

# Warringah Council Policy

## Policy No. CCS-PL 810

### Graffiti

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#### 1 Purpose of Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide Council with a framework through which to respond to graffiti in Warringah. It provides a set of principles on responding to illegal graffiti in the local streetscape – including public and private property – as well as the creation of conditions that may contribute to a reduction in the incidence of new graffiti in the long term.

#### 2 Principles

##### Overview

Graffiti is of ongoing concern to Council and to the Warringah community because of its continuing visibility, detrimental impact on the local streetscape, and high cost of removal. It is also of concern to many people because it represents the social exclusion of a section of the community. Irrespective of whether such exclusion is self-imposed, the result of external factors or a combination of both, its manifestation in the form of graffiti results in a significant cost to the entire community. Graffiti is a visual representation of the fact that a part of the community, and in particular some younger people, feel sufficiently disconnected from community as to feel compelled to deface the property of others.

Whilst graffiti is literally an age-old phenomenon, found in human cultures since ancient times, the motivations and methods of graffitiists vary considerably. It is therefore unrealistic to suggest that Council can eradicate graffiti from Warringah. Graffiti's longevity and universal presence in human cultures also suggests that if Council wishes to have any real impact on reducing its prevalence it must adopt long-term strategies that deal both with its symptoms *and* its causes. Both aspects require a detailed understanding of the motivations and practices of graffitiists, and apply to both legal and illegal graffiti.

The intent of this policy is to reduce over time the prevalence of graffiti in Warringah in a manner that is:

- a) *Demonstrable* – Various approaches will be trialled and will be designed in such a way as to enable their effectiveness to be regularly measured.
- b) *Evidence based* – The continuing roll-out of the program will be based on the results of the trialling of different approaches. Empirical data will be employed as well as specifically targeted consultation. Measures shown to be effective will be maintained and those shown to be ineffective will be modified or discontinued.
- c) *Holistic* – Council will implement measures to address both the symptoms of graffiti and its underlying causes.
- d) *Consistent* – Subject as it is to an ever-changing policy environment, the graffiti debate is susceptible to the imposition of simplistic and non-evidence based solutions. Council therefore needs to give consistent attention to evaluating all measures it implements so as to ensure it has sound data upon which to base the program's continuation.

Reactive measures address the symptoms of graffiti, in that their focus is on responding after the event. These include:

- Rapid removal
- Liaising with the police and other agencies to identify and, where necessary, prosecute perpetrators
- Developing programs in collaboration with NSW Police, NSW Department of Justice & Attorney General, NSW Department of Human Services (Juvenile Justice) and other agencies to facilitate both appropriate penalties and rehabilitation.

Measures to address causes are preventive, and are intended to minimise the occurrence of graffiti in the first place. They include:

- Community education
- Collaboration with external agencies including the NSW Police, NSW Department of Justice & Attorney General, NSW Department of Human Services (Juvenile Justice), other councils, retailers and youth agencies
- Active engagement of young people to incorporate an early intervention approach, as well as programs to effect behaviour change among perpetrators or potential perpetrators
- Adopting a comprehensive approach to urban design that actively encourages the incorporation of 'Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design' (CPTED) for new development sites and existing susceptible high visibility sites in Warringah
- Developing a detailed understanding of the motivations and practices of perpetrators or potential perpetrators, including the development of programs to harness the energies and talents of young people who are aspiring artists to enable them to use and showcase their talents legally.
- Incorporating practices that reduce the possibility of repeat 'attacks' or that enable easy removal of new graffiti.

### General guidelines

- a) Council will employ the best available contemporary research to guide the implementation of its approach to graffiti – hereafter called the Graffiti Management Plan. It will where possible support research conducted by external agencies as a contribution to a comprehensive best practice knowledge base that can be shared between agencies.
- b) Council recognises the value of programs that focus on the prevention of graffiti before it occurs as being complementary to those aimed at removing it once it has been applied.
- c) Council recognises the need for its Graffiti Management Plan to support applicable law enforcement so as to ensure that offenders are appropriately dealt with through the proper legal channels.
- d) Council recognises that all measures taken to deal with graffiti need to be cost effective. In particular, it should be expected that a key measure of the effectiveness of preventive programs would be a long-term reduction in the cost of removal programs. Similarly, reactive programs such as rapid removal should be able to demonstrate their

own cost reductions over time, founded as they are on the notion that rapid removal provides a deterrent to further graffiti.

- e) Council will involve the community, key agencies and young people in its Graffiti Management Plan.
- f) Council recognises the value in creating an environment in which young people are valued and their needs are integral in local planning. It is within such a culture that young people feel connected to their community, and this in turn has flow-on benefits in reducing the inclination towards graffiti by perpetrators or potential perpetrators.

### **3 Authorisation**

This Policy was adopted by Council on 19 October 2010. It is effective from the date following its adoption.

It is due for review in October 2015.

### **4 Amendments**

This Policy was last amended on 7 August 2006.

### **5 Who is responsible for implementing this Policy?**

- Manager, Community & Cultural Services
- Manager, Roads, Traffic & Waste
- Manager, Property & Commercial Development
- Manager, Development Assessment
- Manager, Strategic Planning

### **6 Document owner**

Director, Community & Environmental Services

### **7 Related Council Policies**

- Public Art STR-PL 010 – February 2008
- Cultural CCS-PL 210 – March 2002
- Community Consultation STR-PL 520 – May 2005
- Warringah Design Guidelines – Public Spaces ST-PR 350 – July 2003
- Asset Management GOV PL 550 – February 2003
- Vandalism of Council Buildings GOV PL 861 – November 2006

## 8 Legislation and references

- Graffiti Control Act 2008
- Graffiti Control (Amendment) Act 2009
- Summary Offences Act 1998
- Children (Community Service Orders) Act 1987
- Crimes Act 1900

## 9 Definitions

### Graffiti

Graffiti refers to the act of defacing property with markings and / or graphics. Graffiti without the consent of the owner of the property is illegal.<sup>1</sup>

### Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

CPTED is a situational crime prevention method that aims to design out opportunities for graffiti . . . It is based on the rationale that graffiti is most likely to be applied at locations that are accessible, where there is little surveillance, where there is ease of escape and where the graffiti will be on show<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> *Graffiti Management Model*, NSW Government, 2009

<sup>2</sup> *Graffiti Vandalism - Review of graffiti reduction demonstration projects*, NSW Department of Justice & Attorney General, 2009