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DAREBIN GRAFFITI MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2019-2023

Acknowledgement of Darebin’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community

Darebin City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri people and the Kulin Nations as the traditional landowners and the historical and contemporary custodians of the land on which the City of Darebin and surrounding municipalities are located.

Council recognises, and pays tribute to, the diversity of Darebin’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, valuing the unique and important role Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members and organisations play in progressing reconciliation, respect and the building of mutual understanding across the City, amongst its people, and in the achievement of shared aspirations.

Council also recognises and pays tribute to, and celebrates, Darebin’s long standing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and heritage.



(Artist – Hayden Dewar)

Contents page

1. Introduction	4
2. Policy Context	7
3. Graffiti in the City of Darebin.....	11
4. Best practice in graffiti management and guiding principles	14
5. Strategy themes and objectives.....	18
6. Street Art Programs.....	21
7. Coordination and evaluation	23
8. Appendices	24



(Artist – Simon Dransfield)

1. Introduction

While it is not possible to completely eliminate graffiti, the 2019-2023 Darebin Graffiti Management Strategy aims to build on the existing work and enhance Council's capacity to reduce the prevalence of graffiti in the City of Darebin and the negative impact it has on our community.

The City of Darebin acknowledges that graffiti is a highly complex social activity that remains a consistent issue for inner city councils across Melbourne. Graffiti is a highly contentious and subjective issue that draws a mixture of views from the community. Therefore it cannot be effectively managed by one approach. The City of Darebin Graffiti Management Strategy 2019-2023 seeks to present a balanced graffiti management approach, incorporating an understanding of the graffiti culture; the prevention of; and the expectations of the Darebin community and evidence based knowledge about how graffiti can be effectively reduced.

The strategy promotes a whole-of-community response to graffiti management that includes Council, residents, businesses, artists, community organisations and graffitiists. It also draws a clear distinction between 'graffiti' applied without permission and 'street art' that is created on property with permission.

The strategy will be implemented, monitored and reviewed between 2019 and 2023 against a set of outcome based results. In addition to the outcomes listed against each action the overall strategy will be measured against four Key Performance Indicators that reflect the Strategy goal.

Measure	2014	2018	Target 2023
1. Prevalence of graffiti incidents within the municipality.	2,467	2,931	20% less over 4 years or 2,345
2. % of respondents who feel that graffiti is a problem in the City of Darebin.	53.6%	59.4%	<40%
3. % of respondents is satisfied with Council's efforts in managing graffiti.	61.4%	81.6%	>70%
4. Number of street art projects completed annually.	3	16	>3 per year

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of Darebin's Graffiti Management Strategy is to set out a collaborative, coordinated and a mix of proactive and reactive approaches to graffiti management.

The strategy is structured around six themes which have specific objectives and actions grouped as follows:

- Reporting – development of a database which tracks the reporting of graffiti including location, type, size, asset and tag identification
- Removal – how graffiti will be removed from Council assets, private property and assets managed by other authorities

- Partnerships – how Council will work with other organisations to assist in graffiti management
- Prevention – how Council will use Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles in the development and management of its public spaces. This will also occur for private developments through the Planning processes
- Advocacy – how graffiti on assets owned by other authorities which Council does not control is managed
- Internal Governance – how Council will oversee the implementation of the strategy
- Enforcement – how Council will manage graffiti as a crime in partnership with Victoria Police and Local laws
- Place Activation / Management – how Council will manage connecting people to our public spaces to create places that are welcoming, safe and fun

An action plan has been developed with a mix of continuing current actions and new initiatives. The strategy also considers the approach to graffiti on Council property, as well as how Council may influence the removal of graffiti on assets managed by other public authorities.

Council will work together with internal stakeholders, external agencies and the community to deliver the actions outlined in the strategy.

1.2 Graffiti and perceptions of safety

The presence of graffiti does not strongly correlate to increased crime rates or lower perceptions of safety. However, graffiti in conjunction with other environmental and social factors can reduce perceptions of safety by creating a perceived sense of disorder and lack of ownership. Low perceptions of safety can deter residents from participating fully within their community and accessing local services and facilities, that in turn has detrimental effects on their health and wellbeing. Graffiti can create a perception that an area is neglected and that little community pride exists. Graffiti also negatively impacts perceptions of safety where it occurs in commercial areas, and this can result in certain negative economic repercussions for business owners. Further to this, graffiti that is not removed can attract further issues such as vandalism and antisocial behaviour.

1.3 Why is Graffiti a problem?

Graffiti is a crime that on its own may seem innocuous however often leads to more serious crimes. Graffiti is a social issue with wide spread impact on public and private infrastructure. Unlawful graffiti is one of the most visible of all crime and disorder issues that may occur in the community. Graffiti as vandalism may impact negatively on perceptions of safety and wellbeing. Graffiti may also be perceived as being indicative of a general decline in the quality of public spaces.

Community concerns about the presence of graffiti include:

Consequence	Impact to Community
Damage to property	Graffiti is a problem for property owners because it damages their property, can cost a significant amount of money to remove and may have a negative impact on the value of the property.
Costs to community	The financial costs of graffiti are significant with the impact felt in a variety of ways. The removal process can be costly and can create additional costs through damage to the original surface of the asset which may lead to premature replacement.
Unattractive and unsightly	The presence of graffiti can have a negative impact on the presentation of the area.
Community perception of disorder and criminal behaviour	Graffiti contributes to community perceptions of “disorder”, fear of criminal activity and feelings of general “lawlessness” in the municipality. Unchecked graffiti in a neighbourhood can send a signal that the authorities (such as police and Council) are not managing the environment properly. Many people, particularly the elderly, feel that an area with graffiti is unsafe. Property which has deteriorated and appears uncared for is therefore seen as an easy target for vandalism, which leads to further deterioration of the property.
Graffiti may involve young people in cross offending behaviour	Young people who are involved with graffiti may be involved with other offences. It may also encourage vulnerable youth to engage in more serious crime.



(Artist – Lucy Lucy)

2. Policy Context

2.1 State Government

The Darebin City Council endorsed its first graffiti management strategy in 2008 in response to the introduction by the State Government's *Graffiti Prevention Act 2007*. Darebin's Graffiti Management Strategy 2014–2018 provided an up to date response based on Darebin's graffiti culture and community expectations of how graffiti should be effectively managed across the municipality within the framework articulated by the Graffiti Prevention Act 2007.

The Graffiti Prevention Act 2007 is a key aspect of the state government's graffiti management approach. The Act identifies illegal graffiti as an offence that can attract penalties including heavy fines or imprisonment; empowers police authorities with the right to search for and seize prescribed graffiti implements in certain circumstances, and provides local governments with increased powers and responsibilities regarding the removal of graffiti that is written on private property and visible from a public place.

The Act makes a number of provisions that must be observed by Council when undertaking graffiti removal on private property. Part 4 of the Act states that a Council may, in accordance with this section, take any action necessary to remove or obliterate graffiti on private property if the graffiti is visible from a public place. In relation to a Council, the following actions must be undertaken prior to removal of graffiti on private property:

- Serve a notice on owner or occupier giving 28 days' notice, if required to enter a property, and then only if owner approves removal and entry of property.
- Serve a notice on owner or occupier giving 10 days' notice, if not required to enter property, and only if owner approves removal or does not object to the removal works.

Council cannot proceed unless the owner gives written consent to the removal of the graffiti or does not object, in accordance with the processes outlined in the Graffiti Prevention Act 2007. This process also applies to removal of offensive graffiti from private property.

The Act does not impose a duty on a Council to remove or obliterate graffiti from private property.

Further to the Act, Council's role in graffiti management is also supported at a state government level through the Department of Justice Graffiti Removal program and the annual graffiti prevention and removal grants.

2.2 Amenity Local Law

Council is proposing a review of the current Local Law to determine what further measures could be included to assist with the removal of graffiti from property not owned by Council.

The proposed wording is, 'property owner responsible to prevent a property from becoming dilapidated', without limiting the owner or the occupier of land on which is located any building or other structure which is unoccupied, unfit for occupation or normal use or not occupied most of the time:

- Must not permit any structure to become dilapidated or further dilapidated;
- Must take all reasonable steps to secure the building and the land on which it is built from unauthorized access;
- Must maintain any building in a state of good repair and appearance, including undertaking temporary repairs as required to ensure on-site safety and security and to avoid the appearance of neglect out of character with other premises in the vicinity;
- Must not allow any graffiti to remain on any building, wall, fence, post or other structure or object erected on the land; and
- Will commit a new offence under the Local Law for every month any breach of the sub-clause continues unless effective works have been undertaken to remedy the breach

2.3 North West Metropolitan Region

The Department of Justice Northern West Metropolitan Region Community Safety Strategy identifies graffiti as a concern for the North West Metropolitan region. This is highlighted under *Priority Issue Two: Reduce crime and improve safety in and around public transport and public spaces* that recommends Council's "Continue to promote graffiti removal programs as a key input to improved perceptions of safety at the local level."

2.4 Darebin's local context

2017 – 2021 Darebin Council Plan

Mission: To preserve and improve the physical, social, environmental, cultural and economic health of all our neighbourhoods and ensure quality of life for current and future generations.

Relationship to the Council Plan 2017-2021

Goal 3: We will ensure our planning system facilitates high-quality and sustainable development that extracts social, environmental and economic benefits for our community.

3.3: We will manage local roads, buildings and public spaces to make our city safer, cleaner and more attractive.

Darebin Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021

Graffiti management strongly supports Council's efforts to improve community safety and directly supports **Objective 1.2 of the 2017-2021 Health and Wellbeing Plan**, *Create and maintain a neighbourhood that supports safe and accessible open spaces*. Graffiti negatively impacts on perceptions of safety and can distort understandings regarding actual levels of safety and crime. When individuals feel unsafe in their environment this can decrease their participation in the community and negatively impact on their sense of wellbeing. Further to this those who engage in graffiti are at risk of involvement in other crimes.

Darebin Arts Strategy 2014 - 2020

Graffiti management aligns with the 2014-2020 Darebin Arts Strategy, which aims to create the ideal environmental conditions for creativity to thrive and be sustainable in our City: for creativity to touch every part of our lives. In particular this Strategy strongly aligns to and supports *Key Focus Area 4.3. Regenerative – Develop Creative Spaces and Places* which identifies that permanent and temporary public art, street art and welcoming, creative public spaces are key to creating the kind of neighbourhood we like to live in and feel proud to show off to visitors.

Darebin Tourism Strategy 2017 – 2021

Darebin's Tourism Strategy highlights the need to enhance the visitor experience. Council's ability to attract more visitors, more often, staying longer and spending more will depend on our ability to deliver memorable experiences that exceed what we promise in our marketing. The ability to leave a lasting impression on visitors will also be enhanced by strengthening our sense of place, character and amenity.

Aesthetic improvements will be important; however, we must also continue to activate our City places so that they are vibrant, safe and accessible for residents and visitors. By creating a strong sense of place and improving visual amenity, we will continue to build pride and create the very best advocates for our City – our residents. Goal 2 focuses on initiatives that help to leave a lasting impression on our visitors and enhance their overall experience. The City is more vibrant, active and accessible and our residents feel a stronger sense of pride about their City.

The Graffiti Management Strategy strongly supports Goal 2, and in particular:

2.12 Continue to implement Council's streetscape, public realm improvement, place making and public art activation programs, with a view to strengthening the sense of place.

Equity and Inclusion Policy

Darebin's Equity and Inclusion Policy (2012–2015) identifies key population groups who can be at risk of exclusion due to discrimination, poverty, homelessness, family violence, isolation and other barriers to accessing opportunities and resources available in Darebin and our broader society. In addition to having the Darebin Equity and Inclusion Policy, Darebin Council has also developed an Equity and Inclusion Planning and Audit Tool

(EIPAT) which was applied during the planning, development and evaluation of services and programs of this Strategy to ensure due consideration of the relevant groups identified in this Policy. The application of the policy focused on two key areas: people at risk of experiencing graffiti on their property and people most at risk of engaging in graffiti.

Graffiti occurs at varying volumes across the entire Darebin municipality and residents of all backgrounds, age groups, gender and socioeconomic status contact Council for assistance with removing graffiti from their property. While Council will continue to encourage and support residents to remove graffiti from their property, this Strategy identifies that residents have varying capacity to remove graffiti from their property and may face barriers related to cost, age and disability. The initiatives will aim to ensure that residents have equal access to resources which will support them to remove graffiti and maintain the amenity of their property.

Involvement in graffiti occurs amongst people from different age groups, genders and cultural backgrounds. Although not exclusively, involvement in graffiti is often more prevalent amongst young people and more specifically young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. As a result, the initiatives aimed at preventing and diverting involvement in graffiti will focus on young people, with further focus on young people from disadvantaged backgrounds

Cultural Considerations

Building on the success of Council's street art subsidy program, another option to prevent graffiti in commercial areas is by using street art to promote Council's cultural and community events and other social / educational campaigns on heavily graffitied walls. Referred to as *Street Advertising Spaces*, this model has been used locally and internationally by private and now a growing number of public organisations, commissioning street art on heavily graffitied walls with the consent of the property owner to promote cultural events, social campaigns, products and brands.

Street Advertising Spaces provides the building owner with free, high quality street art to brighten the streetscape and prevent graffiti, while the organisation / company gets access to a unique and highly visible space to advertise their event / campaign or product. The street art is semi-permanent and designed to last the lifespan of the campaign or event and is refreshed with a new art as required. As a result the financial investment in the art needs to be relative to the lifespan, the existing level of graffiti and the amount of resources currently being spent on graffiti removal at the site.

The model has potential application to a number of large Council events, such as the Darebin Music Feast, The Kite Festival, Children and Family Expo and could also be used to promote social and environmental messages in line with Council endorsed policies and strategies. It also provides another avenue to support artists in the Darebin Community and engage them in the promotional aspects of our events and campaigns.

Environmental and Natural Resources

In addition to the financial and social costs, Graffiti management could cost the community significantly in terms of environmental damage specifically due to aerosol spray paint can litter, and paint and chemicals being washed down drains during the graffiti removal process, thereby polluting storm water systems.

3. Graffiti in the City of Darebin

3.1 Prevalence and patterns

Darebin Council received over 1,059 requests for graffiti removal via Council's complaint system for the 2017-2018 financial year. Of these requests, 36.7% are for properties located in Northcote followed by Preston with 29.1%, Reservoir with 6.1%, Thornbury with 13.3%, Fairfield with 5.95% and Alphington 3.5%.

This data illustrates the expectation from the community for Council not only to remove graffiti from its own assets, but also to provide assistance to residents in the removal of graffiti from private property and privately owned public utilities.

Further to this the analysis of audit data and reports to Council illustrates that graffiti is not a persistent issue across the entire municipality, with the prevalence and consistency varying between suburbs and precincts. While there is a perception that graffiti occurs at greater volumes in lower socioeconomic areas, in Darebin the prevalence of graffiti is more closely linked to factors such as the proximity to public transport and rail corridors, the prevalence of vacant shops and the surrounding amenity, and the visibility of the area, such as activity centers.

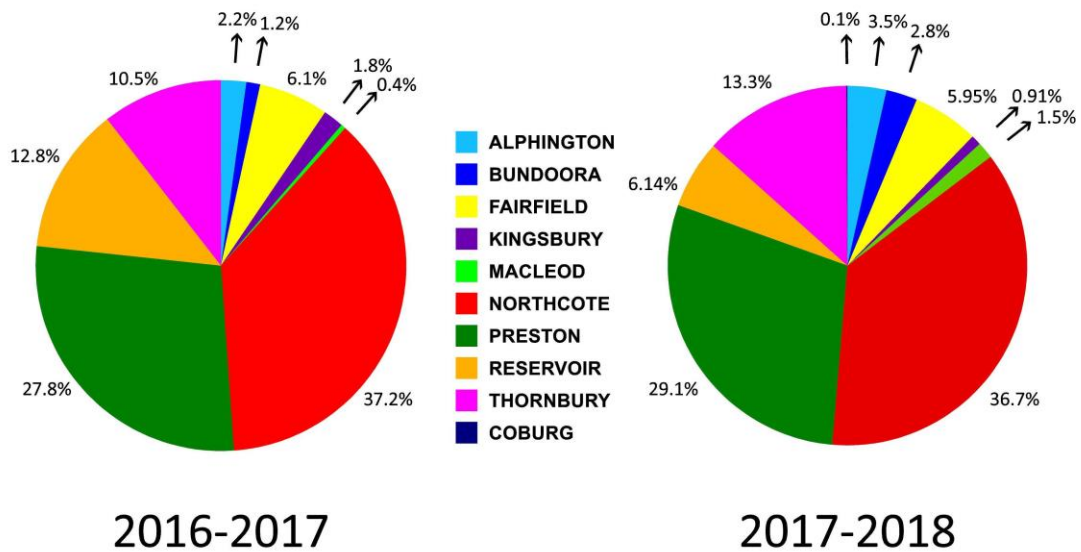
Graffiti also frequently occurs on Council assets, transport and state utilities infrastructure, such as tram shelters and traffic signal boxes and along the rail corridor.

The pie chart below outlines areas in Darebin with a high concentration of graffiti on public and private assets. These sites have been deemed graffiti hotspots and will form the focus of Council's removal activity and initiatives outlined in this strategy.



(Artist – Damien Arena)

Reported Incidents of Graffiti (by Suburb)



3.2 Graffiti Management approaches at Darebin

Managing graffiti is part of developing safer public spaces across the municipality. The strategy builds on the effective work, which Council has undertaken over the past four years. The strategy was strongly in line with best practice and drew upon graffiti prevention, removal, and enforcement approaches across five strategic aims, implementing a variety of initiatives to manage graffiti on private and public assets including:

- Graffiti removal subsidy program for private property owners through the provision of free graffiti removal kits and vouchers for contractors and paint. Operating since 2008, the demand for this program continues to grow each year.
- Department of Justice Graffiti Removal Program to remove graffiti from Council assets and private property abutting public land.
- Street art projects have been implemented across the city on assets prone to tagging.
- Education and diversion programs with young people to promote legitimate street art and not vandalism.
- Council’s Active Spaces program which aims to re-activate vacant retail space has previously included street art to prevent graffiti.

The following table illustrates the graffiti removed from Council assets, private property and private utilities over the life of the strategy.

Year	Council Assets	Private Property	Utilities	Total – M2
2014-2015	17,520	3,442		20,962
2015-2016	14,279	5,538	308	20,125
2016-2017	10,465	8,900	204	19,569
2017-2018	6,782	18,316	566	25,664
2018-2019	13,881	18,120	659	32,660

3.3 The Darebin communities' view on graffiti management

Two surveys as part of the Community survey have been carried out in the 2018-2019 financial year to assess the community's attitude towards graffiti, the level of satisfaction with Council's efforts to manage graffiti, the impact of graffiti on the community's perception of safety and the communities support for legitimate street art initiatives. The survey also sought to understand the community's expectation of Council's role in removing graffiti from private property and ideas to manage and prevent graffiti.

Within Council's household survey the statement 'that graffiti is a problem in Darebin' approximately 43.2% disagreed with the statement; 49.2% of respondents felt that graffiti was a problem in the City of Darebin with the remainder being neutral. When it comes to satisfaction with Council's efforts in managing the issue of graffiti 77.0% of respondents were satisfied.

Whilst on average respondents to the survey agreed with both statements about graffiti in Darebin, it is important to bear in mind that respondents were on average significantly more likely to be satisfied with Council's management of the issue of graffiti than they were to consider graffiti to be a problem in Darebin.

When it comes to whether Council should be doing more to address the issue of graffiti the response was on average relatively neutral in relation to the statement with 53.1% agreeing and a little more the one-third 35.1% disagreed.

While Council is not required to remove graffiti from private property under the current legislation, there is an expectation that Council will provide assistance to do so as part of its commitment to provide a clean and safe city. This strategy will work to ensure that the community has a clear understanding of Council's role and responsibilities in graffiti management.

In terms of what respondents felt when they saw graffiti, there were various comments received which were either negatively or positively oriented, depending on their perceptions of the type of graffiti seen. This highlights the fact that the community holds a diversity of views when it comes to the issues around graffiti.

The graffiti survey found that the majority (92.6%) of respondents supported the use of street art as a form of graffiti prevention and a medium to enhance the amenity of an area. Respondents were, on average, firmly in agreement with the view that Council should encourage spaces for legal street art, and that street art improves the appearance of

public areas.

In terms of what else Council could do to prevent graffiti, respondents provided a wide variety of ideas across the removal, enforcement and preventative perspectives. Many of these ideas have been considered and shaped in the context of best practise to inform actions included in this strategy.

Benchmarking

Through research and consultation, the approaches adopted in several other municipalities in Victoria, Australia and internationally were investigated. The list of other organisations whose approaches were reviewed is included below.

Councils	International Experience
Greater Geelong	City of Ottawa, Canada
Boroondara	London, UK
Yarra	Hamilton City Ward, NZ
Casey	
Melbourne	
Banyule	
Port Phillip	
Greater Dandenong	
City of Brisbane	

Generally, the most successful local government responses to graffiti comprise multi-faceted approaches involving prevention (including education and awareness campaigns), deterrent measures through urban design, timely removal programs and the use of comprehensive records management databases.

Darebin applies most of the approaches that are considered best practice, including reporting of graffiti on public buildings, rapid removal including the provision of removal kits and paint subsidies for private property owners and partnerships with community groups such as local trader organisations.

4. Best practice in graffiti management and guiding principles

The purpose of Darebin's Graffiti Management Strategy is to set out a proactive, coordinated and collaborative approach to graffiti management based on the following principles that are widely recognised to underpin effective graffiti management.

Eradication

Rapidly removing and cleaning up existing graffiti within a timely manner has been identified as a key component of graffiti management and reduction. Rapid removal of graffiti improves the sense of ownership of a space and improves perceptions of public safety. Council must foremost show leadership by ensuring that the amenity of our own assets are maintained. In addition Council must provide information and resources for the community to take ownership in graffiti removal to enable the rapid removal of graffiti from private property.

Engagement

A better informed community is more likely to adopt prevention measures and change from being passive victims to becoming active participants combating illegal graffiti within their community. To achieve a positive and tangible impact on behaviour, the public must be aware of the extent to which the graffiti problem exists. They also must be armed with knowledge and skills to prevent unlawful graffiti as well as having the confidence to report incidences of graffiti. Council will also engage with writers to redirect their talents towards piece murals and is committed to assisting the aspirations of artists in Darebin, including street artists, who engage in practices that do not involve illegal graffiti.

The management of graffiti is based on a partnership approach. Council cannot be the sole body responsible for the prevention and removal of graffiti. Activities that aim to build resilience and civic pride to graffiti removal will complement the efforts of Council and its service providers. The most effective strategies for preventing graffiti in the municipality have been those which focus on environmental design (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design, known as CPTED).

The CPTED principles include the following measures to reduce incidents of graffiti.

Lighting

Lighting can be an effective prevention technique. Dark areas are often targets for graffiti due to low visibility for residents or pedestrians. Graffiti is often conducted under the cover of darkness, to lessen the risk of getting caught or reported. A well-lit area can therefore discourage graffiti.

Addressing blank spaces

The design of walls can influence the mindset of an individual considering an act of graffiti. Textured surfaces can impact adversely on graffiti and as such walls can often seem less inviting to those individuals.

A further recommended preventative technique for blank walls is painting them certain colours such as grey or dark green. Whilst not effective against all colours, painting walls or fences a dark colour may provide a poor base for colours often used by taggers. This can result in the graffiti standing out less which detracts from one of the individual's main goals of recognition.

Landscaping

Planting tree and shrubs along walls and fence lines is a successful graffiti prevention strategy which is designed to limit access to walls and blank canvasses. Landscaping can be used as a barrier due to its density, height and texture. Graffiti is often created to gain recognition amongst peers.

Selection of vegetation is important, and care needs to be taken to ensure that landscaping does not produce an unwanted consequence and create a hiding space for potential offenders.

There are a number of plants which are considered appropriate for screening purposes. It is recommended that advice is sought from local nurseries about what type of plant is required.

Some recommended native varieties of screening plants include:

- **Climbing Plants** – (these may need a surface to assist coverage): Clematis, travellers Joy or Kangaroo Vine.
- **Screening Plants** – (choose a plant suitable to the height of the fence and available space surrounding the affected area): Grevillea, Banksia, Bottlebrush, Casuarina or She-oak.
- **Spiky Plants** – (choose a plant suitable to your circumstance): Acacia, Banksia, Bursaria, Grevillea, Hakea, Lomandra, Melaleuca or Solanum.

The following table provides an overview of what is practiced now and what can be improved to reduce the visual impact of graffiti whilst enabling increased opportunity for the provision of visible works of art on the exterior walls of buildings.

What we do now	What we can do better	Challenges
<p>Design & Materials – Active frontages required.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blank walls discouraged. • Graffiti resistant paint required • Deterrent materials (rough, shiny, grills, gaps & glazing) • Passive surveillance required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add into standard Request for Information letter requirements to minimise graffiti to ensure this is consistent and embedded practice. • Amend standard conditions to clearly address graffiti issues (where materials are part of the solution). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to address problem on rail corridors
<p>Public Art – is encouraged but reactive.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide connections during pre-app/early application stage • A curated approach where agreement is achieved with the relevant developer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to mid-block walls over private land (agreements may not be actionable). • Maintenance costs and upkeep of public art.
<p>Landscaping – is used outside activity centres as edges to discourage graffiti.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site visits to ensure that landscaping is established and maintained in accordance with endorsed Landscape Plans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff resourcing within the Planning area.

Education

Alongside rapid removal, primary prevention is vital to effective graffiti management. Council will seek to coordinate a number of graffiti education and partnership initiatives involving young people that focus on discouraging young peoples' involvement in graffiti culture, and if they are engaging in illegal activity, divert this behaviour into legitimate opportunities to create legal street art. Council will also work with the broader community to build their capacity to prevent graffiti.

Enforcement

Graffiti is a recognised crime with recognised social and economic impacts. Enforcement of the law is a vital part of any holistic approach to graffiti management and Council will support enforcement through partnerships with Victoria Police, the enforcement of Graffiti Prevention Act 2007 regarding the provision of spray paint, the enforcement of Local Laws pertaining to the dilapidation of properties and where relevant assisting with the development on diversionary models.

Difficulties arise to enforce criminal conviction because evidence must be provided 'beyond a reasonable doubt'. Civil convictions can be processed with evidence 'on the balance of probability'. Further discussions are required to progress the process flow to identify the best method of policing and regulation.

Planning

The current approach places a preference for graffiti deterrent design and materials over anti-graffiti coating, given that graffiti resistant paint still requires cleaning and therefore relies on good property management practices by owners and/body corporates to be effective. Additionally, the use of graffiti deterrent design and materials is more likely to increase visual interest of a building when compared to graffiti resistant paint.

Provision of Street Art through the Planning Process

Statutory Planning are exploring a process through the provision of Street Art through the Planning process whereby suitable development proposals are identified at an early stage (i.e. pre-application or Request for Information) and the developer is provided with a contact in Creative Cultures who can act as a broker between local artists and the developer.

This will assist the developer by providing them with a direct contact, ensure that the artist's intellectual property rights are protected, promote local art in Darebin and result in a visually interesting building(s) that improves the public realm.

5. Strategy themes and objectives

In order to continue to tackle the incidence of graffiti, the following themes and objectives have been developed as key focus areas based on the application of best practice principles and community expectations.

Theme	Objectives
<p>1. Reporting – development of a database which tracks the reporting of graffiti including location, type, size, asset and tag identification</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide multiple ways for community members and contractors to report graffiti • Instances of graffiti will be reported promptly to Victoria Police • Graffiti identified on assets belonging to other public authorities will be reported to those entities
<p>2. Removal – how graffiti will be removed from Council assets, private property and assets managed by other authorities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graffiti on Council assets will be removed within specified timeframes • Assistance will be provided to owners of private properties • Ensure Local Law provisions appropriately support removal of graffiti from private property. • Enter into Memorandum of Understandings with utility owners to allow Council contractors to remove priority 1 offensive graffiti from utility assets.
<p>3. Partnerships – how Council will work with other organisations to assist in graffiti management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support traders to reduce and remove graffiti in shopping centres • Engage with residents and community groups to assist in graffiti reduction • Develop effective partnerships with other public authorities to reduce graffiti on non-Council assets
<p>4. Prevention – Council will use Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles in the development and management of its public spaces</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide relevant and appropriate information on graffiti to community members • Consider the application of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles • Support community art projects which act as an effective graffiti deterrent in appropriate locations
<p>5. Advocacy – how graffiti on assets owned by other authorities which Council does not control is managed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council will advocate strongly for a consistent and timely approach to graffiti removal by other authorities
<p>6. Internal governance – the structure to oversee the implementation of the strategy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement an appropriate structure to ensure an integrated approach to graffiti management and strategy implementation

Prioritisation of Graffiti Removal

Graffiti is not a persistent issue across the entire municipality, with the prevalence and consistency varying between suburbs and precincts. Further to this, the impact on amenity and the perception from community also varies between suburbs.

As a result, three categories have been established that prioritise Council's response for graffiti removal from Council and private assets based on the prevalence of graffiti, the relative impact of the graffiti on community amenity and perceptions of safety and the existing resources available to respond to graffiti removal.



(Artist – Tom Civil)

Darebin Graffiti Removal Priority Table

Priority Location	Response
Priority 1 Offensive graffiti on Council assets or private property based on reported incidents of graffiti	Request actioned in 2 working days.
Priority 2 Graffiti Hotspots Locations, based on reported incidents of graffiti and operational knowledge	Request actioned in 3 working days.
Priority 3 All other areas, based on reported incidents of graffiti in the Local Government Area.	Request actioned in 7 working days

Priority One - includes any graffiti deemed as offensive regardless of location or asset. Council will endeavour to action this removal within 2 working days, recognising that our responsibilities under the Act may impede the immediate removal from private property.

Priority Two - includes Activity Centres and other areas of Darebin that have a high concentration of graffiti that has a significant, negative impact on the amenity of the area. These areas are defined as Graffiti Hotspots and are mapped in section four of the Strategy. Graffiti removal on Council and private assets in these hotspots will be actioned within 3 working days.

Priority Three - includes all other areas in the Local Government outside of the hotspots that require graffiti removal. Graffiti removal on Council and private assets in these areas will be actioned within 7 working days.

The graffiti hotspot locations identified for Priority 2 removal will be monitored and revised throughout the term of the Strategy based on data from graffiti reports received, operational knowledge and the relative impact of graffiti on community amenity.

6. Street Art Programs

Street art programs, such as murals and legal walls are an important way to engage young people and foster cultural and creative development in a safe and legal environment.

Respect for the artistic and creative thought that has gone into the mural may act as a deterrent to graffiti tags. Murals should be considered in high graffiti areas and consulting youth for designs of these walls will promote an element of ownership. Murals are a proactive strategy in minimising graffiti while also brightening up a dull area or wall.

It is important that a cohesive cross-council approach to future street art is developed to deliver this section of the Strategy. Any potential street art projects will fall in line with the Darebin Public Art Framework 2018. This Framework will ensure that the terms of new street art projects are clearly defined and contracts with street artists meet best practice standards. It will also ensure a diversity of quality professional artists are being supported across the municipality, representing a broad range of viewpoints, artistic styles and perspectives within the community.

Street Art Festival

With a vision and belief Council could bring street artists from around the world to paint murals on bare walls over a weekend. The event could be funded by canvassing local residents and businesses. For example, Council could commission Juddy Roller Studios to bring together a collective of home grown and international street artists to transform our city. Locals and neighbouring suburbs could tour the various murals to watch the artwork appear in front of their eyes.

Youth Art Mentorship

Council will create a responsive arts project model that focuses on cultural trends and the interests of young community members while fostering relationships with the community. This model will look at increasing young participant's learnings whereby they will be guided and mentored by professional artists towards creating new street art. This initiative will promote employment through the arts in Darebin and help combat vandalism.

Art redirection projects will provide a disincentive to tag and afford local talented young people the opportunity to showcase 'pieces' as an art form in its own right in a process led by trained professional artists.

During the course of this strategy a maintenance and regeneration program will be created to refurbish and/or create new murals over existing ones. Creators of the existing temporary mural, if known will be contacted to advise of the intention to either refurbish or overlay a new mural or to paint it out in a dark colour. This plan will implement the following maintenance program to refurbish:

- Murals in low profile areas - assess condition annually and if still relevant, in a process outlined in the Darebin Public Art Framework, either: refurbish and repaint as required; or paint over in a dark colour; or commission a new work to be overlaid.
- Murals in high profile areas – assess condition twice yearly; and if still relevant, in a process outlined in the Darebin Public Art Framework, either: refurbish and repaint as required; paint over in a dark colour; or commission a new work to be overlaid.

Darebin supports and encourages the creation of murals and street art, to be led by professional artists. Where community engagement is identified as a useful tool for the overall outcome, local residents and business owners may be engaged in the creation of a new street artwork under the leadership of an appointed professional artist. The process of selecting a professional artist to either create and/or lead a new mural (temporary artwork) is outlined in the Darebin Public Art Framework.

7. Coordination and evaluation

The Darebin Graffiti Management Strategy 2019-2023 is relevant to all work areas across Council including:

- Infrastructure Maintenance
- Community Wellbeing
- Youth Services
- Creative Culture & Events
- Business Development
- City Development
- Civic Compliance
- Facilities Maintenance
- Darebin Parks
- Public Realm
- Level Crossing Rail Authority

Infrastructure Maintenance will lead all removal activities across the organisation for Council and private assets and work in partnership with other relevant departments to deliver education and prevention initiatives.

The strategy also relates to Council's partnership with external stakeholders including Victoria Police; Community Correctional Service, Metro Trains, Yarra Trams, Powercor and VicRoads.

Evaluation

Graffiti is a dynamic and changing issue. To reflect this, an annual action plan will be developed and reviewed each year to ensure it accurately reflects and responds to the issue of graffiti in the Darebin Community. The Actions will be implemented, monitored and reviewed against a set of outcome based results outlined in the action plan. The review process will inform the development of future actions under the five strategic objectives.

The information will be captured through Council's customer service data and household surveys and reviewed after the completion of the strategy in June 2018. Council will record and analyse data regarding frequency of graffiti, location, reported details and cost of removal. This information will be utilised to inform Council's ongoing approach to the management of graffiti. The plan will be monitored and reviewed with reports to Council annually. A full evaluation and review in 2023.

8. Appendices

Definitions

Bombing: To 'bomb' or 'hit' is to apply graffiti on many surfaces in a single area. Graffitiist commonly use throw ups and tags to bomb areas as these types of graffiti can be executed quickly and easily.

Commercial graffiti: This type of vandalism refers to graffiti that contains company logos or exhibits advertising images or messages.

Crew tag: Crew tags are scrawls, symbols or designs identifying a group of graffiti writers.

Etch: This method of vandalism refers to scratching a tag or image onto glass with a sharp instrument. Etching may also involve the use of acid solutions for creating frosted glass, such as 'Etch Bath' to write on windows.

Graffiti: The deliberate act of defacing property without the permission of the property owner. The Graffiti Prevention Act 2007 defines graffiti as to 'write, mark, scratch or otherwise deface property by any means so that the defacement is not readily removable by wiping with a dry cloth'

Offensive graffiti: Offensive graffiti has the potential to insult members or groups of the community and commonly includes defamatory or degrading remarks about race, religion, sex or personal privacy. Offensive graffiti frequently contains abusive, crude, vulgar or obscene words, phrases or graphics and negatively impacts perceptions of public safety.

Piece: Short for the word 'masterpiece', refers to large-scale multi-coloured graffiti murals containing a combination of images, patterns, symbols, and letters. Piece graffiti commonly occurs along rail corridors and other highly visible locations. Piece graffiti can take several hours to complete and is most commonly undertaken collaboratively by a group of graffitiists.

Political graffiti: Commonly occurs in highly visible locations and displays slogans or social commentary to signal concern for public issues.

Prescribed graffiti implement: This terminology derives from the *Graffiti Prevention Act 2007* and refers to aerosol spray paint cans; or any implement that is capable of being used to mark graffiti.

Scribe: Also called 'scatchitti', a scribe creates hard to remove graffiti by scratching a tag into a hard surface other than glass generally using a key, knife, stone, ceramic drill bit, or diamond tipped Dremel bit.

Stencils: Stenciling is a popular form of graffiti which involves creating an image, often by using a computer program such as Adobe Photoshop, and transferring the image onto a flat cardboard or plastic surface that can be cut into the shape of a design. When this sheet is placed flat against a wall or other surface, and spray paint is applied to the sheet it reproduces a pattern on the underlying surface.

Street Art: Aerosol art or other mediums that is undertaken legally and applied with the consent of the relevant property owner.

Tagging: Tag graffiti consists of illegible scrawls, symbols or initials that are used to identify the name or alias of the writer. They can also be representative of a group of graffiti artists, as in the case of 'crew tagging'. Tags are commonly drawn quickly, displaying misspellings or social commentary directed at other graffiti artists or known individuals, and are written with implements including pens, spray cans and sharp instruments such as keys.

Throw Ups: Throw ups or 'throwies' refer to tags written in fat, bubble-style writing. They are usually drawn quickly with spray paint and commonly feature two colours. One colour is used to outline the tag and the other is used to fill.



(Artist – Brodie Colbourne)

