



ADOPTED GRAFFITI ACTION PLAN

Date of Adoption: March 2009

1. Plan Objectives

- To eliminate graffiti vandalism from within Tauranga City by adopting and implementing a range of multi-faceted actions.

2. Principles

Council affirms its ongoing support as a 'co-lead' graffiti control coordinating agency, together with the New Zealand Police.

Council encourages a wider multifaceted partnership approach requiring commitment from Police, Youth agencies such as the Ministry for Youth Development and local Youth Offending Teams, local Judiciary, Ministry of Justice, Corrections, Housing NZ and the wider community.

Council adopts a zero tolerance approach to graffiti vandalism (**enforcement**). Graffiti vandalism offences will be reported for prosecuted.

Rapid removal of graffiti vandalism is considered one of the most effective strategies to avoid graffiti proliferation (**eradication**).

Council may also encourage and facilitate '**education**' programmes with retailers, schools, community groups etc.

Council acknowledges that addressing graffiti requires a long term approach and the actions contained within this plan are part of a longer term joint strategy with the Ministry of Justice via the "STOP" Strategy (Stop Tagging Our Places).

3. Definitions

Graffiti vandalism is the intentional unlawful defacing of property with writing, markings or graphics. Tagging is a form of graffiti vandalism where the writing is in the style of a signature on a wall or other property.

A graffiti database is a computer software system which allows for the easy identification and collation of tags of known offenders. The collection and analysis of 'tags' can assist in successful prosecutions.

4. Background

Graffiti vandalism has become a major problem for almost all New Zealand local authorities. Ugly and often offensive scrawls deface the walls and structures of our cities and towns. They can also be found on roads, bridges and road signs throughout the country and in some places they have even appeared on rocks and cliff faces.

The costs to councils, infrastructure providers and businesses are substantial. Tauranga City Council currently spends in excess of \$250,000 per annum on graffiti eradication.

Research shows that graffiti is often linked with other more destructive crimes. Without graffiti removal an area is likely to attract further property damage and other forms of street crime. Offenders may progress from tagging to other and more serious forms of property crime.

The experience of Councils around New Zealand suggests that graffiti offences are committed by youth from 12-19 years of age and they can be from any ethnicity, culture, gender and socio-economic background. Local experience in Tauranga is that the majority of graffiti offenders, an estimated 95%, are from 12 to 17 years of age.

Councils have a responsibility to their communities. Graffiti is an important safety issue for many communities because it represents a perception of the presence of anti-social and criminal behaviour that directly impacts on how safe communities feel, so measures to reduce the incidences of graffiti are likely to reduce this fear of crime in a community as well as lessen the negative financial and social impacts associated with graffiti.

While Council accepts that current best practice for graffiti control focuses on a three stage process (eradication, enforcement and education), the primary focus of this action plan will be on eradication and enforcement.

Council acknowledges recent legislative changes and initiatives from central government and will work closely with Police and the Ministry of Justice officials towards a graffiti-free Tauranga.

In doing so, Council will undertake to fund much of the eradication work undertaken via contract.

Council looks toward the Police and the Ministry of Justice to resource the enforcement aspects of this action plan.

5. Key Actions

Eradication

Council aims to remove graffiti from all places within 48 hours of notification, weather dependant (excluding State Highways, On Track land etc.).

Private property owners will be encouraged to assist Council in the rapid removal of graffiti.

Council may contract externally for the provision of this service. This will be done in an integrated manner through one contractor.

Council contractors will use a limited range of paints to paint over tags and graffiti. Council will not 'colour match' as a matter of practice but will attempt 'best fit'. Council will employ a Graffiti Prevention Officer, primarily to manage the graffiti removal contract, to collate and package the graffiti database intelligence' information to pass to Police for investigation and prosecution and to be responsible for the overall coordination of the actions in this plan.

Council, over time, will encourage 'communities' to take ownership of their own 'patch'. Council may assist communities to take responsibility for their own areas via the provision of basic graffiti removal 'kits' to established community groups such as Neighbourhood Support and the like.

A complaint or call for service to Council from the property owner or occupier is an invitation to enter on that private property and remove/repair graffiti vandalism.

Council will provide graffiti removal 'tips' via a number of media sources i.e. website, call centre, Our City Views, community newspapers etc. in order to enable individual property owners to remove any tagging etc. as quickly as possible and safeguard against future offending.

Council recognises that graffiti is a 'media sensitive' issue and will use and encourage the use of a media style that fits appropriately with this sensitivity, both in terms of form and content.

Over time Council will investigate opportunities to work with key internal and external stakeholders to implement a full range of anti-graffiti and environmental management initiatives, via District Plan, consent conditions and best practice advice to developers etc.

Enforcement

Council adopts a zero tolerance approach to graffiti vandalism. Where possible graffiti vandalism offenders will be prosecuted and reparation sought, as well as seeking some form of community service. Police will lead such prosecutions.

Council will collate and manage information obtained via a graffiti database and forward such information to Police for follow-up inquiries and where appropriate, prosecution. Such information may include known 'hot-spots' where there is a specific pattern to offending, or known offenders whose 'tags' continue to re-appear across the city.

Such information can be collected by the graffiti removal contractor at the time of removal, community groups such as Night Owls and Neighbourhood Support, other Council staff and members of the public. Information will be forward to one central point for management and collation.

Council may also from time to time, use covert surveillance on known 'hot-spots' in order to identify offenders, or may monitor known offenders to track their offending patterns.

Council will operate a graffiti reward system, where a small amount of monies will be paid to informants who provide information leading to the successful identification and prosecution on graffiti offenders. This 'informant fund' will be managed by the graffiti coordinator.

Council will work closely with Police and the Ministry of Justice in order to assist Council with resources and funding for these initiatives.

Council will be responsible for monitoring the access and availability of spray cans and other instruments used for graffiti vandalism, by way of checking and working with key retailers. Repeat offenders will be reported to Police with a recommendation for prosecution.

In addition, Police are encouraged to assist in the flow of information about offenders via their networks with youth such as Youth Aid Services, Youth Education Services, Youth Offending Team's etc.

Council may provide 'opportunities' for offenders to make amends via supervised 'paint out exercises' and the like under the leadership of Corrections and/or Police. Council staff will not be involved in any supervision of these activities.

Education/Proactive

Council also recognises graffiti art as a legitimate form of youth expression where carried out in a lawful context and will facilitate, where possible, opportunities for this expression.

Where appropriate, Council will consider the use of 'legitimate canvasses' to enable supervised street art projects, which may assist in the reduction of graffiti vandalism. It is recognised that there needs to be a credible connection between the geographical area and the 'local' artist, so as to enable local 'ownership' of any street art or mural. Over time, Council may facilitate the provision of targeted education programmes for children aimed at positively raising awareness about graffiti vandalism, litter, pride and responsibility for Tauranga city.

Plan Review

This plan and its' key action points will be reviewed annually before the end of May.

ACTION	WHO	WHEN	COST	MEASURE
Adopt plan	TCC	March 09	nil	adopted
Employ coordinator	TCC	November 08	\$100,000 (total cost with vehicle to be sponsored)	contract signed
Obtain database	TCC Contractor	July 09	Contractors costs	Regular reports
Graffiti reward system	TCC Coordinator	Established November 08	Up to \$5000 per annum	\$ and # of reports and quality of information
Covert surveillance of identified sites	TCC Coordinator to facilitate	On-going as required	Cameras \$4,000 each Surveillance monitoring and set up \$150 per month	# of operations and # of arrests
Monitoring of sales of spray cans	TCC Coordinator / Contractor / Police	On-going	Staff time	% of compliance and # of breaches
On-going enquiries and intelligence gathering	Police YAS	On-going	Staff time	# of self initiated arrests
Graffiti removal 'tips' production	TCC Coordinator	August 09	\$3000	
Graffiti removal 'kits' to neighbourhood support groups	TCC Coordinator	August 09	\$5000	