



Minister for Industrial Relations
Minister for Commerce
Minister for Energy
Minister for Public Sector Reform

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12/5/10

Mr Ninos Khoshaba MP
Chair
Standing Committee on Public Works
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Ninos

Dear Mr Khoshaba

Thank you for your letter of 31 March 2010 regarding an inquiry into the effects of graffiti on public infrastructure.

With electrical infrastructure across the state, all three Distribution Network Service Providers – Country Energy, EnergyAustralia and Integral Energy – have developed their own internal policies and procedures for the management of graffiti across each network area.

I have attached information from Country Energy (Tab A) and EnergyAustralia (Tab B) outlining their works and efforts in combating graffiti on their assets.

I am advised that Integral Energy will be making a submission direct to the Committee.

Should the Committee require further information from Country Energy, it can contact Mr Russell Wallace, Group Manager Security and Corporate Responsibility, on (02) 6589 8951.

Should the Committee require additional information from EnergyAustralia, it can contact Mr Anthony O'Brien, Executive Manager – Corporate Communications on (02) 9269 2114.

Yours sincerely

John Robertson MLC
Minister for Energy

11/5/10

Country Energy

Background

Country Energy operates Australia's largest electricity network, with 341 zone substations, 5,777 padmount, kiosk or ground-mounted substations, 5,860 switch cubicles and 146 customer and field service centres, and many of its assets can be vulnerable to graffiti vandalism.

Social and Economic Impact of graffiti on Public Infrastructure

The cost to Country Energy and the community as a result of, and in the prevention of, graffiti vandalism is estimated at up to \$100,000 per annum, and this has remained fairly steady over the past five years.

However, costs can vary significantly according to both location – from a few hundred dollars in south eastern NSW to \$15,000 or more in northern NSW and parts of the far north coast annually – and the time of year, spiking in holiday periods.

More importantly, when applied to Country Energy's property and network infrastructure, graffiti can pose potential safety risks to the vandal and the general public, and impact on safe and reliable power supply.

Anti graffiti policies and practices to protect public infrastructure

Country Energy regularly undertakes security reviews of its assets and, in line with graffiti prevention best practice, uses:

- security lighting, cameras, fencing, vegetation and other barriers to discourage vandal access; and
- graffiti resistant materials or coatings on walls and network infrastructure in high incident areas.

To further discourage graffiti vandalism, Country Energy removes it as soon as possible – particularly in chronic high incident areas and during peak vandalism times, such as school holidays.

Its regional safety teams visit schools and community groups in high incidence areas to educate them about the risks and impacts of vandalism and proactively engage local communities to combat it.

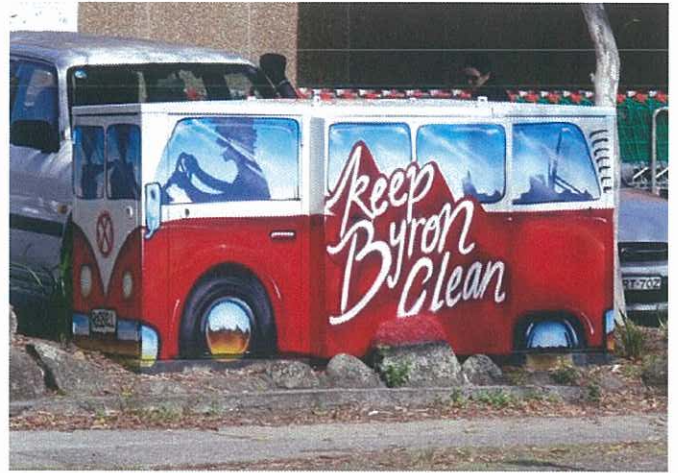
For example, in Byron Bay, Country Energy has worked with the Byron Youth Service, and the local chamber of commerce, Byron United, to involve young unemployed artists in creating innovative artwork on a number of power poles and ground-mounted substations in the CBD.

To date, the assets have not been re-vandalised and, following positive public feedback, the project has been expanded to encompass padmount and ground-mounted substations identified as graffiti hotspots at Mullumbimby, Ocean Shores, and Banora Point.

The cost of the work – around \$400 per substation – is similar to the cost of removing the graffiti once.



Before



After

The padmount substation above is located outside the Woolworths supermarket in Jonson Street, Byron Bay, and was regularly vandalised. Now, due to the partnership between Country Energy and the sponsored Byron Community Art Project, it is the subject of many favourable comments.

Other examples are shown below:



Before



After



EnergyAustralia

Background

EnergyAustralia operates 241 zone substations, 13,480 padmount, kiosk or ground-mounted substations, 40,000 switch cubicles and 60 customer and field service centres, and many of its assets can be vulnerable to graffiti vandalism.

EnergyAustralia is also a member of the Attorney General's Department's Anti-Graffiti Action Team.

Social and Economic Impact of graffiti on Public Infrastructure

EnergyAustralia spends approximately \$600,000 a year, cleaning graffiti from its assets. The majority of graffiti incidences occur on kiosk substations, positioned on public streets where it is difficult to erect fencing or barriers, however appropriate types of vegetation are planted wherever possible.

Vandalism, such as graffiti, can damage EnergyAustralia's electrical infrastructure and jeopardise the reliability of the electricity network which supplies power to more than 1.6million customers.

Vandals who graffiti electrical infrastructure are not only committing a crime, but risk electrocution and other injuries.

Anti graffiti policies and practices to protect public infrastructure

EnergyAustralia has responded to approximately 7,300 reports of graffiti over the past five years. Its website allows members of the public to report incidents of graffiti to EnergyAustralia online. EnergyAustralia is also in the process of writing to more than 300,000 households across its network with advice on how to report graffiti.

EnergyAustralia has found that the best way to deter graffiti vandals is to remove instances of graffiti quickly. It aims to remove offensive graffiti as quickly as possible – generally within a two day timeframe, and other instances of graffiti within a target of seven days.

EnergyAustralia also uses cameras and security lighting in depots and around some substations to provide added security wherever possible.

Graffiti resistant finishes and other building materials

EnergyAustralia has recently carried out a successful trial of new polysiloxane paints, designed to resist graffiti. One of the recommendations from this trial includes coating all new EnergyAustralia kiosk substations in polysiloxane paint to make the job of removing graffiti easier, which will result in reduced cleaning time and operating costs.

Existing kiosks due for re-painting would also be coated in this graffiti-resistant paint to improve productivity and control and costs.