



DOCUMENT NUMBER

RL-05

DOCUMENT TITLE

GRAFFITI POLICY

ISSUE DATE	CHANGE	BY	APPROVED	REVIEW
24/9/04	Initial Issue	CDF	13/9/04	30 June, 2006

1.0 PURPOSE

This graffiti policy sets out to outline the measures to be undertaken by Mitchell Shire Council to prevent/alleviate graffiti vandalism in the district. The increasing presence of graffiti is of ongoing concern to the general community, the Victoria Police as well as to Council, both for its adverse impact on the environment and streetscape and for its considerable cost in removal.

Shane Barnbrook and Kirsty Roberts, youth workers from Seymour, did the bulk of the work on this policy in conjunction with Senior Constable Pauline East and the support of the PCCC, coordinated by the Victoria Police in Seymour. Acknowledgement is also given to the City of Thuringowa and the Victoria Crime Prevention Unit for their guidance.

2.0 APPLICATION

This policy applies directly to:

- Relevant staff of the Mitchell Shire Council
- Councillors
- Private and Business residents of the Mitchell Shire Council district

3.0 PROCEDURE

Mitchell Shire Council can make a significant contribution to reduce the incidence of graffiti vandalism whilst raising community awareness regarding the value of young people and their talents. By creating an environment conducive to property protection, safety and harmony between all members of the community crime prevention will be maximised. Through the development of a partnership between Mitchell Shire Council and other stakeholders and an inclusive process for all members of the community (particularly young people) the incidence of graffiti vandalism will be reduced. Actions to undertake are outlined in section 5.0 "checklist" of this policy.

4.0 DEFINITIONS

Grffiti vandalism - graffiti that is illegal and destructive

Legal street art - graffiti which is permitted either by arrangement with property owners or as part of a Legal Art Program (also known as aerosol art or graffiti pieces)

5.0 STANDARDS

The Draft Mitchell Shire Graffiti Policy acknowledges any relevant National and State strategies, such as:

- *Grappling With Graffiti*, A Graffiti Management Strategy for Victoria
- Goodbye Graffiti Educational campaign

Council's Youth Policy and Strategy provides a model of planning that is inclusive of young people. The Graffiti Prevention Strategy reflects these principles in that it seeks to involve young people in the planning and co ordination of the program.

The Recreation and Youth Strategies each recognize the link between provision of appropriate services, facilities and programs for young people, and their development of a sense of commitment to and respect for their local community.

Several other local authorities across Victoria are implementing policies dealing with graffiti. The nature of the policies is inclusive and aimed at positive outcomes through ownership pride, public art and community awareness and action.

An integrated and comprehensive whole of community approach including both public and private property owners as well as other residents is vital.

For example, it is important that all graffiti vandalism is removed, not only that which occurs on public property. If clean-ups are only done on public property this is likely to cause further displacement of the problem to private property.

The policy objectives are outlined in four sections:

- Establish effective reporting and recording systems
- Implement a rapid removal policy
- Inform the community about prevention measures
- Conduct a Legal Arts Program

5.1 Establish effective reporting and recording systems

Encourage all residents to report incidents of graffiti vandalism on Council property either to Police if incident in progress or to Council if already occurred. Similarly, where graffiti vandalism has occurred on Government or private property, reports should be directed to Police or the appropriate Government organisation or private property owner.

- 5.1.1 Establish a central Council employee as the community contact to whom reports of graffiti vandalism should be directed or use a specific "hotline" phone number to ensure that reports get recorded. If this is to be the general phone number for the Mitchell Shire, then it should be advertised as such.
- 5.1.2 Establish liaison with Victoria Police Service to co-ordinate Council and Police response to reported incidents of graffiti vandalism. Develop partnership with police for the reporting of incidences and recording of types for the purpose of intelligence gathering and identification of problem areas.
- 5.1.3 Keep accurate records of incidents in order to identify high target areas; to measure the cost of graffiti vandalism removal; and to provide data for the evaluation of the effectiveness of the policy and the individual measures taken to address the graffiti vandalism problem. This should link to the Victorian wide database on graffiti.
- 5.1.4 Formulation of a local law addressing the issue of graffiti and enforcement of said local law when required.
- 5.1.5 Develop a partnership approach with local solvent retailers to adopt the 'best practice' of identifying someone's bona fides prior to sale of implements used in graffiti.

5.2 Implement a rapid removal policy

- 5.2.1 Any graffiti vandalism on Council property should be removed within 24 hours after notification. This is particularly important for graffiti vandalism of an offensive nature (e.g. sexually explicit and/ racist comments)
- 5.2.2 Obtain agreement from other public agencies to adopt similar removal policies.
- 5.2.3 Provide owners of private property with technical information on how to remove graffiti vandalism and/or refer them to local experts on paint removal. (These can be found in the Yellow pages under 'Painters and Decorators').
- 5.2.4 Assist those private property victims without adequate financial resources by providing paint/equipment for their use to remove graffiti vandalism. Should this not be possible, see section 4.2.6.
- 5.2.5 Develop a network of concerned citizens who are prepared to assist in graffiti vandalism removal in appropriate locations; or for those private property victims with physical or other disabilities which may make it difficult or impossible for them to remove graffiti vandalism. **NOTE:** Removing graffiti vandalism often involves dealing with dangerous toxic chemicals, so this step should be handled very carefully. Council officers who remove graffiti vandalism from council or other property should use caution and all Workplace Health & Safety precautions **MUST** be strictly adhered to. This also applies to any person who acts on Council behalf to remove graffiti vandalism.
- 5.2.6. Establish a partnership with the Area Office of Corrections to supply suitable persons to partake in graffiti removal projects. Council recognizes that the strategy must include a policing element to ensure that offenders are dealt with accordingly and have access to rehabilitative programs.

5.3 Inform the community of the measures being undertaken.

A community that is better informed and aware of the issue is more likely to adopt prevention measures and change from being passive victims to active participants in combating graffiti vandalism.

- 5.3.1. Seek the positive involvement and ongoing support of local media. Encourage the media to publish/broadcast important public information, including how people can minimise the risks of graffiti vandalism on their property, sources of information about graffiti vandalism, and ways of preventing it.
- 5.3.2. Ensure that information relating to the graffiti policy is included in Council publications and available from all Council buildings.
- 5.3.3. Develop, produce and distribute a range of information material for the public. For example:
- a notice from the Mayor or specific Councillor to householders and owners of business premises about the plan and reporting information. (This could be included in other Council mail-outs e.g. rate notices.)
 - a regular section on graffiti-related issues in the Mitchell Matters page

- a detailed fact sheet/brochure about graffiti
- a small brochure about the Legal Arts Program
- a brochure about removal and prevention methods
- media releases
- posters
- local radio/regional television/ Shire-wide newspaper advertising about the Legal Arts Program and specific prevention measures
- circulars for letterbox drops in hard-hit areas
- Council Internet home page
- fridge magnets or stickers featuring phone numbers for reporting graffiti vandalism
- accessing free multi media community service announcements
- signs displaying the reporting phone number in prominent, public places

5.4 Conduct a Legal Arts Program

Graffiti is an integral part of the 'hip hop' subculture, one of many subcultures adopted by various young people. By providing legal, controlled workshops and sites, a Legal Arts Program aims to effect a change in attitudes and behaviour within this subculture towards public and private property. A Legal Arts Program recognises young peoples' talents. A Legal Arts Program works towards redirecting young people away from criminal activities to more positive pursuits - and possibly the opportunity to become professional artists. Professional graffiti artists are frequently commissioned to paint public murals and create graphic designs.

Such programs also aim to increase community acceptance of legal aerosol art as a modern, internationally recognised art form. Graffiti art murals can be introduced to a community as beautification measures such as on unsightly construction hoardings or on an appropriate brick wall that may already be the target of graffiti vandalism. The inclusion and involvement of young people by Council in its graffiti prevention program is crucial to the success thereof.

A wide acceptance of good graffiti art in the community should result in the development and recognition of the talents of young artists and opportunities for employment through commissions. A second result would be the greater availability of legal sites that could be negotiated by young people and appropriate public/private property owners. Murals and public art done by young people in a town can reflect the history of the town as well as proclaim the identity of the town in a very public manner.

6.0 Evaluation Criteria

Performance indicators to include:

- Reduction in the reporting of the incidence of graffiti.
- Ongoing engagement of young people in community activities supportive of this initiative.
- Maintenance of the integrity of the environment.
- Community satisfaction with the environment.
- Effective Rapid response and report system.
- Reduction in the funding spent on the removal of graffiti.
- Maintenance of an ongoing educational program.
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7.0 CHECKLIST

Description	Responsibility	Timeframe
Graffiti Policy	Rene Laan	

8.0 REVIEW

This procedure may be varied by the Corporate Management Group and will be reviewed by 30 June 2006