

DIRECTORATE:	WORKS AND ASSETS
SECTION:	City Maintenance & Cleansing
POLICY:	Graffiti Management Policy
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	Manager City Maintenance & Cleansing
DATE ADOPTED BY COUNCIL	21 September 2010

POLICY OBJECTIVE

This policy provides clear procedural guidelines for the management of graffiti within the municipality in order to ensure:

- an enhanced presentation of the municipality for both residents and visitors
- a clean, safe and welcoming city image
- an increased sense of personal safety

BACKGROUND

Graffiti is a community issue that must be addressed proactively and on a range of fronts if it is to be significantly reduced. Rapid removal together with community and youth involvement is pivotal to solving the problem. Legally, graffiti is considered vandalism, 'wilful damage' and a criminal offence.

POLICY AND PRINCIPLES

The Council, in implementing this Graffiti Management Policy aims to:

- Within 5 working days of notification, remove graffiti on Council assets;
 - Within 24 hours of notification, ensure the removal of graffiti that is publicly visible on any property in the municipality that contains racist, obscene or offensive material subject to compliance with the Graffiti Prevention Act 2007;
 - Within five working days of graffiti on private property being reported to the Council, property owners/occupiers will be requested to remove graffiti either verbally or through written notice;
 - Provide up to date information to residents and business to assist them in removing and preventing graffiti at their properties;
 - Provide assistance to residents and businesses to remove graffiti by providing graffiti removal information, and when deemed appropriate, a graffiti removal kit;
 - Develop and maintain partnerships to assist in the effort to reduce graffiti;
 - Advocate for resources to implement graffiti removal and prevention initiatives;
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- Liaise with Victoria Police and provide updates on graffiti reported to the Council to assist in the apprehension of offenders;
- Take a whole of community approach to the removal and prevention of graffiti within the municipality including assistance with removal in exceptional circumstances.

PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES

In order to manage graffiti and meet the commitments of the Graffiti Management Policy, the Council has established the following procedures for reporting and removing graffiti. These procedures are detailed in the following section, as are the Council's responsibilities for working in partnership with key stakeholders and for keeping the community informed in relation to graffiti management issues.

Reporting Graffiti

The Council encourages Council employees and the community to report graffiti as soon as possible to allow rapid removal. Any reports of graffiti shall be recorded on a central data base and include the following information:

- Location
- Type of graffiti
- Size
- Type of tool used
- Surface to which graffiti has been applied
- Possible identification
- Digital photographs

This will provide the ability to carry out regular audits of known hotspots, assess trends and provide regular reports to police detailing information of interest to them. Mapping of locations on the Council's GIS system will also be undertaken to assist with rapid identification of hotspots.

Removal Reporting

Council staff, contractors, volunteers, or offender/s removing graffiti will be required to record the following information for input into the Councils central data base:

- Response time.
- The length of time taken to remove the graffiti.
- Cleaning agents used.
- Digital photo on completion

Identifying Hotspots

Identifying likely targets or graffiti hotspots allows preventative initiatives to be concentrated and designed specifically for where they will have most impact. In order to inform preventative initiatives and to assist monitoring and enforcement, the Council needs to keep track of and assess graffiti trends within the municipality. As part of this process the Council will undertake quarterly audits to assess trends in the occurrence of graffiti.

The outcomes of these regular audits will be made available to the police, as required. In addition, mapping of graffiti hotspots will be undertaken on the Council's GIS system to assist future preventative strategies.

Removing Graffiti

The Council is responsible for removing graffiti from its own assets such as Council signage, bus shelters, park & street furniture, sporting pavilions, Council buildings and roads & footpaths.

Commercial and private property owners and utility and service authorities are responsible for removing graffiti from their premises and assets. Graffiti on commercially owned and service authority assets should be reported directly to the property owner or relevant service authority.

Removal from Council Property

- Known hot spots will be inspected weekly (normally on a Monday morning)
- Council staff will be trained in graffiti removal and Council depots stocked with a removal kit to enable offensive graffiti to be removed within 24 hours and other graffiti within 5 working days.
- External contractors will be used where necessary and appropriate.
- A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been entered into with Corrections Victoria to assist with removal where appropriate.
- Tenants of Council buildings will be encouraged to report graffiti as soon as it is detected.
- Sporting clubs occupying Council facilities will be encouraged and supported to remove graffiti in a timely manner.

Removal from Private Property

Removal of graffiti from private property is the owner's responsibility. Where graffiti on private property is observed or reported to the Council, initial contact will be made with the property owner to promptly remove graffiti from the premises. The Council however recognises that some property owners are frequent victims of vandalism and require support. In these cases the Council will assist in the following way.

Support

The Council supports a policy of Rapid Removal of graffiti. Offensive graffiti is given priority and is usually removed within 24 hours. The Council will offer practical support in removing graffiti from private property by:

- Removing graffiti from boundary fences which abut recreation reserves;
 - Providing a one off removal service of graffiti on building walls and fences which have a street abuttal, provided a consent form is signed by the owner and returned to the Graffiti officer; The Council may in exceptional circumstances provide additional assistance in removing graffiti from shopping centres;
 - Supply a graffiti removal kit/paint vouchers to residents and businesses on a one off basis to assist the owner in removing graffiti;
 - Where a structure is identified as a particular target for graffiti Council staff will work with the property owner to minimise the impact of graffiti.
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Should Council assistance be required to remove graffiti from private premises a Graffiti Removal Consent form will be required to be completed and returned to the Council.

Partnerships

The Council recognises that graffiti management requires a whole of community approach and as such commits to managing graffiti by working closely with key stakeholders as follows:

- The Council will liaise with local utility, public transport companies and/or State Government authorities to develop agreements or memorandums of understanding in relation to timely removal of graffiti from their assets.
- The Council will work with adjoining municipalities to share information and resources.
- The Council will work with relevant community groups to assist in the implementation of this policy.
- The Council will work with the Laverton Community Enterprise to assist in implementing their graffiti corridor program initiative.
- The Council will work with police to provide relevant information to apprehend offenders.
- The Council will work with key stakeholders to investigate the implementation of a shared costs graffiti removal service for local residents and businesses.

Murals and Public graffiti art

The Council supports a policy that public art must be relevant to the context in which it is made and should endure. Graffiti murals and painting of utility boxes are generally not supported due to these being out of context and ongoing maintenance costs.

The Council will continue to collaborate with local art groups that engage with young people to improve their artistic skills where peer leaders can work with young people including graffiti artists, on legal and approved community art projects, moving away from a 'graffiti' style of art. Public art projects including those on private property that are publicly visible require Council approval.
