

Draft

Banyule Graffiti Strategy 2020 – 2024

Mayor's Foreword

Graffiti is a pervasive issue that impacts Banyule every day. On the surface managing graffiti may seem to be a straightforward task – see it, report it and remove it. The reality is that graffiti is a more complex issue. Over the last decade Banyule has worked diligently to eliminate and reduce graffiti in our local streets and neighbourhoods. Still new incidences of graffiti occur daily, impacting properties and assets owned by residents, businesses, Council and others. The Banyule Graffiti Strategy 2020 - 2024 was developed to respond to these ongoing challenges

We have developed this four year strategy based on consultations, research, data and best practice to establish a fresh approach to managing graffiti locally. We will work collaboratively to respond to graffiti when it happens and prioritise actions that address the underlying conditions that lead to graffiti occurring in the first place.

Thank you to the members of the community, representatives from partner organisations who have contributed time, local experience and professional expertise to support the development of this strategy and to our partners who continue to address graffiti through removal and beautification projects across the municipality.

Executive Summary

Council recognises that graffiti management is integral to people’s perceptions of safety and aesthetics in the City of Banyule.

The Banyule Graffiti Strategy 2020-2024 outlines Council’s commitment to managing graffiti on Council property and working collaboratively with other agencies and residents to support effective management of graffiti on assets in Banyule. It promotes a dynamic and flexible approach to new ways of managing graffiti over time. Council will actively work alongside key stakeholders over the next four years of the strategy to create opportunities to better understand graffiti in our municipality, make the best use of Council and community resources, and explore the potential of the ‘creative economy’.

The new strategy makes four commitments:

- **Commitment 1: Understand the problem**
Council will better understand the extent to which graffiti is a problem across the municipality and the factors that contribute to the issue.
- **Commitment 2: Ensure collaborative responses**
Council will actively engage with stakeholders to develop collaborative and coordinated responses to graffiti management.
- **Commitment 3: Reduce the environmental impact**
Council will take steps to minimise the impact of graffiti on the natural environment.
- **Commitment 4: Advocate for continuous improvement**
Council will advocate to strengthen Federal, State and Local Government graffiti policies and initiatives.

To act on these commitments, three key actions will drive the annual action plan:

1. **Building a graffiti resilient community**
Council will strengthen its community development approach to prevent illegal graffiti through better education, diversionary support and cultural and economic opportunities
2. **Supporting a rapid response to illegal graffiti**
Council will support rapid removal of illegal graffiti across the municipality and will assist community stakeholders to contribute to achieving this goal.
3. **Strengthening our collaborative response**
Council will collaborate with relevant authorities and community stakeholders to reduce the impact of illegal graffiti and maximise the benefits of partnership initiatives.

An annual action plan will be developed that commits internal and external stakeholders to achieving the aspirational goals. To do this successfully over the next four years, a Banyule Graffiti Management Steering Group will be established to oversee the implementation of the strategy.

Through this strategy, Council will build on its existing approaches and prioritise initiatives that have the ability to deliver the best possible community benefit.

Definitions

Mark graffiti	To write, draw, mark, scratch or otherwise deface property by any means so that the defacement is not readily removable by wiping with a dry cloth” (Graffiti Prevention Act 2007) “Graffiti refers to words, figures, and images that have been written, drawn and/or painted on, and/or etched into or on surfaces where the owner of the property has not given permission” (Ross et al. 2017)
Offensive	The <i>Graffiti Prevention Act 2007</i> provides a further definition of offensive graffiti and defines it as an act that “would offend a reasonable person.” This does not apply to “reasonable” political comment. For the purposes of this strategy, “offensive to a reasonable person” means where another recognised law has been breached. This can include content that is: discriminatory, racist or profane and covers words, symbols or imagery.
Tag	The marking of the writer’s signature, usually able to be quickly sprayed, painted, written or etched. Tags can be made up of symbols, letters, numbers or ‘illegible’ scribble.
Throw Up	Usually more detailed, larger and ‘artistic’ versions of a tag, most often using bubble style writing. Throw Ups can be considered ‘practice’ or a ‘draft’ of future pieces.
Piece	Larger ‘mural’ style graffiti which showcases the writers’ artistic abilities. ‘Piece’ is short for masterpiece, and is usually painted in highly visible locations.
Bombing	Also known as a hit, ‘bombing’ is the application of graffiti on as many surfaces as possible in one single area.
Political Graffiti	Graffiti that’s placed in a highly visible location, with slogans, social commentary or pictures to communicate a writer’s viewpoint on social and political issues.
Public Art	Artwork which is displayed in public places such as parks, streets, buildings and other publically accessible areas
Asset	Anything that can be affected by graffiti, whether privately or publicly owned
Street Art	Refers to a wide range of expressions, including sculptures, installations, wall paintings and stencils that are affixed to surfaces where the owner of the property has not given permission (Ross 2016) or are deemed “sanctioned works” (Kramer 2016).
Etching	Similar to tags in the sense that they are typically stylised signatures; however, these are scored into surfaces such as glass, stone, plastic and even concrete. Etching devices used may include rocks, drill bits or even pens filled with acid
Paste-up	Predominantly but not exclusively ink on white paper, applied to the wall using an adhesive. These large paper-based artworks, which may have been printed, painted or stencilled onto paper, are attached to surfaces using wheat-based glue.
CPTED	Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is defined as a multi-disciplinary approach for reducing crime through urban and environmental design and the management and use of built environments. This can include approaches to how and where assets are built, lighting, clean lines of sight (natural surveillance) and vegetation.

Introduction

Graffiti is a term that attracts considerable worldwide attention and debate as communities attempt to define its meaning and impact over time.

Graffiti is a crime under Victorian State Legislation, and is commonly referred to as property damage, vandalism or defacement. Whilst the Victorian Government holds a strong position against illegal graffiti, there is a long held view that eradication of graffiti is not a realistic goal. *“Rather we aim to lessen the problem... through a mix of situational strategy and long-term prevention programs” (Geason & Wilson 1990).*

Graffiti management remains a complex challenge. In 1990, Geason & Wilson proposed *“graffiti is not so clear-cut. Although it can be ugly, costly to remove and dangerous for its practitioners, it has some benefits for people: it can look better than what it covers up; some slogans are funny; it is seen by some as a form of community art; and politically-motivated graffiti artists see themselves fulfilling an important social function, a belief which is often upheld in court”.*

More recently McAuliffe (2012) suggested that *“despite the increased mobilisation of anti-graffiti technologies, backed by explicit anti-graffiti policies and laws, graffiti and other forms of unsanctioned ‘public art’ persist”.*

Over recent decades there has been a distinct shift towards integrating proactive place-based graffiti management approaches. Many local government areas in Victoria are utilising urban design, Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) and place-based principles to reduce the likelihood of graffiti occurring in the first place. In addition the concept of resilience has been tabled as a means of looking at graffiti holistically. Resilience is created through the development of a robust understanding of the systems that contribute to graffiti management, and their interdependencies and risks they may face. Local government areas can strengthen their resilience through augmenting the protective factors and developing a better understanding of the likely challenges ahead.

On the flip side, there has been a global movement to recognise and exploit the potential of graffiti to contribute to the creative economy. For example, the City of Melbourne regards street art as an urban cultural tourist attraction, and provides access to street art locations that are now internationally renowned but continues to remove illegal graffiti from its streetscapes.

It is widely agreed that graffiti is an ongoing nuisance issue requiring ongoing management at a significant cost to organisations, businesses and communities. Graffiti across the municipality was reported to Victoria Police at a rate of 35 incidences per 100,000 people in 2017/18, 18% lower than other metropolitan Melbourne local government areas. In the 2015-18 period, graffiti management carried an estimated annual cost of \$393,000 for Banyule City Council alone.

Graffiti is committed by people from a wide range of backgrounds and age groups. Research suggests graffiti is a symptom of a range of complex issues and behaviours, including risk-taking behaviours, seeking to build a social reputation and gain respect. Merrill (2015) suggests that individuals perpetrating acts of graffiti can be classified as either “writers” or “artists”, depending on their motivations and values. Graffiti writers may seek to achieve infamy and establish their name through “all-city” coverage. In contrast, graffiti artists may seek recognition through focusing on creative style and aesthetics.

What we are striving to achieve

The purpose of the *Banyule Graffiti Strategy 2020-2024* is to outline Council’s commitment to managing graffiti on Council property and working collaboratively with other agencies and residents to support effective management of graffiti on assets in Banyule. The plan reflects Banyule’s desire to improve understanding of graffiti culture and implement better ways of managing graffiti and Council’s legislative responsibilities under the *Graffiti Prevention Act 2007*. The plan has been informed by an extensive community consultation process, including the Banyule Graffiti Summit, analysis of contemporary local and state government management strategies and academic literature review.

Concurrently, this strategy promotes a dynamic and flexible approach to new ways of managing graffiti over time. We aim to work alongside our stakeholders over the duration of the strategy to create opportunities to better understand graffiti in our municipality, make the best use of Council and community resources and explore the potential of the ‘creative economy’.

What is graffiti?

The Graffiti Prevention Act 2007 defines graffiti as to ‘write, mark, scratch or otherwise deface property by any means so that the defacement is not readily removable by wiping with a dry cloth’. It is usually done by way of paint, marker or scratching.

It is important to make the distinction that graffiti becomes an illegal act **in the absence of permission**. The *Graffiti Prevention Act 2007 (2:5)* states: “A person must not mark graffiti on property if the graffiti is visible from a public place unless the person has first obtained the express consent of the owner, or an agent of the owner, of the property to do so”.

The penalties for graffiti vandalism and other graffiti-related offences under the Act are:

- Marking publicly visible graffiti, or offensive graffiti, on private property without the owner’s consent – up to 2 years prison and a maximum fine of \$38,057
- Possessing, without lawful excuse, a spray paint can while on or adjacent to public transport property or infrastructure, or where the person is trespassing on private property – a maximum fine of \$3,964 or an on-the-spot fine of \$793
- Possessing a graffiti implement with the intention of marking graffiti – a maximum fine of \$3,964.

Offenders may also be charged with property damage offences under the Summary Offences Act 1966.

Anyone under 18 years of age must show proof (a letter or statutory declaration from their employer) that the spray paint is required for work.

- Selling a spray paint can to anyone under 18 years of age other than in circumstances where the person can demonstrate that they need the paint for employment purposes – a maximum fine of \$3,171 or an on-the-spot fine of \$317.
- Advertising a spray paint can for sale, if the advertisement is likely and intended to incite or promote unlawful graffiti – a maximum fine of \$7,928.

Graffiti is an offence in Victoria and carries a penalty of up to 2 years’ prison and a fine. Offenders may also be charged with property damage offences under the *Summary Offences Act 1966*.

“Subcultural graffiti plays a formative role for the groups and individuals that repeatedly use it to establish their identity” Merrill 2015

Whilst the motivation to graffiti varies from individual to individual, studies have identified common reasons for graffiti are “pursuit of fame or recognition, an adrenaline rush, emotional or political expression and artistic expression”. In addition, involvement with graffiti subcultural groups provides a range of social benefits including “friendships, acceptance, recognition, respect [and] sense of belonging’ (Taylor 2015, p.219). The intent to cause malicious damage is not a common motivation for offenders (NSW Department of Justice and Attorney General 2009).

“Perpetrators can continue to graffiti well into adulthood due to their love for the art and connection to the street art culture” (Banyule resident November 2018)

“I don’t do it to be deviant it’s just unfortunate that it’s illegal” (Taylor 2015, p.211)

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The impact of graffiti

“Graffiti prevention and remediation... is a potentially never-ending task in which the goal is to simply maintain an original state.” James & O’Boyle 2019, p.75.

The act of graffiti creates social, environmental and economic impacts for the community. Consultation with the Banyule community reveals three key impacts of graffiti:

1. Graffiti may negatively impact people’s perception of safety and the aesthetic qualities of neighbourhoods, making them appear less clean and safe than they actually are.

“Street ‘art’ is one thing, but scribbled words on fences, street signs, fire hydrants, electricity poles etc. is unsightly and detracts from householders efforts to make yards and streetscapes lovely” Banyule resident, 12th Feb 2019.

“Stairwells in multi-deck carparks are frequently hit by graffiti and impacts perceptions of safety” (Property Services 2018)

For some Banyule residents graffiti is associated with “vandalism, drugs and alcohol” (Community Safety Working Group 3081 Nov 2018)

2. Graffiti negatively impacts the natural environment. Whilst the use of spray cans and paints in themselves are detrimental to the environment, the cleaning substances used to remove graffiti can be harmful, particularly to the health of our waterways.

“Whilst graffiti on trees is rare, it is safer for the trees not to remove it” (Banyule Parks & Gardens 2018)

3. The removal of graffiti creates a significant financial and labour burden for the community, particularly as it relates to clean-up and implementation of prevention strategies.

“The estimated cost of graffiti and other forms of vandalism to the Australian community is a massive \$2.7 billion a year” (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2015)

About Banyule

Banyule is located in Melbourne's north-east, between 7 and 21 kilometres from Melbourne's CBD. Banyule is a growing, culturally and geographically diverse municipality less than 30 minutes travelling time from the CBD. It is well connected by a public transport network with nine railway stations on the Melbourne-Hurstbridge Railway Line, tram route 86, three Smart Bus routes and local buses. There are three main activity areas of Greensborough, Heidelberg and Ivanhoe. The public transport routes and activity centres within Banyule are routinely affected by acts of graffiti and require an integrated management approach to minimise the number and impact of graffiti acts.

The City also has some remarkably significant heritage within its boundaries, including a number of housing estates designed by leading early 20th Century architects Walter Burley Griffin and Albert Victor Jennings, some of the most significant art deco buildings in Melbourne and the world's first Olympic athletes village. Stakeholders afford these assets special consideration to minimise the immediate and long term risk and impact of graffiti.

Banyule has some magnificent parklands within its boundaries and immediately adjacent them. Parklands such as Yarra Flats Regional Park, Warringal Parklands, Banksia Park, Darebin Parklands, Chelsworth Park, Wilson Reserve, Westerfolds Park and Bundoora Park are either within Banyule or easily accessible to Banyule residents. All of these parks are connected to Banyule's rapidly expanding network of shared bicycle/walking trails. Our natural environments require special consideration to protect them from acts of graffiti and the subsequent graffiti removal approaches.

Strategy & Policy Context

“The **Victorian Graffiti Prevention Act 2007** creates a range of graffiti-related offences, gives police powers to investigate suspected graffiti offences and gives Councils powers to remove graffiti from private property.” State of Victoria 2018.

Graffiti is a key priority for crime prevention and in Victoria, a range of parties including state and local governments, businesses and community groups, manage graffiti through prevention, education, removal and enforcement. The following provides an overview of the roles of various organisations.

Government and collaborative actions

The **Community Crime Prevention Unit** (CCPU), within the Victorian Department of Justice and Regulation, seeks to:

- Build knowledge and a shared understanding across government and community about crime prevention and effective responses;
- Strengthen partnerships at a local, state and national level in relation to crime prevention;
- Support the implementation of effective crime prevention measures at both a local and state level; and
- Analyse and review crime prevention initiatives, particularly those funded through the grant programs, to inform future practice.

The CCPU provides information and resources to address the key areas of *Reporting -Prevention - Removal –Enforcement*.

Facilitated by the Crime Prevention Unit Victoria, the **North Metropolitan Regional Crime Prevention Reference Group** advocates for and supports partnerships focused on crime prevention between government departments, local government, policy and local organisations. The reference group supports local communities to take an active role in preventing crime in neighbourhoods, including graffiti.

The **Municipal Association of Victoria Special Interest Group on Graffiti Management** provides opportunity for Councils to share information on graffiti management issues and approaches across local government areas.

An international perspective

UNESCO Creative Cities Network recognises the ‘new cultural and economic value of street art’ and leverages the potential of graffiti as an ‘essential element of urban development’. Creative Cities work towards reconciling the ‘tension between subcultural priorities and the world of contemporary art’. This network promotes management of graffiti through the creative lens.

Banyule City Council context

Banyule City Council Plan 2017-2021 provides a strategic framework for Council. The table below provides a description of the five strategic directions and how they relate to graffiti management.

Council Strategic Objective	Relationship to graffiti management
PEOPLE <i>Strong, healthy and inclusive communities</i> Support and strengthen the health and wellbeing of the Banyule community.	People and graffiti management The effective management of graffiti develops and promotes perceptions of safety and resilience in our community.
PLANET <i>Environmental sustainability</i> Protect and care for the natural environment.	Planet and graffiti management Measures to prevent or remove graffiti across Banyule help to preserve and improve Banyule natural environment.
PLACE <i>Great places and spaces</i> Maintain and enhance our public spaces, buildings and infrastructure.	Place and graffiti management Improved strategies to prevent and remove graffiti encourage our community to enjoy public spaces and discourage acts of graffiti.
PARTICIPATION <i>Engagement and advocacy</i> Engage meaningfully and advocate for the broader interest of the community.	Participation and graffiti management Working in partnership with residents, businesses, public land managers, community groups and government supports collaborative measures to address graffiti in Banyule.
PERFORMANCE <i>Efficiency and good governance</i> Manage our resources wisely to achieve Council’s strategic objectives.	Performance and graffiti management Refining and clearly defining the role of Council in graffiti management supports the effective and efficient use of Council resources.

The **Safer Banyule Plan 2017-2021** identifies graffiti management across Banyule as a required action under key priority 3, with the rationale that:

“Quality spaces invite people into the place and encourage active use of it. Communities that use public spaces with confidence increase community confidence and reduce opportunity for potential offenders to engage in criminal acts and/or anti-social behaviour”.

Banyule City Council General local Law No. 1 (2015)

Council amended the General Local Law after the development of the previous *Banyule Graffiti Management Strategy 2015-2018* to provide a last resort opportunity for eradicating graffiti from a property if no other remedy can be established.

9.2 Unsightly Land An owner or occupier of land must not cause or allow the land to be kept in a manner which:

- (a) contains unconstrained rubbish;
- (b) contains disused excavation or waste material;
- (c) contains graffiti on any building, structure or boundary fence; or
- (d) is detrimental to the general amenity of the neighbourhood in which it is located.

If Council has been notified of graffiti on a private property within the municipality, and Council has explored all reasonable avenues of remedy without success, a Notice to Comply may be issued by Council.

If the property owner/occupier does not comply with the Notice to Comply, the owner/occupier may be issued with 5 penalty units.

This does not apply to state owned assets.

Key Stakeholders in Banyule

Multiple stakeholders hold discrete and shared graffiti management responsibilities, including Banyule City Council, within limited rights and responsibilities. Council acknowledges and values the range of contributions to graffiti management made by a wide range of stakeholders.

There are multiple stakeholders responsible for removal of graffiti in Banyule:

- Crime Prevention Unit and Community Corrections
- Victoria Police
- Council
- AusNet Services
- Jemena
- Public Transport Victoria
- Telstra
- Metro
- Australia Post
- Parks Victoria
- Department of Health and Human Services
- Department of Education
- Yarra Valley Water
- Melbourne Water
- Property owners and occupiers
- State Government including Victoria Police
- Local businesses
- Chambers of Commerce and Traders Associations.

Our Goal

The goal of the Banyule Graffiti Strategy 2020-2024 is to reduce the impact of illegal graffiti in Banyule through building resilience, responding rapidly and working collaboratively within our communities, amplifying the benefits of legal graffiti through a creative communities focus.

Our Commitment

Council has identified four key commitments which underpin the *Banyule Graffiti Strategy 2020-2024*. These statements are based on a balanced view of data and information gathered through research, consultations, including the Banyule Graffiti Summit, comparative benchmarking and state government priorities.

Commitment 1: Understand the problem

Council will better understand the extent to which graffiti is a problem across the municipality and the factors that contribute to the issue.

Commitment 2: Ensure collaborative responses

Council will actively engage with stakeholders to develop collaborative and coordinated responses to graffiti management.

Commitment 3: Reduce the environmental impact

Council will take steps to minimise the impact of graffiti on the natural environment.

Commitment 4: Advocate for continuous improvement

Council will advocate to strengthen Federal, State and local government graffiti management policies and initiatives.

Our Key Actions

Over the next four years, our challenge is to transform these commitments into tangible, achievable and sustainable actions. Based on the understanding that graffiti is a complex, ongoing challenge for Banyule, we need a flexible and collaborative approach to management.

Council's key actions are:

1. Building a graffiti resilient community

Council will strengthen its community development approach to prevent illegal graffiti through better education, diversionary support and cultural and economic opportunities.

2. Supporting a rapid response to illegal graffiti

Council will support rapid illegal graffiti removal across the municipality and will assist community stakeholders to contribute to achieving this goal.

3. Strengthening our collaborative response

Council will collaborate with relevant authorities and community stakeholders to reduce the impact of illegal graffiti and maximise the benefits of partnership initiatives.

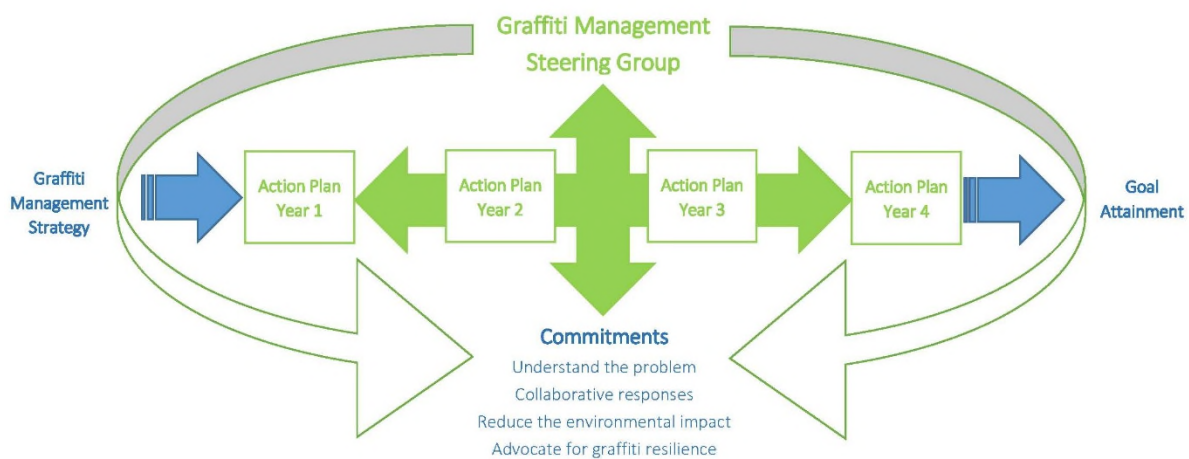
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Our Priorities

Led by the newly established Banyule Graffiti Management Steering Group, Council will develop an Annual Action Plan over the next four years. Each Annual Action Plan will create pathways towards achieving long term aspirational goals. The prioritisation of actions will be influenced by a range of factors including:

- Work already underway
- Feasibility of implementation
- The ability to deliver the best possible community benefits using Council and partnership resources.

The diagram below represents the implementation framework for the Banyule Graffiti Strategy 2020-2024:



How we will measure success

Monitoring and evaluation are essential to understand whether progress is being made towards our goals and to confirm Council is generally headed in the right direction. For each of the actions, indicators (performance and outcome) have been identified that Council will monitor over the course of the plan. We will learn from our experiences and adjust our actions accordingly. We will work across Council and with our stakeholders to measure progress and adapt actions as necessary to stay on track. This will be the responsibility of the Banyule Graffiti Management Steering Group.

Reporting to the Community

We will provide an annual report to Council in September at the completion of each of the four years of the Banyule Graffiti Strategy 2020-2024. This will also be supplemented by the next year’s Annual Action Plan.

Action 1: Building a graffiti resilient community

A graffiti resilient community is one which understands why graffiti occurs, the risks and the protective factors that reduce the likelihood of illegal graffiti incidents, thus effectively reducing our vulnerabilities so we can withstand the potential impacts on daily life. But more importantly a graffiti resilient community bounces back and creates positive outcomes from adversity.

Our rationale

Graffiti resilience is a relatively new concept and is founded on the international Resilient Cities program. In the context of illegal graffiti, the protective factors within the Resilient Cities framework of knowledge development and technical expertise become crucial to developing strategies to resist graffiti, recover and adapt for the future. Whilst we cannot eradicate graffiti, we can build the community level resistance to illegal graffiti by improving our knowledge base, building our levels of expertise and learning from experiences. By doing this we can implement strategies to resist graffiti, support and empower our community to recover from incidences of illegal graffiti and design new ways of adapting based on what we've learnt over time.

Changing our strategic focus towards resilience has additional benefits. Resilience, coupled with an asset and strength-based approach, allows the Banyule community to view graffiti in a more positive light. It evolves our perception of graffiti from a community safety risk to an opportunity to understand the local graffiti culture and make the most of legal graffiti's (street art) potential socio-cultural and economic benefits.

What the community told us

- ***It is important to address the conditions that promote graffiti***

"Better lighting in darkened areas" (Banyule resident, Feb 2019)

"CCTV cameras was an effective deterrent in the Montmorency shopping precinct" (Banyule Traders Association 30 October 2018)

"The sale of spray cans continues to be a problem" (Neighbourhood Watch 4 December 2018)

- ***Education helps build understanding and motivates positive action.***

"Attend schools to speak about graffiti and teach respect for our area" (Banyule resident)

"Educating the general community is a priority- keep the conversation going and make the strategy visible" (Neighbourhood Watch 4 December 2018)

- ***Murals and other types of legal street art are valued and appreciated.***

“Graffiti murals add culture and diversity to places! Especially if the mural is something that relates to the suburb or country” (Banyule resident, Feb 2019)

“I don’t consider that there is a graffiti problem in this area. I am a fan of street art and regularly travel to areas in Victoria to see street art” (Banyule resident Feb 2019)

- ***Designating places for public art can lead to economic and social benefits.***

“Quality art graffiti may bring economic benefits to Council as whole and local small businesses” (Banyule resident, Feb 2019)

“Promote specific areas where young graffiti artists can express themselves in a free and unrestricted environment” (Banyule resident, Feb 2019)

“As a street artist I want to be able to connect with others from my community, not just on social media, somewhere for us to hangout, share and trade.” (Banyule resident, Feb 2019)

Guiding research

Whilst there has been “no significant change in perceptions of safety for Banyule between 2007 and 2015’ (VicHealth 2015), in recent times illegal graffiti has become “an emotionally charged public order issue” (Mcauliffe 2012) with significant pressure placed on governments and agencies to take action. The way in which communities respond to illegal graffiti is guided by its ideological viewpoint. Communities taking a social inequity perspective tend to adopt crime prevention initiatives focused on diversionary and capacity building programmes. In contrast communities who believe graffitiists act “as a result of their own poor decision making” tend to adopt more punitive graffiti prevention approaches (Taylor & Khan 2014). Taking a balanced perspective, Banyule requires a multifaceted, place-based approach to graffiti management. Benchmarking of initiatives employed by other local government areas revealed common responses to graffiti include:

- Education and diversionary programs to help raise people’s awareness of the impacts of illegal graffiti and the legal and other consequences of engaging in graffiti vandalism
- Provide support for community groups interested in addressing graffiti
- Reduce access and attractiveness of graffiti-prone walls with trees and other plantings
- Application of anti-graffiti technologies including coatings to aid rapid removal
- Improve streetscapes by creating legal community art installations such as murals
- Applying Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles
- Providing more legal graffiti writing opportunities (Taylor 2015).

Based on the view that graffiti “is more than mere vandalism” (Fraser 2016) and “will remain part of the [Banyule] urban landscape” indefinitely (Jay 2016), a graffiti resilience approach provides a realistic way forward. Striving to achieve graffiti resilience motivates communities to act as individuals and groups to prepare for the nuisance of illegal graffiti. Moreover, graffiti resilience practice supports deep learning opportunities related to the graffiti subculture, the how and why initiatives work or don’t work, and learn how to drive maturity within individual and collective responses (Vale 2014).

In order to drive maturity, the community needs to view graffiti as more than a nuisance crime. “Rather than being random and meaningless, graffiti has connections to a longer history of public writing and street art and acts as a form of expression for those who feel that their ability to express themselves through other channels is limited” (Lynch 2018). Viewing graffiti within the realm of public art provides space to consider the “alternative valuations of graffiti and street art in the creative city” (Mcauliffe 2012). “Graffiti art is neither ‘simply graffiti’ nor ‘simply art’, but a new kind of visual cultural production that exceeds both categories” (Austin 2010). This challenges communities to move on from the “moral battleground... and embrace the transformative (and economically significant) capacity” (Mcauliffe 2012) of graffiti.

Our focus areas

Using an asset and strength-based community development approach, Council will build a graffiti resilient community by prioritising the following areas:

1. Strengthening the capacity of community to address the issue of illegal graffiti.

Our aspirational long term goal is to build a community that better understands why graffiti occurs, and the risk and protective factors. To achieve this we will:

- a. Educate the community
- b. Provide expert advice to community
- c. Support communities to bounce back following incidents of illegal graffiti and create positive outcomes.

2. Apply Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles and other prevention tools to reduce the likelihood of graffiti occurring in Banyule.

Our aspirational goal is to design graffiti out of our built and natural environments. To achieve this we will:

- a. Support Victoria Police to upskill the community to understand and apply CPTED principles
- b. Upskill our staff to apply CPTED principles in our daily work
- c. Learn better ways of reducing the likelihood of graffiti including new innovations and place-based approaches.

3. Provide diversionary projects to offer persons at risk of offending support to make informed behaviour choices.

Our aspirational goal is to reduce the negative health and wellbeing impacts of engaging in acts of illegal graffiti. To achieve this we will:

- a. Extend our professional knowledge of the graffiti sub-culture
- b. Provide practical support to persons at risk of offending

- c. Offer evidence-informed diversionary programs with a focus on young people

4. Transfer lessons from the creative cities movement and provide opportunities for legal street art to establish its fit within Banyule.

Our aspirational goal is to realise the cultural and economic benefits that community art offers to the Banyule community. To achieve this we will:

- a. Work with the local community to co-design a Public Arts Framework, including street art.
- b. Actively promote public art in Banyule.
- c. Continue to learn from local, Australian and international examples of innovative street art practices.

Banyule Youth Services Street Art Program

After participating in illegal graffiti activity, Nick*, 18, was ordered by the courts to complete a graffiti removal program. Through negotiation, he was instead referred to Banyule Youth Services' Street Art Program. Working alongside talented mentors, Nick explored opportunities to further develop his street art skills and contribute to two community murals, one of which he had a personal connection to. Nick continued to engage with the Street Art program after his court-appointed time. His family took an interest and supported Nick's participation in the program, valuing the opportunity to watch Nick paint and share his talents with family and friends.



Briar Hill Mural and Redesign Project

After long term complaints about graffiti in a small shopping centre in Briar Hill, Council devised opportunities to address graffiti that was occurring to the rooftop facades of the commercial properties. On inspection, it was found that a short bus stop had been placed flush against a wall, providing ample opportunity for taggers to access the roof area.

Recommendations were made that the bus stop would be moved forward to the verge and other “steps” (such as a post box) were relocated away from the building façade. After reconfiguring the physical layout of the bus stop, a mural was painted by a local artist on the façade wall. Council employed the principles of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design to prevent and reduce occurrence of graffiti and improve the aesthetic and perceptions of safety at the shopping centre.



Action 2: Supporting a rapid response to illegal graffiti

Rapid removal means removing graffiti within 48 hours and removing offensive graffiti within 4 hours of notification. The Victorian Crime Prevention Unit advocates for quick removal of graffiti as it tends to discourage further attacks. In addition, most forms of graffiti are easier to remove soon after it is marked. The ability to rapidly remove graffiti is underpinned by effective reporting systems, adequate resources and a coordinated, action-based response. Enforcement activities can be viewed as having a rapid removal support function. A caveat to this action is that rapid removal activities should not be undertaken at the expense of the environmental, structural and heritage value of the asset impacted.

Our rationale

Banyule City Council is responsible for the removal of graffiti on Council assets. Council has a graffiti removal program in place to rapidly remove graffiti from its assets, utilising removal techniques including chemical treatments or painting over the graffiti. This approach represents best practice.

Graffiti also impacts non Council assets such as private fences and walls, utility assets, public transport infrastructure and businesses. Any property owner impacted by graffiti has the responsibility to remove graffiti from their property at their own expense. Council acknowledges that it may be more challenging for individuals and businesses to rapidly remove graffiti, therefore Council plays a role in supporting communities to respond in a timely manner. Currently Council provides the following support activities:

- Free graffiti removal kits and paint vouchers
- Partnership with the Department of Justice, Corrections Graffiti Removal Program, where supervised teams of offenders on community orders clean-up graffiti hotspots.
- Graffiti Removal Trial on selected service authority infrastructure.

Rapid reporting of graffiti supports enforcement authorities to provide a coordinated response and contributes to a Victorian database of incidences of illegal graffiti which becomes a valued enforcement tool. However, it is not always clear who owns the affected property and reporting graffiti to the appropriate property owner can be onerous and frustrating, especially if no action is taken.

Whilst the Victorian Graffiti Prevention Act 2007 creates a range of graffiti-related offences, gives police powers to investigate suspected graffiti offences and gives Council powers to remove graffiti from private property, pursuing enforcement avenues will be viewed as a measure of last resort for Council and utilised where all other viable alternatives have been exhausted, or the cost of pursuing the alternatives outweighs the benefits.

Banyule's Environmental Sustainability Policy and Strategy outlines the framework for Council and the community to work together towards a more sustainable future. It recognises the intrinsic value of the natural environment and the ecosystem services it provides for us. It aims to protect our city's

unique natural assets and quality of life and includes five key environmental sustainability goals, of which have direct relevance to graffiti management in Banyule:

- Protect and enhance our natural environment
- Conserve water and improve stormwater management
- Lead in planning for, and responding to, climate change
- Avoid waste generation
- Be environmental stewards

Preservation of our natural environment needs to remain at the forefront of our approach to graffiti management as the unintended consequences as a result of the act of graffiti and associated removal activities may be significant.

What the community told us

- ***Rapid removal is a well-supported approach***

“Graffiti gets sprayed on my fence once a month or so. I paint it out ASAP” (Banyule resident, Feb 2019)

“Immediate removal works best as leaving it invites more graffiti” (Neighbourhood Watch, Nov 2018)

- ***Council’s rights and responsibilities associated with graffiti removal activities are not widely understood within the community***

“Council is fighting a losing battle by not removing graffiti from residential/commercial [property]” (Banyule resident, Dec 2019)

“Community does not differentiate between ownership and responsibility - Council is the face of graffiti management. How do we [Council] resist the pressure to take action where the responsibility lies with another party?” (Building Maintenance 2018)

- ***Reporting creates information to support action***

“I will report it as soon as I see it” (Banyule resident, Feb 2019)

“I doubt any use is made of reports of graffiti ‘scribble’ to expose the culprits” (Banyule resident, Feb 2019)

“Council needs to consider better coordination of data, recording and products. We need the right tools for mobile management” (Operations Infrastructure 2018)

- ***Enforcement activities are seen as effective deterrents***

“Keep up pressure on State Government to bring in stiffer penalties”

“[Implement] consequences for those who are caught- i.e. clean up all rubbish in Banyule”

“Fines don't stop graffiti, in fact the larger the fine the more respect you gain. I mean those that get smaller fines, well they are not considered to be in the same league.” Taylor 2015

“Going to [juvenile detention] was a holiday. I got fed. I put on 8 kilos in six weeks. I met some really good painters, and some really violent people...it was pretty much a training ground. I learnt a few new tricks on how not to get caught and on how to get money” Taylor 2015

Guiding research

Councils across Victoria adopt a variety of initiatives to support removal of graffiti in the municipality from offering free or discounted graffiti removal services for residents and retailers to free removal kits and paint vouchers. The issue of Council not removing graffiti from private and commercial property was highlighted through consultation. Local government benchmarking suggests the removal of graffiti from non-Council assets is possible but will require significant increased investment from Council, as well as navigation of a complex risk management framework and written permission from the asset owner.

It is acknowledged that robust reporting systems are needed to support rapid removal of graffiti. Hotlines for residents and businesses and reporting apps like Snap, Send Solve are examples of initiatives implemented to encourage reporting. However, ABS data (2018) indicates that in 2016/17 4.2% of Victorians were victims of malicious property damage at home such as destruction of property or graffiti. Of these, 47% did not make a report to the police for reasons including the issue was too trivial/ unimportant or they thought there was nothing the police could do (ABS - 2016/17). Therefore, any attempt to improve the reporting systems needs to be coupled with better utilisation of information and a consistent and transparent response framework that give individuals confidence their report is valued and actioned.

Whilst some hold the view that tougher enforcement activities should be pursued, research indicates that pursuing enforcement avenues is complex and extremely difficult to achieve successful outcomes.

“The act of tagging was criminalized, but given the vast times and places it could occur—along with the relative brief amount of time required to complete the act—policing such behaviour could be almost impossible.” James & O’Boyle 2018, p.75.

Further, convicted offenders propose penalties may not be as effective as anticipated. A 2015 study of prolific graffiti offenders aged 15-25 years (Taylor 2015) revealed penalties may have unintended consequences and may entrench behaviours.

Our focus areas

Council will support rapid removal of illegal graffiti by prioritising the following areas:

1. Continue to improve Council’s approach to graffiti rapid removal.

Our aspirational long term goal is for optimal utilisation of Council resources to achieve effective and efficient rapid removal of illegal graffiti within Banyule. To achieve this we will:

- a. Continue to explore and apply best practice approaches to achieve rapid removal, such as Council’s hot spot removal program
- b. Improve our information management systems and practices to better understand the extent to which graffiti is a problem in Banyule
- c. Work with government, utilities providers and public land managers with the aim of motivating these authorities to take rapid removal action.

2. Strengthening the capacity of community to rapidly remove illegal graffiti from private assets.

Our aspirational long term goal is for the Banyule community to take action to remove illegal graffiti from private property with 48 hours. To achieve this we will:

- a. Educate the community on environmentally friendly methods of graffiti removal
- b. Offer material support such as removal kits and paint vouchers to assist with removal activities
- c. Work with and support community-based organisations to undertake graffiti removal activities within Banyule
- d. Investigate ways to better support community members who are unable to remove graffiti from private assets.

3. Support the community to report incidences of graffiti in a timely manner to enable rapid removal.

Our aspirational long term goal is for the Banyule community to report graffiti as soon as they see it. To achieve this we will:

- e. Review and improve the information we provide to our community to support reporting
- f. Adopt effective and efficient tools to support community to report graffiti when they see it
- g. Develop a clear, transparent process for dealing with graffiti with an integrated feedback loop to the individuals to encourage reporting.

4. Take reasonable steps to eliminate or minimise the environmental impact of graffiti.

Our aspirational long term goal is for Banyule to adhere to best practice removal practices as guided by ISO and AS/NZS standards. To achieve this we will:

- a. Establish a best practice Graffiti Removal Practice Manual to guide our workforce and the community take steps to protect the environment when removing graffiti
- b. Establish and implement systems to ensure standards compliance with standards including:
 - o ISO 14001:2015 Environmental management systems – Requirements with guidance for use
 - o ISO 14004:2015 Environmental management systems- General guidelines on principles, systems and support techniques

5. Supplement our rapid removal approach with a considered enforcement response.

Our aspirational goal is to deter illegal graffiti and support the apprehension of offenders. To achieve this we will:

- a. Support the community to understand the penalties for illegal graffiti
 - a. Provide written advice and material supports
 - b. Educate our community regarding the penalties for illegal graffiti.
- b. Utilise strategies to deter illegal graffiti and support relevant stakeholders to pursue enforcement action
 - a. Collaborate with Victoria Police to make relevant information available for use at their discretion
 - b. Develop a coordinated approach to identified hotspot areas with relevant stakeholders.
 - c. Support stakeholders to uphold the legislative requirements under the Graffiti Prevention Act 2007.
- c. Where other options are exhausted Council will exercise its rights under Local Law No. 1 (9.2)

Action 3: Strengthen our collaborative response

A collaborative response to graffiti management in Banyule means that key stakeholders work in partnership to implement a coordinated response to illegal graffiti. This is underpinned by a well-defined shared understanding of the problem, the risks and protective factors, as well as a shared mechanism to build knowledge, competence, participation and meaningful outcomes.

Our rationale

Whilst Council's graffiti management responses and levels of resource commitments may differ from partners, stakeholders and other local government areas, Council encourages all stakeholders to collaborate and work towards the provision of a consistent and best practice response within Banyule.

There is no one formula to developing a collaborative response to illegal graffiti. However, underpinning any collaborative framework are opportunities to come together so that experiences and local lessons can be shared and recorded and an agreed agenda for the future can be established.

Council firmly believes working collaboratively will support our community to make positive inroads towards understanding the local graffiti subculture and adopting a multifaceted, best practice management approach.

What the community told us

- ***Partnerships and collaboration is required***

"Work with the community to ensure spaces are activated and accepted" (Council officer, Dec 2018)

"Utilities providers and public asset owners not removing graffiti contributes to the problem" (Community Safety Working Group 3081 2018)

"We need proactive relationships with stakeholders including utilities, government and developers" (Manager Planning and Building 2018)

"It would be great if the community would work together to understand why it happens, and what we can do to encourage it not to happen" (Council officer, Dec 2018)

"You will never solve the problem whilst you only focus on your own assets" (Banyule resident, Feb 2019)

"Is there a way for Council to better liaise with Victoria Police in reporting, recording and removal of graffiti?" (Council officer, Dec 2018)

"Ensure developers or building owners/managers take responsibility where appropriate" (Council officer, Dec 2018)

“Continue to work with other agencies on the removal of graffiti” (Council officer, Dec 2018)

- ***There is a willingness to contribute***

“I would LOVE to be given the paint/brush and permission by Council and take responsibility for fixing the graffiti once a week in my street” (Banyule resident, Feb 2019)

“For more than 11 years, Neighbourhood Watch has routinely removed graffiti from the alleyway behind Ivanhoe Shops” (Neighbourhood Watch Banyule, Nov 2018)

“Internally, improve cross-functional responsibilities so Council staff in various roles can report and capture graffiti on a sophisticated mobile app” (Council officer, Dec 2018)

“Local residents were trained to use Graffiti Removal Kits and were willing to respond if called upon” (Community Safety Working Group 3081 Nov 2018)

“Banyule’s enthusiasm in this area needs to be continually encouraged” (Council officer, Dec 2018)

“Having a process in place where local community members/groups/schools etc. could apply to ‘decorate’ graffiti-prone areas creates a great opportunity for people to get involved in their local community in a positive and artistic way, whilst also helping deter antisocial behaviour” (Council officer, Dec 2018)

Guiding research

The concept of collaborative communities has been widely explored in research through multiple sectors from ecological sustainability to product innovation. Working collaboratively enables organisations to utilise shared resources, skills, knowledge and talents, as well as the ‘extrinsic and intrinsic motives’ (Almirall, Lee & Majchrzak 2014) of partners, to lead change and address complex societal problems (DuBow et al. 2018).

There are multiple benefits of working collaboratively. Striving to develop a collaborative response enables the collation of diverse perspectives within a community which in turn “communicate[s] the true complexity [of the issue]” (Sarkissian & Wenman 2010). Bringing diverse perspectives together helps shape a shared and locally-focused understanding of graffiti and supports the development of a common agenda to address the opportunities and challenges. “A common agenda is critical for intentional collective impact, because it serves as a uniting force” (Wood 2016). Further ‘consistent and coordinated activities’ facilitated by the stakeholders involved in community problem-solving is said to amplify sustainable and timely system based change (Wood 2016).

Research orientates collaborative communities to “shift the collective focus from reactive problem solving to co-creating the future” (Weaver 2016). Weaver (2016) suggests “essential to getting to the possible includes the engagement of the broader community and a growing sense and belief by the community that transformational change can in fact happen”. This is where aspirational collective goal setting comes into the equation. Based on the journey so far, strengthening the collective response requires the community to image a new future and set aspirational goals measured against community indicators. Therefore, a key activity to strengthen collaboration becomes understanding the role of

‘Community Indicators in building, forwarding and monitoring towards collective impact’ over time (Wood 2016).

To achieve change over time, a developmental evaluation model can be applied. As per the example below, the community uses Community Indicators as a basis for deliberative goal setting and subsequent participatory planning, governance and implementation. This type of model advocates for changing outcomes through robust, intentional planning of initiatives in collaboration with community.

“Community change happens when different sectors of the community believe in the need for change to occur and embrace their individual and collective contributions to this change” (Weaver 2016)

Our focus areas

To build knowledge, competence, participation and meaningful outcomes for the Banyule community, our focus areas are:

1. Create and implement a collaboration model to achieve a coordinated response

Our aspirational long term goal is for a representative Banyule Graffiti Management Steering group to lead and monitor a coordinated, effective, targeted graffiti management approach in Banyule. To achieve this we will:

- a. Create a common understanding of the problem and a shared vision for change
- b. Share accountability to collect data, measure results and focus on performance and outcomes
- c. Establish mechanisms to achieve consistent and open communication
- d. Coordinate our efforts through a joint action plan
- e. Establish an internal Graffiti Management Steering group consisting of key staff with graffiti responsibilities and expand to include external partners where appropriate.

2. Strengthen collaborations with a range of graffiti stakeholders to address specific issues.

Our aspirational long term goal is to create positive, long-term change by addressing the issues we can control with the partners that can affect change. To achieve this we will:

- a. Work closely with individual stakeholders to design a realistic, measured response to specific issues, measure the impact of the response, and apply learnings to follow up responses
- b. Actively seek out and participate in opportunities to advocate for a strengthened collaborative response through forums, networks and other activities.

3. Facilitate our community’s understanding and support of the annual Graffiti Action Plan and play a role in its implementation.

Our aspirational long term goal is for the Banyule community to understand the Banyule Graffiti Strategy 2020-2024 and feel empowered to contribute to achieving its goals. To achieve this we will:

- a. Raise awareness of the Banyule Graffiti Strategy 2020-2024 through effective communication channels
- b. Develop a better understanding of the ways in which the Banyule community wish to contribute to goal attainment
- c. Support the Banyule community to take action against illegal graffiti in meaningful ways

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