

## 10.12.Graffiti Management Update

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**ENDORSED BY:** Duncan Mitchell, Director Engineering and Property Services

**ATTACHMENTS:** Nil

### **PURPOSE:**

To update Council on the Graffiti Management Program and Councils submission to the Policy Manager Law Enforcement & Crime Policy, Reform and Legislation Branch - Department of Communities and Justice.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

Since 2006 North Sydney Council has used an effective, rapid graffiti removal program for all property types across the North Sydney Local Government Area which includes all private property owners for “free” (with some conditions).

North Sydney Council bears all costs of graffiti removal across the LGA, currently managed through an annual contract with a specialist graffiti removal contractor at a cost of \$135,000 per annum. This contract is a biannual contract that forms part of Council’s Annual Schedule of Rates Contract for maintenance services and minor works.

Over the last 5 years, a total of **7019** graffiti removal jobs where done, with a total area removed of **20,327 Sqm** across the North Sydney LGA, of which:

- a. 3,940 x jobs were on **Council / public property**, comprising a total of 13,176 square meters of graffiti removed.
- b. 1,572 x jobs were on **private property**, comprising a total of 4,437 square meters of graffiti removed: and
- c. 1,507 jobs were on **public authority properties**, such as utility companies Ausgrid, Telstra, Sydney Water and State Government agency property such as that controlled by the RMS, RailCorp, Australia Post, comprising a total of 2,714 square meters of graffiti removed.

In recent years, there has been an increase in graffiti activity, mainly on Council properties and on public infrastructure belonging to Service Authorities/ Utilities.

With regards to suburbs / precincts, the most graffiti impacted suburbs in the past five years are, North Sydney, followed by Neutral Bay, Cremorne, Crows Nest, Cammeray, and Wollstonecraft.

Council has received 1502 graffiti removal agreements from private property owners across the Local Government Area since 2006, which we encourage local property owners to apply for.

Council encourages the public and private owners to communicate and notify Council of graffiti issues via our web site or contacting Customer Service.

Council receives a significant amount of positive feedback from the community (residents, property owners and Strata Managers), both on the program itself and the responsiveness to graffiti removal requests. It has a positive broader social, health and environmental impact, including making people feel safe in their local community.

Back in February 2020, at the request of the NSW Minister, Council made a submission to the Department of Communities and Justice, for the review of the Graffiti Control Act 2008. The review of the Graffiti Control Act is currently ongoing and North Sydney Council's submission is being considered as part of the review. To date, no amendments have been made to the Act since the review began.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

North Sydney Council bears all costs of graffiti removal across the LGA, currently managed through an annual contract with a specialist graffiti removal company at a cost of \$135,000 per annum. This contract is a biannual contract that forms part of Council's Annual Schedule of Rates Contract for Maintenance Services and Minor Works.

The contract cost of \$135,000 per annum does not include any of Council's on-costs which includes contract management, reporting, staff resources and general administration, which is estimated to cost a further \$100,000 per annum.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**1.THAT** Council notes the review of the Graffiti Control Act is ongoing and North Sydney Council's submission is being considered as part of the review.

## **LINK TO COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN**

The relationship with the Community Strategic Plan is as follows:

1. Our Living Environment

1.3 Clean and green places

2. Our Built Infrastructure

2.1 Infrastructure and assets meet diverse community needs

3. Our Innovative City

3.3 Distinctive sense of place and design excellence

## **BACKGROUND**

Graffiti is defined as illegally applied markings and/or graphics in multiple forms including designs, words and images using chalk, paint, marking pens, acid etching, partially wiped dirty surfaces (e.g. dusty surfaces), or other material such as adhesive stickers and posters defacing private and public property without the owner's consent.

On 13 November 2019, Council received a letter from The Honourable Shelley Hancock MP requesting Council participate in the NSW Government's review of the Graffiti Control Act 2008 (the Act). The purpose of the review is to see how the State Government can improve and help Councils in tackling graffiti and illegal bill posting which has significant costs as well as broader social, health and environmental impacts, including making people feel unsafe in their local community. Council's Graffiti management team and Rangers department provided a detailed response to the review which was reported to Council on the 23 March 2020 – Item12.

Currently, Local Government plays an important role in graffiti and bill poster removal. A discussion paper was provided and prepared by the 'Department of Communities and Justice', outlining key focus areas where improvements could be made to assist councils in managing graffiti and illegal bill poster removal.

The key focus areas in the discussion paper include:

1. whether the current offences adequately capture the right behaviours;
2. whether penalties for offences remain appropriate;
3. any issues with mandatory clean-up requirements in community service orders;
4. whether liability for bill posters should be extended to those who authorise or otherwise benefit from illegal bill posting;
5. whether councils should need to provide more areas for legal bill posting; and
6. improvements to the community clean-up scheme or council's graffiti removal powers.

Council provided feedback and recommendations for each key focus area. The review and feedback of the current Graffiti Control Act 2008 prompted the Engineering and Property

Services Division to review and update all of Council's graffiti-related documentation and Policies. A review of the following documentation was undertaken:

7. Graffiti Management Policy- last adopted by Council on 6 April 2020 (Last amended and reviewed February 2013);
8. 'Graffiti Solutions' brochure made available on Council's website, and the 'Graffiti Clean Up' page on Council's website; and
9. Graffiti Removal on the Private Property Agreement Form.

Council's Engineering and Property Services Division is responsible for administering Council's "free" graffiti removal service, raising community awareness of the program, managing the many graffiti removal agreements that are entered into between Council and property owners, and managing all communication with Council's graffiti removal contractor.

## CONSULTATION REQUIREMENTS

Community engagement is not required.

## DETAIL

Since November 2006, Council has operated its all-inclusive Graffiti Removal Program to remove graffiti within **three working days** of notification from all properties within the Council area – not just Council properties. If the graffiti is offensive, it is removed within **one working day**. Graffiti is removed from private properties at no cost to the property owner. A key intention of the program is for Council to focus on rapid removal to keep the area clean and deter vandals from returning to the site.

This program recognises that graffiti removal is a community problem that needs Council, residents, the business community, service authorities, schools, universities and the police to work together in managing the issue. An effective graffiti removal program makes the local environment clean and cared for – a place where you feel safe to live, work and play.

Council's graffiti removal program consists of both an inspection regime across the LGA, including "hotspots", and ad-hoc removal jobs based on public notification. Council's current general strategy for managing the graffiti removal program is to closely monitor graffiti removal trends, identify the hot spots and increase the inspections program in those "hotspot areas", and finally remove the graffiti promptly.

However, despite the success of this program in North Sydney, Council believes that Graffiti Control Act-2008, can be improved with regulatory empowerment and more severe penalties enforced, to further discourage illegal graffiti and markings of public and private property.

North Sydney Council bears all the costs of graffiti removal across the LGA which is currently managed through a contract with graffiti removal contractor at a cost of \$133,000 per annum plus staff oncosts for managing the contract which are in the order of \$100,000.

The opportunity for the community in North Sydney to get involved in Graffiti Removal program is with their identification of graffiti and advising Council of its location so that Council can arrange for the graffiti to be removed promptly. Council will promote and inform the public through its website: [https://www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/Environment\\_Waste/Waste\\_amp\\_Recycling/Recycling\\_amp\\_Clean\\_Ups/Graffiti\\_Clean\\_Up](https://www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/Environment_Waste/Waste_amp_Recycling/Recycling_amp_Clean_Ups/Graffiti_Clean_Up).

On the Council website, the public can find:

- Sign up now forms for the removal of graffiti on private property
- Report for graffiti removal on public infrastructure
- Graffiti solutions pamphlet with useful information
- Graffiti NSW web site for more information
- Councils Graffiti Management Policy

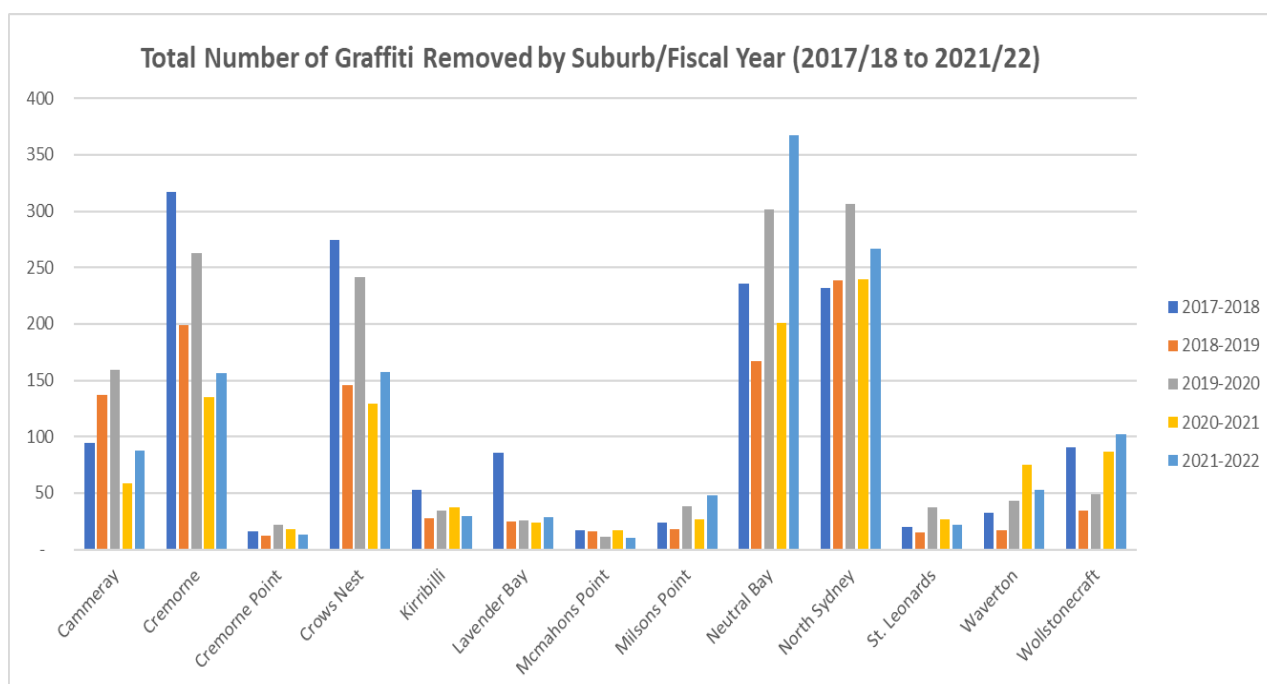
### **Graffiti Statistics**

In summary, the following statistics highlight the success of this program in the **last five (5) years** from 2017 to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2022:

1. A total of **7019** graffiti removal with a total area removed of **20,327 Sqm** across the North Sydney LGA have been undertaken over 5 years, of which:
  - a. 3,940 x jobs were on Council / public property, comprising a total of 13,176 square meters of graffiti removed.
  - b. 1,572 x jobs were on private property, comprising a total of 4,437 square meters of graffiti removed: and
  - c. 1,507 jobs were on public authority properties, such as utility companies Ausgrid, Telstra, Sydney Water and State Government agency property such as that controlled by the RMS, RailCorp, Australia Post, comprising a total of 2,714 square meters of graffiti removed.
2. Compared to previous year of 2020/2021, 2021/2022 has shown to have an increase by 266 jobs and an increased by 465 Square meters of graffiti . As the data tables below show, this increase was experienced mainly on Council properties and on public infrastructure belonging to Service Authorities/ Utilities.
3. With regards to suburbs / Precincts, the most hits suburbs in the past five years are, North Sydney, followed by Neutral Bay, Cremorne, Crows Nest, Cammeray, and Wollstonecraft.
4. In addition, Council has received 1502 graffiti removal agreements from property owners across the LGA since 2006.

The following graphs show a breakdown of graffiti removed in North Sydney area.

**Table 1. Graffiti Removed by Suburb/Fiscal Year (2017/18 to 2021/22)**



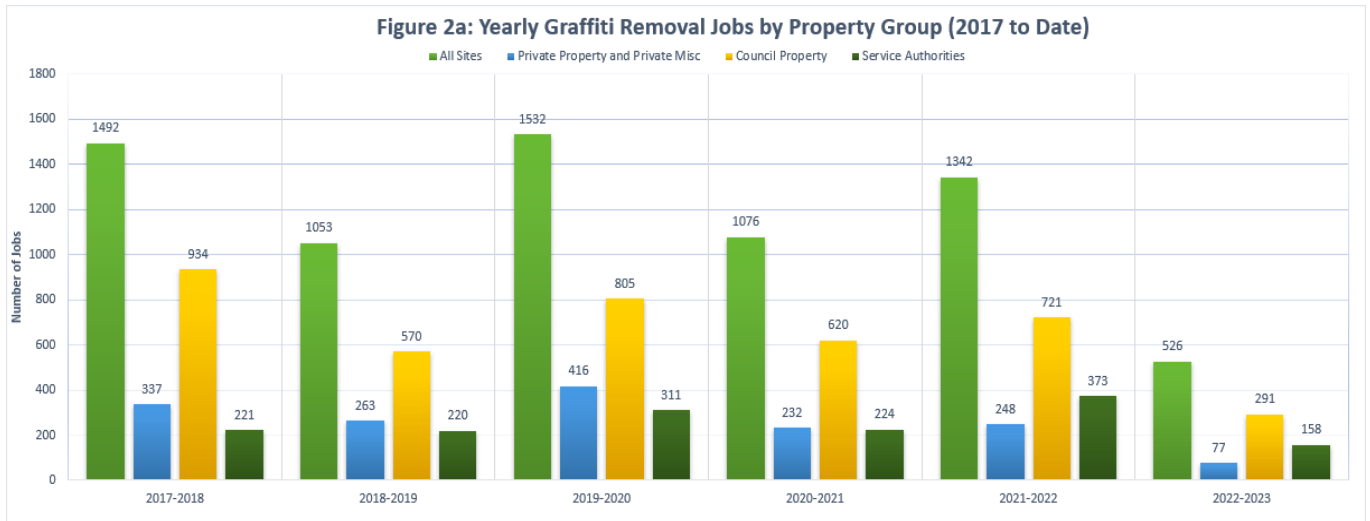
**Table 2. Graffiti Removed by Fiscal Year- No of Jobs**

Financial Year	Total Removals	Private Property and Private Misc	Council Property	Service Authorities
2017-2018	1492	337	934	221
2018-2019	1053	263	570	220
2019-2020	1532	416	805	311
2020-2021	1076	232	620	224
2021-2022	1342	248	721	373
2022-2023 (1 July to 31 October)	524	76	290	158

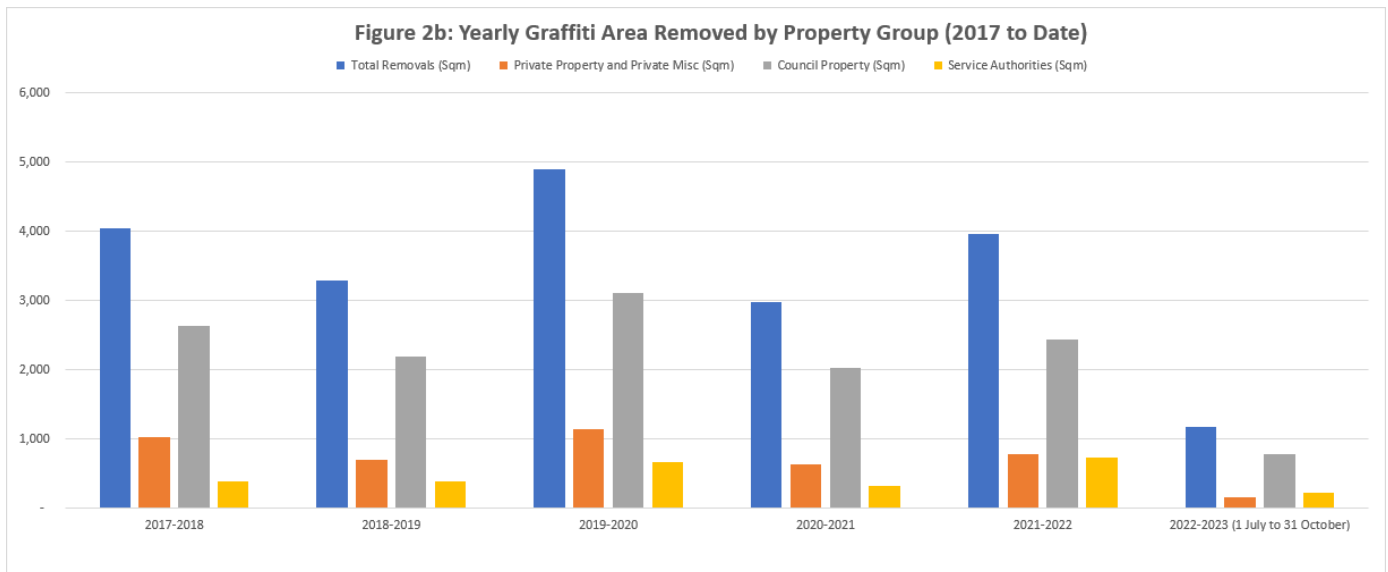
**Table 3. Area removed by Fiscal Year - No on sqm2**

Financial Year	Total Removals (sqm)	Private Property and Private Misc (sqm)	Council Property (sqm)	Service Authorities (sqm)
2017-2018	4,042	1,030	2,628	384
2018-2019	3,283	703	2,190	390
2019-2020	4,899	1,134	3,108	657
2020-2021	2,977	633	2,022	322
2021-2022	3,961	784	2,442	735
2022-2023 (1 July to 31 October)	1,165	153	86	226

**Table 4. Graffiti Removal Jobs by Property Group – Private Property – Council Property – Service Utilities – No of Jobs**



**Table 5. Graffiti Removal Jobs by Property Group – Private Property – Council Property – Service Utilities – No of sqm**



**Table 6. Graffiti Removed by Suburb / Precinct Fiscal Year**

No of Jobs	Financial Year					Grand Total
	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	
Suburbs						
Cammeray	94	137	159	59	88	537
Cremorne	317	199	263	135	156	1,070
Cremorne Point	16	12	22	18	13	81

No of Jobs Suburbs	Financial Year					Grand Total
	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	
Crows Nest	274	146	242	129	157	948
Kirribilli	53	28	34	37	30	182
Lavender Bay	86	25	26	24	29	190
Mcmahons Point	17	16	11	17	10	71
Milsons Point	24	18	38	27	48	155
Neutral Bay	236	167	302	201	367	1,273
North Sydney	232	239	306	240	267	1,284
St. Leonards	20	15	37	27	22	121
Waverton	32	17	43	75	53	220
Wollstonecraft	91	34	49	87	102	363
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1,492</b>	<b>1,053</b>	<b>1,532</b>	<b>1,076</b>	<b>1,342</b>	<b>6,495</b>

### PHOTOS - Before and After Removal



*Before and After photos of typical Instance of Graffiti in North Sydney on Utilities*





*Before and After photos of typical Instance of Graffiti in North Sydney on Council Property – retaining wall Crows Nest*



*Before and After photos of typical Instance of Graffiti in North Sydney on Council bus shelter – Watson Stand A, Neutral Bay*



*Before and After photos of typical Instance of Graffiti in North Sydney on public spaces – pedestrian walkway, Alfred Street, North Sydney*



*Before and After photos of typical Instance of Graffiti in North Sydney on Council Facilities – Berry Island Reserve, Shirley Road, Wollstonecraft*



*Before and After photos of typical Instance of Graffiti in North Sydney on Private Property -- Manns Avenue, Neutral Bay*



*Before and After photos of typical Instance of Graffiti in North Sydney on Council' Parking Station, Alexander Street Carpark, Crows Nest*



*Before and After photos of typical Instance of Graffiti in North Sydney on Telstra Property*



*Before and After photos of typical Instance of Graffiti in North Sydney on Telstra Property*



*Before and After photos of typical Instance of Graffiti in North Sydney on the RMS Control box – Military Road, Neutral Bay*



*Before and After photos of typical Instance of Graffiti in North Sydney on Council Facilities – Skate Park Plaza, Cammeray*



*Before and After photos of typical Instance of Graffiti in North Sydney on Public space – pedestrian walkway, North Sydney*



*Before and After photos of typical Instance of Graffiti in North Sydney on Public space – Ennis Lane, Milsons Point*



*Before and After photos of typical Instance of Graffiti in North Sydney on Public space – Ridge Street Lookout, North Sydney*



*Before and After photos of typical Instance of Graffiti in North Sydney on Private Property – top of lift shaft – units Neutral Bay*



*Before and After photos of typical Instance of Graffiti in North Sydney Council Street furniture*