8 March 2005

DRAFT GRAFFITI STRATEGY

Division   Assets & Services

Presenter   Geoff Robinson, Group Manager Engineering Services

Purpose

To present a Draft Graffiti Strategy (the "Strategy") for consideration by Committee and seek approval for its release for public consultation.

Time Frame

Following community consultation, the final Strategy will be presented to Committee for endorsement in August 2005.

Finance

The 2004/05 budget for graffiti management is $200,000. This includes funds to remove graffiti from Council owned property, pay contractors who undertake selected removal from private property and fund payment of graffiti removal kits and communication. The initiatives detailed in the Graffiti Strategy (Draft) would be funded from this existing budget and by using existing staff resources, ie no additional budget is required at this time.

Legal

The report seeks approval to release the Draft Graffiti Strategy for public comment and consultation only and no legal implications arise from the recommendation contained in this report.

Sustainability

Implementation of the Graffiti Strategy should lead to a reduction in graffiti tagging. This will improve the visual amenity of city buildings and infrastructure.

Three quarters of the graffiti removal effort involves painting over the affected surface. Where Council is involved in graffiti removal from surfaces such as brickwork, bluestone, marble or porous surfaces, on 90% of occasions this is removed by using pressurised hot water alone. On these occasions, drains are covered to prevent solids from entering the drainage network. When chemicals are used to remove graffiti, Council chooses products that are non-toxic, readily biodegradable or heavily diluted. Council will always promote the removal of graffiti by professional organisations that comply with statutory health, safety and environmental work practices for employees, adjacent property owners or occupiers.

Recommendation

That the Community and Culture Committee:

- approve the release of the Draft Graffiti Strategy for public comment and consultation;

- record that a briefing note detailing outcomes of the consultation period will be provided to Councillors in June 2005; and

- record that it is proposed that the final draft of the Graffiti Strategy will be presented to the Community and Culture Committee at its meeting in August 2005.

Attachment:
1.   Graffiti Strategy (Draft)

DRAFT GRAFFITI STRATEGY

Division   Assets & Services

Presenter   Geoff Robinson, Group Manager Engineering Services

Purpose

1. To present a Draft Graffiti Strategy (the "Strategy") for consideration by Committee and seek approval for its release for public consultation.

Background

2. The City of Melbourne is directly responsible for removing graffiti from infrastructure managed or owned by Council. This includes roads, footpaths, street furniture, sculptures, artworks, bridges and public buildings, pedestrian bridges and parks and gardens as well as Council's administrative buildings. It may also remove graffiti from private property if it is offensive. Council removes this graffiti based upon a policy of rapid response.

3. In January 2004, Council commenced a new incentive program. This program involved issuing paint vouchers or removal fluid to property owners/ managers/occupiers as a means of further encouraging them to take responsibility for the removal of graffiti from buildings for which they are responsible. This removal program is supplemented by Council sponsored graffiti removal in areas of the municipality with high pedestrian densities.

4. Relationships with private transport and utility owners have been developed to encourage them to accept responsibility for graffiti removal on assets they own that interface with the public domain. For example, arrangements for graffiti removal have been made with VicTrack who has overall responsibility for rail transport infrastructure (eg train stations, railway bridges and underpasses). The City of Melbourne has also updated graffiti informational material provided on its website. The website now provides information on general graffiti issues including roles and responsibilities, removal and prevention tips and the current incentive program.

5. Associate Professor Alison Young, who has many years of national and international experience as a researcher on graffiti matters, was engaged to prepare a draft Council Strategy on graffiti. This work included making direct contact with many graffiti writers from different parts of Australia , including a number of graffiti writers who live and / or work within the City of Melbourne. City of Melbourne staff have collaborated with Associate Professor Young in the writing and the refinement of the Draft Strategy.

Issues

6. The Strategy has three main themes. These are engagement, eradication and education. Each theme is discussed in more detail below:

    6.1 *Engagement*: the Strategy recognises that graffiti writers as a group are able to contribute diversity and value to the social fabric of the city. An example of engagement is providing alternative sites for graffiti which maintain the ethos of graffiti culture in ways acceptable to the Council - for example by providing hoardings that can be used for graffiti art (and which will then be replaced in order to keep the look of the area fresh and interesting);

6.2 *Eradication*: the Strategy adopts the point of view that 'tagging' (this is the name given to the calligraphic signature used by some graffitists) makes the streetscape look less attractive. It therefore includes measures that aim to move graffiti artists towards graffiti 'pieces' (essentially mural-type work that may include a more sophisticated calligraphic signature within a broader piece of work) and away from basic tagging. The Strategy establishes areas of the City where the presence of graffiti will not be tolerated (eg retail core of the CBD) without permission from the Council. It is recommended in the strategy that the City's resources dedicated to actual removal be mainly directed at these areas; and

6.3 *Education:* the Strategy advocates general community education on issues such as how to 'design out' graffiti around your home or office building and the establishment of discussion and forums about graffiti culture and graffiti artwork. Under the Strategy, the main thrust of graffiti writer education is directed at helping to move graffiti writers into areas where there will be a higher tolerance of their work.

7. The Strategy recommends that tolerance towards the presence of graffiti vary according to where it is located. The rationale behind this aspect of the Strategy is that graffiti art has a place within the municipality and that in any case it is not possible to totally eradicate graffiti from the municipality. Therefore a policy of 'zero tolerance' across the municipality has no credibility.

8. There will be a special focus on graffiti removal in areas of high pedestrian usage such as the retail core of the CBD, Lygon Street, Rathdowne Street, Errol Street, Domain Road and Macaulay Road. These areas will be considered as areas of 'no tolerance' for graffiti. The program resources of the City of Melbourne will mainly be directed at these areas with a view to getting the quickest possible removal. This will produce improvements in the community's experience of the city (ie, by dealing with the areas of greatest pedestrian volume). Staff from private property in these areas will be contacted by the City of Melbourne whenever graffiti appears on buildings they own or managed and the policy of no tolerance will be explained. Public art and murals on private and public walls in this area will be subject to planning permit process. Under the draft Strategy, the City of Melbourne reserves the right to achieve a graffiti removal outcome by using the Activities Local Law as appropriate.

9. The City of Melbourne will also seek the removal of graffiti on most other streetscapes within the municipality. Property owners/ managers will be entitled to access cost sharing and other incentives (for example, to assist small traders who may find repetitive cleaning leads to high costs and frustration). Quick removal times will be less applicable and there will be less scrutiny than that applying to areas of high pedestrian volumes.

10. Areas of higher tolerance for graffiti. In these areas, the City of Melbourne's resources (eg payment for removal, graffiti kits/paint vouchers), will not generally be available. These areas will include nominated laneways that have developed a graffiti life of their own through the presence of multiple, large graffiti pieces. Creating and supporting areas of higher tolerance in which high quality street art can exist is recognition of the cultural significance that street art has today – especially for young people. These areas will be allowed as much as possible to self-regulate except where 'hate' graffiti has appeared.

11. A higher tolerance of graffiti in certain areas of the municipality does not remove the right of a property owner to remove graffiti from property they own at any time.

Consultation

12. It is intended that this Draft Strategy be released for public comment and consultation. In preparing this Draft Strategy, Associate Professor Young spoke with graffiti artists whilst Council officers have had contact with the Victorian Government's Department of Justice and members of the Victoria Police.

13. Consultation within Council has been undertaken with the Arts & Culture Branch, Design Branch, Street Activities Branch, Community Services Group, Parks & Recreation Group and Marketing & Customer Relations Division.

14. Full consultation on the Draft Strategy itself will include dialogue with property owners and property groups, retailers and retail groups, Police Community Consultative Committees, resident and business groups and further contact with the Victoria Police and graffiti artists. Specific consultation will be undertaken with ratepayers and residents from areas where a higher tolerance to graffiti is proposed.

Recommendation

15. That the Community and Culture Committee:

    15.1. approve the release of the Draft Graffiti Strategy for public comment and consultation;

    15.2. record that a briefing note detailing outcomes of the consultation period will be provided to Councillors in June 2005; and

    15.3. record that it is proposed that the final draft of the Graffiti Strategy will be presented to the Community and Culture Committee at its meeting in August 2005.

GRAFFITI STRATEGY

THE CITY OF MELBOURNE

(DRAFT)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The word 'graffiti' derives from the ancient Greek (*yrafo*, meaning 'to write') and from Latin (*graffito*, 'scratch'). It is commonly understood to mean writing on walls. There is no typical demographic for writers. While graffiti is often done by teenagers, there is evidence that writers with an aptitude for the activity will continue the activity into their twenties and thirties.

2. In the last three decades, graffiti has come to be regarded as a social problem because of the costs of graffiti management, graffiti and fear of crime, graffiti and social decline and the risks to graffiti writers.

3. Within the City of Melbourne, each of the major types of graffiti is represented. Due to the capital city location and the large visitor population, the City of Melbourne attracts graffiti writers from other neighbourhoods and cities. Tagging is evident at many public spaces within the municipality – especially in areas where there is higher pedestrian numbers.

4. Underpinning this Strategy is the view that a property owner has the right to remove illegally placed graffiti from his/her property at any time.

5. To facilitate its key aims of graffiti eradication, public education and engagement, Council will designate certain laneways and other sites as areas of higher tolerance for graffiti. Creating and supporting areas of higher tolerance in which high quality street art can exist, is recognition of the cultural significance that street art has for today's young people. The graffiti removal resources of the City of Melbourne will mainly be directed at areas of high pedestrian usage (eg. the retail core of the CBD) with a view to getting the quickest possible removal although these resources will also be used in other areas of the municipality.

6. As a necessary aspect of both the objectives of reducing the amount of graffiti and diversion of graffiti away from heavily pedestrianised areas, Council will continue to foster partnerships of mutual benefit with property owners/ managers, Government departments and utility companies and residents to aid with the goal of effective graffiti removal.

7. This Strategy also advocates engagement with graffiti writers recognizing them as a group capable of contributing cultural diversity and vibrancy to the community. As such, Council needs to engage positively with the writing community in order to achieve the aim of directing the flow of writers away from areas where graffiti is not tolerated. This includes providing incentives for writers to improve the quality of their work and celebrating this success with them.

8. Initiatives introduced as part of this program will be accompanied by rigorous research and evaluation.

9. The approaches to graffiti management undertaken in other municipalities and selected cities are detailed in an appendix.

INTRODUCTION

1. Graffiti is an issue of great significance to local communities, local government, police, public transport agencies and young people. Individuals within these groups can be affected in various ways by graffiti. While some see it as an index of social decline and youth criminality others find pleasure in the expression and find its results attractive. Local government agencies and public transport companies make significant financial outlays in graffiti prevention initiatives and graffiti removal schemes. Financial costs can also be considerable to private households, local traders and schools. Hundreds of incidents of graffiti are processed through the criminal justice system each year. Graffiti therefore affects a community on aesthetic, emotional, legal and financial levels. This Strategy was commissioned because of the social and economic problems caused by graffiti.

2. In recent years, a range of responses have been developed in municipalities across Australia. Some have opted for 'zero tolerance' approaches and mandatory removal regimes; others have implemented multi-faceted strategies that attempt to balance a range of community interests. The City of Melbourne has engaged with the issue of graffiti in a number of different ways, but without any overall policy on graffiti. The development and implementation of a Graffiti Strategy would allow the City of Melbourne to:

    o   Respond to graffiti through a coherent set of initiatives;
    o   Balance the range of community concerns about graffiti;
    o   Adopt best practice initiatives deployed in comparable urban settings;
    o   Set achievable goals in line with council targets for graffiti management.

BACKGROUND

3.   Graffiti is not a unitary, homogeneous phenomenon. The term 'graffiti' refers to an activity which has a long history and which has taken various forms. The word 'graffiti' derives from the ancient Greek (*yrafo*, meaning 'to write') and from Latin (*graffito*, 'scratch'). It is commonly understood to mean writing on walls. Graffiti was practiced in both ancient Greece and Rome (examples have been found at Pompeii and Herculaneum), and was also common in the early modern, medieval and Elizabethan periods. In contemporary times, graffiti takes a number of forms including hip hop, political graffiti, and stenciling.

Hip Hop Graffiti

4.   Hip hop graffiti includes the most common and most visible forms of contemporary graffiti: 'tags', 'throw-ups' and 'pieces'. Each of these centres on a stylized form of the writer's chosen graffiti name (his or her 'tag'), which constitutes a kind of identity for the author within graffiti culture. A tag name will have been chosen for its combination of particular letters (which the author finds pleasurable to write, and which s/he thinks will look impressive to other writers) and for its evocation of a kind of 'street' sensibility. Thus examples of tags include 'Phake', 'Meta4', 'Optic', 'Yeha', and so on.

5.   'Tagging' is the name given to the writing of this name in a calligraphic style which looks to those outside hip hop culture like 'scribble' or 'scrawl'. In fact it is an activity which can take weeks or months to perfect, although only those inside graffiti culture tend to find it pleasing to the eye. Tags can be written or etched very quickly, on almost any surface (e.g. walls, park benches, glass, cars, train seats, pavements, signal boxes), and with a variety of implements (pens, spray cans, keys, coins). 'Throw-ups' are a simplified version of a tag, written in bubble-style letters, usually spray-painted with one or two colours. They can also be executed very quickly (hence the name: the letters are 'thrown-up' onto a wall in about 30 seconds). A 'piece' is a large, mural-style rendering of the writer's tag name, often using several colours and incorporating images into the design. A 'piece' usually takes a number of hours or days to complete and can sometimes be the work of several writers.

6. Hip hop graffiti originated in the United States in the late 1960s (see Austin; Macdonald; Chalfant and Prigoff). Individuals known as 'Top Cat' and Cornbread' in Philadelphia are usually credited as the first to write their tags on walls and on public transport; in New York City the first writers to become famous were Julio 204 and Taki 183. The subway system in New York became the main location for this form of graffiti writing until concerted regulatory efforts (cleaning, prosecution of those caught) were made. The subway system is now often cited as 'graffiti free': however, two caveats should be noted. First, graffiti did not disappear from the city; it was greatly reduced on the subway trains and expanded into the streets as a result. In New York, graffiti can be seen on mailboxes, newsstands, walls, doors, security shutters, lampposts and phone booths. Second, the strenuous efforts to clean painted graffiti from the trains led to the evolution of a new form of graffiti, whereby a key or coin is used to etch or scratch a tag onto a smooth surface. Transport companies in New York are now facing extensive costs from replacing train windows which have been heavily etched with tags.

7. Tags, throw-ups and pieces derive from hip hop culture more generally. Hip hop culture has a strong 'grass roots' dimension, emphasizing the ordinary individual's abilities to make music, art or dance. It includes, in addition to graffiti, breakdancing (prevalent in the 1980s and making a comeback in popularity), emcee-ing or DJ-ing, and skateboarding. It has also become associated with hip hop or rap music, such that music videos often feature heavily graffiti-ed backgrounds. Advertising targeted at young people often makes use of graffiti in selling products such as mobile phones, shoes, clothing, soft drinks, and so on. Given the immense popularity of hip hop culture generally with young people today, it is important to realize that hip hop graffiti is likely to be prevalent for some time to come.

Political Graffiti

8. Political graffiti commonly involves the writing of a word or phrase in the public sphere. The writer's aim is usually to have their message seen and read by people; thus, slogans are written in a legible style and locations selected are usually areas of considerable visibility. Some slogans are simply personal in nature, such as 'Sally loves Ted'. Most, however, engage with current affairs, national events, and issues of public concern, much as a newspaper does. Indeed, slogan writers (in interviews with the author of this Strategy) state that they usually became involved in slogan writing because of frustration with the limitations of the mainstream media (such as talkback radio or writing letters to a newspaper) as an outlet for their views. Issues covered by slogan writers in recent years within the City of Melbourne include environmental concerns, feminist issues, state politics, international relations, with the most common being anti-war and anti-globalization slogans. All share the common feature of being declaratory or exhortative in nature, expressing a view to an audience.

9. Racist and other 'hate' graffiti is a variety, albeit objectionable, of political slogan writing (see Halsey and Young 2002a). Slogan writing involves the generation of political debate and the expression of a range of individual views. Some writers express socialist opinions, some have feminist politics, others promulgate the politics of hate. 'Hate' graffiti vilifies individuals or groups.

10. In some countries, political graffiti has been recognized as having great social and historical value: the political murals of Mexico City and the writing on the Berlin Wall, for example, are both regarded as crucial cultural records of political struggle.

Stencils

11. Stencils have become an extremely popular form of graffiti in recent years, particularly in cities such as Paris, London and Melbourne. The work of stencillers such as Banksy and Nylon (based in Britain) and Blek and Miss-Tic (based in Paris) has been exhibited and collected in books and on websites. In Melbourne, some of the most prolific stencillers working within the municipality include Ha Ha, Sync and Optic. To make a stencil, an image is created (often using a computer program such as Adobe Photoshop) and translated into a cardboard template which can be placed flat against a wall or other surface and sprayed, to leave behind the stenciled image. Stencils range from the highly political through the allusive to the whimsical. They are highly reproducible, by their very nature: when a stencil is painted out, the stenciller need only return later with the template to replace the erased image.

12. Stencillers combine some of the communicative aspects of slogan writing with elements of the autonomous culture of hip hop graffiti. British art critic Tristan Manco, who has published several books on stenciling, writes that: "stencils are more self-conscious than the spontaneous tagged graffiti messages or the coded confidence of hip hop style. A stencillist will have a location in mind for both aesthetic reasons and for an audience. Generally the artists have an affinity with the place they choose, they know its aspect and have considered its qualities of colour, shape and surface. Other stencillists pick locations for their associations… Fashionable districts are also popular sites for art-based stencils since they will be seen by young people, the media, and perhaps galleries" (2002).

13. Some local stencillers see it as a way to communicate a political view (like slogan writing). Others state their aim as 'making people smile' or 'giving them a laugh' while walking through the city. Stencilling has become significant in Melbourne in recent years. Melbourne has developed a reputation for stenciling, evidenced by discussions on stencil art websites, and in tributes to its high quality stenciling emanating from cultural institutions such as the National Gallery of Australia (which recently exhibited videos of stencil art in the City of Melbourne), the National Gallery of Victoria and the Australian Centre for the Moving Image (which have both exhibited photographs of stencils in Melbourne).

WHO WRITES GRAFFITI?

14. There is no typical demographic for writers. Some come from disrupted or chaotic homes but just as many come from stable backgrounds. While graffiti is often done by teenagers, there is evidence that writers with an aptitude for the activity will continue the activity into their twenties and thirties. Tagging is most frequently done by teenagers, while piecing is usually the activity of older writers (late teens upwards); however, older writers will still place tags within a piece. Stencilling and slogan writing is also often done by older individuals: many begin the activity in their twenties (say, at university) and continue for a number of years. The relative proportion of female to male stencillers and slogan writers is also greater than in hip hop culture. In the South Australian study of 44 hip hop graffiti writers carried out by Halsey and Young (2002b), the average duration of involvement in graffiti culture was 3.92 years. However, a few respondents had been involved for a fairly short time (such as a year or less), while a similar proportion had been engaged in graffiti for periods in excess of eight years (one writer had a 20 year history of writing).

15. The constituency of writers is diverse. It should therefore be assumed that graffiti may be written by individuals in the following categories: those aged from 10 to 45; by males and females; by the employed and unemployed; by those in school and truants; by children of stable and unstable families; by students; by artists; and by the politically active. Obviously not every member of those social groups does graffiti; however, any policy response to graffiti has to take account of the diversity of individuals making up the general constituency of graffiti writers.

WHY IS GRAFFITI A PROBLEM?

16. In the last three decades, graffiti has come to be regarded as a social problem for the following reasons:

Costs of Graffiti Management

17. Local government agencies, utility companies, and public transport authorities make considerable financial outlays in prevention initiatives and removal schemes. Residents, traders, and schools also can face relatively high costs if they wish to remove graffiti from their property. It has been estimated that the costs associated with graffiti removal in Australia are at least $300 million per year (Graycar 2003). The State Government of New South Wales alone spends $60 million per year cleaning graffiti on trains and alongside train lines (Callinan 2002). In the United States, costs of graffiti management have reached US $7 billion per annum.

Graffiti and Fear of Crime

18. The presence of graffiti in an area is often said to make people apprehensive about other criminal activity generally and their risk of victimization specifically. Here, graffiti, as a type of illicit behaviour, is being treated as linked to other types of crime. It is therefore being assumed that those who engage in graffiti are likely to engage in other types of criminal activity, especially interpersonal violence.

19. Research shows that the links between graffiti and fear of crime (see Darcy 2003) and between graffiti and other crimes is complex (see Halsey and Young 2002b). In some outer suburban areas, for example, groups of young males might well engage in a range of illicit behaviours, comprising assault, vandalism, drug taking or dealing, car theft, burglary, and graffiti. For most writers, however, illegal activity beyond graffiti itself is limited to some drug taking, theft of paint, and occasional bouts of violence (usually directed at other writers who have painted over their work, or infrequently at security personnel or cleaning crews). This is not to minimize the seriousness or illegality of such behaviours; rather, it should simply be noted that graffiti is not per se an index of increased criminality (and particularly increased violence) directed at the general population in any area. The results of the 2003 Perceptions of Safety Survey carried out by the City of Melbourne appear to support this. In the survey, graffiti was not highly rated as a social issue making respondents feel unsafe.

Graffiti and Social Decline

20. Graffiti's presence can also indicate to people that community authorities do not take an interest in their environment. Such an apparent lack of interest then gets extrapolated into a general indifference to community well-being. Many local and State authorities therefore maintain a commitment to graffiti removal in order to communicate to individuals that their concerns are taken seriously and can be solved through social policy responses.

21. Graffiti is not the only activity which is regarded in this way. Vandalism, littering, public drunkenness, bill posting, noise pollution, and other 'anti-social' behaviours are also often taken as potential indicators of social decline. Rapid response to such behaviours is advocated in what has come to be known as the 'broken windows' theory: this asserts that social decline begins with as simple a phenomenon as a broken window left unrepaired or graffiti left on a wall. Failure to respond to such behaviour is thought to indicate a lack of ability to control crime, leading to more crime and therefore to economic decline and social instability (see Kelling and Coles, Skogan, Taylor).

22. There is some evidence for the merits of such claims; however, the causal link between anti-social behaviour and economic and social decline is not straightforward or uni-directional. It also does not apply equally well to all areas. Those with transient populations flowing through the area (as commuters, students, tourists, clubbers and so on) will often see relatively high levels of anti-social behaviour, without experiencing the decline predicted by exponents of the 'broken windows' theory. Melbourne's CBD, Soho in London, Times Square in New York, the 6th *arrondissement* in Paris all constitute examples of such an area. The 'broken windows' theory best applies in areas with a relatively stable population and a relatively unified character (e.g. suburbs, small towns). [Regarding the limits of 'broken windows' approaches, see Harcourt].

Risks to Graffiti Writers

23. There are a number of significant risks suffered by graffiti writers, often as a result of the activity's illegal nature. The risks of arrest, prosecution, and a criminal record are an obvious consequence of graffiti writing. Health risks constitute another major problem for writers. Those who use spray cans without masks can suffer respiratory disorders. Graffiti's culture tendency to value tagging in remote or inaccessible places has led to some writers being injured or killed in falls (in an 18 month period to the end of 2002 in New South Wales nine writers died or were injured falling while writing on trains or train property – see Callinan 2002).

GRAFFITI IN MELBOURNE – A SNAPSHOT

24. Within the City of Melbourne, each of the major types of graffiti is represented. Due to the capital city location and the large visitor population, the City of Melbourne attracts graffiti writers from other neighbourhoods and cities. Tagging is evident at many public spaces within the municipality – especially in areas where there are higher pedestrian numbers. When one tag appears in a prominent location, another often quickly follows.

25. The amount of stencil-based graffiti appears to have grown over the past eighteen months. While stencil work appears in many locations across the municipality, there are particular concentrations of this form of graffiti in particular laneways within the CBD and Carlton. The writing of slogans and political comment is less common than stencilling and tagging although there are prominent examples within the municipality. There has recently been an increase in glass etching (e.g. on train windows) although this is still quite rare.

26. Larger pieces of graffiti are less common within the municipality. This may be due to the time needed to complete this type of work. There are however examples of this type of graffiti at locations within the CBD (e.g. Centre Place). A prominent work on a hoarding attached to the water feature at City Square was recently removed when the water wall was reopened.

27. It is difficult to quantify the amount of graffiti in the municipality without conducting a complete audit. An indication can be found in the amount of graffiti removed by Council from private property. In 2002, Council removed 10,000m^2 of graffiti on private property followed by 8,000m^2 in 2003. This work was undertaken as part of a Council funded removal drive conducted in the lead up to Christmas. It concentrated on areas of the municipality that were higher profile and more visible to pedestrians. Following the removal, some sites have remained free of graffiti, whilst others have been re-graffitied many times over. Buildings re-graffitied include those located in prominent CBD locations such as Heffernan Lane, Caledonian Place and Centre Place. The figures quoted above do not include the large amount of graffiti removed from property by private individuals and maintenance companies on behalf of businesses.

28. The City of Melbourne's expenditure on graffiti is listed below.

YEAR	EXPENDITURE
2004/05	$250,000 *(projected)*
2003/04	$248,000
2002/03	$286,881
2001/02	$357,550

REVIEW OF PAST STRATEGIES AND INITIATIVES

29. In the early 1990's, the Arts & Culture Branch at the City of Melbourne managed and funded graffiti related arts projects, such as graffiti paint workshops and the establishment of legal graffiti opportunities. These mainly targeted young people. Graffiti removal concentrated on Council's own buildings with much of the graffiti removed being slogans and scrawls. Occasionally contact was made with other authorities seeking graffiti removal. Tagging and other graffiti was a lot less prevalent than today.

30. By 1998 the City of Melbourne had commenced removal of graffiti from private property but only when the content was considered obscene. It was not until 2001 that a package of initiatives was introduced aimed at reducing the impact of graffiti. This package included the employment of two project officers to visit ratepayers and residents offering free removal of graffiti from prominent locations at Council's expense. Written permission was sought from property owners and managers to remove this graffiti. The program, instigated in the lead up to Christmas 2001, concentrated on Southbank, the CBD, Queen Victoria Market precinct and Errol Street and Lygon Street shopping centres. Over this two-month period, 10,500 m^2 of graffiti was removed from private property at a cost of $210,000. The program of removal coincided with a period of more intensive work with other authorities to encourage them to clean up their assets as well. This included contact with VicRoads and VicTrack.

31. In 2002, Council supplemented its graffiti removal activity with two 'graffiti art' projects. These were at:
    o Holland Park Skate facility where a graffiti element was integrated into the design of the skate park as a community development project with local youth, and;
    o Carlton Police Station where graffiti panels were prepared and erected within the Station courtyard.

32. In July 2002, the City of Melbourne replaced the program of free graffiti removal from private property with a new program whereby Council would offer to clean off the graffiti using its own resources and recoup 50% of the cost from building owner/ occupiers. Two temporary project officers were employed to contact residents and seek commitment to the program. Over a five month period leading up to Christmas, more than 2000m² of graffiti was removed as part of this program - predominantly in the CBD.

33. In July 2002, a community education program was also introduced. This was based upon continually reinforcing the message to building owners/ managers that – even though they didn't put the graffiti on their property – leaving it there impacts negatively on the visual amenity of the city. It included the issuing of a Graffiti Fact Sheet detailing preventative measures to manage graffiti and outlining responsibility for removal under the Activities Local Law.

34. In November 2002, the City of Melbourne instigated a 'graffiti removal blitz' on private property. This program involved employing a contractor to remove graffiti from prominent areas of the City (mostly the CBD). The graffiti was removed on sight and unlike the 2001 program; no specific permission was received from property owners. The program was promoted as 'temporary relief' with the 50/50 program to resume after Christmas. The removal cost $100,000 over a two-month period.

35. By January 2003, Council had developed a package of initiatives that included community information, an incentive program of part payment for graffiti removal and liaison with large businesses and local authorities seeking their support in removal of graffiti. From late October to mid December 2003, Council repeated the 'graffiti blitz' program of 2002. The cost of this removal was $100,000 and led to the removal of 5,000m² of graffiti.

36. The City of Melbourne's current graffiti management program is a refinement of program components used in the past. Graffiti removal from private property is the bedrock of the City's current approach with some resources dedicated to community education, design and graffiti art workshops. Further information can be found in *Appendix Two*.

THE THEMES UNDERPINNING THE STRATEGY

37. The Australian Institute of Criminology stated that "Graffiti is a multi-faceted practice requiring a multi-faceted response from law enforcement, state and local Governments and the community… tailored to specific local areas" (Graycar 2003). This statement is supported. In light of this, the themes underpinning the City of Melbourne Strategy on Graffiti reflect the need for inclusiveness, balance, an informed approach and equity.

INCLUSIVENESS

38. The Strategy takes account of a wide range of community and Council interests. Input into the Strategy has been obtained from a range of resident and commercial groups as well as graffiti writers. However a more extensive consultation must be undertaken to finalise the document. An on-going dialogue with the community is also required.

39. It is proposed that a variety of public meetings and forums be held at appropriate intervals in order to provide information to the public about forthcoming aspects of the Strategy's implementation, and allow members of the public to express their views and concerns about graffiti and its management in the community.

BALANCE

40. The strategy must recognize the validity of different interests and maintain a balance between them wherever possible. A review of best practice management techniques practiced locally, interstate and overseas reveals that the most successful graffiti management response is a multi-faceted one which balances both the short and long term objectives sought by Council. Single-pronged approaches to graffiti management, such as those practiced in the Cities of Salisbury (SA) and Stonnington (Vic) may be effective within the specific context of those localities, but have been found to be severely limited in other areas.

41. Balance must also be sought in a Graffiti Strategy in terms of the range of interests within a community as diverse as the City of Melbourne. Such a community includes ratepayers and non-ratepayers, residents and commuters, tourists and students, and those who like or dislike graffiti. Balancing such a diversity of views is not simple, but it is certainly crucial in terms of acknowledging *all* members of the community.

AN INFORMED APPROACH

42. The Strategy has been based on a thorough and comprehensive review of issues surrounding graffiti as a social phenomenon.

43. Graffiti has become an issue of great public concern in recent years, and this has led some Councils to develop policies without investigating the specific needs of their community and the range of options available to them. The Strategy is based upon extensive research (conducted both for this purpose and also as part of an ongoing research project conducted at the University of Melbourne). The Strategy derives from a thorough review of the international literature on graffiti and of management strategies locally, interstate and overseas. The City of Melbourne is therefore now in a proactive position to adopt a suitable Strategy.

EQUITY

44. In responding to a broad range of viewpoints and in maintaining an effective balance between them, the strategy will operate in a way that upholds notions of social equity while achieving Council's aims.

45. The Strategy focuses upon the rights of the property owner within the municipality. Council would therefore be entitled to remove all graffiti on its own assets, should it wish to do so, but would be required to seek the consent of the property owner in cleaning property belonging to another. Such an approach places community and individual rights and ethics squarely at the centre of the Strategy.

A MULTI-FACETED STRATEGY

The Strategy encompasses 3 inter-related dimensions. These are eradication, engagement and education.

ERADICATION

46. The City of Melbourne has in recent years worked with private property owners who want graffiti removed and will continue to do so. However, some City of Melbourne actions have resulted in graffiti being removed when the property owner was not consulted. Such an approach runs contrary to the spirit of equity and negotiation which animates this Strategy. Instead of imposing mandatory removal, City of Melbourne will facilitate a cooperative ethos, whereby removal is something negotiated between different stakeholders within the community, and between Council and the property owner.

Recommendation One – That the City of Melbourne devises a written process for seeking property owner / manager permission before it removes graffiti from private property.

47. Enforcement is also a component of 'eradication'. Enforcement with regard to illegal graffiti work is the responsibility of the Victoria Police. The Victoria Police (Transit Police) has developed a database on which it records photographs of graffiti tags so as it can link tags to offenders: ie. by comparing the calligraphic signatures of one tag with another. (Grappling with Graffiti, State of Victoria, 2003). This database is used as an aid to prosecution. The City of Melbourne will work with the Victoria Police by photographing persistent graffiti tags and relaying these to the police so as they can be checked against the police database and if appropriate added to the database.

48. The City of Melbourne also supports moves by the Victorian Government to prepare a communications strategy that encourages the community to report graffiti offences to the police.

Recommendation Two – That the City of Melbourne assist the police to find persistent graffiti taggers by photographing 'repeat' tags and relaying these to the Victoria Police to aid in future prosecutions. This shall exclude areas of higher tolerance *(see 'Implementation').*

49. The other aspect of enforcement relates to the City of Melbourne's powers under the Activities Local Law. Part 9 of this local law states that *'an occupier of premises must not cause or allow his or her premises to be kept in a condition which in the opinion of the Council is unsightly'.* This clause was written with graffiti in mind. The definition of "unsightly" is open to interpretation. As of September 2004, this clause has yet to be evoked for the removal of graffiti and City of Melbourne staff have negotiated for graffiti removal without reference to the local law.

50. The City of Melbourne currently practices 'no tolerance' in relation to graffiti on assets it owns. This practice will continue. Council will set a target time for removal of 72 hours from notification on its own assets. 'Hate' graffiti will be removed within the shorter period of 24 hours.

> **Recommendation Three– That undesirable graffiti on City of Melbourne assets be removed within 72 hours of notification unless it consists of 'hate' graffiti in which case it shall be removed within 24 hours of notification.**

51. The City however allowed a graffiti 'piece' or mural to remain on a hoarding at Mockridge Fountain for several months even though the mural was placed without permission. The unwritten rationale for this was that the mural was found to be attractive and having it there seemed to be stopping the placement of graffiti tagging on the hoarding. The City must reserve the right to leave graffiti on property it owns although the process for leaving graffiti on a building or within a streetscape should be the same as that followed by private citizens or businesses who may seek the same outcome.

52. The exception to the 'no tolerance' on municipal assets raised above begs the question – should the City of Melbourne be aiming to eradicate all graffiti within the municipality? If not, how does it decide which graffiti is acceptable? These issues are further addressed under the section titled 'Implementation'.

ENGAGEMENT

53. Engagement needs to take place at several levels and in a variety of ways. Underlying this section of the Strategy is a philosophy of *partnerships based on mutual benefit*. Review of best practice indicates that the greatest successes (in controlling levels of graffiti and in encouraging feelings of well-being, amenity and belonging within the community for all groups) are obtained when municipal authorities work with other agencies and groups. This can take such forms as cooperative relationships, jointly sponsored events or programs, knowledge-sharing initiatives, and long term collaborations. Some specific initiatives are detailed later in the Strategy.

EDUCATION

54. A number of misconceptions about graffiti and graffiti management exist in today's society. These include:
   o Simplistic associations between the presence of graffiti and the likelihood of being the victim of a crime of violence;
   o Stereotypical assumptions about who writes graffiti and why;
   o Assumptions about best ways of responding to graffiti (often through wholesale no tolerance approaches that are not married to other techniques).

55. These misconceptions usually arise from a lack of information and knowledge about the complexities of graffiti culture and the complexities of responding to graffiti as a social issue. The Strategy therefore contains a crucial component – that of education, both within the community generally and within Council departments. Graffiti is often dealt with by a number of departments within a municipal authority (in the City of Melbourne, it involves Branches such as Engineering Services, Community Services, Arts and Culture, Parks and Recreation, Street Activity, City Projects). For any Strategy to succeed, it will be essential for all relevant branches to pool knowledge, adapt to different ways of responding to graffiti if necessary, and combine expertise in order to achieve the Strategy's goals of removal and diversion. It also requires each of the relevant Branches to allot officer time to implement the Strategy and the establishment of a coordinating mechanism.

Recommendation Four – That each relevant department dedicate Officer staff hours to the implementation of this Strategy.

Recommendation Five – That a 'Graffiti Group' be set up within the City of Melbourne to coordinate a whole of Council implementation of this Strategy. This Group will be chaired by a senior Council Officer.

IMPLEMENTATION

56. Implementation is discussed in connection with each of the 3 key aspects of the Strategy.

ERADICATION

57. The different forms of graffiti were detailed earlier in this paper. Public opposition to graffiti is focused on tagging – the most predominant form of graffiti within this municipality. It is widely recognized that there is some value in many of the larger graffiti pieces even when they incorporate tagging as part of a broader mural. There is some artistic ambivalence about the worth of stencilling although it is less well-known as a form of graffiti and therefore people have had less reason to think about its artistic merit. This Strategy adopts the point of view that 'tagging' type graffiti makes the streetscape look less attractive. It will therefore incorporate measures that aim to move graffiti artists towards murals and away from 'tagging'.

58. Consistent with the details of the three dimensions of this Strategy (ie. eradication, engagement and education), as well as removing or arranging the removal of graffiti within the municipality, it will also allow graffiti to flourish in certain areas.

59. There will be a special focus on graffiti removal in areas of high pedestrian usage such as the retail core of the CBD, Lygon Street, Rathdowne Street, Errol Street, Domain Road and Macaulay Road in Kensington. These areas will be considered as areas of 'no tolerance' for graffiti. The program resources of the City of Melbourne will mainly be directed at these areas with a view to getting the quickest possible removal. This will produce significant improvements in the community's experience of the city (ie, by dealing with the areas of greatest pedestrian volume). Staff from private property in these areas will be contacted by the City of Melbourne whenever graffiti appears on buildings they own or manage and the policy of no tolerance will be explained.

60. The City of Melbourne will also seek the removal of graffiti on most other streetscapes within the municipality. Property owners/ managers will be entitled to access cost sharing and other incentives (for example, to assist small traders who may find repetitive cleaning leads to high costs, frustration and a sense of powerlessness). Quick removal times will be less applicable and there will be less scrutiny than that applying to areas of high pedestrian volumes.

61. Certain laneways and other sites will be designated as areas of higher tolerance for graffiti. In these areas, the City of Melbourne's resources (e.g. payment for removal, graffiti kits/paint vouchers), will not be available. These areas will include laneways that have developed a graffiti life of their own through the presence of multiple, large graffiti pieces. These locations are to be confirmed.

62. Creating and supporting areas of higher tolerance in which high quality street art can exist, is also recognition of the cultural significance that street art has for today's young people. These areas will be allowed as much as possible to 'self-regulate' except where 'hate' graffiti has appeared. In these circumstances, the City of Melbourne will request that the graffiti be removed. A higher tolerance of graffiti in certain areas of the municipality does not remove the right of a property owner to remove graffiti from their property at any time. It is anticipated that by directing graffiti writers into areas of higher tolerance, this will lead to the creation of mostly mural type work and stencilling with less tagging.

63. Where any laneways flow into the streets selected as areas of no graffiti tolerance, graffiti will be removed in the laneway regularly and thoroughly to a distance of at least ten metres back from the main street (thus ensuring that passersby on the main street are less likely to see tagged laneway corners).

64. In locations falling into areas of higher tolerance for graffiti, the fate of graffiti will largely be decided by the wishes of the property owner. The City of Melbourne's efforts to facilitate removal in this case will be limited to providing information through leaflets, online and through addressing telephone inquiries.

65. In situations of conflict (such as where neighbouring residents/traders wish the graffiti to be removed or oppose a mural), a process of negotiation should be conducted (through the City of Melbourne, or through local residents/ traders groups, for example). This negotiation process may also be used if the City of Melbourne seeks removal from a building in another area of the city but the property owner refuses to do so. The City of Melbourne also reserves the right to use the Activities Local Law as a last resort to get property owners to remove graffiti in areas other than those where it is allowed.

Recommendation Six – That the City of Melbourne establish areas of the municipality where there will be a higher tolerance for graffiti.

Recommendation Seven – That the City of Melbourne develop a negotiation process to assist with dispute resolution that may arise between neighbouring property owners concerning a graffiti piece.

66. Graffiti removal should not be the only aspect of the area's 'clean-up': Council must also address the presence of litter, excessive noise (such as from spruikers), and other ephemera (items of short term use or interest) such as stickers, posters, and human and animal waste. Experience in the City of Westminster has shown that measures which improved these correlative urban problems contributed enormously to individuals' sense of security and well-being.

> **Recommendation Eight** – That the City of Melbourne continue to offer graffiti removal incentives such as paint vouchers and graffiti removal kits to property owners/ managers in areas other than those designated as being areas of higher graffiti tolerance.
>
> **Recommendation Nine** – That the City of Melbourne continue to offer a program of graffiti removal from private property. This will be established along the following lines:
>
> - Operating over the course of the year rather than as a targeted 'Christmas blitz',
>
> - Be available to property owners/ managers in areas other than those designated as being areas of higher graffiti tolerance,
>
> - Be graduated with Council paying the whole cost of removal the first time and then offering a paint voucher/removal kit to aid with subsequent removal.
>
> **Recommendation Ten** – That Council establish a 'graffiti prevention small grants scheme' that would allow CPTED graffiti prevention outcomes to be implemented (eg. To allow access to anti-graffiti coatings, installation of security grills, climbing plants etc). The grants scheme will be reserved for properties and areas where repeat graffiti is prevalent despite utilisation of Council's graffiti removal options.

ENGAGEMENT

67. Partnerships with property owners/ managers and residents who wish to remove or prevent graffiti are important. A sense of cooperation between Council and the community will increase individual satisfaction with Council performance; enhance Council's image; and increase the likelihood of self-directed removal/ prevention schemes within the community. Specific means of engagement have been detailed below.

68. Just as the Skatesafe campaign recognized skaters as a legitimate stakeholder group who add vibrancy and cultural diversity to the city, this Strategy advocates engagement with graffiti writers recognizing them as a group capable of contributing cultural diversity and vibrancy to the community. As such, Council needs to engage positively with the writing community in order to achieve the aim of directing the flow of writers away from areas where graffiti is not tolerated. This will be done by:

   o Fostering mentorship by more experienced artists, to reduce tagging which is usually carried out by younger writers, through activities such as sponsored exhibitions/ workshops. (This is already happening informally but needs institutional encouragement);

   o Providing incentives for writers to improve the quality of their work and celebrating this success with them. This will be achieved by providing sites where writers can compete for commissions or other small prizes, sponsoring street art events and sites which result in the best works being collected by galleries (where able to be negotiated and the City of Melbourne and sponsoring prizes for high quality street art. For example, Brisbane City Council offers a prize of $1,000 annually for best painted traffic signal box. The City of Melbourne will run a similar competition;

- Providing alternative sites for graffiti which maintain the ethos of graffiti culture in acceptable ways, for example by providing hoardings in a range of areas which can be used for graffiti art (and which will then be replaced in order to keep the look of the area fresh and interesting). This allows rapid removal if offensive graffiti is placed on a hoarding and allows the artworks to be rotated. This builds on the example of the graffiti mural done at City Square (Mockridge Fountain) upon the hoarding covering the water feature. Replacement of hoardings can be less expensive than chemical cleaning or repainting;

- Providing sites which can be used creatively by writers in acceptable ways, for example by expending some thought in converting problematic spaces into interesting ones. Union Lane is a suitable example. A previous attempt was made to beautify Union Lane by commissioning a mural running the length of one side of this laneway. The lane remains uninviting and unappealing, and the mural has been heavily tagged. Using hoardings on the wall would allow experimentation with what might work best in this difficult location, and could also be used to generate variegated relief along an unremittingly flat surface. Additional lighting could be provided to make the laneway feel safer after dark and to provide a means of displaying the artwork effectively;

- Fostering partnerships with schools to help direct writers towards improved quality of work and away from areas where graffiti is not wanted. This will also include sponsoring projects in schools which teach pupils about acceptable forms of street art;

- Including high quality graffiti art as an aspect of street art within the City of Melbourne in various promotional/ informational materials (such as a map of 'Art in the City' or a 'City Secrets' series on Art).

Recommendation Eleven – That the City of Melbourne positively engage graffiti writers by fostering mentoring schemes and partnerships with schools, providing incentives for improved work, providing alternative graffiti sites and including high quality work as part of City of Melbourne art promotions.

69. Engagement with community organisations that can network with residents, traders, writers and schools will help generate flows of information to concerned community members and in maintaining the impetus for graffiti writers to be diverted away from certain areas and towards others. This includes encouraging precinct groups and residents' groups to self-organise regarding the removal of graffiti from private property and the possible promotion of certain sites and structures (eg. electrical sub-stations).

70. A number of potential relationships exist which should be further utilised by Council. These include:

- o Construction companies/ hoarding manufacturers. Building sites are usually locations which do not generate positive feelings for people passing by. They are often noisy, dusty and visually unappealing. Creative partnership with construction companies and hoarding manufacturers would lead to an increase of amenity at these sites. Artists could be invited to carry out work on the hoardings which surround building sites (the artists could be identified through the partnerships fostered with experienced street artists). For example, a local Melbourne artist has recently been approached by Multiplex to commission 12 street artists to do artwork for the hoardings at the World Square building site in Sydney,

- o Galleries. A number of galleries in the CBD have already hosted exhibitions by street artists and graffiti writers (including Eden Gallery, Flinders Lane Gallery, and Gammaspace). The City of Melbourne will work in conjunction with appropriate galleries to co-host or co-sponsor exhibitions (for example of stencil art), thus enhancing community understanding of street art and again providing incentives to artists to improve their work;

- o Police and Community Consultative Committees (PCCC's). These Committees will be requested to identify hot spots and help develop site specific solutions, with graffiti being regarded as one of a related network of social problems which include noise abatement, littering, public drunkenness and public urination. Solutions will be tailored to the specific needs and wishes of local stakeholders, and may involve simple solutions such as improved lighting at one site and creative lateral thinking at another (such as painting the security shutters on cafes in Centre Place);

- o VicRoads. One of Brisbane City Council's great successes in this area has been the wholesale reduction of tagging and stickering on painted signal boxes. In its trial 3 month period, there was a 100% success rate (ie no tagging); now, several years after the scheme's introduction, tagging is still minimal. Artists are invited to design artwork which is appropriate to the box's location (over 250 artists have painted more than 500 signal boxes since 2001). The scheme has been so popular with the community that a gallery exhibition of the artworks is planned. The project also won a National Local Government Award in 2002. Queensland State Department of Main Roads has offered its own signal boxes for painting since 2003 in light of the scheme's success. VicRoads will be approached to support a similar scheme in cooperation with the City of Melbourne;

- Transport companies. Understandably, transport companies tend to focus their resources upon stations, as the sites where graffiti can have greatest impact on customers. The City of Melbourne will encourage transport companies to identify wall sites along train lines at some distance from main stations (such as Flinders Street and Spencer Street) which are considered the most unattractive as a result of graffiti. These walls will then be transformed into areas showcasing high quality graffiti art. Research has shown that where sites are thus transformed, tagging and throw-ups in the area are much reduced (see Frost). Writers could be invited to submit designs on an annual basis;

- Other councils. In the course of consultation for this Strategy, several councils expressed a willingness to take part in inter-council discussions in order to share knowledge, report on progress and develop ideas;

- Young people. Every community must include its young people as valid and respected members. This requires acknowledgment that graffiti is an important cultural form for many young people today. They do not have to be actual practitioners of graffiti to be interested in it: many now visit the CBD simply to visit sites known for stencil art; school groups come to the CBD to visit its laneways as well as its galleries; and some tourists are visiting Melbourne not just for its food, fashion and sporting events, but also for its reputation as a world center for street art. The City of Melbourne will foster a sense of legitimate belonging in the young people of its community by providing information and resources to them.

Recommendation Twelve – That the City of Melbourne discuss partnership opportunities with Connex, selected art galleries, selected construction companies and VicRoads as outlined in this Strategy.

Recommendation Thirteen – That the City of Melbourne arranges a meeting with neighbouring municipal Councils to share knowledge and develop new ideas relating to graffiti management.

EDUCATION

71. Many of the initiatives proposed above (especially under *Engagement*) also include an educational dimension. It is worth noting separately that Council will strive for the education of the general community. This shall include:

- General community education about graffiti prevention techniques; options regarding removal or retention of the graffiti; Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles and street art and graffiti culture (for example, regarding misconceptions about graffiti and violent crime, or about writers' aims and motivations). As a means of enhancing community awareness about graffiti and those who engage in the activity, the Strategy recommends the co-ordination of a number of community forums;

o Further information about graffiti culture. This will also be distributed to the community in leaflet form and made available on the Council website. Information online or in such a leaflet will include a brief discussion of the (often misunderstood) relationship between graffiti and other types of crime; a brief summary of graffiti's historical and political roots; a snapshot of what other cities and countries are doing to manage graffiti; an overview of any pilot projects to be implemented by the City of Melbourne, their precise timeline, and methods for reporting results; and an indicative quarterly estimate of mass tagging within the municipality and the reconfirmation of the City's commitment to removing such graffiti.

Recommendation Fourteen – That the City of Melbourne review and improve all the literature it has prepared for the community on graffiti management and then reissue it.

72.   Education of the graffiti community needs to concentrate on re-directing writers towards the areas of higher tolerance. This can be done through:

o The introduction of a code of conduct relating to graffiti. This would include: mapping streets where graffiti is not tolerated and those areas where there is higher tolerance; setting out principles for property owners who wish to remove or deter graffiti; and setting out principles for graffiti writers interested in high quality street art;

o Instituting what is called 'considered placement' by some sections of the graffiti community, whereby writers give thought to the situation of their work and to its content. Council will encourage writers to develop a sense of 'considered placement' within the municipality. This will include encouraging writers to 'graduate' from tagging to more acceptable forms of street art such as stencils, or to abandon illicit writing in favour of legal graffiti, or to move towards designated precincts instead;

o Establishing sponsored workshops wherein younger writers learn about placement issues, the costs of illicit graffiti and removal, and means of improving their work. Marion Council (SA) currently runs such a scheme, called 'The Art of Respect': artists submit a portfolio of work with the best 15-20 winning a place in the workshop run by a more experienced legal graffiti artist. They learn about the consequences of graffiti, and design a work on canvas which is then exhibited and sold through the Council's Cultural Centre. A similar scheme should work well in the City of Melbourne.

Recommendation Fifteen– That the City of Melbourne introduce a graffiti 'Code of Conduct'.

Recommendation Sixteen - That the City of Melbourne establish an educational campaign directed at getting graffiti writers to use geographical areas of higher tolerance for graffiti activity and to encourage them to more fully consider the content of their work.

EVALUATION AND MONITORING

73. Initiatives introduced as part of this program will be accompanied by rigorous research capable of indicating what occurred, why it occurred, and with what intended and unintended effects. Measurements of 'success' will be established at the time projects are actioned in order to reliably report on the relationship between charter, process and outcome.

74. The City will also keep full records of where graffiti has been removed and of the numbers of people accessing and benefiting from its graffiti related programs.

75. In all cases, definitions of success will be flexible enough to account for 'positive failures' (ie initiatives which provide invaluable information to the municipality about what might work in marginally different locations or within slightly varied financial contexts) as well as the cases at either end of the success/failure spectrum.

76. Evaluation will take various forms. These will include an audit of the target areas; telephone survey of local residents or traders; compilation of data on complaints or compliments received in relation to Council strategies and public meetings at which individuals can voice their views. This will enable discovery of the wide potential range of opinions within the community and allow more genuine assessment of the Strategy's impact and effectiveness.

Recommendation Seventeen – That the City of Melbourne establish performance measures to accurately assess the success of the Graffiti Strategy.

Recommendation Eighteen – That the City of Melbourne develop an evaluation plan for the Graffiti Strategy.

Recommendation Nineteen – That the City of Melbourne conduct an bi-annual graffiti audit of major pedestrian routes within the municipality.

APPENDIX ONE - POLICY FRAMEWORK

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

City Plan 2010

77. City Plan 2010 commits the City of Melbourne to continuously improving the urban design, amenity, safety and quality of the City's public environment. It is an objective of City Plan 2010 to 'create a city environment where the community feels safe and comfortable and that stimulates cultural activity and vibrancy' (p.44).

Legislative Provision

78. Under the Activities Local Law, private property owners/managers are responsible for removing graffiti on their property. Part 9, "Dilapidated, Dangerous and Unsightly Premises", regulates the presence of graffiti on private property. Clause 9.2(B) states that:

'an occupier of premises must not cause or allow his or her premises to be kept in a condition which in the opinion of the Council is unsightly or is detrimental to the general amenity of the neighborhood ... The Council may serve a Notice to Comply in accordance with clause 13.18 of this Local Law specifying the work required to correct the condition of the premises'.

79. The local law outlines enforcement action, including the provision to fine a property owner, manager or occupier if graffiti is not removed from a building when directed to do so by an Authorised Officer.

STATE GOVERNMENT

80. In late 2003, the Minister for Police and Emergency Services launched *Grappling with Graffiti: A Graffiti Management Strategy for Victoria*. The strategy operates within the larger policy context set by *Safer Street & Homes: A Crime Prevention Strategy for Victoria 2002-2005*.

81. With the advent of the State graffiti management strategy, it is the strong preference of Government that all Councils attempt, to the best of their ability, to engage responses to graffiti (both short and long term) which fit within the general principles and aims of the strategy.

82. The purpose of the following discussion, therefore, is to outline how the graffiti management strategy for the City of Melbourne reflects the overarching tenets of government policy on graffiti. *Grappling with Graffiti* has three core aims. These are:

o Improved coordination between government, the police, private industry and the community in developing and implementing innovative and effective initiatives to address graffiti;

o   Improved data collection, monitoring and reporting practices to more accurately assess the impact and prevalence of graffiti and enable the development of appropriate responses; and

o   Enhanced community awareness about:

- The complex nature of graffiti and its causes,
- The cost of graffiti to the community,
- The role of the community and actions and initiatives which might be taken at a local level based on what works in graffiti reduction and prevention, and
- Graffiti reporting and response.

83.   The strategy for the City of Melbourne reflects each of these.

Aim 1

84.   In relation to *improved coordination* between key sectors, the Strategy has been developed only after consulting widely with government personnel, traders and residents within the City of Melbourne. Significantly, a number of graffiti writers have also put forth their own views concerning the management of graffiti within the municipality.

Aim 2

85.   In relation to *data collection and monitoring*, the strategy aims to identify a series of hot spots which feature prominently in the public mind in order to test (through a series of pilots) the relative efficacy of various responses to dealing with graffiti in such areas. In some cases, rapid removal will be appropriate. In others, it may be a question of calling community meetings in order to tease out a response which is site specific and sensitive to all the stakeholders on the area. In others still, it may be necessary to put into practice some basic CPTED principles. In all cases, the Strategy calls for ongoing rigorous evaluations of particular responses and the development of indicators of success and failure relevant to specific situations and time lines.

Aim 3

86.   With regard to *enhanced community awareness*, the Strategy includes initiatives to educate the community about the causes and types of graffiti as well as associated economic impacts. The Strategy is premised on the idea that graffiti culture is heterogeneous and there, as such, no single solution to graffiti. Indeed, the Strategy has been designed to balance the views of those who have no tolerance for all types of graffiti against those who have an appreciation for graffiti culture.

APPENDIX TWO - GRAFFITI MANAGEMENT IN OTHER PLACES

LOCAL RESPONSES TO GRAFFITI MANAGEMENT

An Overview of Municipalities Bordering the City of Melbourne

City of Hobsons Bay

87. Council has no overarching graffiti strategy and submits that 'graffiti is not a major issue' within the municipality. There is a telephone number (not a hotline) which people can use to report graffiti. Various personnel are deployed to remove graffiti depending on whether it appears on Council or residential buildings. In February 2003, Council conducted a brief audit of selected sites, painted over all graffiti, and then continued monitoring these sites for a period of three months. Council reported a noticeable decline in the amount and type of graffiti in these areas during this time. Urban Maintenance Systems are contracted to the value of $30,000 per year to remove graffiti within the municipality. Recently, an anti-graffiti trailer was donated by a local company and is used by volunteers from the Lion's Club to remove graffiti from school buildings. The Arts and Culture department within Council has assisted in the production of '3 or 4' legal walls in recent times. Council did not report any flow-on effects from the City of Melbourne in terms of what it may or may not be doing about graffiti within its jurisdiction.

City of Maribyrnong

88. The Council released a discussion paper titled 'Graffiti Management in the City of Maribyrnong' and is currently working on a graffiti management strategy. This strategy is likely to promote the artistic merit of some types of graffiti but will also aim to reduce mass tagging across the municipality. The strategy is likely to recommend the establishment of a register of local aerosol artists and the allocation of spaces to display aerosol art (including disused office or warehouse spaces). Beyond this strategy, plans have been developed to commence a trial of a 'zero' tolerance stance toward graffiti in the Footscray business precinct.

89. At present, all graffiti monitoring occurs on an ad hoc basis. Council is nearing the end of a five year contract with its graffiti removal service provider. Such removal extends to Council assets only. Graffiti removal kits are available for residents on request. Presently, Council allocates $65,000 per year for graffiti removal.

90. Council has overseen a successful legal wall within the municipality (executed at Braybrook Community Centre). The effect of this was to break down the communication barrier between the different users of the Centre. Council reported that young and old people from various backgrounds were able to commence a dialogue with one another because there was a common project and thus a common sense of purpose to be gained from participation in the project. Residents and traders have since commissioned pieces on private walls – the vast majority of which have been self-initiated (ie without Council assistance).

91. In terms of the movement of graffiti and graffiti writers from one municipality to another, Council submitted that Kensington and Footscray are often viewed as one and the same area. The contention here is that what occurs in either of these suburbs occurs in both because of the purportedly similar demographic profile and transience of persons moving through these zones to and from the CBD.

City of Moonee Valley

92. Official policy is that Council paints out all graffiti on public assets within 24 hours. Tagging is by far and away the biggest problem. The removal of graffiti is undertaken through the general depot responsible for parks, gardens and public spaces. There is, however, the intention to think more creatively about graffiti by linking it to programs based around youth enhancement and youth culture more generally. In April 2004, the Youth Festival held at Queens Park involved public workshops and displays by stencil artists. This was deemed a great success and a similar event is planned for Arts Week in August 2004. Council's stance on graffiti art programs will be embodied in its Youth Strategy due for release in June 2005.

93. Council also commented that it is difficult to quantify the flow-on effect of graffiti to and from surrounding municipalities. The statement was made, however, that many young people within Moonee Valley are in constant transit from this municipality to the City of Melbourne. It is therefore reasonable to assume that incidences of graffiti will - to a certain degree - follow these corridors. Overall, Council is concerned to move away from both 'zero' tolerance and prosecution as key strategies toward a more inclusive community based response to the issue. Council would be more than happy to participate in an inter-Council round-table with the City of Melbourne and other adjoining municipalities to share knowledge and ideas about best practice graffiti and aerosol art management.

City of Moreland

94. Council has no official graffiti management strategy although it is committed to remove such from Council assets within as short a time period as possible. Graffiti is described as 'a huge problem, particularly on the rail corridors'. However, there is evidence to suggest that graffiti does not present to the community as a key issue in need of a solution (best evidence of this is the fact that Council has not had pressure placed upon it by constituents to develop a co-ordinated response). The Youth Services section trialed 'portable pieces' at the Sydney Road Festival in March 2004. This was deemed a great success to the extent that members of the public bought works produced by local aerosol artists / graffiti writers. Further, a number of traders have since commissioned writers to paint their shop walls on the strength of the quality of the work exhibited at the Festival.

95. Council is unable to comment in an informed manner concerning the precise relationship between graffiti within the City of Melbourne and that occurring within its own municipality.

City of Port Phillip

96. Council reports that graffiti has been increasing over the last two years to the point where tagging is described as 'standard social practice' in the area. Commercial premises are cleaned on a needs basis whilst residential premises are cleaned once only and thereafter information is given to residents about how to carry out their own removal initiatives.

97. Council is considering introducing a scheme whereby apprehended graffiti writers would be made to pay the total cost of removing all graffiti done by that writer over a designated period of time. Word of this potential strategy has reached 'the street' and Council notes that this is the only strategy to make writers think twice about tagging or continuing to engage in other types of graffiti within the municipality. Having said this, Council also notes that this is not the most socially progressive way to address the problem. Accordingly, Council also expresses the desire to enhance the cultural life of the community – which would include examining the role of aerosol art in building and sustaining community life.

98. Council could not make an informed comment about the relationship between graffiti in the City of Melbourne and graffiti within its own municipality.

City of Stonnington

99. Over the last two years, Council has systematically embarked on a graffiti removal program. In 2003, two pilot removal programs were set up in Malvern and Prahran. This involved a comprehensive audit of all graffiti within three varied zones and the subsequent removal of all graffiti within these sites. A period of monitoring over several months revealed that only 30% of graffiti returned to these areas. This graffiti was again painted out which led to 30% of the previous amount returning. The overall effect was a substantial reduction in graffiti in the two pilot zones. Following the success of the pilot, an all of municipality audit was instigated in January 2004 (this revealed 52% of graffiti to be on private property and 48% to be on public property). The cost of removing all graffiti in the municipality was estimated at $120,000 over a 4 month period. Council is presently engaged in this process and has an annual dedicated graffiti removal budget of $200,000 (each year for three years) with which it contracts Urban Maintenance Systems to undertake graffiti removal. The aim is to reduce the annual cost of removal to around $50,000 from around 2007 onward. Significantly, Council removes graffiti from all public assets regardless of which government entity is officially responsible for maintenance. The view here is a pragmatic one in that Council believes the graffiti problem would progressively worsen were it to sit and wait for various entities to grant their permission to remove graffiti from particular sites.

100. Council has deliberately kept publicity of its removal program to a minimum so as not to draw attention to the fact that its municipality is replete with 'clean canvasses'. The approach to graffiti management compliments Council's Community Safety Strategy whereby it is believed a 'clean town' equates to a 'cared for town', which, in turn, equates to a 'safe town'. Council is convinced that the amount and type of graffiti in its jurisdiction is to some extent influenced by neighbouring Council policies. It is pragmatic in this regard to the extent that it will remove whatever comes its way regardless of what other municipalities are doing or not doing. Council preference, however, is to work with other Councils to develop an inter- municipality approach to the problem.

101. Council has approved a number of murals/legal walls within its domain, although it encourages residences to remove graffiti (or to give Council permission to remove it) wherever it appears. However, Council does permit certain types of graffiti to remain where a resident expressly desires this and the graffiti is considered not to be hate oriented or otherwise offensive in nature.

City of Yarra

102.   City of Yarra's approach to graffiti management is driven by the Whole of Community Graffiti Management Policy and Strategy. These documents were endorsed by Council in July 2004.

Yarra's approach to graffiti management focuses on the following components:
- Providing real options to residents and property owners to remove graffiti from their properties (referral service, graffiti removal kits, assistance through the Home and Community Care program);
- Prompt and programmed graffiti removal off Council gateways (high profile/visible sites/entry points);
- 'Place Management' response to principal commercial strips – cleanup occurs with extensive trader liaison, consideration of mural sites and planning issues and programmed removal;
- Support for diversionary or art-based programs with young people (Napier Street Art Studio based at Yarra Youth Services and graffiti pilot grants through Community Grants program);
- Increased focus on monitoring and proactive enforcement (enforcement officers are the 'eyes' on the street and will report graffiti in their field visits back to the organisation for response);
- Fast-track planning response – fees are waived for painting out graffiti in new colours in a heritage area.
- High-level advocacy with senior representatives from statutory authorities and utility companies

Consulting the community

City of Yarra plans to clean up major gateways within the municipality and programmed clean up of key commercial strips. Part of this process is to audit graffiti in these areas. An audit of an area within Fitzroy is about to start, followed by some programmed community consultation, designed to inform Open Space planning and within this, to help Council understand more about the nature and extent of the impact graffiti has on members of that community. This consultation will also canvas support for public art sites in this area. This is a 'place management' approach that recognises that 'one size does not fit all', that there is diversity amongst precincts and communities in Yarra.

Background: It is hoped that through the application of these strategies:
- Graffiti, 'tagging' in particular will be significantly reduced in the City of Yarra
- Statutory organisations and utilities companies will take a significant role in maintaining their own properties.
- Broadly, that graffiti is addressed as part of the Proud Yarra initiative, working towards making the streets and public areas cleaner, safer and more pleasant to be in. Instilling a sense of civic pride in all who live, work and visit Yarra.

- That property owners will feel empowered to respond to graffiti and that the information and options for removal Council gives the public will help to reduce unsightly and unwanted graffiti.
- That the public will have taken on the key messages about preventing graffiti.
- That retail strips and major gateways throughout Yarra will be clean of graffiti and that investment in programmed clean up now will reap rewards in the future.
- Graffiti style art as a legitimate form of expression and public art to be promoted in line with Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles and urban planning.
- Prevent polarisation of the issue and dispel some unhelpful myths about who does graffiti.
- Policy and strategy will have to be reviewed to reflect the changes in society and the nature of the municipality.
- Increased opportunities for people to be involved in legitimate/legal street art and use of street art as a tool to assist social cohesion through community cultural development practice.

City of Casey

103. The City of Casey formally adopted a strict zero tolerance stance toward the problem of graffiti in March 2002. Its initiatives deploy three approaches: eradication; education; and enforcement. The centrepiece of the first of these (i.e. eradication) has been the establishment of a 'free call 24 hour 1800 vandal hotline'. Graffiti deemed to be within public view is removed from all surfaces (public, private, Council owned, etc.) following reports to this hotline. Removal is performed by contractors and volunteers alike. Council reports that 'more than 3,000 calls' were dealt with in the inaugural twelve month period of the hotline.

104. In terms of education, Council has arranged for 'trained facilitators' to speak to all students from years 5 to 8 about graffiti and its detrimental social effects. The aim here is to persuade would-be writers that graffiti is 'uncool, costly and criminal'. In excess of 6,000 students have participated in this initiative and Council reports that nearly all (98.5%) have a 'greater understanding of the anti-social consequences of graffiti'. Another aspect of the Council's commitment to education is the regular supply of information (via newsletters) to all residents concerning the nature and extent of the graffiti problem within the municipality and what Council has done and is doing to combat this.

105. With regard to enforcement, Council actively pursues the prosecution of graffiti writers. A tag data base is used to match offenders to all tagging produced over the period for which records have been kept. Regular surveillance of hot spots is carried out by police. Council has also introduced the 'Casey Community Graffiti Prevention and Control of Aerosol Spray Local Law No. 3' which restricts the sale of spray paint to those under the age of 18. It also places tight controls on who is permitted to supply paint to minors beyond the point of sale (e.g. teachers to students, employers to workers, etc.).

106. The City of Casey reports an initial operating budget of $465,000 (2002/03). This reduced to $270,000 in 2003/04, and was projected to further fall to $180,000 during 2004/05. Since developing its graffiti management plan, Council submits that it has seen a constant reduction in new graffiti in the municipality.

INTERSTATE RESPONSES TO GRAFFITI MANAGEMENT

City of Brisbane

107. Council has a fairly extensive and well developed set of policies and strategies for addressing graffiti. With the exception of legal artworks, Council adopts the view that all graffiti should be removed from public and private property. A combination of reactive and proactive measures predominate with the latter involving regular (once a week) inspections of five high profile areas within the municipality (ie 'high volume roads; city entry points; tourist destinations; entertainment and business precincts; and regional and destination parks'). Where Council notices graffiti on a private property, this can only be removed as part of the process of removing graffiti from nearby public assets. In all other cases, written permission is required from the owner to remove graffiti. This gives some scope for persons to 'keep' graffiti of a non-offensive or aesthetically pleasing nature. Council has developed a standard set of paint colours to be used to paint out graffiti. The majority (70%) of graffiti removal is achieved through 'over-painting' with the remaining 30% removed via the application of chemicals and the like. Council's activities thus include:
    o provision of free graffiti removal kits;
    o employment of a graffiti reduction officer to advise on graffiti prevention and removal;
    o distribution of removal materials and paints to community groups to remove graffiti;
    o presentations about graffiti vandalism to community groups;
    o graffiti and safety audits in affected areas and recommendations of appropriate actions;
    o coordination of legal art projects to beautify local communities and prevent graffiti;

- A highly successful public art program, Art Force. To date, this has led to the production of artwork on more than 75% of the City's 800 Traffic Signal Boxes. The idea here is to adopt a 'camouflage' strategy such that the boxes become less visible as possible targets for graffiti and instead take on an artistic aesthetic.
- Provision of a leaflet, entitled 'Brisbane City Council Graffiti Prevention Guidelines' which applies CPTED principles to graffiti.
- removal of graffiti as soon as possible;
- Design of public areas to support graffiti prevention.

City of Gosnells

108. This Council is located just east of the Perth CBD and has developed a widely renowned strategy for dealing with graffiti within its municipality under the banner of its Safe City program. Against a backdrop of decreasing levels of State Government support and input, Council established its 'Zero Tolerance = No Graffiti' program in 1998. The graffiti team removes graffiti across the City within 24-48 hours; checks the whole of the City of Gosnells each Monday to assess hot spots and coordinate removals; completes reports and submits them to the police; obtains all waivers for work on private property and follows up after work has been completed to ensure quality control; liaises with the Building Maintenance team to confirm work required during after- hours operations within council reserves and affecting council buildings.

109. Council encourages residents to report graffiti (whether tags, throw-ups, pieces, or slogans) on its hotline which operates 24 hours 7 days a week. Council has also adopted a policy of painting walls and fences backing onto reserves. This is typically carried out by those on Community Work Orders and Council liaises with the Department of Justice to implement this component of its strategy.

110. Council reports that its approach has been extremely successful in reducing graffiti to the point where its annual budget for graffiti removal has decreased from $133,000 to $71,000 as at July 2003. A primary reason underpinning the Council's success is its willingness to match a no tolerance stance with an extensive Mural Arts programme. This provides 'a controlled environment for young urban artists … to develop their skills and reduce the incidence of graffiti'. Council reports that the site for one of the most recent murals was the Gosnells Police Station.

111. Another equally crucial aspect of Council's strategy was the time and energy spent consulting with as many different stakeholders as possible prior to introducing its plan. Information about what Council intended to do was publicised extensively in local newspaper and Council flyers with community comments openly accepted and debated by Council. Council has since received two major awards for graffiti management – the Premier's Award for Metropolitan Graffiti Action for Local Government in 2000, and, more recently, the Local Government Award in 2003.

City of Norwood, Payneham and St Peters

112. Council – located just to the east of Adelaide CBD – is noted for its zero tolerance position on graffiti. Over the past five years Council has tackled its graffiti problem through a dedicated team of volunteers, most of whom are retirees. A fully equipped trailer with a range of cleaning materials is available around the clock to deal with incidences of graffiti. Council claims to be graffiti free but it should be noted that graffiti removal teams respond to graffiti on a daily basis (suggesting that graffiti is an ongoing issue rather than something that has been permanently eliminated). Council is highly committed to implementing the basic principles of CPTED and matching this with community input and involvement.

OVERSEAS RESPONSES TO GRAFFITI MANAGEMENT

113. Two metropolitan areas have been selected for detailed comparison with the City of Melbourne.

Central London

114. The central area of London is governed by Westminster City Council. The City of Westminster includes areas such as the dense retail and leisure districts of Soho and the West End, Westminster with its office blocks and parliamentary buildings, districts with major transport hubs such as Euston and St Pancras stations, and diverse residential areas ranging from housing commission-style lower-income accommodation to highly priced apartments and houses. The area includes some of the main tourist attractions in London and would be seen by many as the 'essential London', in much the same way that much of the City of Melbourne would be regarded as the 'essential Melbourne'.

115. Its residential population is relatively small and stable at 230,000, but in addition to this figure over 1 million people enter the City of Westminster each day or night for work or leisure. It contains the highest number of licensed premises per square mile in the United Kingdom and much of its central district undergoes a dramatic change in character after 7pm, as shops and offices close and leisure activities related to cinemas, clubs and restaurants predominate. Again, similarities can be seen with the City of Melbourne's CBD.

116. The City of Westminster recently carried out a survey on fear of crime amongst its residents. Results showed that the community had serious concerns about crime with 54% feeling unsafe within some areas of the municipality after 9pm. However, graffiti did not feature in this survey as a resident concern. Instead, street theft (41.8%), burglary (39.5%) and begging (33.5%) were the main issues raised (NB multiple issues could be listed; figures do not total 100%). As a cause of their feeling unsafe, the main reason cited was groups of young people in the streets. In response to this survey, Council initiated a team of 'uniformed neighborhood wardens' called 'City Guardians' who work alongside the police to tackle specific problems such as public drunkenness, street assaults and thefts, and homelessness.

117. Graffiti does feature in Council's endeavours to respond to 'anti-social behaviour' or issues relating to quality of life. A range of activities has been targeted: public urination, littering, noise, dog fouling, and graffiti and 'fly posting' (bill posting). The City, inspired by strategies operating in Baltimore and New York in the United States, has instituted a partnership scheme called CivicWatch. A number of Council departments work in conjunction with the Metropolitan Police, the Fire Brigade, local housing authorities, and residents and traders organizations. The aim has been to boost community confidence and pride by delivering cleaner and safer streets through the reduction of the above anti-social activities.

118. Strategic units have been set up to deal with specific activities, including the Street Enforcement Management Service (which deals with littering, graffiti, signage, noise, and road safety) and the Anti Graffiti and Fly Posting Unit. The Unit has a dedicated staff of 3 who deal only with graffiti and fly posting. Since its formation in 2001, the Unit has removed over 7600m² of graffiti from over 3100 sites and over 3500m² of fly posting from 1250 sites (including lamp posts, phone booths, and hoardings). Graffiti is mainly tagging, although some stencilling is done (often as advertising for companies). The Unit undertakes to remove reported graffiti within 5 working days and offensive or 'hate' graffiti within 12 hours. Other activities include: undertaking audits of selected areas on a regular basis; working with the CivicWatch scheme to engage and divert likely graffiti writers in housing estates within the municipality by providing information about costs, chances of arrest, alternative legal sites and so on; promulgation of a voluntary code for retailers who undertake not to sell spray paint to under-18s. The Unit's annual budget for the cleansing contract alone (with an outside contractor who removes graffiti and re-paints the surface) is £220,000 (about AUD $500,000) with a total annual expenditure on graffiti and poster removal of approximately £400,000 (about AUD $1million).

119. Graffiti is seen as less of a problem than fly posting. Fly posting involves the use of posters to advertise products and events. Particular companies and products make use of fly posting, notably nightclubs, record companies, sports promotion companies, and youth-related products (mobile phones, footwear, clothing companies and so on). Council made the decision to prioritize fly posting removal on the grounds that the posters detract from the visual character of the municipality.

120. Great lengths have been gone to in the effort to deter and remove fly posters: prosecution of posters, advertising companies and the 'beneficiary' (the manufacturer of the product being advertised); replacing smooth surfaces with stippled surfaces which make it hard for posters to adhere; applying an 'anti-stick' coating to surfaces (and stationing security guards until the coating dried, since advertisers had previously attempted to scrape the coating off before it dried); sending warning letters to directors of companies who benefit from fly posting informing them that fly posting is a criminal offence. Some success has been achieved: an extremely long and visible wall adjoining the Marylebone Road has received an anti-stick coating and is now poster-free; while the footwear company Footlocker was taken to the Magistrates Court and fined £2000.

Philadelphia

121. Philadelphia is currently the fourth largest city in the United States (its metropolitan population is approximately 1.5 million). Its central metropolitan area is governed by two municipal bodies, the City of Philadelphia and the Center City District (the latter established in 1990 as a private-sector-directed municipal authority). Both have targeted graffiti as an issue of municipal concern.

122. The Center City District aims to provide a clean, safe and attractive environment for residents and workers. Graffiti is dealt with through its cleaning and maintenance department, which deploys 70 uniformed workers to deal with issues of littering. Cleansing and graffiti removal. The annual budget for cleaning and maintenance in 2005 is USD $4.45 million, rising to USD $5.1 million in 2009. In 2003, crews removed 647 tags and over 4,000 stickers from property within the district (including bus shelters, street furniture and so on). Center City District also deploys supplementary crime and safety patrol officers on-street, which deal mainly with interpersonal violence and street theft but which have some overlapping concern with graffiti (as a property crime). The annual budget for safety and crime prevention is USD $2.8 million in 2005, rising to USD $3.2 million in 2009.

123. The City of Philadelphia established an Anti-Graffiti Network in 1984, which provides both the formation of policy on graffiti and its implementation. It takes a three-pronged approach: rapid removal; a paint voucher program for community groups to encourage removal; and a program of mural arts and youth workshops. Three zones were designated no tolerance zones with several areas being later declared graffiti-free (although it should be noted that cleaning teams are still required in these areas, showing that graffiti has not disappear but is controlled at lower levels). Rapid response removal of graffiti began in 1995, with increasing amounts of graffiti being cleaned in the years up to the end of the decade (indicating both an increase in expenditure and an initial lack of deterrence through removal). Since then, lesser amounts have been spent on removal and greater amounts on community engagement.

124. A crucial component of the policy is the mural arts program. Its aim is to divert actual and potential graffiti writers away from illicit writing and towards legitimate artistic expression. Any writer who joins the network must undertake to give up illicit writing and to do outreach work within the illicit writing community in the hope of providing an example to other illegal writers. It has been hailed as a phenomenal success: it has, to date, generated over 2,500 murals throughout Philadelphia (on the murals, see Westerman).

125. The City's range of activities also includes:

- working in conjunction with the police force to facilitate arrests and with the court system, which in 1995 created a dedicated 'graffiti court' within the (equivalent of the) Magistrates Court;
- formation of a partnership with the paint industry in seeking to restrict access to spray paint.
- enforcement of a Property Maintenance Code, which can require, through the equivalent of a Local Law, property owners to remove graffiti within 12 days of the graffiti's appearance, if it is visible from the public right-of-way. Penalties for non-removal involve payment of fines ranging from USD $100 to $300. Non-compliance results in imposition of such a fine, plus all liability for all costs incurred by the City's removal of the graffiti.

Summary

126. Review of management strategies locally, interstate and in relevant international settings indicates that multi-faceted responses to graffiti produce the most positive results. This conclusion is backed by academic research (see Graycar 2003; Halsey and Young 2002a, 2002b) and provides the impetus for the Strategy on Graffiti for the City of Melbourne, elaborated in detail in the remainder of this document.

APPENDIX THREE - CITY OF MELBOURNE - CURRENT STRATEGIES AND INITIATIVES

REMOVAL OF GRAFFITI FROM CITY OF MELBOURNE PROPERTY

127. The City of Melbourne is directly responsible for removing graffiti from infrastructure managed or owned by Council. This includes roads, footpaths, street furniture, sculptures, artworks, bridges and public buildings, pedestrian bridges and parks and gardens as well as Council's administrative buildings. Council removes graffiti based upon a policy of rapid response.

128. Graffiti considered obscene, racist or political is removed within 24 hours of it being reported. Otherwise graffiti is usually removed within 2 to 3 working days of it being reported. The City of Melbourne has not had a major problem with graffiti/vandalism on council buildings over the past two years. An estimate of vandalism/graffiti removal costs (by the contractor) were approximately $10,000 per annum. Slogans that are judged to be offensive (e.g. racist) on private property are also removed as quickly as possible through contact with the property owner/occupier or through use of Council's resources where necessary.

NEW INCENTIVES – GRAFFITI REMOVAL MATERIALS

129. In January 2004, Council commenced a new incentive program. This program involved issuing paint vouchers or removal fluid to property owners/ managers/occupiers as a means of further encouraging them to take responsibility for the removal of graffiti from buildings for which they are responsible. Through the program, residents and property owners can paint over graffiti when it is located on paintable surfaces or remove the graffiti using the kit when the graffiti is on a non paintable surface (e.g. bluestone, granite surfaces, and unpainted bricks, metal and wood).

PARTNERSHIPS

130. The City is developing relationships with private transport and utility owners to encourage them to accept responsibility for graffiti on assets they own that interface with the public domain. For example, arrangements for graffiti removal have been made with VicTrack who has overall responsibility for transport infrastructure (e.g. train stations, railway bridges and underpasses), CitiPower who manage public lighting infrastructure such as substations and cast iron green pillars and VicRoads who manage signal boxes of which there are 100 in the CBD and approximately 150 others throughout the municipality.

131. Utilities affected by graffiti are usually substations and cast iron green pillars located on footpaths. At Council's urging, CitiPower is considering adopting a scheme whereby the community is encouraged to share the maintenance responsibility for sub-stations. Substations in Carlton and North Melbourne have been earmarked for a community project and Council has held discussions with the Carlton Police Community Consultative Committee (PCCC) to seed the idea.

WORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY

132. Community consultation and information sessions have been conducted with the Police Community Consultative Committees and briefing notes sent also to resident and body corporate organisations. These included an overview of the planned annual program and in the Carlton scenario flagging two potential local community projects for painting a substation in Neill Street and a Council park butting onto a private property wall at Canning and Palmerston Streets Carlton. More opportunities for similar projects are expected to arise.

INFORMATION PROVISION

133. The City has updated graffiti informational material provided on its website. The website now provides information on general graffiti issues including roles and responsibilities, removal and prevention tips and the current incentive program. The City of Melbourne complements its Internet material with a graffiti 'fact sheet' that provides information to property owners/managers and occupiers about effective graffiti management on private property.

PREVENTION/ EDUCATION

134. The City uses the principles of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) in the design of all public assets and infrastructure. CPTED is based on the idea that people's behaviour within the urban environment, particularly in terms of the possibility of offending, is influenced by the design of that environment. The theoretical basis of CPTED is opportunity reduction and target hardening. CPTED involves the application of design initiatives and principles to an area or site to minimise the potential for that site to support criminal behaviour (e.g. the use of creepers and foliage along a wall to break up a potential canvas and make it less accessible).

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

FINANCE ATTACHMENT

DRAFT GRAFFITI STRAT EGY

The 2004/05 budget for graffiti management is $200,000 (included in the contracts for street cleaning with Citywide and Berkeley Challenge). This includes funds to remove graffiti from Council owned property, pay contractors who undertake selected removal from private property and fund payment of graffiti removal kits and communication. The initiatives detailed in the Graffiti Strategy (Draft) would be funded from this existing budget and by using existing staff resources, ie no additional budget is required at this time.

Joe Groher
Manager Financial Services

LEGAL ATTACHMENT

DRAFT GRAFFITI STRATEGY

The report seeks approval for advertising of the draft Graffiti Strategy only and there are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendation.

Section 3C(1) of the *Local Government Act 1989* ("Act") provides that:

> *"The primary objective of a Council is to endeavour to achieve the best outcomes for the local community having regard to the long term and cumulative effects of decision."*

Section 3C(2) of the Act provides that in seeking to achieve its primary objective the Council must have regard to facilitating objectives including:

> *"(a)   to promote the social, economic and environmental viability and sustainability of the municipal district;*
>
> *(e)   to improve the overall quality of life of people in the local community;"*

Section 3E of the Act provides that the functions of a Council include:

> *"(a)   advocating and promoting proposals which are in the best interests of the local community;*

The matters detailed in the report are within the functions and powers of the Council pursuant to the provisions of the Act.

Instrument of Delegation

On 16 December 2004 the Council resolved to delegate to the Community and Culture Committee the power, duties and functions directly relating or ancillary to social policy.

Alison Lyon
Manager Legal & Governance