

Graffiti Management Plan

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Introduction

City of Casey strives to deliver services that meet the needs of its growing community. The purpose of this management plan is to highlight Council's role in the provision of a safe, inclusive and connected community when it comes to illegal graffiti.

This management plan takes a holistic approach to cover every stage in the graffiti lifecycle. The plan has six principles and relevant guidelines to each: eradication; engagement; education; engineering; enforcement and evaluation.

City of Casey takes a zero-tolerance approach to graffiti, reflected in the long standing removal service. The service aims to remove graffiti within one business day, or four hours if offensive (subject to landowner's approval). This is achieved through a contracted company, a simple reporting system and dedicated staffing.

The *Graffiti Prevention Act 2007* and City of Casey Community Local Law 2018 provide the legal authority to address graffiti and further the need for this Management Plan.

Background

What is graffiti?

Graffiti is an action 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' (*Graffiti Prevention Act 2007*, p. 3).

There are many types of graffiti (see appendix A for a full list). Listed in order of complexity are the most common types found in the City of Casey:

Tag – The simplest form of graffiti, a single colour stylised signature usually made via spray cans or markers but sometimes scratched into surfaces.

Throw up – A two tone larger tag usually in bubble writing style with an outline and solid fill.

Bomb – The low-quality quick application of graffiti on many surfaces in one location.

Piece – A bigger multi-coloured work that shows more skill and complexity.

Is graffiti art?

Whether graffiti should be considered art is a question that has been around for the last few decades. The divide arises because most graffiti and street art works are done illegally, and there is debate as to whether the illegal acts should be celebrated due to their artistic element. Even when completed with permission, some people do not consider high quality aerosol spray paint works to be art due to the history of illegality and associations graffiti has had to crime and anti-social behaviours.

The *Graffiti Prevention Act 2007* suggests graffiti can be legal under two conditions. The artist must have permission to paint on the surface, and the content must not be offensive. The quality of the works does not matter. Within the City of Casey, the Public Art Acquisitions Policy 2018 considers temporary murals or street art to be legitimate forms of art only when commissioned.

To be considered art, generally work needs one of three things: communication, aesthetics or intent. In all three aspects, legality does not matter, and graffiti can be considered art. Graffiti should be considered art if the artist considers their work to be art and can justify why. However, due to protections on property in the *Graffiti Prevention Act 2007*, not all art is legal and therefore will be removed by Council (with permission from the property owner).

Why is graffiti a problem?

Graffiti is a problem because it is an ongoing issue, is costly to remove, and can have severe mental health impacts on victims, particularly when offensive. In addition, offenders can put themselves in dangerous situations near traffic and trains. Below is a list of other reasons why graffiti can be a problem:

- » Graffiti is seen to be unattractive and represent a threat to safety.
- » Graffiti can be a sign of antisocial behaviour.
- » Graffiti is often linked to other crime types and escalating levels of criminal behaviour.
- » Graffiti impacts the whole community, not just the owner of the property or amenities targeted.
- » The cost associated with removal of graffiti is substantial (Morgan & Louis 2009).

How do we stop graffiti?

Previously, the City of Casey has attempted to reduce graffiti by focusing on enforcement, eradication and education. This management plan builds on that approach and incorporates the following suggestions from the Australian Institute of Criminology (2010) to address graffiti:

- » development of graffiti prevention guidelines
- » presentations on graffiti to local groups
- » graffiti and safety audits in target areas
- » use of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles
- » urban art projects.

Policy context

[Link to the *Graffiti Prevention Act 2007*](#)

Under section 9 and 10 of the *Graffiti Prevention Act 2007* it is illegal to:

- » *mark graffiti*
- » *possess a prescribed graffiti implement without lawful excuse*
- » *sell or supply an aerosol paint container to a person under 18 years of age.*

See appendix B for a full summary.

Section 18 defines where Council may or may not remove graffiti as outlined in Appendix C.

[Link to City of Casey Council Plan](#)

Objective One: People Driven ‘An inclusive, safe and connected community’.

Objective Three: A High Performing Organisation ‘An efficient and effective, customer focused Council with sufficient resources to meet priorities.

Further links to:

- » Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021
- » Community Safety Strategy 2018
- » Arts and Cultural Development Plan 2018-2022
- » Community Engagement Plan
- » Casey’s Future: A plan for Children, Young People & Families 2017-2021
- » Open Space Plan
- » Leisure Facilities Development Plan

Link to Community Local Laws

Section 48-49 of the Casey Community Local Law 2018 reflect and build on the *Graffiti Prevention Act 2007* (See appendix D for a full summary). In the City of Casey, it is illegal to:

- » write, paint or draw any inscription, figure or mark on the exterior of any property without prior consent.
- » possess aerosol spray paint container on any land without consent or lawful excuse.
- » store or display aerosol spray paint containers in an area that is accessible to the public.
- » sell or supply aerosol spray paint containers to a person under the age of 18 years.

In addition, under section 17 of the Casey Community Local Law 2018 a person who owns or occupies land must not allow that land to be kept in a manner which is considered unsightly. Council's definition of unsightly includes graffiti on exterior walls or fences.

Link to City of Casey Public Art Program

Council includes temporary or permanent murals and street art as Public Art in the Arts Acquisitions Policy. Council will commission Public Artwork around the following themes:

- » innovation and excellence
- » reflective and engaging
- » activation and integration

Graffiti in City of Casey

City of Casey Graffiti Removal Program

The City of Casey has delivered a graffiti removal program since 2002, and its approach to graffiti removal has long been valued by the Casey community. The ability for residents to report graffiti to Council for removal assists in ensuring graffiti is removed in a timely manner, and the provision of a dedicated hotline: 1800 VANDAL demonstrates Council's commitment to the service.

The City of Casey aims to remove graffiti within one business day and where offensive, within four hours.

City of Casey will remove all graffiti from public places (as listed in the *Graffiti Prevention Act 2007*) and private property where visible from a public space. Graffiti is mainly removed on a request for service basis. A request can be made by any person (internal or external to Council) via City of Casey's online reporting page or by calling Customer Service. Graffiti is only removed by approved contractors, who are engaged through a tender process.

Municipal Association of Victoria Involvement

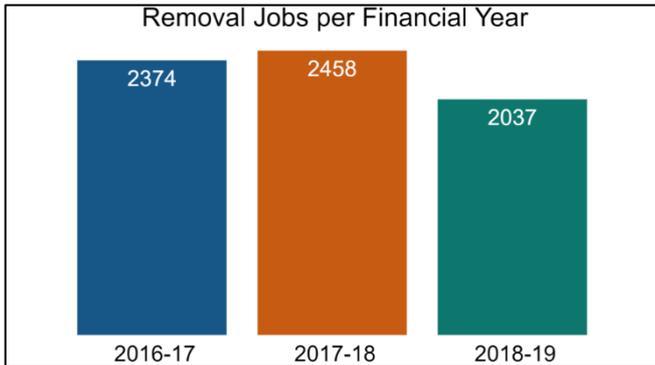
City of Casey is a member of the Municipal Association of Victoria and a representative has been involved in the Victorian Graffiti Register Co-ordinating Group. Council has been involved in the setup of the Victorian Graffiti Register, specifically:

- » user action testing
- » provision of recommendations for software
- » tender assessments and selection
- » direct work with successful tender in configuration of software
- » creation of a Good Practice Guide for graffiti management by Victorian councils.

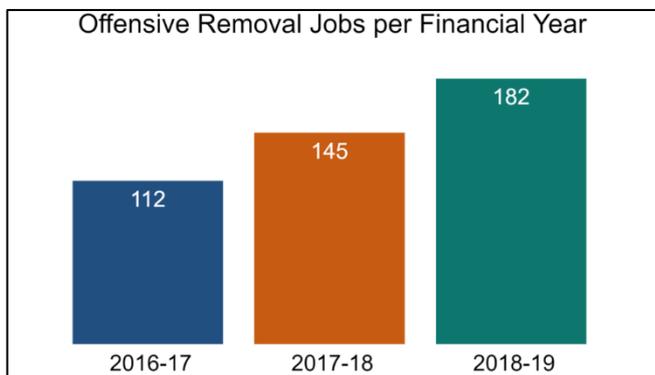
Community engagement

A survey collecting data about the community’s views on graffiti and whether they support street art has been undertaken to inform this plan. The survey sought to determine if the community and internal staff are aware of Council’s graffiti removal program. In addition to the online survey, specifically designed fridge magnets promoting Council’s graffiti removal program have been produced and distributed to encourage reporting of graffiti.

Data Trends



In the last financial year, the number of removal jobs has decreased by 17%.



From the 2016 to 2017 financial years the number of offensive removal jobs increased by 29%.

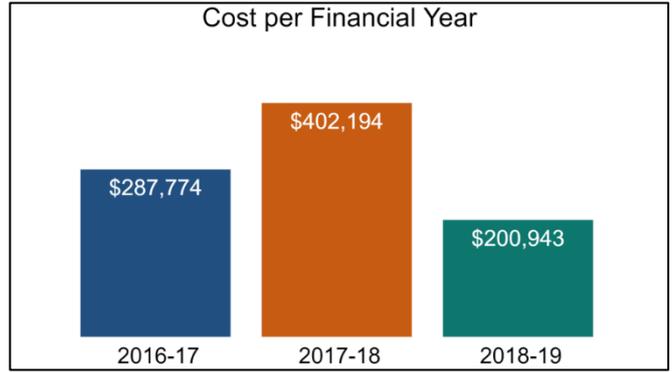
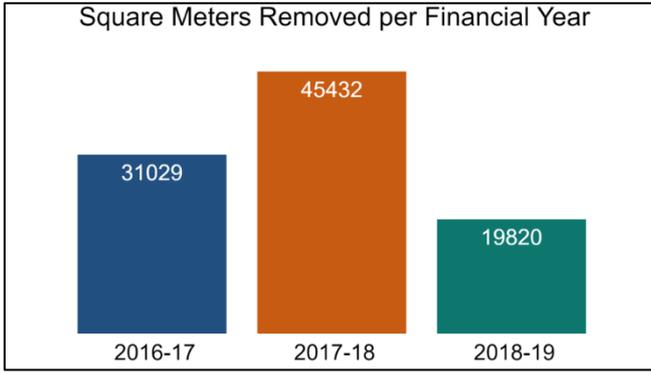
In the last financial year, the number of offensive removal jobs increased by 25%.

In total, the number of offensive removal jobs has increased 62% in the last three financial years.

Across the past three years the square meters removed, and cost is highly varied. This can fluctuate with changes to graffiti trends and amounts of proactive reporting from contractors.

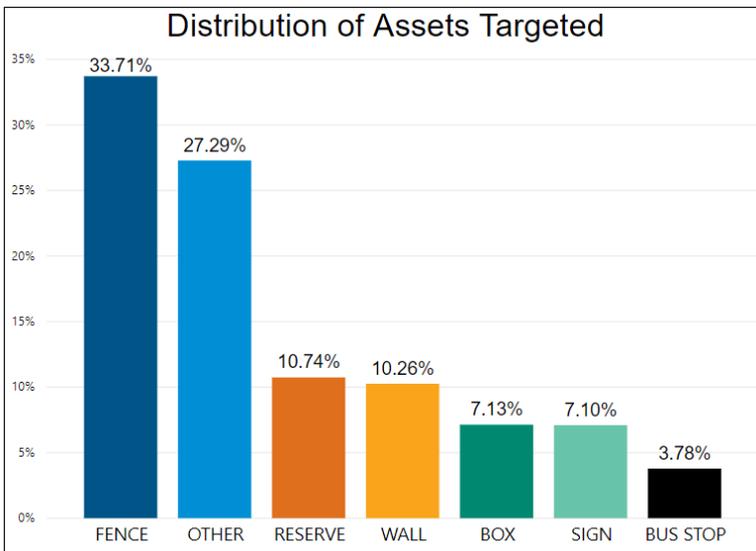
There are also the issues that smaller jobs are replacing the larger ones i.e. the rapid removal has worked for larger pieces which take longer and are larger but now the tagging which are now smaller and more opportunistic

The council’s staff have been vigilant and have changed contractors in August 2019 to improve removal response rates.



Across the past three years the square meters removed, and cost is highly varied. This can fluctuate with changes to graffiti trends and amounts of proactive reporting from contractors.

2018-2019 financial year target distribution

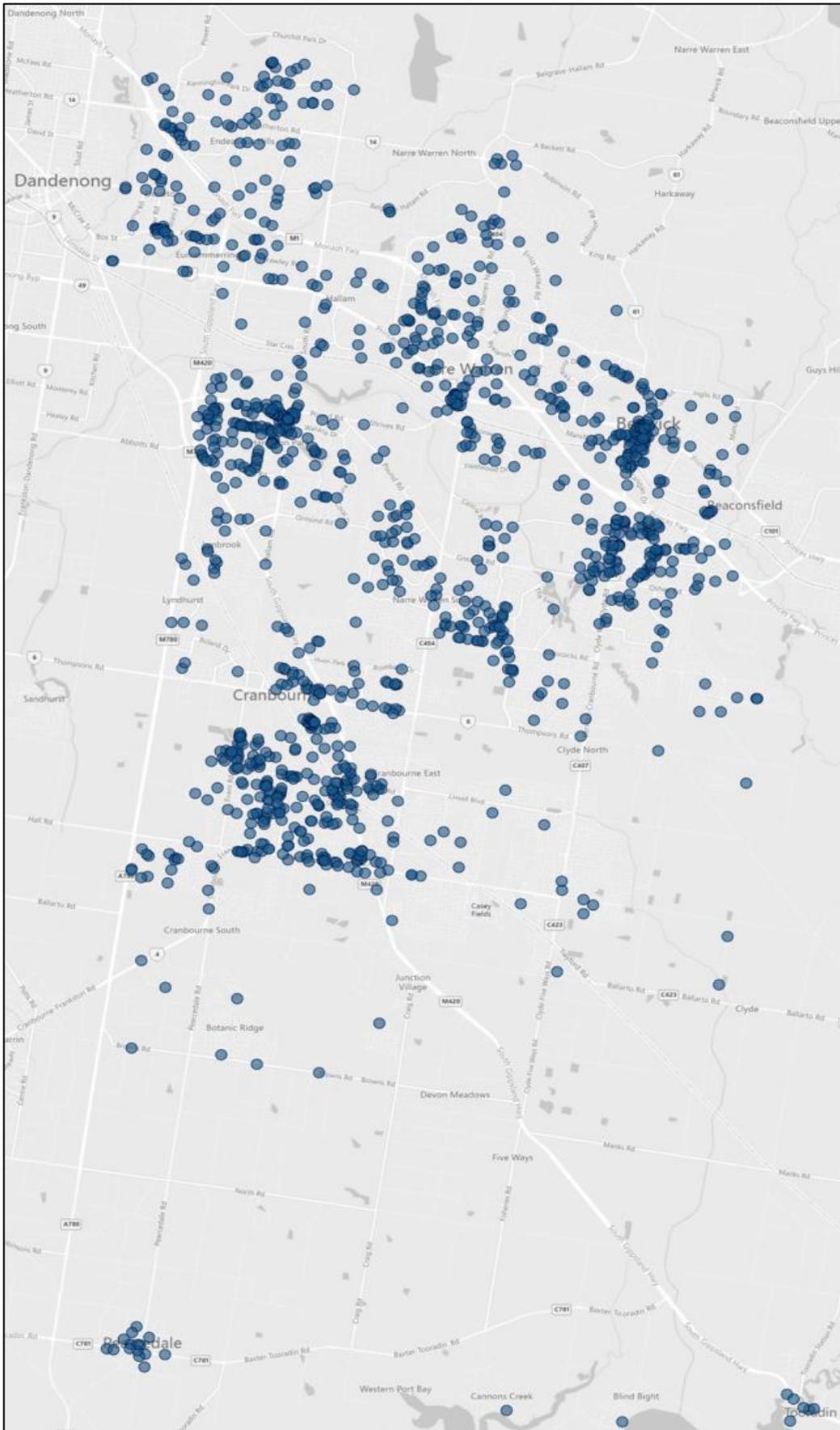


In the last two financial years, there was minimal change to the distribution of what assets were targeted by graffiti.

Fences are the most common target of graffiti, making up just under a quarter of all graffiti removals.

‘Other’ locations commonly include amenities such as: power poles, footpaths, benches, rubbish bins, lights, skate parks and playgrounds.

2018-2019 financial year report map



In the last two financial years, there was minimal change to the dispersion of reported graffiti incidents.

There is a similar spread of graffiti reports across the municipality, with a higher amount in town centres.

In the South there are minimal reported graffiti incidences with evidence of more in the coastal towns of Pearcedale and Toradin.

This spread correlates to both the spread of population and infrastructure, as expected.

Graffiti Management Plan

The six principles aim to:

- » outline Council's commitment to eradicate illegal graffiti
- » engage and educate all stakeholders
- » explore opportunities to better design spaces that naturally deter graffiti
- » enforce the *Graffiti Prevention Act 2007* and Casey Community Local Law 2018
- » provide relevant evaluation targets for graffiti removal and retail compliance
- » provide a one stop document with Casey's graffiti information, standards and policies.

1 Eradication

The first principle demonstrates how the City of Casey removes graffiti. Council takes a zero-tolerance approach to graffiti, demonstrated by employing a full-time dedicated Officer to coordinate graffiti removal and oversee the contracted removal company to ensure timely removal.

Timely Removal

- » City of Casey aims to remove reported graffiti within one business day (subject to landowner's consent).
- » City of Casey aims to remove offensive graffiti within four hours of it being reported to Council or it's contractor.

This timely removal approach keeps the City clean and deters offenders. Often people who engage in graffiti do so to spread their name, claim territory or to defy authority. Quick removal of graffiti can deter all three if done so continuously as offenders become discouraged.

Internal staff reporting requirements

Safer Communities aims to educate all staff about the reporting tools and encourage all to report any incidences of graffiti. All staff have a social responsibility to report graffiti (particularly when offensive) as '*Safety is Everyone's Responsibility*'

Contractors

City of Casey contracts a graffiti removal company via a tender process to remove all graffiti following approval by Council.

Routine visits

The graffiti removal contractor conducts regularly scheduled visits to known hot-spot and areas at high-risk of graffiti targeting to ensure quick removal of unreported incidents.

Department of Justice and Community Safety grants

City of Casey applies for grants available from the Department of Justice and Community Safety. The grants allow City of Casey to develop strategies and projects to remove or reduce graffiti.

2 Engagement

The second principle recognises who should report graffiti and provide channels for ease of reporting. It also includes strategies to increase awareness of Council's graffiti removal program.

Safety is Everyone's Responsibility

It is important for the community, contractors and internal staff members to be aware of the graffiti reporting process. Everyone has a social responsibility to report graffiti (particularly when offensive) as

‘Safety is Everyone’s Responsibility’.

Reporting tools

Online - A simple design which allows users to add a photo, location, make notes, and provide their contact details.

Phone – Community members may call City of Casey’s Customer Service who can raise a removal request for action.

Customer Service – Community members are encouraged to visit Customer Service Centres at either Bunjil Place or Cranbourne Park Shopping Centre.

Smart Phone application – Safer Communities is investigating the viability of developing a phone application to further ease the reporting process.

Community engagement

City of Casey will conduct community engagement activities in relation to this management plan. Council will engage residents, shop owners, internal City of Casey staff and the wider community to encourage reporting.

3 Education

The third principle shows how Council engages with stakeholders to improve their knowledge and compliance with laws surrounding aerosol spray paint containers and other graffiti implements.

Website information

City of Casey has information available online about ways to reduce graffiti. It is aimed to add additional information about:

- » laws and enforcement (for individuals and retail stores)
- » impacts and penalties of offending
- » differences between art and graffiti.

Retail sector compliance

City of Casey will conduct annual audits of retail stores that sell aerosol spray paint containers. The aim is to educate retail store owners of responsibilities in selling and storage of aerosol spray paint containers to reduce the likelihood of any being purchased for illegitimate activities.

In 2019/2020 City of Casey visited 44 stores. All were provided a copy of the Casey Community Local Law 2018 and *Graffiti Prevention Act 2007* amongst other support materials. Business owners and staff were encouraged to include this education in their training practices. Eleven stores were identified as not meeting legal storage requirements, and seven were offered lockable storage cabinets funded by the Dept. Justice and Community Safety.

Stores that were in compliance of the legislation were provided letters of congratulations in order to raise awareness that audits are undertaken on a regular basis, and to recognise those store owners who were acting responsibly to support Casey’s commitment to graffiti management.

School preventative initiatives

City of Casey will continue to investigate the viability of starting school preventative workshops. The project would pair a local artist with one school per year and together deliver a community art project in

a suitably identified location. Here, education could be included in the workshops to inform young people about the difference between art and graffiti, as well as the impacts and penalties of offending behaviour in an informal manner.

4 Engineering

The fourth principle identifies ways the City of Casey can explore opportunities to better design spaces that naturally deter graffiti through Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) and placemaking techniques.

CPTED techniques in design

CPTED is a way of designing a space in a way where architecture meets criminology. The design aims to increase feelings of safety and reduce anti-social or illegal behaviours. Listed below are the five CPTED concepts (outlined in more detail in Appendix E):

- » Natural access control - Aims to simultaneously decrease accessibility to areas that are unmonitored while increasing visibility of people accessing areas.
- » Natural surveillance - Aims to have anyone in the area be observed by anyone else going about their normal business.
- » Activity support - Aims to have designated spaces for specific activities.
- » Maintenance - Aims to keep the space clean, following the broken windows theory.
- » Territorial reinforcement - Aims to create a sense of ownership

Internal CPTED training

Approximately 25 Council staff have received CPTED training. Due to the increasing importance of CPTED in planning and improvement works, the feasibility of internal training is being assessed.

Beautification

City of Casey is investigating areas that will benefit from greening works as a way to reduce graffiti.

City of Casey is investigating a block colour wayfinding mural to be completed on a blank wall in a shopping precinct. The block colour style is deliberate to allow for easy graffiti removal should the mural become a target of graffiti. After seeing a wayfinding mural successfully implemented in Braybrook and other murals across Casey (see Appendix F) the viability of the project is being assessed for a location in City of Casey.

Greening

Greening is the process of transforming spaces into a more environmentally friendly version. Most often, greening is the addition of a 'Green Wall' to a place. Green Walls can act as a CPTED technique of access control, as offenders can no longer access the wall to do illegal graffiti. Greening can range anywhere from planter boxes in front of a wall to entire walls being covered in greenery.

Not only can greening increase perceptions of safety/deter anti-social behaviours, it can have positive health, environment and biodiversity impacts. A downside to greening is that if done with living plants, high maintenance is required

Cross-departmental collaboration

Where possible, the Community Safety team seeks to engage in cross departmental thinking on projects. Regarding graffiti management, the following teams have been identified to collaborate with:

- » Building Services
- » City Compliance
- » Landscape Design and Construction
- » Parks Services and Landscape Services
- » Recreation Planning, Urban Planning
- » Road Maintenance
- » Sport and Recreation, Sporting Facilities
- » Community Transport
- » Placemaking
- » Smart Cities and Innovation
- » Arts and culture
- » Community grants

5 Enforcement

The fifth principle outlines how Council incorporates Community Local Laws and the *Graffiti Prevention Act 2007* into graffiti management practices.

Zero tolerance approach

City of Casey has a zero-tolerance approach to graffiti. It is removed quickly, tags registered, and evidence is kept for assisting the Police with prosecutions. Every effort will be made to educate and enforce the laws surrounding graffiti, as outlined in this section.

Tag register

The dedicated Officer and contractor identify and record tags from the reports they respond to. This collection forms a tag register, containing data about where and how often a specific tag appears. The tag register can assist in the prosecution process when needed.

The City of Casey will participate in the state-wide Graffiti Tag Register coordinated by the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) on behalf of Local Governments to demonstrate its commitment to graffiti management at a broader level.

Noncompliance

During annual store audits, the Community Safety Team assesses if stores are compliant with the *Graffiti Prevention Act 2007* and the Casey Community Local Law 2018. If not, non-compliance is addressed by the City Compliance team.

Prosecution

Council will assist Victoria Police where needed in the prosecution process to assist in holding graffiti vandals to account. City of Casey can provide any of the following to Victoria Police to assist with investigations:

- » City of Casey record management of removals
- » history or graffiti information collected by City of Casey
- » photographic evidence
- » statements
- » CCTV footage (if available)

6 Evaluation

The final principle, evaluation, outlines relevant factors that are important to keep record of in graffiti management in Casey. Keeping record of the following allows Council to track changes and predict future problems.

Annual review and end of year report

A three-part review can assess whether City of Casey's approach to graffiti management is effective. It may include:

1. Graffiti Management Plan implementation
2. Graffiti removal amounts, costs and KPI's contractors deliver
3. Community Local Law compliance levels surrounding graffiti and aerosol spray paint containers in retailers

Periodic site specific KPI summary

KPI summaries help identify trends in graffiti offences to assist in identifying areas that need redevelopment or CPTED assessment.

Graffiti related KPI's include:

- » total amount of graffiti removed
- » total cost of removal
- » number of reports, separated to regular and offensive
- » if the response time met the aimed commitment time
- » location frequency of offences
- » tag register appearances

Community engagement

Community engagement can provide an insight into whether City of Casey's graffiti management program is effective and meets community expectations. It is a service for City of Casey residents, and whether they are satisfied with it is important. Suggested questions include:

- » perception of safety
- » perception being affected by graffiti
- » perception of graffiti issue in area
- » satisfaction with Casey's graffiti removal service

Benchmarking

City of Casey conducts benchmarking research of graffiti management practices when deemed necessary, allowing Council to gain insight into good/best practices. In 2019 the Graffiti Management Project Officer compared Council's graffiti management practices against all municipalities in Victoria with a publicly available graffiti management plan. From 97 municipalities in Victoria, 21 graffiti management plans were available for comparison.

References

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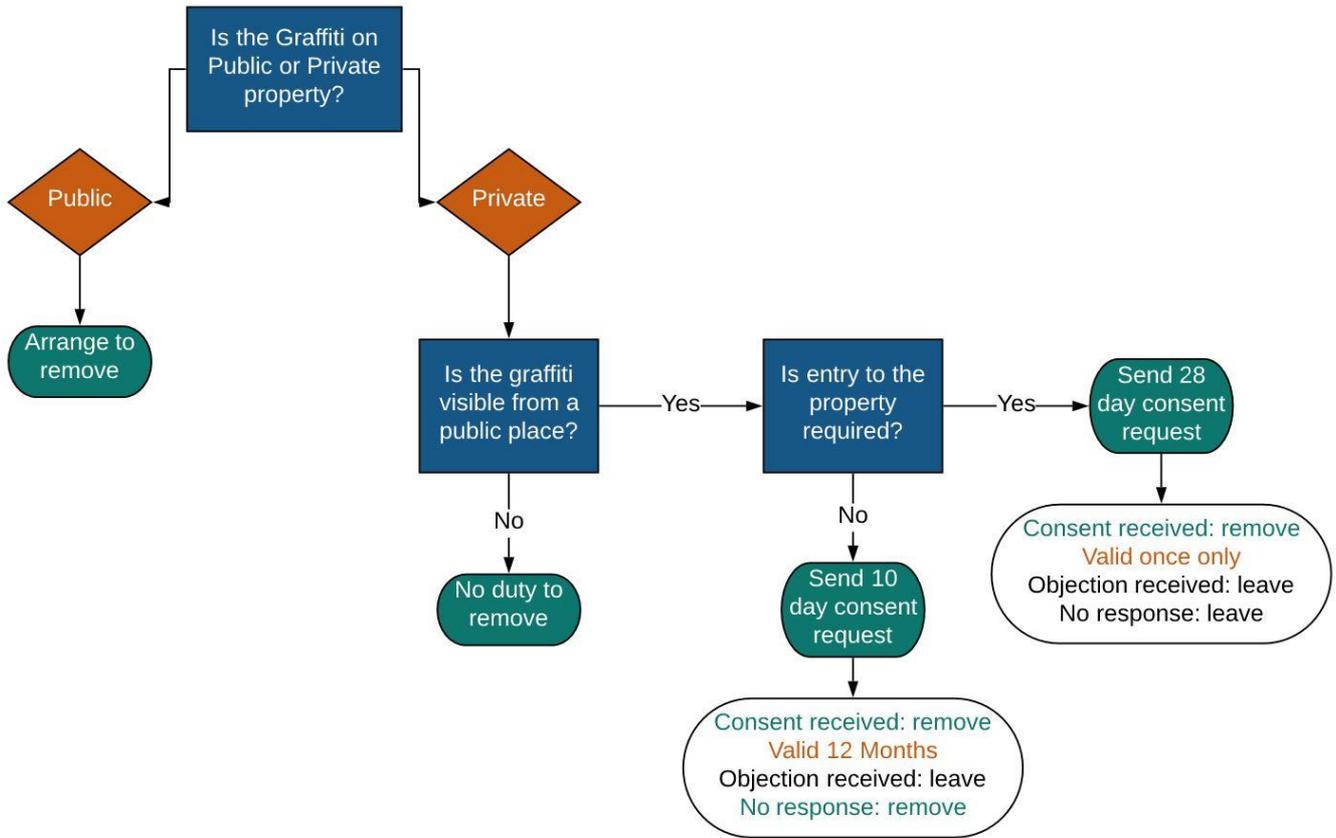
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Appendix A - Types of Street Art

Type	What	Where	How
Beautification	Process of making visual improvements to a place.	Town, city, or urban area.	Planting greenery, adding streetlights, fixing breakages.
Mural	A large, complex, and labour-intensive graffiti painting.	Walls and fences.	Aerosol spray paint.
Poster Art	A drawing on paper fixed using paste.	Anywhere. Commonly on walls and amenities.	Paper fixed using paste.
Scratching	Scratching or incising a tag into an object.	Tables and amenities.	Generally using a key, knife or stone.
Stencil	Image or text that is easily reproducible.	Walls and fences.	Aerosol spray paint and cardboard or other.
Sticker	A sticker with the writer's tag on it.	Commonly on walls, public transport and amenities.	Often obtained from shipping companies and name greeting labels.
Tag	A stylised signature.	Commonly on walls, public transport and amenities.	Typically done with a paint pen or spray can.
Throw up	One-color outline and one layer of full colour.	Walls, fences and public transport	Aerosol spray paint.

Appendix B - Graffiti Prevention Act 2007 Council Authority Summary



Appendix C - Graffiti Prevention Act 2007 Offence Summary

The penalty unit at 1 July 2019 is set at \$165.22 in Victoria and is increased annually by the State Government.

Offence	Penalty	As at July 2019
Mark graffiti	Level 7 imprisonment	2 years imprisonment
Mark offensive graffiti (reasonable political exceptions)	Level 7 imprisonment	2 years imprisonment
Possess a prescribed graffiti implement (without lawful excuses)	25 penalty units	\$4,130.50
Possess a graffiti implement with intent to mark graffiti	25 penalty units	\$4,130.50
Advertise for sale prescribed graffiti implements	50 penalty units	\$8,261.00
Sell an aerosol paint container to a person under 18 years of age	20 penalty units	\$3,304.40

Appendix D - City of Casey Community Local Law 2018 Offence Summary

Offence	Penalty
Write, paint or draw any inscription, figure or mark on the exterior of any property without prior consent.	\$500
Possess aerosol spray paint container on land without consent.	\$500
Fail to appropriately store or display aerosol spray paint container (first offence).	\$300
Second and subsequent offences.	\$500
Sell aerosol spray paint container to person under the age of 18 years.	\$500

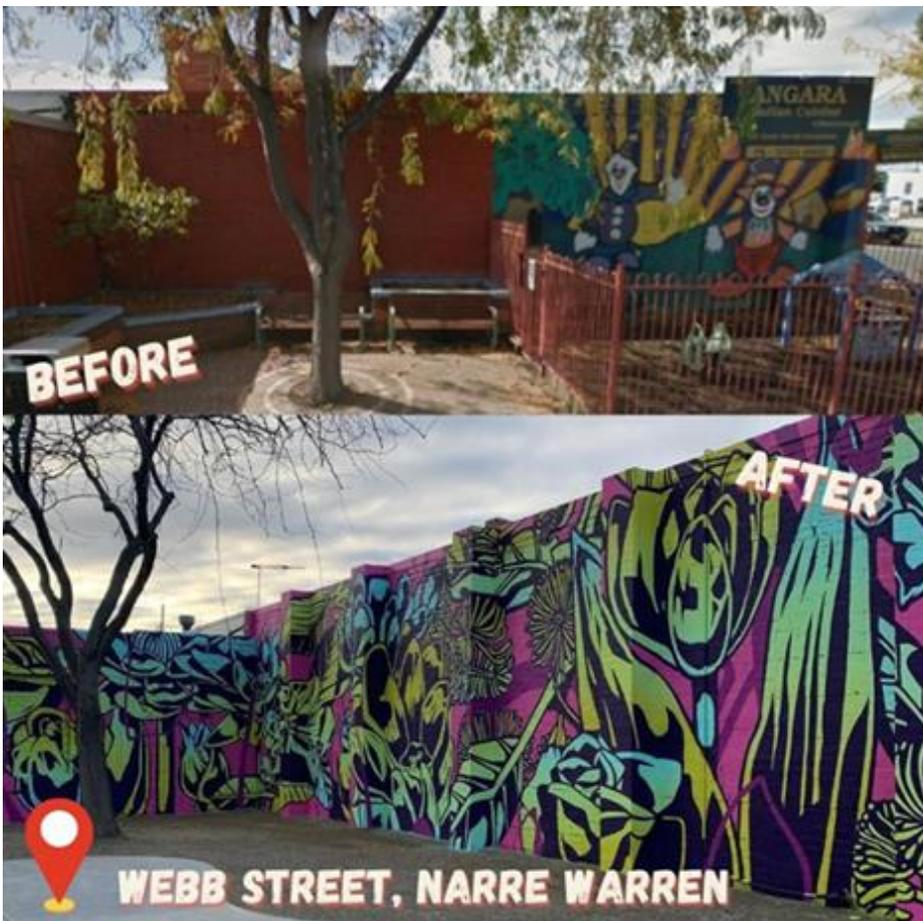
Appendix E – CPTED Explained Further

Principle	Explanation
Natural access control	Aims to simultaneously decrease accessibility to areas that are unmonitored while increasing visibility of people accessing areas.
Natural surveillance	Aims to have anyone in the area be observed by anyone else going about their normal business.
Activity support	Aims to have designated spaces for specific activities.
Maintenance	Aims to keep the space clean, following the broken windows theory.
Territorial reinforcement	Aims to create a sense of ownership

Appendix F – Murals



Webb Street Narre Warren Commissioned July 2020 City of Casey.



Before and After - Webb Street Narre Warren Commissioned July 2020 City of Casey.



Community mural located in Rowans Reserve, Doveton, City of Casey.