

WYONG SHIRE COUNCIL

Graffiti Submission – The Legislative Assembly's Standing Committee on Public Works

The Social and Economic Impact of Graffiti on Public Infrastructure

The term 'Graffiti' generally refers to illegally defacing private and public property with markings and/or graphics without the owners consent.

Fact sheet 1: Managing graffiti vandalism in NSW

If minor offences such as a Broken Window or graffiti are taken care of by residents reporting to police and taking action against crime, then social order will follow. As a consequence, if they are ignored, more serious crime occurs which perpetuates fear.

Wilson and Kelling (cited in Xu, 2005) Broken Windows Theory

Wyong Shire Council embarked on an extensive consultation process for its Community Plan (2008) that included a CSIRO 'Quality of Life' survey process. The consultations and surveys highlight residents need for a safe community as we move towards the future.

This is an interesting fact as statistically Wyong Shire overall has low criminal activity. However, the community has a perception of not being safe. Various studies show that one of the elements that contribute towards such a perception is graffiti vandalism. There has been a growing concern in Wyong Shire about increased amounts of graffiti in our neighbourhoods. As a result it became evident that a strategic approach to Graffiti Management was required.

Community concerns about the presence of graffiti include:

- As mentioned above it creates fear in the community (particularly among the elderly) as residents come to believe that our streets are not safe.
- A negative impact on Community Pride because of the presentation of the suburbs.
- The cost of removing the graffiti for community members as well as for businesses and local government, especially when it is so constant.

Anti Graffiti Policies and Practices to Protect Public Infrastructure

In 2008, in response to the many incidences of graffiti throughout the Shire, a report on graffiti management was tabled to Council. Recommendations included one full-time dedicated resource and offensive wording to be removed within 48 hours. Council has a database with details of all places graffiti is removed from.

It was decided that Council can not resolve the Graffiti issue alone nor is it exclusively a Council issue. Rather it was agreed this represented a whole of community problem that should be tackled as a partnership: Council, Police, Business and Community could have an impact. Representatives of these four groups therefore have met to work together in developing a policy document with strategies and an accompanying Tool Kit.

The strategy covers the main aspects of a multi faceted approach and includes:

- Recording and monitoring graffiti: A register has been set up within Council, providing the location, size and cost of removal.
- Rapid removal: Council's current procedure is the removal of graffiti using offensive language within 48 hours and removal of general graffiti on council premises within 2 weeks.
- Training in Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED): Principles for reducing the incidence of repeat graffiti. CPTED principles aim to prevent and manage graffiti vandalism by; Surveillance and lighting, Access Control, and Coating and Surfaces.
- Community Engagement: Council is inviting the community as a whole to work with them in partnership on graffiti. Stronger working relationships are being enhanced between Police, Council, Businesses and the Community in order to maximise the impact of graffiti removal.
- Community Education: Council's strategies aim to increase awareness about the processes of reporting to Police and to Council, provide information on methods to remove graffiti, and to provide Graffiti Prevention Fact Sheets for community members and business owners.

Anti Graffiti Practices such as Mural Painting Programs Employed by NSW State and Local Government Agencies

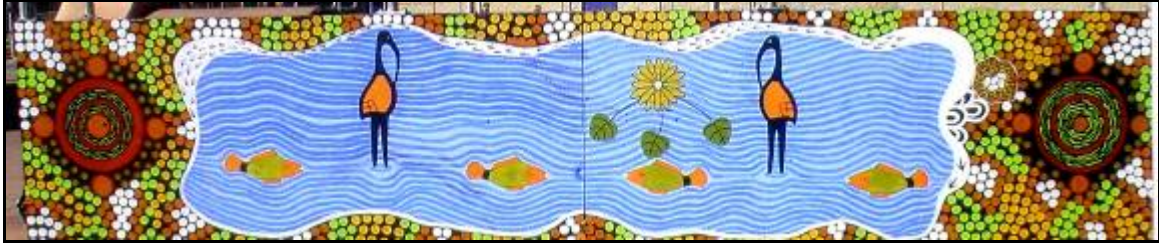
In late 2003 two Graffiti Walls were constructed through a motion of Council as a trial to help combat a recognised graffiti problem. One location was chosen for its close proximity to a Skate Park and Youth Centre and because the surrounding areas had a history of graffiti, and at the time, a high level of anti social behaviour. It was considered that a graffiti wall within close proximity to a large youth centre and highly frequented public space would place the wall under public surveillance and provide opportunities for aerosol art workshops that have an anti graffiti vandalism education component. A sign with the conditions of the legal graffiti wall was erected approximately 2 metres from both walls.

Evidence gathered at the Skate Park and Youth Centre would indicate that the legal wall didn't work. Despite several graffiti art workshops, held over a five year period, there was no development of artistic skills evident and no improvement in graffiti vandalism. Although the intention to allow the locals, specifically young people, a legal place to exercise their "aerosol art" as an artistic expression and as an alternative to graffiti vandalism, in reality Council has deemed the concept of graffiti walls a failure.

Although initially confining the graffiti vandalism to a smaller area, it had increased the frequency of the vandalism in the first location. The second legal wall was located in an open sports complex and patronised by some capable graffiti artists from the outset. It was located away from all other building walls and trees and did not create the above disturbance.

Both walls however were removed. Wyong Shire Council and Police views were that graffiti walls had given permission for aerosol cans to be brought into the area without scrutiny.

Whilst workshops on the legal graffiti walls have not made any notable impact in kerbing graffiti vandalism, community murals prepared with Council permission, on the back walls of the adjacent skate park ramps have been respected. These have been a success and still to this day remain untagged or defaced. The mural below is one example of a mural by permission and has been in place for 5 years in the Skate Park only 15 meters away from where the Legal Graffiti wall was located and it has never been tagged or defaced. Aerosol paints were not used on this mural.



Producing quality murals can be a great opportunity to get the community involved in graffiti prevention. Murals can involve local artists, youth and community volunteers, local schools, community organisations or Clubs. When services associated with the Youth Centre and Community Park have held supervised programs involving a recognised artist or a supervised workshop to create a meaningful mural, those murals have been respected and have not attracted vandalism. This means these walls are protected.

Lake Haven Legal Graffiti Wall, Dec 2008 Review

Graffiti Resistant finishes and Other Building Materials Suitable for Public Infrastructure

The chemicals that Council uses are too strong for general use. Council was exploring the following as a possible chemical that could be used in a Graffiti Kit, however this year Council came across a product that looked simple to use called Scrubs and was recommended by a community interest group. Keep Australia Beautiful recently held a Graffiti Action Day Campaign which utilised the So Safe products. Local community groups had a chance to use this chemical and were pleased with the results. See Information on these products below.

Technical Data Information

ELCO Remove-it

ELCO Remove-it is an ORGANIC, environmentally friendly, biodegradable, non caustic cleaner for the removal of most spray enamels, acrylics, permanent markers and lipstick off surfaces such as metal, stainless steel, ceramic tiles, porcelain, formica, timber, brick, concrete, natural stone and most surfaces treated with graffiti resistant coatings.

Always use ONLY ELCO REMOVE-IT on surfaces coated with ELCO TUFF COAT.

HOW TO USE REMOVE-IT

- **STEP 1** - Ensure that the surface and cleaning utensils (brushes, cloths etc) are completely dry and clean prior to removal.
- **STEP 2** - Commence removal work at the base and work upwards if on a vertical surface. Apply REMOVE-IT and work on small areas at a time. Agitate surface lightly with a stiff, natural bristle brush and gradually work REMOVE-IT into surface. **DO NOT SCRUB!**
- **STEP 3** - Leave REMOVE-IT on for approximately 3-5 minutes. The ORGANIC compounds within REMOVE-IT will soften and do all the work.
- **STEP 4** - For stubborn or thick paint, apply additional REMOVE-IT and continue to work on this area with brushes.
- **STEP 5** - Wipe away any residue with dry, clean cloths continuing in a "spray and wipe" operation applying more REMOVE-IT until the surface is thoroughly clean.
- **STEP 6** - Once clean ELCO REMOVE-IT **MUST BE NEUTRALISED** with water otherwise it will remain active and may damage your protective coating so wipe the cleaned surface thoroughly with a damp cloth or if possible, wash surface.

N.B. For best results on porous surfaces use Remove-it in conjunction with pressure cleaning equipment

- The less time that the graffiti is allowed to cure on the surface, the easier it will be to remove.
- **DO NOT** at any time use scourers, steel wool or abrasives in conjunction with this product. Permanent and irreversible damage will be caused if this important note is ignored.
- **ALWAYS** test REMOVE-IT on a small area first to ensure that no adverse reaction occurs with the surface.
- Read the detailed instructions on data sheets and product labels prior to use. If you have any problems following these guidelines then do not hesitate to contact us for assistance.

TECHNICAL HELP LINE.

If you require any further information or have any questions please call us on toll free 1800 675 650 and speak to one of our experienced staff.

The statements above are compiled from our field of production and according to the latest technological developments and application techniques. Since application and working are beyond our control, no liability of the producer can be derived from the contents of this information sheet. ELCO International Pty Ltd and associated group of companies shall not be responsible for any damage or injury resulting from abnormal use of the material, from any failure to adhere or observe the recommendations, or from any hazards inherent in the nature of the material. It is the users responsibility to evaluate the information contained herein and use this product safely and within the current laws and regulations.

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Graffiti Scrubs



One-step Graffiti Removal System

Have you ever tried to remove Graffiti and made a bigger mess than you started with?

SCRUBS® Graffiti & Spray Paint Remover towels combine a high quality graffiti remover formula with an absorbent, abrasive, non-scratching towel.

This product will loosen and remove graffiti and spray paint, allowing the towel to absorb and hold residue without redepositing paint on the surface. To break paint, crayon, pencil, lipstick and pen ink down we need to dilute these substances to avoid spreading it over the surface you are cleaning.

The key to easy graffiti removal is to remove it – not spread it.

Directions: After putting on gloves wipe the marks to moisten the area and then continue to remove by wiping in a circular motion until finished. Use another towel if necessary.

Available in 30 towel tubs and also in single packets.

If you work in a school, University, Council or a transportation terminal then these towels will make graffiti removal easy.

Used for:

These towels work really well on Aluminium, Glass, Signage, Phone booths, Lockers, Busses, Trains, Bathroom walls, Painted surfaces, Stainless steel, Table tops, Vinyl and upholstery, Elevators and Train Stations.

So Safe

SoSafe is the only non-corrosive, non-poisonous, non-hazardous, non-flammable, non-toxic, pH neutral and biodegradable graffiti remover in the world.



Which graffiti removal brand should you use?

There are many different brands of graffiti removers to choose from, but which is right for your purpose? **SoSafe Graffiti Removers** eliminate the need to trade off between a products effectiveness and safety/environmental features.

The SoSafe range of graffiti removal products tick all the boxes.

- **Non-Toxic**
- **Biodegradable**
- **Non-Flammable**
- **Non-Corrosive**
- **pH Neutral**
- **Water Soluble**
- **Sweet Light Citrus Odour**
- **Water deactivated (except SoSafe Professional Edition)**

These characteristics are why SoSafe Graffiti Removal chemicals are used and recommended by thousands of contractors, schools, councils, roads and traffic authorities, shop owners and home owners worldwide. SoSafe Graffiti Removal chemicals are proudly sold in Australia, Ireland, New Zealand, Spain, Hungary, Netherlands, United States and United Kingdom.

Anti Graffiti Approaches taken in other Jurisdictions to Protect Public Infrastructure

Council have been impressed by Melbourne Council's Graffiti Management Plan which incorporates the Engagement and Education strategies alongside the Eradication and Enforcement strategies:

http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/AboutCouncil/PlansandPublications/strategies/Documents/graffiti_management_plan_2009_2013.pdf

Council were also interested in the Brisbane Council approach which includes an Art Force element which sets out to allocate the city's most targeted assets to be part of an art project that the community participated in:

<http://svc189.bne146v.server-web.com/artforce/>

Locally, Council were also interested in the development located at Newcastle where the youth service 'The Loft' employed a graffiti artist who then took on contracts to involve young people in creating 'pieces' or murals on various sites such as the city's water towers. See below pictures.



Other Relevant Issues:

During 2009 various Precinct representatives, Town Management representatives, local residents, and Neighbourhood and Youth Services formed a Forum to address the issue from a community and business perspective. These meetings were also attended by a representative of the Police, Wyong Shire Councillors and Council staff.

The purpose of the forum was to present current strategies and programs that aim to minimise graffiti and to discuss future initiatives. Communication of what Council is doing in regards to **rapid removal** and **rewards**, what the Police would like businesses and residents to do around **reporting** and what **responsibility** lies with individual organisations such as schools, electricity companies (electricity boxes), shops and private property were all raised. The message that graffiti is everyone's responsibility came through strongly.

With the development of the Northern Wyong Graffiti Forum it was decided that Council can not resolve the Graffiti issue alone nor is it exclusively a Council issue. Rather it was agreed this represented a whole of community problem that should be tackled as a partnership: Council, Police, Business and Community could have an impact.