

## Social and Economic Impact

Council continues to remove graffiti on public infrastructure in accordance with the service standards set out in its adopted Graffiti Policy shown attached as AT 1. Staff estimate that the economic cost of removing graffiti for the last two years has been approximately \$100,000. During the current financial year staff and contractors have removed 1689 m2 of graffiti. Graffiti on public infrastructure has a huge impact on the look and feel of our area, particularly in the CBD. Over the years, Council has undertaken many projects to improve the visual amenity and atmosphere of our area and graffiti on public infrastructure causes a large social impact and limits the effectiveness of these projects.

## Anti-Graffiti Policies and Practices

Council on 1 September 2008, adopted a Graffiti Policy and Management Plan shown below.

Council for many years has had a Graffiti hotline for the reporting of graffiti in our area, this hotline is checked regularly and the messages are passed onto staff for action. Staff and contractors enter into the Australian Graffiti Register the location and square metres of graffiti which is removed.

## Anti Graffiti Practices

A number of Council's plans and policies attempt to address the anti-social behaviour of graffiti. The Graffiti Policy includes under the section Council's responsibilities, the following two objectives:-

- Open Space and Urban Services and Human Services, in association with Lane Cove Alive, will develop and communicate graffiti prevention initiatives and include an educational component in any youth services activities associated with graffiti/aerosol art projects; and
- Council will also support educational programs which are conducted in schools based on anti-graffiti education awareness and prevention programs.

Council's Social Plan, attempts to address the issue through education and murals. Prevention approaches are primarily delivered through the Youth Centre. The Centre undertakes education and facilitates legal opportunities through youth art projects. The previous Social Plan's action to create a youth art mural was very successful (2006). Funds have been included in the 2010-2011 Budget to redo the pool wall with a mural. An excerpt of the plan is shown below.

## Graffiti Resistant Finishes

Lane Cove Council has been using anti-graffiti coatings on its buildings for the past ten years, and possibly longer. The coatings are a non-sacrificial type of protection. These coatings either form a coating over the top paint coat or form the top coat themselves. They prevent the graffiti from adhering to the paint under them and allow it to be pressure cleaned or wiped clean with an appropriate solution. Council does not use sacrificial type coatings as these need to be re-applied after each incident.

## **Conclusion**

Council has put in place a number of mechanisms to reduce Graffiti in our local area. This information could be beneficial to the inquiry being run by the NSW Legislative Assembly's Standing Committee on Public Works.

## **Graffiti Policy**

Adopted 1 September 2008

### **Objectives**

- To enhance the built and natural environment by reducing the incidence of graffiti within Lane Cove.
- To remove graffiti as quickly as practicable as a strict deterrent.
- To work with neighbouring Councils and other tiers of government in reducing graffiti.
- To work with the Police, the community, local organisations and government agencies in identifying graffiti offenders and in dealing with them via legal and other means such as training or community service programs.
- To develop a partnership with appropriate local organisations which involve young people as partners and advisors in reducing graffiti.
- To support proactive education strategies that are designed to decrease the incidence of graffiti.

### **Policy**

#### Purpose

This policy provides Council with a framework through which to respond to the proliferation of graffiti in Lane Cove. It provides a set of principles covering the removal of current and future graffiti from public places, and prescribes actions and conditions that may contribute to a reduction in the amount of new graffiti.

#### Background

This policy has been formulated in recognition of the continuing prevalence of graffiti within Lane Cove. The presence of graffiti is of ongoing concern to the general community as well as to Council, for its adverse impact on the environment, streetscape amenity and for the cost of removal.

#### Scope

The policy provides guidelines for Council staff and contractors to follow in responding to graffiti on Council property. Because Council cannot compel private landowners to remove graffiti, it is largely dependant on public cooperation, goodwill and financial capacity to achieve an overall reduction of graffiti in Lane Cove. Amendments to the Local Government Act Chapter 6, Part 3, Division 4, Graffiti Removal, Clauses 67A, 67B, 67C permit Councils to remove graffiti with owners' permission.

#### Principles

Council recognizes the following principles:

- The value of programs which focus on the prevention of graffiti before it occurs as being complementary to those aimed at removing it once it has been applied.

- The need for a continuing program to remove the graffiti from its own property and to encourage its removal from private property.
- That all measures taken to remove graffiti need to be cost effective.
- The importance of developing and maintaining community partnerships to assist in the effort to reduce graffiti. This particularly applies to the reporting of graffiti and the identifying of potential legal artwork sites.
- That any strategy to reduce the incidence of graffiti should contain an enforcement element so as to ensure that serious offenders are appropriately dealt with through the proper legal channels.
- Council will involve young people in its anti-graffiti program.
- The need to help enforce an environment in which young people are valued and their needs are integral to local planning. Such actions support an environment where graffiti is minimized.

### Removal

Council will remove graffiti from the following;

1. Council property;
2. Community leasehold sites – free of charge to the lessee

Council, where possible, will encourage property owners to remove graffiti from private property.

Council staff and contractors are to remove graffiti in accordance with the following removal timeframes. This policy also applies to graffiti on bus shelters that are maintained by Council's contractor.

#### **PRIORITY 1**

- Removal within 24 hours  
Applies to sites with obscene, racist or other offensive material.

#### **PRIORITY 2**

- Removal within 10 working days  
Applies to sites of low visibility and small amounts of graffiti.

Council will undertake the removal of graffiti on private property where a signed agreement by the property owner has been completed. All private property graffiti removals will be excluded from the priority listing unless written consent from the owner has been completed in advance.

### Responsibilities

- Council's Open Space & Urban Services Division, in association with Lane Cove Alive, will work together on graffiti prevention initiatives.

- Open Space and Urban Services and Human Services, in association with Lane Cove Alive, will develop and communicate graffiti prevention initiatives and include an educational component in any youth services activities associated with graffiti/aerosol art projects.
- Council will also support educational programs which are conducted in schools based on anti-graffiti education awareness and prevention programs.
- The Open Space & Urban Services division is responsible for graffiti removal in accordance with the removal timeframes, and for developing the necessary operational procedures to support the removal requirements.
- Funding for the removal of graffiti on Council owned property will be provided from the Sustainability Levy's Village Graffiti Reduction budget.
- Graffiti removal from private property in the Village, under signed agreement will be provided, in part, from Lane Cove Alive's Economic Sustainability allocation of Council's Sustainability Levy

#### Related Policies and Plans/ Legislation

- Public Art Policy.
- Graffiti is identified as a crime under the Crimes Act 1900 and the Summary Offences Act 1988.
- Sustainability Levy Plan - Lane Cove Alive - Rapid Removal Graffiti Project
- Lane Cove Alive Strategic Plan
- Plaza Maintenance

#### Reporting

- The community and Council staff are encouraged to report graffiti to Open Space and Urban Services Division.
- Council supports a working partnership with the local Police, Lane Cove Alive and encourages the reporting of graffiti offences.
- Public Reporting - Graffiti Hotline - [www.lanecove.nsw.gov.au](http://www.lanecove.nsw.gov.au)

#### Murals

- Murals on Council property are covered under the Public Art Policy. All requests regarding murals and other artwork must be referred to Lane Cove Council's Executive Manager, Human Services.



# Graffiti Management Plan

Adopted 1 September 2008



Lane Cove Council

# Introduction

## What is a Graffiti Management Plan?

A Graffiti Management Plan is Council's public statement concerning graffiti; what it is, how it is regarded locally, strategies adopted to deal with it, the resources needed, and the partners with whom Council works on the issue.

## Definitions

Graffiti: Drawings, names and/or words written on walls of public buildings, infrastructure and equipment, such as railway rolling stock, and on private property such as billboards, wall of buildings, fences, etc. It may be obscene or political, or it may not make any sense at all to the casual observer. In NSW all graffiti on public or private property, unless the property owner has given permission, is a criminal offence.

Offenders Profile: Most profiling shows that offenders are usually aged between 15 and 25 years and overwhelmingly male; females account for little more than 5%. Rebellion is a key motivation, also a desire to be recognised, to be part of a group. Other reasons may include 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.

Hip Hop Graffiti: Hip hop is a strand of youth culture attracted to rap music, break dancing and its own language style. Graffiti is integral to Hip Hop but not all graffitiists are part of Hip Hop sub-culture.

Tagging: A tag is a graffiti writer's signature. Tags occur randomly and are created primarily by felt pen (permanent marker or spray paint). More recent versions are the mild "dusties" (finger drawn) and the very damaging scratches made by sharp objects such as bottle tops.

Legal walls and murals: Legal Graffiti walls are those venues which are provided for aerosol painting which have limited or little supervision. Legal walls provide greater accessibility for painting for more time and more people. They provide an opportunity for less experienced painters to legally improve skills, thus reducing the need to illegally tag. Graffiti murals are those aerosol paintings which are commissioned by private organisations or carried out as community arts projects by local councils and community groups.

## **Scope of Plan**

This plan discusses graffiti on private and public property, including property belonging to other levels of government, occurring within the Lane Cove LGA. Statistics are collected on graffiti occurrence on public property but not on private property unless the owner of the property involved has entered into a written Agreement with Council for removal. Progress on the Plan will be reported annually.

## **Aims and Objectives**

- To enhance the quality of the Lane Cove built environment by limiting the appearance of graffiti;
- To improve safety of young people by reducing their involvement in graffiti
- To work with other levels of government to reduce graffiti
- To develop affordable means of assisting the community to take a proactive approach to the removal of graffiti from private property.

## **Graffiti Management**

### **Scale of the problem in Lane Cove**

In 2006/07 approximately 285 square metres of graffiti was removed from public buildings and other Council facilities. All parts of the LGA are affected, particularly in the Lane Cove Town Centre and the St Leonards Commercial Precinct. A large part of this graffiti is on private property that is in highly visible areas.

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

### **Cost of Removal**

Graffiti removal cost Council about \$18,500 in the 2006/07 year at approximately \$65 per square metre. Prior to 2008, both contract and Council's day labour was utilised for graffiti removal. From 2008, only day labour is proposed to be used, with no expected increase in cost.

## **Partners in the Plan**

Council's partners in the Graffiti Management Plan are:

- Chatswood Police
- Lane Cove Alive
- Lane Cove Youth Advisory Committee
- The community



## **Strategies**

### **Removal from Public Buildings and Other Structures**

Council currently administers graffiti removal from public buildings. Council generally removes graffiti within a week of it being reported and often within 24 hours where resources permit. Weekly inspections are made of bus shelters and carparks. Council parks are inspected fortnightly, and reports are responded to within a week. This service is advertised through Council's homepage. Staff and the general public are encouraged to report graffiti whenever observed. Reporting can be in writing, or by phone, fax or email. Details

### **Education**

Council has redrafted the State Government brochures on "graffiti prevention and removal" into the one document. Copies of this are held in print and forwarded to residents who make enquiries. This is a very practical booklet which to some extent allows the public to manage graffiti issues on their own. The booklet also advises properly owners of the opportunity to sign up for council's free removal of graffiti program.

### **Working Directly with Young People**

Council's Youth Centre maintains a strong anti-graffiti policy through a positive promotion of aerosol art. This includes regular structured art programs facilitated by an experienced and well respected artist.

The Youth Centre runs a variety of recreation and education programs to address youth issues, including illegal graffiti vandalism. They include:

- Community involvement
- Promoting a positive image of young people in the community
- Development of positive peer group influences
- Development of job and living skills

### **Murals**

The Youth Centre has successfully completed murals at the Youth Centre in Little Street, at the Lane Cove Public School, and in the Clancy's alley way, following negotiation with the organisations involved. One limiting factor on murals is funding with several recent applications to the State Government going unrewarded, as Lane Cove is not recognised as a heavily affected area. There is capacity in the Youth Centre to provide a tutor and team for a one reasonable sized mural per year. There is usually some interest (and some opposition) from the community, which needs to be negotiated through.

## **Removal from Property Not Belonging to Council**

### **Property Belonging to the Utilities**

Council has successfully negotiated with the authorities the introduction of community service orders for removal of graffiti. The exceptions are Energy Australia structures, for safety reasons.. Instead Council provides a list of graffiti affected areas to Energy Australia on a regular basis.

These arrangements are effected by formal correspondence. No legal agreements have been entered into.

### **Private Property Adjoining Public Spaces**

Amendments to the Local Government Act Chapter 6, Part 3, Division 4 (Graffiti Removal Work) Clauses 67A, 67B, 67C, permit councils to remove graffiti – with owners' or occupants' permission.

This is the option that Council will consider in February 2008. Legal agreements will be drawn up and adopted by way of delegated authority of the General Manager. Inspections will be made weekly. A register of this work will be kept, listing:

- The owner or occupier of the premises on which the graffiti appears, and
- The nature of the work carried out, and
- The actual cost, or an estimate of the cost at current market rates, of carrying out the work, and
- In the case of graffiti removal work carried out in accordance with section 67A – the actual amount charged by the Council for carrying out the work.

Graffiti removal without agreement of owner or occupier: Council has not resolved to go down this path. There are several qualifications to this power as set out in the Act, including:

- The removal must be carried out from a public place (ie. The structure must be built to the boundary).
- Council must bear the cost of removal
- Council must pay compensation for any damage caused.

### **Free Removal from Private Property**

In 2008, Council in association with Lane Cove Alive will commence a program, in the Town Centre/Village and elsewhere in Lane Cove, offering free removal of graffiti from private property. Formerly applying only to Council owned facilities, the service will now be available to all property owners. A Legal Agreement still needs to be entered into, a copy of which can be downloaded from Council's website, or obtained through contacting Council's Customer Support Team. This increased service level is being offered to the community as quick removal and is understood to result in less graffiti. Council's expenditure under the new program will be funded from Council's Sustainability Levy, as initiated by Lane Cove Alive.

### **Community Consultation**

This Management Plan has been drafted after several years experience in responding to reports of graffiti, and developing and testing programs designed to reduce graffiti at source. Officers have developed Council's strategies after consultation with Lane Cove Alive, the Police, the Youth Advisory Committee and representatives of relevant State Government authorities. This Plan is to be placed on public exhibition and feedback solicited.

### **Bibliography**

NSW Graffiti Solutions Handbook, Premier's Department, New South Wales, July 2000.

## **From the Youth Social Plan 2010-14:**

### **4.1.2 Arts and Culture**

Fostering young people's artistic and cultural talents is also needed, linking them to the growing cultural opportunities in and around Lane Cove. There is currently a good range of opportunities available in Lane Cove, via the Youth Centre, private sector or school (eg dance, drama). Lane Cove does not have the population size or specialised staff skill base required to organise some art forms (eg short film competitions), however they can be accessed elsewhere on the Lower North Shore.

There is a need for young people to have a legitimate form of self expression in Lane Cove, including opportunities for public art and the performance of popular music and dance. Whilst the Shoreshocked Festival ceased in 2007 (for various reasons), Council has instigated band nights every term. The four Councils previously involved in Shoreshocked are examining doing something in 2010 for Youth Week.

There has been a perception that some of their avenues of expression are at odds with the community. For instance, graffiti art may be perceived by some in Lane Cove as a violent act against public or private property. Many young people perceive it as creative art. "Graffiti seems to be of the highest concern in regions without other major public order concerns." (NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research). Council provides a 24hr. hotline for the reporting of incidences of graffiti and for rapid removal of graffiti.

Whilst it is undoubtedly an issue, and does impose a notable financial burden on Council to clean off graffiti, it is not a significant issue relative to other localities. Graffiti was not raised as an issue during consultation meetings. Discussions with young people suggest that only a small number of youth appear to be involved<sup>12</sup>, and that not all are residents. However, a small number of offenders can have a disproportionate and widespread effect.

Prevention approaches are primarily delivered through the Youth Centre. The Centre undertakes education and facilitates legal opportunities through youth art projects. The previous Social Plan's action to create a youth art mural was very successful (2006). During the life of this Plan there will be a need to repeat this project. Council will continue to implement its graffiti removal policy, in coordination with Lane Cove ALIVE.

Youth are a vital and active part of the arts and cultural scene whose issues need to be catered for. The Youth Centre should remain responsive to local interests and requests. The Centre currently run seminars on arts which reflect youth interests. Council will continue to implement the recommendations of its Cultural Plan.

This info is what we put into our brief for a **Call for expressions of interest for the engagement of an aerosol artist to undertake a youth art mural project in Lane Cove.**

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<sup>1</sup> A view supported by just 10 youth getting involved in the mural arts project.

<sup>2</sup> Crime statistics and research identifies that a notable proportion of offenders are older adults.

## INTRODUCTION

Lane Cove Council wishes to employ a suitably qualified aerosol artist to undertake a youth art mural project at Synergy Youth Centre. A Youth Art Mural in the Lane Cove area is needed due to a lack of public space for young people to creatively identify with their local area. Lane Cove has minimal public art and it has been identified as a need through various avenues such as Council's Social, Cultural and Management Plans.

A Youth Art Mural on the Youth Centre basketball court wall would give local young people a sense of belonging, pride and purpose. This mural would give young people skills in different areas and be a good way to promote the Youth Centre and its activities to other local young people. The project would assist in bonding Lane Cove youth to the Youth Centre, each other and the community.

Council is seeking the services of a professional aerosol artist to undertake the project in consultation with the Youth Services Team with the design being signed off by the General Manager following the development of ideas and concept plans.

### 1.1 Aim

To provide a youth art mural that serves as a creative outlet for young people, whereby the process involved contributes to young people's skills base. The mural design would increase public awareness of diverse elements of youth culture in Lane Cove and contribute to the aesthetics of public space in the area.

### OBJECTIVES

The youth mural will:

- Limit the incidence of graffiti damage in the area, by offering an alternative to street vandalism for local youth artists and other young people.
- Provide local youth artists and other young people an opportunity to develop and refine their skills and existing talents.
- Improve awareness of youth culture and young people's talents.
- Provide a safe, fun and supportive environment for young people to express themselves creatively.
- Assist young people in gaining interpersonal skills through group development of the mural concept
- Encourage young people to build worthwhile links to other similarly interested people and thereby build a sense of cultural cohesion.
- Give young people a sense of pride in a public space that they actively and positively contributed to.
- Improve the aesthetic appeal of the wall adjoining the basketball court with a relevant message on public display.

### PROCESS

In order to undertake the mural, once a mural artist is selected, the following would need to be done:

- Organisation of a consultative workshop with the mural artist, young people and Youth Services staff to discuss and develop ideas and themes for the mural.

- Run training workshops to assist young people with skill development in aerosol art.
- Prepare and submit the proposed mural design to the General Manager for approval prior to the painting of the mural commencing.
- Over three weekends, participants will create a large mural on the Youth Centre wall adjoining the basketball court. The Artist will participate in and supervise this activity.
- Publicise and launch the project

## **ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

Creating a professional image that is positive and aesthetically pleasing, whilst not being confrontational or anti-social in any way.

The design of the mural should be based around developing a theme that is a non-confrontational series of images that represents a sense of community, inclusion and diversity whilst looking professional and instilling a sense of pride by creating positive images of youth culture. The artist should also be aware of some of the sensitivities that surround aerosol art within the community.

Addressing OH&S and legal issues.

Appropriate Personal Protective Equipment will be supplied to the artist and participants, in particular face masks. During the workshop and painting process the artist shall discuss OH&S issues and how to paint safely. The artist should clearly state what kind of safety equipment is needed for the project and include that in their costings. During the workshop, the artist shall also discuss with the participants the issues of copyright, attribution and moral rights, and ensure that each participant understands Council's position (also see below).