

SOUTH WAIRARAPA DISTRICT COUNCIL

31 JULY 2013

AGENDA ITEM C3

REPORT ON MANAGEMENT OF GRAFFITI VANDALISM IN SOUTH WAIRARAPA

Purpose of Report

To provide Council with a proposal for future management and prevention of graffiti vandalism in South Wairarapa.

Recommendations

Officers recommend that the Council:

1. *Receives the information;*
2. *Adopts the Wellington Regional Graffiti Prevention Strategy 2013-17; and*
3. *Establishes a working party to develop a graffiti prevention policy and action plan for South Wairarapa.*

1. Executive Summary

There have been 399 graffiti strikes recorded in South Wairarapa from October 2012 to June 2013. It has cost \$5655 to remove graffiti so far, and costs will continue to rise until October, when the new contracting year for City Care begins.

There is a considerable amount of information available about graffiti management through the Ministry of Justice STOP Strategy, the Wellington Regional Graffiti Forum and other local authority programmes. A Wellington Regional Graffiti Prevention strategy has been developed and agreed to by the Mayoral Forum. Many local authorities are successfully running graffiti prevention campaigns. It will take time to assess successful initiatives and best practice, and determine the most appropriate graffiti prevention plan for South Wairarapa as a whole. A Council working party is proposed as the best way to achieve this and ensure community buy-in and consistency in the management of and response to the graffiti issue.

2. Background

2.1 Graffiti prevention and management in New Zealand

2.1.1. Definition and legislative framework

Graffiti vandalism is defined as

the act of a person damaging or defacing any building, structure, road, tree, property or other thing by writing, drawing, painting, spraying or etching on it, or otherwise marking it, without lawful authority and without the consent of the occupier or owner or other person in lawful control.¹

The major piece of legislation is the Summary Offences Act 1981 as amended by the Summary Offences (Tagging and Graffiti Vandalism) Amendment Act 2008. This covers wilful damage, graffiti vandalism, possession of graffiti implements and provisions to restrict the sale of spray cans. Penalties include fines, community work, and if charged with wilful damage, a prison term of up to three months. Charges can also be made under s269(2) of the Crimes Act 1961 (intentional damage) with penalties of up to seven years imprisonment.

2.1.2. Wellington Regional Graffiti Prevention Strategy 2013-17

The Wellington Regional Graffiti Forum was established in 2010. The three Wairarapa Councils were initially represented by the Southern Wairarapa Safer Community Council, but that representation ceased when government funding for a district Graffiti Officer ended. The Forum has since sought direct representation from the three Councils. South Wairarapa will be represented by an officer at the next Forum meeting. The Forum includes representatives of Wellington, Hutt Valley, Porirua and Greater Wellington Councils as well as Kiwi Rail, Metlink and the Police. Carterton and Masterton do not appear to be participating in the Forum at the moment.

The Forum developed the Wellington Regional Graffiti Prevention Strategy 2013-17², which was approved by the Mayoral Forum in March 2013. The purpose of the strategy is to promote region-wide collaboration and consistency on reducing and preventing graffiti vandalism. Member organisations adopt the strategy through local action plans, evaluate and measure progress, and report back annually. Participation is therefore scalable to the level appropriate for the size of organisation and extent of the local graffiti vandalism problem.

The strategy focuses on graffiti prevention through leadership, community engagement and education, prompt eradication and the application of the law when offenders are identified.

2.2 The graffiti problem in South Wairarapa

2.2.1 City Care contract

The current Property, Parks and Reserves Maintenance Contract with City Care provides for the contract to remove graffiti from:

- the exterior surfaces of all Council property;

¹ Summary Offences Act 1981;

² Attached as Appendix 1

- the interior of toilets and swimming baths facilities;
- playground equipment, seats, skateboard ramps etc;
- street furniture and signs in reserves (excludes road and traffic signs);
- litter bins;
- footpaths in the urban area;
- fences; and
- memorials.

The contract provides for a monthly lump sum payment of \$287.67 to City Care for the removal of all graffiti each month. This amount was based on an anticipated 192 strikes³ per year; once the 192 strikes is exceeded, removal of each succeeding strike is charged at the actual cost of removal.

The contract response time for graffiti removal is within seven days of City Care being notified, with particularly offensive graffiti to be removed within 48 hours of notification. In practice, all graffiti is generally removed within 48 hours of notification. Approximately 90% of notifications come from City Care's own staff or contractors; the remainder from officers. Best practice is to remove all graffiti within 24 hours.

City Care's graffiti removal contractor routinely photographs each graffiti strike and uploads it to the City Care job system, meaning images are available for comparison, and for use by Police if offenders are identified.

2.2.2 Graffiti statistics 2012/13

The 192 strikes for the year was reached in March, the sixth month of the contract, and since then, City Care's charges have been for the actual cost of removal at the agreed day works rate.

Table 1 – Graffiti strikes October 2012 – June 2013

Oct 2012	Nov 2012	Dec 2012	Jan 2013	Feb 2013	Mar 2013	Apr 2013	May 2013	Jun 2013	TOTAL
18	0	31	102	23	24	87	114	1	399

Graffiti strikes are more likely to occur during school holidays. The dearth of graffiti in June is probably attributable to the cold and wet weather during the month.

2.2.3 Featherston Community Board actions

At its July 2013 meeting, the Featherston Community Board endorsed the following proposed actions:

³ A graffiti strike is a single word, name, tag or continuous connected shape. Repeated tags over a single area count as multiple strikes – one for each tag. A high number of strikes may be confined to quite a small area (eg the top and seats of a park table) or spread out over a larger area (skatepark, playground)

- participation in Wellington Regional Graffiti Forum through officer attendance at meetings;
- recommendation to Council to adopt the Wellington Regional Graffiti Prevention Strategy;
- recommendation to Council to develop a local graffiti prevention policy and plan; and
- recommendation to Council to use the Stop-Tags database used by the other members of the Regional Forum (cost involved).

3. Discussion

3.1 Participation in the Wellington Regional Graffiti Forum

- 3.1.1 The Facilities and Parks Officer will be attending the Forum as the representative of SWDC.
- 3.1.2 Councillors should encourage Carterton and Masterton councils to designate officers to attend the Forum, and to liaise with the SWDC representative.

3.2 Adoption of the Wellington Regional Graffiti Prevention Strategy

- 3.2.1 The Regional Graffiti Prevention Strategy has four overarching principles. More detail, and example of ways to implement the principles can be found in Appendix 1.
- Leadership – provide region-wide direction and guidance to address graffiti vandalism in neighbourhoods, communities and.
 - Engagement – work collaboratively with communities and stakeholders to promote ownership and action in preventing and removing graffiti.
 - Eradication – prompt removal of graffiti vandalism to promote a sense of ownership and.
 - Enforcement – effective use of legislation in enabling communities to be free of graffiti.
- 3.2.2 By adopting the Wellington Regional Graffiti Prevention Strategy, SWDC would be accepting these principles, but would remain free to implement them in the way that best suits community needs and the available resources.
- 3.2.3 There are a number of reasons to take a regional approach to graffiti management and prevention.
- It provides an opportunity for sharing resources and information for more effective graffiti management.
 - National and regional organisations such as police, Kiwi Rail, Tranz Metro, utility companies and other service providers have assets and interests spread through the region, and therefore have a role to play in graffiti prevention.
 - There is a high degree of movement of residents, property owners and graffiti vandals around the region.

3.3 Establishment of a working party to develop local graffiti prevention policy and plan

- 3.3.1 A working party is proposed to develop a policy and local plan for South Wairarapa. This group would investigate the local situation, identify and evaluate potential approaches, including use of Stop Tags. It would be able to consult with the community including businesses, schools and police. Once a local action plan is developed, the working party would lead community-based initiatives, monitor progress and report back to Council and the community.
- 3.3.2 The membership of the working party would be determined by Council, but should include Councillors and Community Board members wishing to take a leadership role on this issue, as well as the relevant SWDC officer, a representative from City Care, and ideally some youth representation.
- 3.3.3 Using a working party would ensure community participation and ownership of what plan was developed. Facebook comments, in Featherston at least, show a desire for leadership from Council when it comes to tackling graffiti vandalism and general crime in the area.
- 3.3.3 A working party would also support the limited officer resources which are available to contribute to this work.

3.4 Stop Tags database

- 3.4.1 The Stop Tags database is a web-based database on proprietary software provided by Smartrak Ltd, a Hamilton-based GPS tracking specialist. Stop Tags clients and their contractors use iPhones in the field to photograph tags, identify tag names, the product used and the property defaced. This information is uploaded to the database in real time. From there it can be reviewed and reported on. Tag reports are available to view, share and investigate. Profiles of individual taggers can be developed and passed onto police if the individual is identified. Further information about the Stop Tags system can be found in Appendix 3.
- 3.4.2 The cost of participating in the Stop Tags system would be \$150/month (\$1800/yr), excluding any additional phone costs and any additional charges if data is uploaded manually.

4. Conclusion

There is a considerable amount of information available about graffiti prevention and management through the Regional Forum and more widely, and many local authorities are successfully running graffiti prevention campaigns. It is important to allow time to assess successful initiatives and best practice, and to consult with the community before determining the most appropriate policy and local graffiti plan for South Wairarapa.

The management and prevention of graffiti is a complex issue requiring a clear policy, and a strategy which allows for community engagement. Graffiti vandalism occurs throughout South Wairarapa, and a district-wide

approach ensures consistency in the management of and response to the issue.

5. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Wellington Regional Graffiti Prevention Strategy 2013-17

Appendix 2 – Costs of graffiti to SWDC October 2012 – June 2013

Appendix 3 - Stop Tags System

Contact Officer: Helen McNaught, Facilities and Parks Officer

Reviewed By: Mark Allingham, Group Manager Infrastructure Services

**Appendix 1 – Wellington
Regional Graffiti Prevention
Strategy 2013-17**

WELLINGTON REGIONAL GRAFFITI PREVENTION STRATEGY 2013-17

Our Vision:
**PREVENTING GRAFFITI
VANDALISM TOGETHER**

HOW WE PREVENT

LEADERSHIP	ENGAGEMENT	ERADICATION	ENFORCEMENT
Provide direction	Consistent messages	Prompt removal	Apply the law
Agree activities	Effective partnerships	Quality services	Seek reparation
Share resources	Share and learn	Cost effective	Focus on hot spots
Ensure accountability	Targeted education	Community action	Target repeat offenders

BENEFITS/OUTCOMES

HOW WE MEASURE

SUSTAINABLE GRAFFITI REDUCTION	Crime data Graffiti audits Shared 'Stop Tags' database
IMPROVED ENVIRONMENT	Community feedback Graffiti audits Shared 'Stop Tags' database
IMPROVED SAFETY PERCEPTIONS	Perception of safety audits Community feedback Crime data
ENGAGED AND EMPOWERED COMMUNITIES	Community feedback Crime data Graffiti removed (\$ and time)
VALUE FOR INVESTMENT	Total spending Graffiti removed (\$ and time) Crime data Shared 'Stop Tags' database Graffiti audits Community feedback Perception of safety audits

WHO WE ARE



 WELLINGTON REGIONAL
GRAFFITI FORUM

Wellington Regional Graffiti Prevention Strategy 2013-17: Principles, Definitions and Implementation

Purpose of Strategy: To promote region-wide collaboration and consistency for reducing and preventing graffiti vandalism.

Principles and Definitions: The organisations with logos appearing on the Strategy's front page have signed up to this Regional Strategy. Each of those organisations will adopt the principles and definitions (below) as part of their local action plans and other efforts to prevent graffiti. No activities should be inconsistent with those principles and definitions.

Guiding Examples: The examples are for guidance around how to implement the principles. There is no expectation, however, that organisations signing up to this Strategy implement all of the examples, particularly if other projects better suit local circumstances.

The definitions and examples below will generally be relevant for communities and stakeholders such as: territorial authorities (TAs), Wellington Regional Council, KiwiRail, Wellington Electric, other utility companies, NZ Police, government organisations, businesses, schools, residents associations and youth clubs.

Implementation and Evaluation: Organisations signing up to this strategy will annually evaluate progress using the measures on the Strategy's front page that are relevant to them (for example crime data, graffiti audits, shared 'Stop Tags' database). Annual progress will be reported back to the regional working group.

Overarching Principle	Definition	Sub-Principles	How principles can be implemented (Examples)
Leadership	Provide region-wide direction and guidance to address graffiti vandalism in neighbourhoods, communities and businesses.	Provide direction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give best-practice and consistent advice on how to tackle local graffiti effectively. • Promote region-wide activities (including the Graffiti Prevention Strategy, Governance Group and quarterly reporting).
		Agree activities	Undertake initiatives, such as the following, to help divert people from graffiti vandalism: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Murals • Community programmes • Youth activities • Education projects • Partner with businesses.
		Share resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share data/analysis (e.g. StopTags information),

			<p>communication and advertising materials.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have common funding streams. • Share contracting services.
		Ensure accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have local graffiti policies. • Clearly define who is responsible for what. • Measure policy success and feed this back to the community.
Engagement	Work collaboratively with communities and stakeholders to promote ownership and action in preventing and removing graffiti vandalism.	Consistent messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use standard format for messaging. • Do not use real graffiti images in published materials or media.
		Effective partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve stakeholder groups in community work or projects. • Work with young people in school holidays.
		Share and learn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give permission for other councils/businesses to use your printed materials. • Share and learn from successes and things needing to be done differently. • Share ideas, principles and initiatives. • Seek feedback and learn from communities.
		Targeted education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate school children and communities about the negative effects of graffiti and how to tackle graffiti.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise communities on how to remove graffiti.
Eradication	Prompt removal of graffiti vandalism to promote a sense of ownership and safety.	Prompt removal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set and adhere to time standards.
		Quality services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have consistent and effective ways of removing graffiti across all assets.
		Cost effective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streamline removal methods. • Target surveillance. • Bulk-order products.
		Community action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate a volunteer programme (adopt a spot) and encourage the reporting of offences and offenders. • Work towards regionally consistent practices for public access to resources to eradicate graffiti.
Enforcement	Effective use of legislation in enabling communities to be free of graffiti vandalism.	Apply the law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prosecute, prevent and deter graffiti vandalism. • Assist the Police by providing information on offenders or offences. • Ensure retailers do not sell spray paint to underage customers.
		Seek reparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always seek reparation after a specific amount of damage. • Penalties should be commensurate with the level of offending (e.g. penalties under the Crimes Act for significant damage, Summary Offences for

			less significant vandalism).
		Focus on hot spots	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use StopTags to identify and concentrate resources on areas of concern. • Councils to inform the Justice sector about the impact of graffiti on communities.
		Target repeat offenders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top 10 offender lists

**APPENDIX 2 – COSTS OF
GRAFFITI TO SWDC
OCTOBER 2012 – JUNE 2013**

COST OF GRAFFITI REMOVAL

Month	Monthly lump sum	Additional cost	TOTAL
October 2012	287.67	-	287.67
November 2012	287.67	-	287.67
December 2012	287.67	-	287.67
January 2013	287.67	-	287.67
February 2013	287.67	-	287.67
March 2013	287.67	-	287.67
April 2013	287.67	-	287.67
May 2013	287.67	2161.11	2448.78
June 2013	287.67	904.73	1192.4
July 2013	287.67		
August 2013	287.67		
September 2013	287.67		
TOTAL	3452.04	3065.84	5654.87

(Note : some costs do not appear until invoicing the month following the graffiti strike)

Appendix 3 – Stop Tags System



BENEFITS OF STOP TAGS™

- ▶ Report on the extent of your graffiti problem
- ▶ Dispatch cleanup crews to the exact location of tagging (available with Smartrak add on)
- ▶ Accurately record the time and resources used for graffiti removal
- ▶ Identify and investigate tagging trends
- ▶ Build offender files to aid in convictions
- ▶ Measure, monitor and meet your KPI's through smart reporting
- ▶ Identify graffiti hotspots
- ▶ Utilise robust reporting information to track and predict future hotspots

Map of Tag Offences

The following map shows the hot-spots that exist for the year in the jurisdiction specified.



Results (1416 offences total):

Total area searched	14068 Dwp
Total number of tags	2236
Number dispatched jobs completed	629
Percentage jobs completed in 2 days	93%

STOP TAGS™ IS A SECURE GRAFFITI MANAGEMENT DATABASE DELIVERED OVER THE INTERNET. USING STOP TAGS™, COUNCILS CAN MANAGE ALL ASPECTS OF GRAFFITI REMOVAL, FROM INCIDENT REPORTING TO CLEAN UP DETAILS, AND PROVIDES COMPREHENSIVE STATISTICS.

This graffiti management database is also a powerful offender tool that police can use for the conviction of taggers.

Stop Tags™ is currently used by territorial authorities throughout New Zealand, servicing over 65% of the urban population. Some of our clients include: Auckland Council, Hamilton City Council, Hastings District Council, Porirua City Council, Wellington City Council, Lower Hutt City Council and KiwiRail. Stop Tags™ is also working with Corrections in the Australian States of Queensland and Victoria to become their preferred Graffiti solutions provider.

HOW STOP TAGS™ WORKS

Stop Tags™ uses iPhones in the field to photograph tags, identify tag names, the product used and property defaced. This information is uploaded to the database in real time. From there it can easily be reviewed and reported on. Tag reports are available to view, share and investigate.

For more information please call Casey Molloy on +64 21 228 5835 or email casey@smartrak.co.nz

ABOUT SMARTRAK

In 2008 Smartrak Ltd responded to the need for councils to manage the growing problem of graffiti vandalism. We developed Stop Tags™ to provide councils with accurate and timely information about when, where and what was being tagged in New Zealand's towns and cities. Stop Tags™, hosted by Smartrak, is New Zealand's leading graffiti management solution.

How Stop Tags works and how it could be used by SWDC

Stop Tags users such as council staff and contractors use an app on iPhones to photograph and GPS locate graffiti. The photograph and other details are upload it to the database, beginning a workflow which can record the time taken to remove and the amount of product used for removal. Costs can also be associated for future reporting. A final photograph showing the cleaned area is then uploaded.

The full functionality of Stop Tags is best suited to large urban authorities – for example, the mapping tools which enable the creation of street plans showing local hotspots, or the mapping of the locations of an individual's

tags. We don't have too much difficulty in identifying hot spots, however, the system would still be of value to SWDC in enabling the collection of tag photographs and being able to search tags and offenders across the whole region. At the moment graffiti and tags are photographed by City Care workers and uploaded to the CEM database, which does not have the same search functionality as Stop Tags.

If an individual tagger is able to be identified, the database can be searched for all of that individual's previous tags, and a report provided to the police. As a tag is essentially a signature, this makes it possible for historical offences to be identified in a report to police, making prosecution more likely.

At the moment the Stop Tags app is only available for the iPhone. City Care staff do not use iPhones, meaning that they would need to change from their present technology at either their expense or ours. In Wellington, WCC paid for iPhones for the City Care staff. It is possible to upload photographs to the database manually, and given the low numbers of graffiti strikes in South Wairarapa (compared to the larger cities) it could be possible for officers or City Care to do this from the information stored in CEM.