

Attachment 1

28 September 2007

Jill Wilson  
9400 4666

03011 730691

09907

Ms Maria Usedo  
Community Policy Officer  
WALGA  
PO Box 1544  
WEST PERTH WA 6872

Dear Ms Usedo

**FEEDBACK ON THE STATE GRAFFITI VANDALISM REDUCTION STRATEGY  
2007-2010**

I refer to the invitation of 20 August 2007 to provide feedback to the WA Local Government Association on the State Graffiti Vandalism Reduction Strategy. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the Strategy. The City's responses are as follows.

**1. Do you believe that Local Government should be given the opportunity to provide further consultation and feedback on this strategy?**

Yes. Whilst the Strategy has already been developed, it would be beneficial for local government representatives to provide input into the development of the key initiatives to ensure their support and a consistent and co-ordinated approach across all local governments.

**2. Do you believe that this strategy identifies the key priorities for Local Government?**

Yes. The following specific initiatives link to priority areas already identified by the City of Joondalup.

- **Standard Service Level Agreements (SLAs)** - The development of standard SLAs between state agencies and local governments for the removal of graffiti is welcomed. This will remove the need to negotiate multiple separate agreements between each party which may result in differing levels of service being provided. However, it is vital that SLAs accurately reflect the actual costs of graffiti removal to local governments.

- **Entry onto private property** - The development of legislation to allow local governments entry onto private property for the purposes of removing graffiti will remove the need for the administrative consent process and will assist in reducing timeframes for graffiti removal.
- **Reporting incidents to the Police** - The need to provide information to the Police on graffiti incident reports in a standardised electronic format is welcomed and has already been identified by the City of Joondalup as a process for streamlining. The City would welcome consultation to ensure:
  - that reports and photographs of tags can be provided by the City in a useful form for the Police to be able identify individual tags and are then used to pursue investigation of offences;
  - a streamlined reporting process from our existing software so that there is no duplication of data entry to provide the same information to the Police.
- **Improved reporting of graffiti, including the use of GIS** – As a key priority the City has just upgraded its graffiti recording system to ensure:
  - accurate data is available to identify hot spots and inform the development of the most appropriate reduction strategies;
  - to improve its response to removing graffiti.
- **Mobile security cameras** – The City is proposing to implement the use of CCTV in 2008 to monitor and identify offenders. However, here it is noted that cameras are really only effective if cameras are monitored and there can be a rapid response to graffiti crimes as they are occurring. Evidence suggests that few graffiti vandals, who are caught on camera, are subsequently identified from the photographs and then prosecuted.
- **Community involvement** – the City is currently reviewing its Graffiti Volunteer Removal Program and has identified the need to better co-ordinate and support the volunteers. It is most likely that the City will target their activities in the way suggested within the Strategy, eg 'Adopt a bus shelter' or 'Adopt a Spot'.
- **Training for Graffiti Removal** – The City has identified the need to implement further training for fieldworkers and volunteers and welcomes the proposal to re-establish an ongoing series of industry managed and certified training courses for both professionals and volunteers.

- **Other initiatives within the Strategy** – The City supports most of the strategies outlined within the Strategy. Some have not been identified as current priorities for the City or may be outside the scope of local governments, eg
  - Proposed community education in schools;
  - Actions to reduce the number of juveniles engaging in graffiti;
  - Improved effectiveness of programs run by of the Juvenile Justice Team to rehabilitate juvenile offenders;
  - Promoting further guidelines which identify planning and design features to reduce the incidence of graffiti on property.

**3. Would the implementation of the initiatives proposed within the strategy appropriately target the reduction and prevention of graffiti?**

While local governments currently develop their own initiatives for reducing graffiti separately, a co-ordinated approach, as advocated within the Strategy, is more likely to bring about sustainable improvements in the reduction and prevention of graffiti, than local governments acting on their own.

It should be noted, however, that some of the initiatives advocated are already in place and their effectiveness needs to be evaluated, or example, the Juvenile Justice Team measures to deal with offenders.

**4. Does the strategy provide adequate information regarding the resourcing and costing between State and Local Governments?**

More information on available funding for initiatives would be welcomed. The allocation of \$1.5 million to fund anti-graffiti initiatives across all WA local governments seems inadequate. It is also questioned why funding is dependent on local governments forming partnership agreements with state government. Federal government funding for local governments to undertake initiatives does not require individual partnerships.

**5. What issues do you foresee for Local Government in the implementation of this strategy for Local Government?**

- There are no timeframes for implementation of initiatives noted in the Strategy. Timeframes would assist in monitoring the implementation and achievements within the period from 2007 to 2010.
- Whilst noting that WA has some of the toughest penalties for dealing with graffiti offences, the response from the Police in investigating and pursuing graffiti offences needs to be strengthened.

- A long term change in behaviour to deter graffiti offenders can only be established by:
  - rapid removal;
  - effective policing and prosecution, if appropriate;
  - successful programs for rehabilitation and holding offenders accountable;
  - education programs in schools; and
  - targeted preventative programs.

Some of these are outside the scope of local governments.

- Activities such as 'Community Action Days' will require local governments to take on a supervision or co-ordinating role for graffiti removal with members of the public. Staff resourcing and occupational safety issues will need to be considered before such programs can be widely promoted.
- Local governments making use of loan video surveillance equipment or obtaining grant funding to purchase equipment will need to be provided with clear guidelines on their use and follow-up with relevant agencies on offender identification, prosecution and implementation of effective action. It is noted there is a proposal to develop protocols by the Police. The use of cameras will also have resourcing implications for a local government.

**There are five key issues outlined in the Strategy that the Minister has requested feedback on. Please provide comment on the following.**

#### **Reporting and recording of graffiti**

- Streamlined reporting through upgrades to the *goodbyegrffiti* website and the new 1800 freecall number is a good initiative. Consultation with local governments might assist in providing reports from the *goodbyegrffiti* website in a common format that can link easily to the systems of other local governments.
- The option for a caller to be transferred directly to the WA Police on the 1800 number in the event of an incident in progress is also welcomed. There is, however, concern that such incidents are not treated with priority by the WA Police.
- As mentioned in Question 2 above, the City has recently streamlined its reporting and recording of graffiti to improve the response and removal times, link reports to GIS to identify hotspots, and to improve reporting on the level of graffiti and accurate costings of providing the graffiti removal service.

### **Service Level Agreements between State Government Agencies and Local Government**

As stated in Question 2 above, in theory the City supports the development of standard Service Level Agreements as it will ensure a co-ordinated approach to service standards across the state. However, the agreements must reflect true costs to local governments.

### **Designing out graffiti**

The City promotes strategies to minimise the incidence of graffiti through the following.

- Using anti-graffiti coatings on regularly targeted City buildings;
- Recommending the use of anti-graffiti coatings when approving building licence applications;
- Making recommendations on fence design, position of pedestrian accessways and other measures to minimise the impact of graffiti and anti-social behaviour within subdivision policies.
- Reviewing development applications for City Centre buildings and making suggestions on design modifications to minimise areas which might encourage anti-social behaviour or large expanses of walls.
- Improved lighting when reviewing areas where youths may congregate and which are regularly targeted.

The City could benefit, however, from any future urban design initiatives being developed to minimise the opportunity for graffiti vandalism.

### **Surveillance of hot spots**

The City is proposing to implement the use of CCTV in 2008 to record offenders carrying out graffiti. There are however concerns relating to the difficulty in identifying offenders, and assistance may be required from the Office of Crime Prevention. It is noted that the Strategy advocates protocols to be developed by the Office of Crime Prevention in consultation with the Police which will assist in the use of cameras and submitting video evidence.

### **Clean up orders**

- The City will assist in community programs aimed at graffiti prevention and diversion. However, where offenders are required to participate in clean-up programs, issues of supervision, insurance and the safety of participants need to be addressed by state government.
- Supervision by a parent or a building owner or by an organisation such as People Against Vandalism may require careful consideration, particularly if repeat offenders and young people, who may be considered at risk, are involved in the program.

Should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact Chauncey Johnson, Community Safety Co-ordinator on 9400 4444.

Yours sincerely

**GARRY HUNT**  
**Chief Executive Officer**