

Manly Council



Your Ref: Letter 300310 - Graffiti
Our Ref: 120881/XDVC-VENW/BL

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

Dear Mr Khoshaba,

**Re: Manly Council submission to Legislative Assembly's
Standing Committee on Public Works**

On behalf of Manly Council, please find Council's submission on the effects of Graffiti on Public Infrastructure.

For additional information please contact Ms Beth Lawsen, Divisional Manager, Human Services and Facilities on 02 9976 1513 or records@manly.nsw.gov.au.

Yours sincerely,

Beth Lawsen
Divisional Manager
Human Services and Facilities

Dated: 10/5/2010
(encl.)

CLEANER HEALTHIER HAPPIER

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Manly Council submission to Legislative Assembly's
Standing Committee on Public Works

Submission on the effects of Graffiti on Public Infrastructure
May 2010

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Manly Council welcomes the opportunity to make this submission on the effects of graffiti on public infrastructure to the Legislative Assembly's Standing Committee on Public Works.

Introduction

Public perceptions of crime are just as important as statistics. Feeling safe where you live is one of the most important life quality indicators in a community. The Manly Social Plan needs analysis of social indicators has revealed that community safety was a top order issue, especially for older and young people and women of all ages, who feel at risk.

Reasons for people feeling unsafe were:

- Poor lighting
- Lack of police presence
- Poorly maintained area which includes graffiti vandalism in the built environment

Whilst the Manly LGA is a relatively safe place and currently holds a safe reputation for visitors it is important that this perception is maintained as safety is a paramount consideration for tourists, when choosing a destination.

Manly Council's graffiti management information, along with other crime prevention strategy, is about asking the community to make every effort to keep the appearance of their property clean and neat. An exterior appearance that suggests apathy and neglect including graffiti, litter, broken fences, overgrown landscaping, and poor lighting all send a message that property owners are not attentive or do not care. Council encourages the creation of safe and attractive youth friendly spaces to ensure 'ownership'.

In terms of the impact of graffiti on public infrastructure, this impact will have a flow-on effect of how a community views a public building and how they wish to use it. If the community see repeated attacks of graffiti, no matter how rapidly Council can remove it, it will eventually lead to a reduced sense of comfort in using a facility which has been affected by such anti-social behaviour. The community will feel that if offenders can easily graffiti a public building, they capable of doing other damage.

Many community groups regularly use public facilities and have a strong sense of ownership over these facilities. Graffiti damage to a building is similar to the sense of space being invaded, as when an owner experiences a break and enter, and the outrage felt by communities is similar.

Manly Council supports a policy of rapid removal of graffiti vandalism. Rapidly removing graffiti affects the community's perception of the area and its value.

Graffiti vandalism detracts from the visual image and creates a feeling of an unsafe community.

1. The Manly Experience

Manly Council "Report Graffiti" program informs the community to: *Report Graffiti, Illegal Graffiti is a Criminal offence and you should report it*

To manage Graffiti removal and engage the community in an awareness program, in October 2009 Manly Council adopted the principles of **Engage, Remove** and **Educate**.

A program kit of information including policy, reporting, management of removal, rewards criteria, frequently asked questions, a poster and post card was produced for distribution to ratepayers and to a wide range of businesses, schools, sporting and life saving clubs, local utilities and authorities and community groups.

The Graffiti Awareness campaign was launched by the Mayor of Manly, on 30th April 2010 in co-operation with Manly Police, Manly Rangers, Council staff, contractors, precinct community representatives and the Telstra authority at their site in Manly.

2. Manly Council's Graffiti Awareness program

Engage

Manly Council adopted new Graffiti Management and Graffiti Reward Policies in October 2009. Council resolved to conduct a campaign to raise community awareness regarding the policies and Manly Council launched the Graffiti awareness campaign to combat graffiti vandalism on Friday 30 April 2010.

- The Graffiti community awareness campaign is being introduced to the Manly Community through its Precinct Community Forums at their monthly meetings.
- Precinct Communities were invited to the April launch, received copies of the Graffiti Awareness Program for information and to display posters at relevant local venues and in their community notice boards.
- Council's Customer Request System (CRM) reports and records graffiti incidents for actioning by the Works teams in their daily patrols of the facilities.
- Council's **Tell Us** email address, located on the website in the tab, Contact us.
- Council's **Graffiti hot line** 9976 1633, receives information from the community to alert to the need for removal.

Remove

Council's operations employ a dual strategy for graffiti removal, by engaging Council staff and contractors in the removal work.

Contractors are employed to patrol Council's public amenities and buildings in the high visibility business and tourism locations in The Corso CBD area, from 4.00am Monday to Friday, 52 weeks per year. These contractors act on any graffiti observed by photographing the tags, prioritising the cleaning of the surfaces and repainting, if necessary.

Contractors register the location, building and area sq. metres which has been removed in a monthly report to Council.

Council's Civic and Urban Services staff, Works and Parks and Cleansing teams report graffiti identified in the suburban centres, facilities and on infrastructure to the Works team. The Works team photograph the graffiti and place a works order for removal of Graffiti from the facility. The graffiti is removed within works schedules.

If offensive graffiti is reported, Council will make a rapid removal decision based on the location and level of offence.

The Graffiti data is recorded and these records are held in Civic and Urban Services for both contractors and Works staff removal of graffiti.

Educate

The Education and information material to report Graffiti has been produced in both poster and post card format as part of the Graffiti Awareness project kit.

Graffiti Post Cards will be included in rate notices for the July 2010 distribution to each rate payer in Manly, providing a clear quick reference to reporting, policies, frequently asked questions, information sheets and removal.

The Graffiti awareness program kits are currently being distributed to Service clubs, Precinct Community Forums, the Manly Liquor Accord, Chambers of Commerce, Primary and High schools, Youth Groups, local Authorities, Public Health, Police, Rangers, Customer Service Centres, Commercial centres and Banks.

3. Response to Graffiti

Social and economic impact of Graffiti on public infrastructure

Manly Council has expended considerable amounts of ratepayer funds to address the ongoing vandalism of graffiti on its infrastructure in the public arena and advises and encourages residents, local authorities, schools and businesses of the need to address this anti social activity.

The cost to the ratepayer of removing graffiti remains high and occupies Council resources, Police, the judicial system and the community. Conversely, it provides work for contractors and staff who are engaged in the activity. It also increases the sale of products, paints cleaning equipment and vehicles.

Expenditure in the past 5 years has increased as follows:

\$34,545 in 2005/06
\$45,019 in 2006/07
\$92,270 in 2007/08
\$76,373 in 2008/09
\$85,000 budgeted for the year 2009/2010

In 2009/10 for the year to date, Council has expended \$53,000 on contractors, with an expenditure of up to \$100,000 anticipated, for the total costs of graffiti removal by both Council Works staff and Contractors.

The area of Graffiti measured in sq. metres as removed by Council's Operational Works staff from public infrastructure in the general suburban areas of Manly for the period March 2009 to April 2010 is recorded as follows:

March 2009	191
April 2009	354
May 2009	326.5
June 2009	180
July 2009	369
August 2009	449.5
September 2009	113
October 2009	340
November 2009	336
December 2009	194.5
January 2010	129.5
February 2010	166.5
March 2010	605
April 2010	<u>241.5</u>
Total	3996m2

Anti graffiti policies and practices to protect Public Infrastructure

Council's adoption and distribution of the Graffiti Policy and information to the community raises the awareness, informs the community of the actions which they can take and strengthens the ability of communities to manage local areas with the Council and other agencies.

Manly Council actively encourages the community to use Council's graffiti hotline on **9976 1633** and Telstra's number **180 22 44** to report graffiti on Council and Telstra property. To report graffiti on private property, residents are encouraged to call the Police Assistance Line on **131 444**.

If an offence is witnessed while occurring, people are advised to contact Manly Police immediately on **9977 9499**.

Manly Council encourages early reporting of graffiti and is calling on the public to report graffiti vandalism as promptly as possible.

Graffiti resistant finishes

Sacrificial coatings to the facility enable removal however are expensive and require reapplication after each incident and over time, due to the breakdown of the products.

High pressure cleaning and repainting have proved to be equally as effective in removal.

Council has a policy of rapid removal of graffiti on Council property, as research shows that graffiti removal within 24 to 48 hours significantly reduces the chance of graffiti re-occurring.

Rapid removal denies the graffiti vandal the peer-group kudos and recognition they crave, and sends a clear message that graffiti will not be tolerated. Graffiti is easier to remove before the paint has dried.

Relevant Issues

Graffiti vandalism not only devalues property, it also gives the impression that no one cares about the neighbourhood, which, in turn, creates an open invitation for littering, loitering and further vandalism.

Manly Council's graffiti management information, along with other crime prevention agency advice, is about asking the community to make every effort to keep the appearance of their property clean and neat.

An exterior appearance that suggests apathy and neglect including graffiti, litter, broken fences, overgrown landscaping, and poor lighting all send a message that property owners are not attentive or do not care. Council encourages the creation of safe and attractive youth friendly spaces to ensure 'ownership' and works with sporting and lifesaving facilities as well as youth council representative to ensure opportunity and acceptable community standards for public infrastructure is maintained.

Manly Council's community information on graffiti is available at Council's Customer Service counter, and also on Manly Council's website: <http://www.manly.nsw.gov.au/Graffiti.html>

4. Recommendations

- Encourage and provide the Community with a Report Graffiti program which is easy to use, and has responsive reporting systems that deliver action.
- Painting out the graffiti on painted surfaces is less expensive than cleaning.
- Cleaning with gurney treatment is more effective on stone and unpainted concrete surfaces.
- Involvement of the Community in reporting can alert Council and authorities; for quick removal response.
- Work and communicate with Principals of the local high schools by holding several meetings per year, aiming to engage their support, understanding and communication with students and parents on the illegal activity of graffiti vandalism.
- Work with youth council and the Police to ensure good communication between the parties.
- Offer government grants to Community groups to provide for their training, equipment and materials to facilitate removal in local areas

Attachments

1. Photographs taken in Manly – April 30th.
2. Manly Council Graffiti Awareness program kit and community information materials.

For contact with Manly Council, please address your correspondence to:

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Mr H T Wong
P O Box 82 MANLY NSW 1655

Attention to:
Ms Beth Lawsen
Divisional Manager
Human Services and Facilities

Or by email to records@manly.nsw.gov.au
Phone 9976 1513



Mayor Jean Hay speaks with Manly police Superintendent Dave Darcy during the launch of the Manly Council Graffiti Campaign on 30th April, 2010.



Graffiti on concrete wall



As cleaned by Gurney – most effective method on stone concrete and unpainted surfaces.



