centre are affected. There is a strong, repeated pattern of damage centred on the Lucky Country and Crown and Anchor Hotels - both in Hunter Street.

The patterns of graffiti are random unlike in other municipalities. Different areas are affected at different times without a pattern to it. Also the vacant buildings in the Precincts are repeatedly targeted.



Most graffiti happens, because of passing pedestrian traffic up and down Hunter and Scott Street.



According to the Newcastle Police there are over 100 empty buildings. The City Guides have recorded over 250 vacant shop fronts.



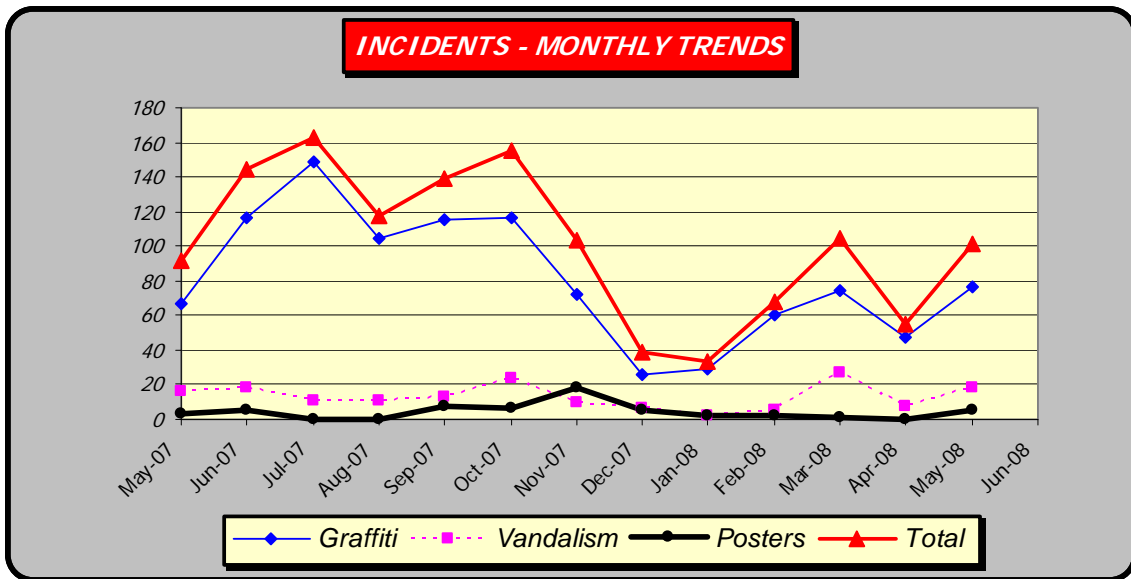
There is also random graffiti at Marketown shopping centre and at Market Square in the Mall. Both Centre Managers remove graffiti regularly.



It is hard to say whether there has been an increase in graffiti since the closure of the graffiti removal program or whether we are simply seeing the result of accumulating damage now it is not being addressed.

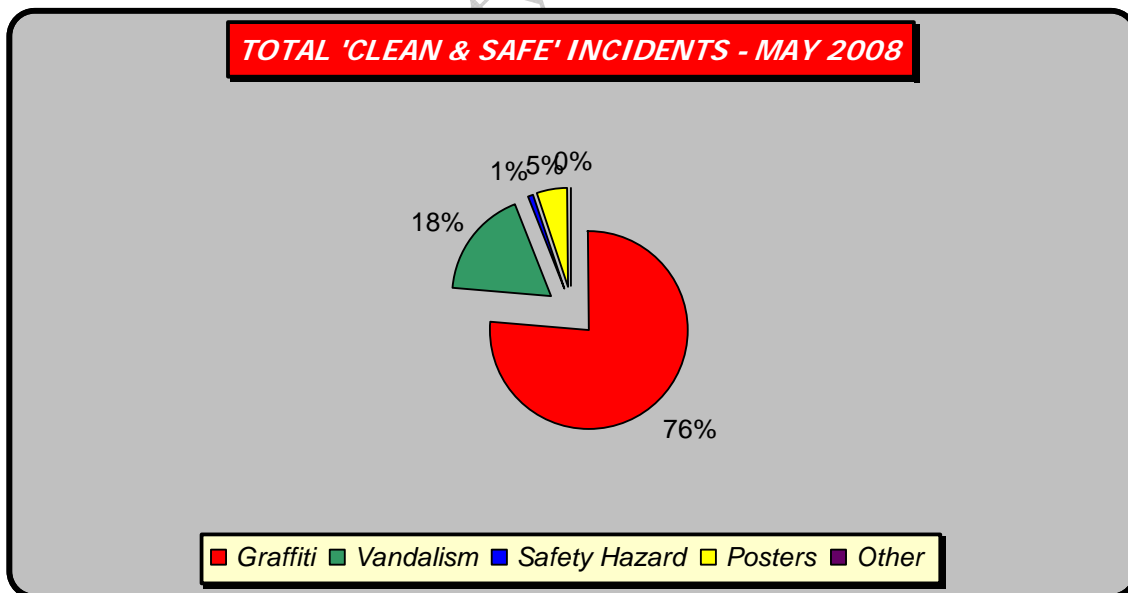
Whereas, whilst the Precincts were cleaning it off, the scale of the problem was not apparent except in the growing budget demands,

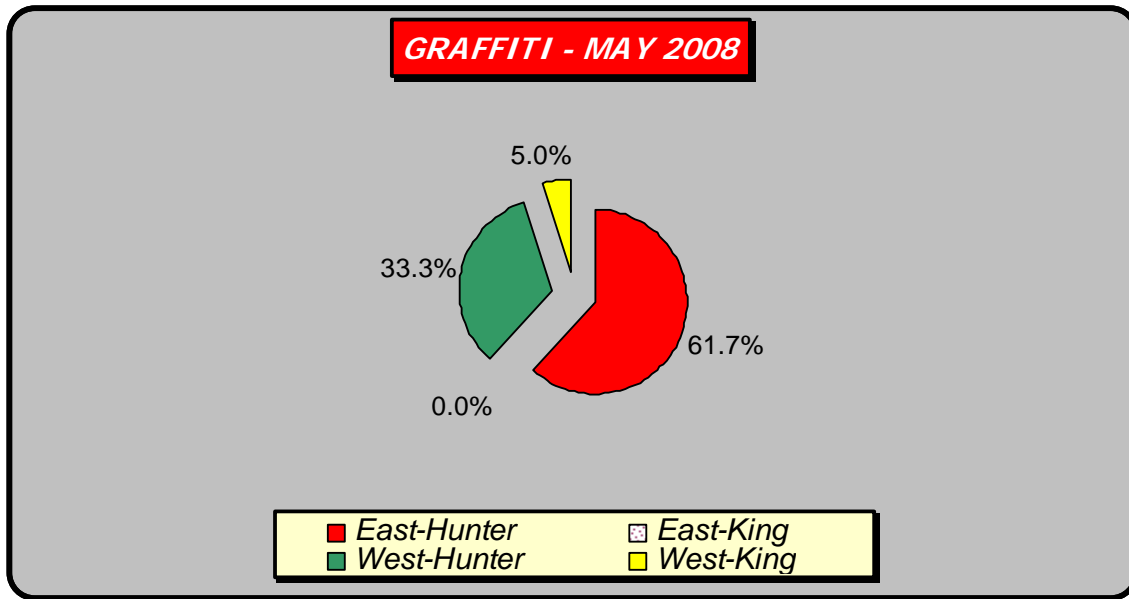
The chart below indicates that graffiti is a bigger problem than general vandalism or bill posters in Newcastle (The data for the charts comes from the City Guides' information)



From this it can be established that the overall number of graffiti incidents has reduced since October 2007. This can be due to two reasons.

- That the removal graffiti program was working and that it deterred further graffiti.
- That the initial reporting of graffiti was very vigilant in reporting and there might have been some doubling up.





The above charts clearly support the claim from David Brealey that most of the graffiti occurs in the East Business Precinct. David has another theory that the moon cycle and the school terms have an influence of the appearance of graffiti.

Most graffiti is done during the night and particular during the weekend of a full moon. There is generally less graffiti during the school holidays although At Marketown shopping centre there is an increase in graffiti during the school holidays, particularly of graffiti inside their buildings, done during the day.

What type of graffiti?

The main form of graffiti in Newcastle City Centre is tags according to the photographic evidence from the Newcastle City Guides.



Who?

It is difficult to definitely say, because insufficient arrests have been made to establish a pattern, but we can assume that, as in other cities, it is mainly done by young males between the ages of 15 and 29.

Removal of Graffiti

To date, the removal of graffiti from privately-owned buildings has been funded through a special benefit rate from city business owners, collected by Newcastle City Council and distributed through the City East and City West precinct committees. It was done under delegated authority from Council.

The objective of the project has been to provide a graffiti service to privately owned buildings, ensuring that the city centre was kept relatively free of graffiti. The project was contracted out to David Brealey from Allsweep.



The requirements for the contractor were to:

1. Identify graffiti on private buildings.
2. Liaise with businesses to gain permission to clean the graffiti from the buildings.
3. Identify the appropriate method for cleaning the graffiti off the building to ensure that surfaces or structures are not damaged.
4. Maintain a regular route in the city to ensure that the graffiti is quickly and effectively removed, therefore reducing graffiti artists' ability to have their tags seen.
5. Respond to graffiti blitzes in particular areas if they occur.
6. Advise the Newcastle Alliance of any vandalism needing attention.
7. Provide a customer service focus.
8. Represent the Alliance and Precincts and act as an "ambassador".
9. Provide a regular report of graffiti removal to the Newcastle Alliance.

In implementing the above tasks, the contractor was also required to abide by relevant environmental and OH &S guidelines and to supply his own chemicals and tools of trade for the removal of graffiti.

Costs of removal

The Alliance had set aside through the City Centre Committee an annual budget of up to \$100,000 per annum in 2007/2008. The demands of the project however have been growing annually and by May 2008 the yearly budget had been overspent despite monthly adjustments to the scope of the project and the project was suspended pending the development of a full report into options.

Authorised Graffiti

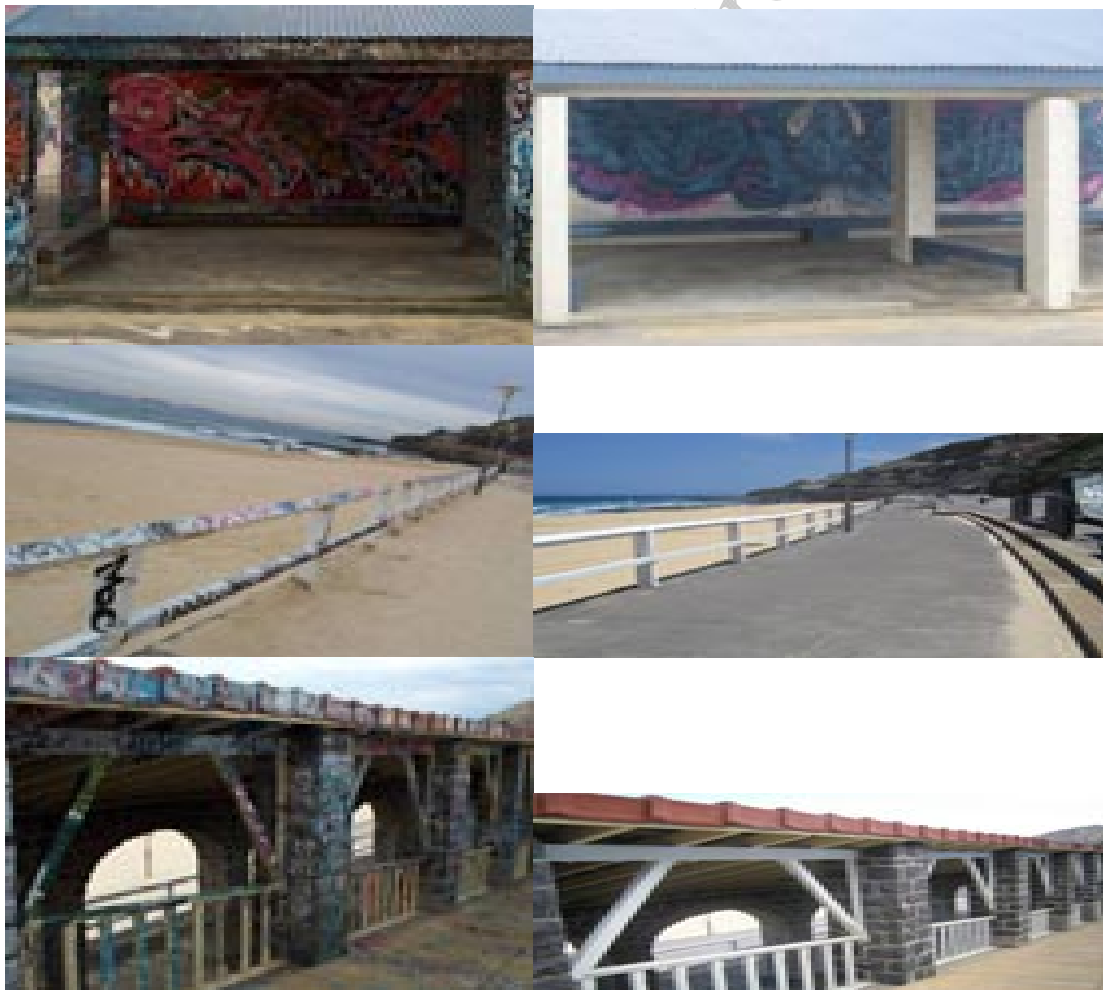
Newcastle City defines "Authorised Graffiti" as any painting, writing or picture on a wall in public view which has been executed with the owner's permission and according to Council DA conditions.

This includes work done in accordance with either the South Newcastle Beach Aerosol Art Agreement or under the auspices of any Council program that encourages responsible and creative aerosol art expression ("You Write Mate" being one example). The YouWriteMate program has been running successfully for the last five years. It is a workshop group for budding and experienced aerosol artists. The program provides a legal and safe place where writers can come together and develop and share skills under the expert tutelage of the 'Loft' Youth Venue mentors. The "YouWriteMate" projects also provided the work at Charlestown Water Tower and on Council work vans.

South Newcastle Beach: Before and after the "you write mate" program was introduced.

Before:

After:



Newcastle City Centre Committee

5. Other organisations with assets in Newcastle and their approach to graffiti

In order to establish the list below relevant organisations were contacted by phone

Organisation	Graffiti removal	Notification of graffiti
Newcastle City Council	Rapid removal from Council assets by Council maintenance crew	Customer service line and internal reporting
Newcastle TAFE	Removes from buildings they occupy by own maintenance crew and subcontractor	No formal reporting
Marketown Shopping Centre	Rapid removal from all buildings at the centre through own maintenance crew asap	No formal reporting
Market Square Shopping Centre and GPT	Removal by own maintenance crew. Have just employed subcontractor	No formal reporting
Australia Post	Removal by subcontractor organised through hub manager	Through customer service line, delivery drivers and posties.
Telstra	Removal as per internal priority listing carried out by two different contractors	For Pay phones use reporting line advertised in phone booth. For all other Telstra assets by Telstra staff or the general public by ringing the Fault line
RTA	Response time depending on severity e.g. dangerous or obscene by own maintenance crew or contractor	Internal RTA hotline
Railcorp	Removal by own maintenance crew	Through daily inspections of property.
Newcastle Bus and Ferries	Removal from street furniture, busses and buildings by own maintenance crew. Trial of sacrificial coating. Cost for inside of bus from last door to end of bus \$3.50 per bus in materials.	Driver or general public through reporting line
Energy Australia	EnergyAustralia aims to keep its network assets free of graffiti and it is their policy is to remove graffiti from substations or other assets within a week of it being reported to our	Reporting vandalism on 13 15 35

	Graffiti removal team. However if the graffiti is offensive and in close proximity to a school or church, we aim to remove it within 24 hours of it being reported to our team.	
Newcastle Port Corporation	Removal by own crew asap, this keeps the building at Scott and Newcomen Street, virtually free of graffiti.	Port services officer and general public through established relationships.
NAB	Removal by contractor	Staff report to the contractor
Commonwealth Bank	Removal asap by contractor	Staff or customer report to manager

From the above list it becomes clear that there are many organisations in Newcastle engaging in the removal of graffiti. They all have adopted varying ways of removal, but there is little cross communication between the organisations and the Council.

There is no neighbourhood watch program in operation in the area according to Jeff Milton from Newcastle Police.

Other business precincts all have some trouble with graffiti from time to time and have a contractor employed to remove the graffiti and other local government areas nearby have adopted varying methods to deal with graffiti.

- Cardiff has a committed team of volunteers walking the streets with the aim of eradicating graffiti. The program is part of the community revival program. Robert Denton who spearheads the program says, "To establish competitive retail and business we need to present a good looking street".
- Warners Bay, Belmont and Business Charlestown Chambers of Commerce are keen to adopt the Cardiff program.
- The Northlakes Chamber of Commerce is considering a project to paint five murals with the help of local schools.
- The Toronto Chamber of Commerce sponsors a Work for the Dole project in which workers will clean up small amounts of graffiti.

6. The approach of other Local Government Areas

The list below has been established by conducting web searches and talking to the relevant staff in the local government areas. The local government areas chosen represent varying sizes and socio-economics but all have had some success with their graffiti removal program.

Local Government Area	Approach to graffiti removal
Casey in Victoria	Graffiti is removed from all Council assets and from all qualifying privately-owned residential, commercial, retail and industrial properties at no cost to the property owner A toll-free graffiti reporting 24 hour hotline (1800 VANDAL or 1800

	<p>826 325) which is extensively publicised, allows residents to report the presence of graffiti which is, in most cases, removed in one working day. A proactive inspection service also authorises and enables the graffiti removal contractors to remove any graffiti identified by them throughout the course of the removal program.</p> <p>Education The education component aims to reduce the occurrence of new graffiti through professional delivery of a program specifically designed by Council's youth workers and psychologists. Grade 5 and Year 8 students at all of Casey's primary and secondary schools are presented with the program each year. Every student since 2002 in Grades 5, 6 and Years 7, 8, 9 and 10 has participated in the graffiti education program. School principals are enthusiastic about the educational component of the program and report that the incidences of graffiti vandalism at schools have declined since the inception of the program. Students have also given positive feedback on the program.</p> <p>Program Success Casey's Graffiti Management Program is an innovative and award winning program that has been extremely well received by the business community and the general population. Eradicating graffiti has already improved the image of districts, encouraged a sense of pride, and improved perceptions of public safety.</p>
<p>Bayside in Victoria</p>	<p>The Graffiti Prevention Strategy is a way forward for graffiti management in Bayside. The purpose of the Strategy is to provide a framework for Bayside City Council to respond to illegal graffiti through operational and preventative initiatives.</p> <p>Proposed elements of the Strategy include:</p> <p>Education Programs: Programs for young people to outline the implications of illegal graffiti and cultivate creative energies through legitimate art projects. Such a program may either be sourced externally or incorporated within the Graffiti Officer's role.</p> <p>Community Art Program: Community Art Programs would provide young people with the opportunity to express their artistic skill in a positive way by producing legitimate artwork for the community. Street art murals would add to the art profile of Bayside by celebrating the creative talents of young people and challenge negative perceptions of young people in public spaces. A professional artist would offer positive mentoring opportunities in a program that would be amalgamated with the Education Program. Other initiatives would include murals on statutory authority assets, legitimate graffiti exhibitions and funding opportunities.</p> <p>Information and Communication: An Information and Communication Program would include advice to property owners, managers and occupiers on graffiti prevention through such mediums as an information flyer and a comprehensive web page. The graffiti reporting system would be revised to allow Council to respond to a proactive graffiti removal program. A media campaign to detail elements of the Strategy would heighten public awareness of programs implemented by Council.</p> <p>Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED): Through CPTED principles in building design, such as vegetation plantings, property can be designed so that it is less likely for illegal</p>

	<p>graffiti to occur. All new Council designs would be required to consider CPTED principles specific to graffiti prevention.</p> <p>Graffiti Removal: In order to reduce the amount of graffiti in Bayside, it is proposed that removal initiatives for private property be adopted, such as the provision of graffiti removal kits and vouchers. A more proactive approach to graffiti removal from Council, statutory authority and priority properties is also proposed. Removal programs would include volunteers for community clean up days and a graffiti offender diversion program.</p> <p>Legislation and Enforcement: Proposed revisions to Council's Local Laws includes a Street Art Mural Permit to monitor and manage public mural art. Council is working with local police to monitor graffiti hotspots and supporting their Anti Graffiti Unit. Council has allocated considerable funding for graffiti management in the 2006/2007 Budget to implement elements of the Graffiti Prevention Strategy. The Council has also established a Southern Eastern Region Graffiti Network.</p>
<p>Melbourne in Victoria</p>	<p>Council initiatives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o quick removal of graffiti from its own buildings and infrastructure o working closely with electricity suppliers, transport owners/operators and State Government agencies to encourage them to apply the same level of vigilance to remove graffiti from their assets, o giving out information and graffiti removal kits and paint to private property owners, managers and occupiers. o offering one free graffiti clean for private property owners/managers or tenants o working with neighbouring municipalities to work out a consistent approach to graffiti management, o sending pictures of the work of persistent graffitists to the Victoria Police to help with detection, o working with young people to encourage them to undertake art work in the graffiti style – rather than 'tagging' and stenciling. o National Trust Victoria says it will consider a proposal to have graffiti in some of Melbourne's laneways heritage listed, Hosier Lane being one of them.
<p>City of Greater Geelong in Victoria</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Rapid removal from public and private buildings by contractor o Removal on private buildings up to 3sqm or \$80 per tag free to the owner. o Employ a graffiti team leader, auditor and support officer o Yearly budget of \$220,000 for graffiti removal (subcontractor, removal kits, education programs) o Conducts 4 graffiti audits per year o Keep a data base of images (Ausgraph) o Graffiti removal kits available (easy wipes for removal) o Graffiti reporting line o Recent review of their graffiti removal documents o Use of people on community orders to remove graffiti in reserves, at factories and bus stops. o Will send new management documents as soon as available o When a new mural gets painted the police attend and educate the mural artists. o Work in close association with Victoria Police

<p>Sydney in NSW</p>	<p>The City is committed to addressing community concerns about the financial and social costs of illegal graffiti. The City of Sydney seeks to minimise the incidents of graffiti on both public and private property by prompt removal whilst providing legitimate avenues for the expression and dissemination of community information. While it is not possible to eliminate graffiti altogether, the City has adopted a variety of strategies to reduce illegal graffiti. These strategies aim to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Prevent the reoccurrence of illegal graffiti through rapid removal. ○ Educate the community about the illegality of graffiti. ○ Prevent the reoccurrence of illegal graffiti through the prosecution of offenders. ○ Provide local opportunities for residents to display notices/posters of community nature. ○ Lessen the negative financial and social impact of illegal graffiti. ○ Reduce the fear of crime in the community. <p>The City's Graffiti Management Policy will be implemented focusing on the following fundamentals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Removing graffiti from 'hot spots' on a daily basis. ○ Regular inspections and removal of graffiti every 5 days from the entire Local Government Area. ○ Promoting the City Care Line to residents to report graffiti for removal. ○ Providing community notice boards and great opportunities in key areas for the display of community / event information.
<p>Woollahra in NSW</p>	<p>Woollahra Council removes graffiti on all Council property such as buildings, signs, park and street furniture.</p> <p>People are asked to report graffiti on Council property as soon as it is notice by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Graffiti Hotline ○ Email ○ Through Council's Customer Services line on 9391 7000 <p>Once a project is logged, removal time takes up to 14 days for general graffiti or up to 48 hours for offensive or racist graffiti.</p> <p>For graffiti on private property accessible from a public area Woollahra Council offers residents a FREE graffiti removal service although to arrange removal of graffiti from private property, not accesible from a public area people need a private contractor.</p> <p>Advice is given about how to contact contractors and people are encourages to report graffiti to the Police to assist them to develop profiles on where and when it is happening preferably with photographs of the graffiti and record the time, date and location.</p>
<p>Waverley in NSW</p>	<p>Waverley Council is planning a comprehensive response.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ act to remove offensive graffiti on a site of significance within two working days of the reporting of the graffiti incident. ○ apply protective coatings to Council owned buildings where the treatment is considered to be appropriate and cost effective. ○ discuss the provision of an <i>at-cost</i> graffiti removal service with

	<p>the relevant Chambers of Commerce and prominent businesses within Waverley and will offer an <i>at cost</i> graffiti removal service to government departments and agencies and to owners or occupiers of private property within Waverley.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ work with key stakeholders to identify appropriate locations and processes for the placement of legal graffiti in Waverley, will assess security arrangements including the use of security patrols and/or equipment in areas with high incidence of graffiti and Council will support community participation events focused at the removal of graffiti from the public domain. ○ seek agreement and cooperation from transport, electricity and other agencies to include their infrastructure within Council's removal programs at their cost. <p>An assessment will be made of the provision of graffiti removal services for non-Council owned property using Council in-house service team or external contractors. It is anticipated that Council will be able to provide lower costs to private property owners through <i>economies of scale</i> and tendered pricing.</p> <p>Council will also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ develop a graffiti removal kit to be available for sale to property owners to remove minor levels of graffiti. ○ introduce a standard condition of consent requiring the removal of graffiti from hoardings on Construction Sites within 5 working days at full cost to the developer. ○ at the discretion of the General Manager Council intervene to remove graffiti from private property where the graffiti is grossly offensive in nature and removal is necessary to prevent public concern. ○ perform regular audits its properties to identify graffiti hot spots. ○ establish a graffiti database to enable the analysis of graffiti incidents within the Waverley area. ○ support ratepayers, businesses and community groups through information gathering, information sharing and directing coordinated efforts to address graffiti. ○ actively support and promote NSW State Government initiatives in respect to graffiti management. ○ continue to promote legal graffiti as an important element of Public Art. <p>Council's Recreation Community and Customer Service Department will develop and conduct education initiatives in regard to graffiti management involving the whole community.</p>
Dubbo in NSW	Has adopted a scheme called 'Dob in a vandal', where a monetary incentive is offered to the person reporting a vandal.
Gosford in NSW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rapid removal from Council buildings only. ○ A community kit is available and Council has set up a graffiti subcommittee. ○ There is not too much graffiti in the city and CCTV cameras are installed in the CBD,
Auburn in NSW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ From 2000 to 2006 the graffiti removal was done through the 'Work for the Dole' program. Since July 2006 the Council has

	<p>been using its own crew again.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ The Council has up to 3 people engaged in graffiti removal for 3 days per week. The graffiti is removed from public and private properties.○ Costs of the graffiti removal are part of the Council's overall maintenance budget
--	--

Newcastle City Centre Committee

7. The Role of State Government

The New South Wales State Government plays a significant role as the law maker. The NSW Attorney General's Department is reviewing all legislation to stop graffiti vandalism including consideration of a complete ban on the sale of aerosol paint. The report should be available early next year. The review will also assess and examine the operation, effectiveness and implications of relevant legislation. The State Government has gone beyond just the legal aspects and has prepared a particularly good resource for the general public on how to manage graffiti. This information can be accessed on:

http://www.graffiti.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/cpd/ll_graffiti.nsf/pages/graffiti_index

This site offers resources and publications on:

- Anti Graffiti Action Team which plays a key role in leading the development and implementation of:
 - Increased use of Community Service Orders to make offenders repair the damage caused by graffiti vandalism;
 - Identification of graffiti vandalism “hot spots” and stepping up enforcement and surveillance;
 - Assistance to Councils and government utilities with the development of Graffiti Management Plans targeting high graffiti vandalism environments;
 - A scheme for local Councils to accredit community groups and volunteers to remove graffiti vandalism.
- Graffiti Law
- Graffiti Prevention
 - Remove graffiti promptly
 - Maintain your property
 - Install fencing that won't attract graffiti
 - Paint walls/fences with dark colours
 - Plant vegetation in front of walls/fences
 - Employ security measures
 - Improve lighting
 - Use graffiti coating in high risk areas
 - Report graffiti vandalism
- Graffiti Removal
 - Research shows that graffiti removal within 24 to 48 hours significantly reduces the chance of graffiti reoccurring. Sometimes removing graffiti within a short timeframe may be difficult, however, it prevents the graffiti vandal from receiving the fame and recognition they desire, and sends a clear message that graffiti won't last long on your property. Graffiti is also easier to remove before the paint has dried. Before you start the removal process, you should photograph the graffiti vandalism. Photographs may help police identify the graffiti vandal.
- Graffiti Reporting
 - Reporting to the police
 - Reporting to the local Council
 - Reporting to the property owner

8 Discussion and Analysis

Other Local Governments in NSW and Victoria

The study of the different local Councils and their approach shows that graffiti is evident throughout Australia regardless of social, economic or cultural status of the community.

Graffiti is variously described as crime, defacement, property vandalism or street art. Businesses and residents are often legitimately angry when vandals deface their homes, public places and open space.

Unightly graffiti adds to an atmosphere of neglect and urban decay, and distorts perceptions about the actual level of crime and safety. It should be noted that from the perspective of the individual(s) concerned, whether a threat is real or perceived matters little. The fear is real. Physical safety and perceptions of safety, although separate, are intrinsically linked. Perception of safety leads to increased usage and more people, both of which enhance perceptions of safety. This “feedback loop” becomes self-perpetuating. Similarly, an environment which generates feelings of being unsafe, leads to decreased use which diminishes its actual safety.

Illegal graffiti is of ongoing concern to the general community and incurs substantial social and economic costs to the community. Some Councils developed strategies by themselves while others formed networks, working parties and committees involving a wide range of people involved in their area with the management of graffiti.

Most Councils, whose approach was researched for this report, are adopting a rapid removal of graffiti from public and private buildings in the business districts with some even offering a once yearly service to all building owners who wanted it.

The City of Sydney has gone so far as to inspect ‘hot spots’ every 24 hours and remove graffiti within 24 hours of identification or owner’s consent being obtained. Councils that would only remove from public buildings often offer business and other rate payers a graffiti removal kit.

The city of Greater Geelong had a graffiti management program since 2001. The three documents governing graffiti management developed in 2001 have just recently been rolled into one graffiti management plan. We will be able to receive a copy once it is printed. The City of Greater Geelong has been very successful with its graffiti removal program and doesn’t view graffiti as a problem in its city anymore.

The Councils that had a good all round management approach to graffiti and involved the wider community seemed to have the best results.

It is important to have a clear policy addressing:

- prevention,
- protection and removal,
- community awareness, involvement and education
- prosecution

Some Councils used their own maintenance crew while other Councils tendered the removal of graffiti out to a contractor. It was very difficult to extract realistic costs from the Councils,

because most graffiti removal programs were run under vandalism in the general maintenance program.

Quite a few of the Councils have a graffiti reporting line - either a dedicated graffiti line or the Council's customer service line. If the Council had such a line it was marketed through the Council's website, Council newsletter or other publications.

Coating of surfaces was not often used as a protection. It seems that costs are generally too high and the benefits are not clearly established.

Some Councils reported on running education programs in local schools. The "Crime Prevention Workshop" program is available to government and non-government schools. It involves teachers working with police officers to provide lessons on a variety of topics relating to anti-social behaviour and crime. There are modules in this program that focus on graffiti vandalism there was a strong belief that education is crucial. However the effectiveness of those programs hasn't been able to be measured.

All Councils but Auburn held a belief that there needs to be some room for legal graffiti. Some of the Councils offered legal walls. Most legal walls worked well and offered an artistic outlet. This worked particularly well when the wall was run in conjunction with a youth organisation that took charge and established rules for the use of the wall.

Auburn Council from 2000 to 2006 ran a very successful program utilising the 'Work for the Dole' program. The person instrumental for this program put a lot of time and effort into it, but once the person moved from her position, the program couldn't be maintained and it reverted back to the Council crew being responsible for the removal. This program was very much based on one idea and the strong commitment of one person. Some other Councils have adopted parts of this approach to utilising the Work for the Dole.

"Work for the Dole"

Using the Work for the Dole program is an option to be considered for the Newcastle graffiti management model. Either the Council or another not for profit organisation could become a sponsor for the Work for the Dole program. The sponsoring organisation would employ a supervisor and meet the cost for materials, insurances, transport etc. Adopting a program like this would offer unemployed people the opportunity to gain skills and work experience and would ensure a program that removes graffiti on ongoing basis and is cost effective.

Other organisations with assets in Newcastle

The study of local organisations shows that we do have a problem with graffiti, since all the researched organisations and other Main Street areas had graffiti that needed to be removed from their assets.

However, the removal of graffiti in Newcastle is very fragmented and there are many players involved.

Sometimes it appears that the graffiti is not removed as quickly as some of the organisations claimed to achieve.



This suggests the need for a much more coordinated approach to stop the spread of graffiti.

It particularly needs to involve the owners of currently vacant buildings, since graffiti is most prevalent on those buildings and graffiti invites more graffiti if it is left.

A committee that invites representatives from local organisations, Council, police, youth groups, state government representation and owners of buildings should be established to develop a collaborative, coordinated graffiti management plan.

Newcastle City Council – The appropriate leadership entity

Newcastle Council has a Position Statement on graffiti together with a basic Graffiti Management Plan.

The Council has a positive approach to authorised graffiti and has underpinned it with an agreement for the South Newcastle Beach Skate Park aerosol art program, as well as having the Council vans decorated in mural art.

The Council, as the common body would be best positioned to establish a **Graffiti Management Plan** that includes all stakeholders and has clear instructions on community awareness and education which will be able to be used over the whole of the Newcastle Local Government area.

This plan needs to offer guidelines on:

- **prevention**
- **protection and removal**
- **strategies for community awareness, involvement and education**
- **consistent approaches and strategies to support successful prosecution**
- **develop and distribute resources for the community schools and businesses.**

The cost of the removal of graffiti is a major problem for all parties.

It is paramount that any strategy focuses on how to develop an efficient and cost effective removal program. The current situation of the Council and the Precincts engaging different

people and techniques in the removal over a relatively small area might not be the most cost effective way.

The programs that have been used by the City of Greater Geelong and have just recently been reviewed would be a good model for Newcastle to use, particular since Geelong has similar socio demographics and is a post industrial city like Newcastle.

Removal of Graffiti

The options for removal might include the following. These options do not include the removal of graffiti from buildings or infrastructure controlled by other agencies.

1. Council removes all graffiti on public and private buildings using their own crews (properly trained and resourced).
2. Council tenders the removal of all graffiti on public and private buildings out to a specialist contractor.
3. Council employs a supervisor and uses a workforce through the 'Work for the Dole' program in conjunction with their existing crew, or alternatively contract a not-for-profit organisation to undertake the project.
4. Council continues to remove graffiti from public buildings and the Precincts tender the removal from private buildings out to a subcontractor (as has been done).
5. Council continues to remove graffiti from public buildings and the Precincts (through the Service Provider) employs a supervisor and uses the "Work for the Dole" program to remove it from private buildings.
6. The Precincts undertake to manage the removal of graffiti from both private and Council buildings through a contractor and bill Council for its share.

9. Conclusions and Recommendations

A. Establishment of a Graffiti Management Plan

Under the leadership of Newcastle City Council, a coordinated, collaborative graffiti management plan needs to be developed, involving a range of programs and with the cooperation and joint funding of stakeholders. The Council's position statement on graffiti could be used as the starting point as well as information from the NSW Attorney General's Department and the Graffiti Management Plan from the City of Greater Geelong. The plan needs to be reviewed biennially with a sound audit to be undertaken at the beginning. The data gathered by the City Guides over the past two years can provide a reasonable starting point for comparison.

The plan needs to address:

1. Prevention, Protection and Removal
2. Community awareness, involvement and education
3. Prosecution.

In addition to the active steps there needs to be a range of protocols agreed between the stakeholders about information exchange and public communication. Part of the challenge for the vandals is creating a public outrage. Media coverage is satisfying.

B. Definition of Roles, Service Agreements and Contributions

Property owners, businesses and inner city residents are clearly not in a position to drive the changes that need to happen.

This is a clear responsibility of Newcastle City Council and State Government.

The Precincts need to take a strong stand on behalf of the other stakeholders to ask that Council adopt the resolution of the graffiti scourge in the City Centre as core business.

On the other hand, inner city commercial property owners pay a Special Benefit Rate and expect to see outcomes for those funds. Reviews and surveys undertaken in 2007 were clear that people want the Precincts to focus on strategies designed to achieve a clean and safe city centre.

The Precincts can make a contribution in the following ways.

1. Seek Council's support in establishing a comprehensive Graffiti Management Plan for the City Centre.
2. Fully participate in the development, implementation and monitoring of that Plan including taking on the management of elements of it should that be appropriate.
3. Allocating a reasonable budget provided that the funds are matched by other participants.
4. Approaching State and Federal bodies and representatives to seek sources of funding for pilot projects.
5. Exploring options such as Work for the Dole or Community Service Orders as a means of reducing costs and engaging the community.
6. Seeking the support of the City Ambassador volunteers to continue their monitoring and reporting of vandalism.
7. Help to set up a resident graffiti watch program where local residents can 'adopt' blocks/areas of houses and report any graffiti that may appear on 'their block'. This can be done through the already existing neighbourhood groups.
8. Supporting a public communication strategy to ensure better reporting to Police or to Council about incidents.

Reference List

Interviews were held with the following people.

Andrea Hooper, Building/Maintenance Officer, City of Port Phillip
Barbara Heaton, Community Liaison officer Newcastle City Council
Barney Langford, Youth Venue Coordinator, The Loft Venue
Christine Gregson, Manager Markettown shopping centre
David Brealey, Allsweep
Donna Edwards, GPT, Centre Manager, Market Square
Jeff Milton, Senior Constable, Newcastle Police, Crime Prevention Officer
Jeff Roesse, Acting Team Leader Cleansing, Auburn City Council
Jenny Coppock, Manager Economic Development, Auburn City Council
John Brown, graffiti team leader, City of Greater Geelong
Josie Hand, Communications coordinator, Dubbo City Council
Lili Mc Cubin, Graffiti Strategy Officer, Bayside Council
Mathew Brewster, Senior Strategist, Newcastle City Council
Peter Zygald, Managing Director, Globex
Rhyall Gordon, Safety Officer, Newcastle City Council
Saul Standerwick, Mural Art Coordinator, The Loft Youth Venue
Steven Legg, Senior Policy Officer, NSW Attorney General's Office
Sue Verhoek, Public Space Worker, Gosford City Council

Websites used

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/06/23/2282814.htm>
http://www.bayside.vic.gov.au/environment_graffiti_in_bayside
<http://www.casey.vic.gov.au/graffiti/>
<http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/Residents/Graffiti/GraffitiManagementPolicy>
http://www.graffiti.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/cpd/ll_graffiti.nsf/pages/graffiti_index
<http://www.graffitihurts.com.au>
<http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/info.cfm?top=145&pg=1150>
http://www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au/my_community/community_safety/managing_graffiti
<http://www.waverley.nsw.gov.au/publications/>
<http://www.woollahra.nsw.gov.au/services/graffiti>
http://www.geelongaustralia.com.au/Accessing_Council/Policies/

Publications

- GRAFFITI LOCAL ISSUES, LOCAL SOLUTIONS, Jenny Coppock Manager Strategic Projects, Auburn Council, New South Wales
- Graffiti Management Policy, City of Sydney
- NSW Graffiti Solutions Handbook, for Local Government, Planners, Designers and Developers

- The Star, Newspaper, July 9, 2008

Newcastle City Centre Committee