

Sunshine Coast Graffiti Action Toolkit

March 2016 edition



Sunshine Coast Graffiti Action Toolkit

Graffiti prevention is a challenge for all communities including the Sunshine Coast.

The solution to the problem is not up to any one group or agency, but the responsibility of every person and organisation.

To support a shared response to the management of graffiti the Sunshine Coast Council provides this Graffiti Action Toolkit as a Resource tailored to help schools, businesses and the community understand, manage and prevent graffiti vandalism.

The Graffiti Action Toolkit presents an integrated approach to graffiti management applying three principles – **Report, Remove and Prevent** – to eradicate graffiti vandalism in our community.



An Australian Government Initiative



Drawn Together – Caloundra/Beerwah was a Sunshine Coast Council pilot program, funded under a grant from the Australian Government.

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Acknowledgements

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Graffiti Action Toolkit Structure



To find out what you can do, first select your group:

Schools
Business
Community

About Graffiti Action

Graffiti prevention is a challenge for all communities including the Sunshine Coast. The solution to the problem is not up to any one group or agency, but the responsibility of every person and organisation.

To support a shared response to graffiti management, the Sunshine Coast Council provides this Graffiti Action Toolkit as a Resource tailored to help all levels of the community understand, manage and prevent graffiti vandalism.

The Graffiti Action Toolkit presents an integrated approach to graffiti management applying three principles – **Report, Remove and Prevent** – to eradicate graffiti vandalism in our community.

Purpose of the Graffiti Action Toolkit

Graffiti vandalism is one of the crimes most visible to the community and it costs millions of dollars to Australia each year. The cost of graffiti vandalism is not only financial. Indirectly the cost to society includes environmental harm, community's perception of safety at a location, reduced civic pride and a potential decline in property value. Illegal graffiti has a significant impact on towns, cities and communities.

This Toolkit aims to assist Sunshine Coast communities in finding appropriate solutions to local issues. The resource contains a range of information and examples of 'good practice' in graffiti management and is designed for use by schools, community organisations, shop and property owners, small businesses and council.

What is graffiti vandalism?

The term 'graffiti vandalism' refers to defacing private and public property without consent from the property owner. Graffiti vandalism can take the form of writing, drawing or scratching onto surfaces using different implements such as paint, chalk, markers and stickers.

Graffiti is not homogeneous, there are many different types of graffiti and graffiti related activities including:

- **Tagger graffiti**
Notoriety, peer recognition, status, being seen in as many places as possible, an entry point into graffiti
- **Toilet/desk graffiti**
Participating in a public conversation or debate
- **Gang related graffiti**
Strategic and territorial, part of a wider lifestyle
- **Political and protest graffiti**
Communicating a view point or challenging the legitimacy of the current political order
- **Illegal graffiti murals**
Expression of creativity, aim to enhance public space but without property owner's permission.

The current social stereotype of a graffiti offender is that of a young male from low socio-economic background. However, preliminary research indicates the main offending age is between 12 to 25 years old from all socio-economic environments¹. The largest percentage of offenders are from mid to high-level income families with a median age of 15. This is supported by both national and international research.

¹ State Graffiti Taskforce, www.goodbyegrffiti.wa.gov.au, Western Australia, Accessed 10 October 2014

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What is the difference between urban art and graffiti vandalism?

It is important to distinguish between the terms urban art and graffiti vandalism and use them in the correct context. Defining these terms assists organisations by keeping language consistent and helps different agencies to stay on the same page. Throughout this document, the term 'graffiti' refers to illegal vandalism and the term 'urban art' refers to the legal artwork.

What is council doing?

Sunshine Coast Council has a zero tolerance for graffiti and a commitment to tackling the social and financial impacts that graffiti has on our community.

In 2012, the Sunshine Coast Council was successful in obtaining funding from the Commonwealth of Australia, Attorney-General's Department, under the *Proceeds of Crime Act 2002* to deliver the [Drawn Together Project](#).

This pilot project brought together community partners, community initiatives and existing graffiti strategies to build a holistic Graffiti Management Program and Community Graffiti Management Toolkit for the Sunshine Coast region.

Drawn Together was a place-based project for Caloundra and Beerwah. The project connected members of the community concerned about graffiti vandalism, young people and those at risk of engaging in illegal activity.

The project aimed to effect a cultural change in graffiti management on the Sunshine Coast. A change from stand-alone graffiti removal actions to an ongoing shared response supported by diversionary programs and a community toolkit.

For additional information see [Drawn Together Program](#).

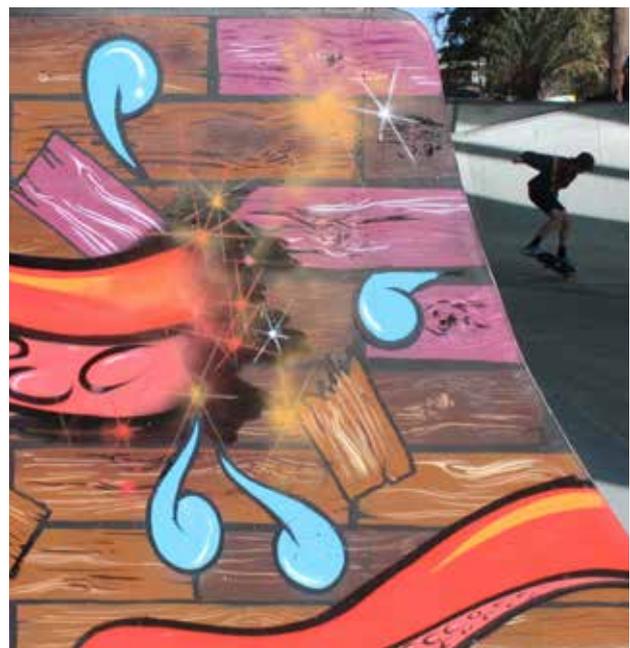
Community Service

Offenders may be ordered by a Queensland Court to complete community service (unpaid work). The offenders issued community service orders tend to be younger than those committed to prison terms and usually have committed less serious offences. These offenders are placed under supervision because the courts consider them at risk of becoming more serious offenders.

Community service projects are operated by not-for-profit organisations. They include environmental groups, schools, ambulance services, charities, meals-on-wheels, sporting clubs, local councils and many other organisations.

Voluntary supervisors oversee the offenders working on projects. Offenders, working one or two days a week and provide nearly one million hours of labour each year as reparation to local communities. For many, it is their first experience of voluntary work and some offenders continue this volunteer work after the completion of their orders.

For additional information see [Community Service program](#).



Drawn Together – Beerwah Skate Park

Drawn Together Program

In 2014 a team from The Old Ambulance Station, Nambour (managed by the Sunshine Coast Arts Industry Precinct Inc. (SCAIP)) was engaged by council to develop and deliver the Drawn Together Project, a graffiti management program for the Sunshine Coast region.

Drawn Together was a pilot, place-based project for Caloundra and Beerwah. The project connected members of the community concerned about graffiti vandalism, young people and those at risk of engaging in illegal activity.

The project aimed to effect a cultural change in graffiti management on the Sunshine Coast. A change from stand-alone graffiti removal actions to an ongoing shared response supported by diversionary programs and a community Toolkit.

The project was delivered in accordance with the Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles. CPTED is an approach to crime prevention that takes into account the relationship between the physical environment and the users of that environment.

The community crime-prevention approach has several key components, including:

- natural access control
- natural surveillance
- territoriality
- maintenance.



Drawn Together Project – Caloundra Transit Centre.

During the project the Youth Justice Centre and SCAIP formalised an agreement for a Graffiti Removal Program across the Sunshine Coast. This Agreement led to cleaning activities in Caloundra by young offenders and referred others to attend workshops at Beerwah.

A key outcome for the project was this Graffiti Action Toolkit which provides the community with information and resources to respond to graffiti vandalism and management.

This project aimed to address, promote and improve community safety and achieve numerous crime prevention outcomes by:

- reducing and preventing incidents of graffiti and wilful damage
- reducing fear and perception of crime within the community
- reducing incidents of anti-social behaviour by providing a suitable engagement and diversionary project
- increasing an awareness of crime prevention strategies
- developing and sustaining partnerships with local community stakeholders
- developing long and short-term crime prevention strategies
- action through education initiatives
- promoting good practice in graffiti management
- developing opportunities for partnership between community, including members at risk of becoming involved in risk-taking behaviours.

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Drawn Together Project – Caloundra and Beerwah
Delivered by The Old Ambulance Station (SCAIP).

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The project deliverables were:

- support crime prevention through a series of creative responses
- undertake graffiti clean-up and educational activities
- partner early intervention and diversionary activities
- develop a Community Graffiti Management Toolkit
- provide a project evaluation.

The project offered a series of diversionary activities to provide taggers and youth at risk with a replacement for the 'buzz' they get through graffiti vandalism.

A program of workshops for young people was run by professional artists. These workshops aimed to build the participants' skills in illustration, creativity, organisation and teamwork and, within a common interest group, provide a forum to discuss graffiti and art.

The project's goals were to promote the community responsibility for crime prevention and graffiti management and to direct the creative interest and skills, of young offenders and young people at risk, towards positive expressions and outlets.



Drawn Together Project – Beerwah Skate Park.

The project included several phases and resulted in a range of engaging outcomes including:

- a series of art workshops in Caloundra and Beerwah
- a series of graffiti clean-up sessions at Caloundra and Beerwah
- new artwork on new or existing surfaces at Caloundra and Beerwah
- community launch events as part of the Caloundra Fringe Festival and Glasshouse Country Festival program
- an exhibition of artist and participant artwork at the Old Ambulance Station, Nambour.



Drawn Together Project – Village Lane, Caloundra.

Community Service Program

Graffiti removal legislation was introduced as part of the *Criminal Law and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2013*.

The laws have increased the maximum penalty for graffiti crime. They also require offenders to spend time removing graffiti.

These graffiti removal laws apply when a young offender commits a wilful damage by a graffiti offence. In line with these laws, young offenders are held accountable by making them do unpaid graffiti removal work in the community. This provides a direct consequence for their offending.

Young graffiti offenders will be made to clean up graffiti via three program pathways:

- 1 mandatory court sentencing
- 2 police diversion
- 3 conferencing agreements.

Mandatory Court Sentencing

A court must make a graffiti removal order for young offenders if they are:

- aged 12 and over at the time of the offence,
- found guilty or plead guilty to a wilful damage by graffiti offence.

The young offender takes part in a graffiti removal program as part of their graffiti removal order.

Youth Justice Officers will organise the graffiti removal program.

Police Diversion

If a young graffiti offender admits guilt, a police officer may refer them to a graffiti removal program instead of bringing the matter before a court.

As part of the Youth Justice Graffiti Removal Program, the young offender must complete two hours of unpaid graffiti removal work.

The police may take further action if the young offender fails to complete the program. They may bring before a court the graffiti offence matter as well as the offence of failing to comply with a police direction.

Youth Justice Conference Agreements

If a police officer refers an offender to a Youth Justice conference following an admission of guilt, the conference agreement must include a graffiti removal program (similar to one ordered under a court sentenced graffiti removal order) unless the victim of the offence asks that the offence be dealt with in another lawful way. The agreement cannot be stricter than the sentence a court may order.

During the Drawn Together program the Youth Justice Centre, Mooloolaba and SCAIP Inc. formalised an agreement for a Graffiti Removal Program across the Sunshine Coast.

To find out about local youth offender graffiti removal programs contact your local [Youth Justice Centre](#).



Drawn Together Project – Youth justice clean-up, Caloundra.

Schools

Graffiti Management Requires a Shared Community Response

To support a shared response to graffiti management, the Sunshine Coast Council provides this Graffiti Action Toolkit as a resource tailored to help all levels of the community understand, manage and prevent graffiti vandalism.

The Graffiti Action Toolkit presents an integrated approach to graffiti management applying three principles – **Report, Remove and Prevent** – to eradicate graffiti vandalism in our schools and community.

Graffiti vandalism can be in many forms including:

- spraying, writing, drawing, marking or applying paint or another marking substance to a person's property without their consent
- scratching or etching a person's property without their consent.

Incidents of personalised graffiti directed at staff members or particular students can be distressing. This form of graffiti is usually committed by someone within the school environment.

Graffiti artists claim tags are art, but in most cases they are simply malicious damage to the building upon which they are placed.

Graffiti in schools should be dealt with in the same way as any other public or private space – the school community needs to work together and **Report, Remove and Prevent**, to eradicate graffiti vandalism in the school.

Report

Remove

Prevent

Report Graffiti Now

If you see suspicious activity or witness graffiti vandalism, please contact the police immediately by phoning [Policelink](#) on 131 444.

Things to do and remember:

- 1 **Quick removal**
Research has shown that the faster offending graffiti is removed, the less likelihood there is of repeat attacks.
- 2 **Photographing instances of graffiti**
The offending graffiti should be photographed for future reference. This can assist in identifying the graffitist.
- 3 **Keeping school staff informed**
Staff should be shown photographs of tags and made aware of the nature of graffiti. It is likely that the person placing graffiti on school buildings may be a student, in which case it is likely that their school bag or another personal item may also have their tag.
- 4 **Prevention through education**
Establish a program for students at risk of offending and /or refer students to community programs. Contact [council](#) to register your interest with council's Public Art Officer.

Business

Graffiti Management requires a Shared Community Response

To support a shared response to the graffiti management, Sunshine Coast Council provides this Graffiti Action Toolkit as a resource tailored to help property owners, small and large business operators and owners, understand, manage and prevent graffiti vandalism.

Graffiti vandalism can be in many forms including:

- spraying, writing, drawing, marking or applying paint or another marking substance to a person's property without their consent
- scratching or etching a person's property without their consent.

The Graffiti Action Toolkit presents an integrated approach to graffiti management applying three principles – **Report**, **Remove** and **Prevent** – to eradicate graffiti vandalism in our schools and community.

Incidents of graffiti on business property can take many forms and should be dealt with in the same way as any other public or private space – the business community needs to work together and **Report**, **Remove** and **Prevent**, to eradicate graffiti vandalism.

Report

Remove

Prevent

Report Graffiti Now

If you see suspicious activity or witness graffiti vandalism, please contact the police immediately by phoning [Policelink](#) on 131 444.

Things to do and remember:

- 1 **Quick removal**
Research has shown that the faster offending graffiti is removed, the less likelihood there is of repeat attacks.

Photographing instances of graffiti and report them

The offending graffiti should be photographed and reported. You can use your portable device including smart phones and tablets to report and upload images of graffiti. For more information on how to report graffiti, visit [Report](#) in this document.

- 2 **Speak to your neighbours**
Form an alliance with surrounding shop owners and operators and encourage them to **Report**, **Remove** and **Prevent**, to eradicate graffiti vandalism in your area.
- 3 **Prevention through education**
Consider participating in community graffiti management programs by providing a wall or series of walls to be painted. Contact [council](#) to register your interest with council's Public Art Officer.

Community

Graffiti management requires a shared community response

To support a shared response to the graffiti management the Sunshine Coast Council provides this Graffiti Action Toolkit as a resource tailored to help individuals and community organisations understand, manage and prevent graffiti vandalism.

Graffiti vandalism can be in many forms including:

- spraying, writing, drawing, marking or applying paint or another marking substance to a person's property without their consent
- scratching or etching a person's property without their consent.

The Graffiti Action Toolkit presents an integrated approach to graffiti management applying three principles – **Report**, **Remove** and **Prevent** – to eradicate graffiti vandalism in our schools and community.

Incidents of graffiti on private and community property can take many forms and should be dealt with in the same way as any other public or private space – neighbours and the community in general need to work together and **Report**, **Remove** and **Prevent**, to eradicate graffiti vandalism.

Report

Remove

Prevent

Report graffiti now

If you see suspicious activity or witness graffiti vandalism, please contact the police immediately by phoning [Policelink](#) on 131 444.

Things to do and remember:

- 1 **Quick removal**
Research has shown that the faster offending graffiti is removed, the less likelihood there is of repeat attacks.
- 2 **Photographing instances of graffiti and report them**
The offending graffiti should be photographed and reported. You can use your portable device including smart phones and tablets to report and upload images of graffiti. For more information on how to report graffiti, visit [Report](#) in this document.
- 3 **Speak to your neighbours**
Form an alliance with your neighbours and others and encourage them to **Report**, **Remove** and **Prevent**, to eradicate graffiti vandalism in your area.
- 3 **Prevention through education**
Consider participating in community graffiti management programs by providing a wall or series of walls to be painted. Contact [council](#) to register your interest with council's Public Art Officer.

Report

Report graffiti now

If you see suspicious activity or witness graffiti vandalism, please contact the police immediately by phoning [Policelink](#) on 131 444.

If the incident is happening now please contact Triple Zero (000) and advise Queensland Police.

Graffiti is vandalism and it impacts on our community both socially and financially. Graffiti that is not removed can attract more graffiti and other forms of vandalism. This can have a negative impact on feeling safe in the community, as well as affect business operation and property values in the area.

Council encourages the rapid removal of graffiti as one strategy to discourage further attacks. Rapid removal lessens the impact of graffiti which reduces the rewards to offenders.

Anyone can report acts of graffiti vandalism. If graffiti vandalism occurs you should report the incident as soon as possible.

Private or commercial property

If the incident is happening now please contact Triple Zero, 000 and advise Queensland Police. Otherwise please contact [Policelink](#) on 131 444 or report the matter to your local police station.

If safe to do so, take photographic evidence of the graffiti vandalism and provide it to Police when you make your report.

Public assets or community facilities

Council is committed to providing a coordinated, resourced and timely response to removing the graffiti from council owned assets across the region. To aid in providing a holistic approach to graffiti management, Council has Memorandum of Understanding's with other agencies for the removal of graffiti and litter from their assets.

To assist in providing a uniformed approach to graffiti removal, and to ensure the safety of the community, members of the public should not remove graffiti from community assets.

Sunshine Coast residents can help reduce graffiti on community assets by reporting it using any of the following methods:

- Reporting the vandalism to council's [customer service centre](#)
- Telephone council's Customer Service Centre 07 5475 7272
- Via e-mail: mail@sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au
- Connect online via [MyCouncil Services](#) and submit a [General Service Request](#) to report and upload images of graffiti
- Download the free *iCouncil* app from the [iTunes App Store](#) to report and upload images of graffiti.

Remove

Rapid graffiti removal is seen as best-practice in graffiti reduction as it diminishes the level of recognition and reward achieved by graffiti vandals. Prompt graffiti removal also prevents assets from appearing uncared for.

The Sunshine Coast Council has a rapid removal policy for Graffiti Management. If you see graffiti on Public Assets or Community Facilities, please DO NOT attempt to remove the graffiti yourself, but report the graffiti to [council](#).

For more information on how to report graffiti, visit [Report](#) in this document.

Overall the accepted best approach to managing graffiti vandalism is to encourage the owners of assets to remove graffiti as soon as possible, with the preferred target being within 48 hours (from the time of reporting), or immediately if the graffiti is racist or obscene.

Many graffiti removal efforts can leave surfaces looking as bad or worse than before the work began. It is important to identify the surface type and substance to be removed i.e. brick, stone, concrete, aluminium, utility boxes, poles, street signs, bus shelters, pavement, wood, and glass are just some of the materials and infrastructure that can be vandalised with graffiti. These surfaces can be smooth or textured. Some are painted while others are unprotected.

While most graffiti is applied with spray paint, graffiti vandals also use markers, adhesives (stickers), shoe polish, lip stick, stencils, and etching products. The length of time graffiti has been on a surface also impacts how easily it can be removed.

Depending on the substance to be removed, each surface requires or responds better to a particular method.

Below is a graffiti removal chart with suggestions on how to make a start. The information is not to be treated as complete authority on how to undertake graffiti removal and where a person is uncertain of the surface to be repaired or the appropriate action to be taken then professional advice should be sought. See also [Select a removal method](#).

Surface/graffiti type	Removal of Spray Paint and Similar Materials (markers, shoe polish, lip stick, stencils, etc.)
Aluminium, Fiberglass	Paint remover (sparingly). Rinse with water.
Glass	Razor blade to scrape off. Can also use paint thinner.
Masonry (includes brick, marble, stone, tile, granite, and concrete)	Power washing with low pressure. Sand or soda blasting (may create a shadow). Paint remover or chemical graffiti remover/solvent applied with brush and rinse with water. Paint over.
Metal	Paint thinner or chemical graffiti remover/solvent and rub with steel wool or sandpaper and rinse. Power washing. Paint over.
Pavement	Chemical remover and power washing. Soda blasting.
Street Signs	Chemical remover (make sure it does not remove reflective coating).
Stucco	Paint remover/chemical remover and rinse with pressure wash. Paint over.
Utility Boxes	Chemical remover with cloth or scrubber.
Vinyl Siding	Chemical solvents sparingly as they may remove the vinyl coating. Repaint with primer first.
Wood	On painted, unweathered wood can try mineral spirits. Power washing with low pressure. Sanding. Repainting.
Etching	Etching may be repairable on some glass (seek out a professional). Replace glass.
Adhesives	Scrape away as much of the adhesive as possible. Use nail polish remover or acetone-based cleaner to remove remaining residue. Be aware that acetone-based solvents can soften plastics.

Select a removal method

Care should be taken at all times to ensure adequate safety measures (such as protective clothing – gloves, safety goggles, etc) are employed when attempting to [remove graffiti](#) with the methods described.

Except for paint, most graffiti removers are not available at local home improvement, hardware, or paint stores. They are specialty industrial products and are often sold in bulk to cities, counties, or professional graffiti removal companies. Graffiti removers that may be sold in retail outlets are likely to be for small clean-up tasks.



Following are the three most common removal methods:

- 1 Paint-out**
Paint is used to cover over graffiti on smooth, painted surfaces. It is fairly low cost (ranging from donated paint to 6 cents per square foot), and paint is a relatively safe product compared to removing graffiti with some chemical solvents.

For further information see [Paint-out](#).

- 2 Chemical removers**
Chemical removers vary, but typically the stronger the solvent, the faster it will dissolve or remove paint. In some cases, stronger solvents may require more safety consideration or personal protection. A solvent or cleaner that is poorly matched to a particular construction material, however, may create aesthetically unappealing results. Successful product selection is critical.

For small jobs, such as removing spray paint and markers from light poles and utility boxes, use a chemical removal product with a cloth and/or scrubber. Easy and safe one-time use products, similar to 'handi-wipes' are also available. Larger jobs will require an industrial product and may require professional application.

For further information see [Chemical removers](#).

- 3 Pressure washing**
Pressure washing equipment uses water or water in combination with a solvent to remove graffiti from a surface. A solvent may first be applied and then the surface is washed with pressurised water. Sometimes a blasting medium, such as baking soda, is used to remove graffiti. While pressure washing is effective, it can wear down the surface being treated.

For further information see [Pressure washing](#).

Note

Protective coatings

There are two types of protective coatings, sacrificial and non-sacrificial or permanent. Sacrificial coatings are protective, but come off when graffiti is removed and must be reapplied. Non-sacrificial or permanent anti-graffiti coatings are unaffected by the graffiti removal process and remain on the surface.

While some paint products have similar properties to anti-graffiti coatings, that is not their intended purpose and they are not likely to be marketed for that use.

For further information see [Protective coatings](#).

Paint-out

Use the following guidelines for an effective paint-out:

- Removing graffiti by painting new random square blocks provides graffiti writers with a new, bright canvas.
- Improper paint selection may also lead to bleed-through of graffiti due to poor durability
- When painting over graffiti, colour match the paint to the original surface colour. If this cannot be done, repaint the entire surface.
- If limited by time and/or paint, paint the entire surface from ground level up to a certain height (making sure that the line of paint is clean and straight).

Prepare the surface

Painting over a surface that is not properly prepared may lead to peeling and cracking of paint.

Ensure appropriate surface preparation before painting over any graffiti:

- Clean the surface of any dust, dirt, grease or oils.
- Apply paint only to a dry surface.
- Make sure the surface is dull. To achieve this, sanding may be necessary.
- Ensure the surface is sound before painting over it. Check for cracks, rust, water damage, or other signs that indicate the surface is in poor condition.

Select the correct paint

Poor paint selection and repeated paint-outs have the potential to cause surface damage, allowing for structural deterioration.

When painting over surfaces like wood, concrete, block wall, and brick choose 'breathable' paint, such as acrylic latex (i.e. paint manufactured so that moisture can pass through the product and escape from inside the surface).

Multiple coats of paint on the same area can also prevent surface pores from breathing, causing structural and maintenance problems. Painting over a surface that already has several coats of paint may require using a pressure washer or scraping and sanding to properly prepare it for a new coat of paint. Consider applying a protective coating after 2-3 paint-outs to prevent the need for repainting.

Ensure proper clean-up

Remember to use a drop cloth when painting to avoid dripping large amounts of paint on the footpath and other areas around the site. Also, promptly clean or properly dispose of equipment such as cleaning brushes, rollers, and buckets.

It is often illegal and always environmentally irresponsible to allow dirty cleaning water into the sewer systems or into the soil. Disposal method will likely vary depending on the amount and type of material requiring disposal (water, solvents, other materials, paint, etc.). Check with local environmental or solid waste services about disposal options, and be sure to read the product label recommendations for disposal.

Return to [Select a removal method](#).

Chemical removers

Be careful to read and understand all safety precautions prior to using any chemical removers. Significant damage and/or injury can occur if used improperly.

There are five basic types of chemical graffiti removers, which come in a variety of forms including gels, creams, and liquids:

- solvents containing chlorinated hydrocarbons
- solvents containing monoglycol ethers and glycol acetates
- solvents containing diglycol ethers
- solvents containing polar solvents
- solvents containing miscellaneous solvents.

When using any chemical remover, keep in mind who will be using the product, the safety precautions to follow, and any training required for the product user.

Secure a safety data sheet (SDS) from the distributor of any hazardous chemical. The SDS will show chemical make-up and any health and safety risks associated with use. A SDS is a requirement of the Work Health and Safety Regulations (WHS Regulations).

Four additional factors should be considered prior to purchase of a product:

- 1 **Specialised equipment**
When working with various chemical solvents, skin and eye protection is necessary. Safety goggles, rubber gloves, and protective clothing should always be worn.
- 2 **Adequate ventilation is required when using many chemicals**
A respirator that complies with the relevant Australian Standard should be worn by each person involved.
- 3 **Environmental considerations**
VOC (volatile organic compound) refers to the level of fumes emitted into the air. When working with chemical removers, VOCs should be kept as low as possible, and proper clean-up and disposal is critical.
The potential for damaging environmental impacts is high when using and disposing of chemicals.
- 4 **Accessibility to the wall or surface**
Walls located in precarious places, that are difficult to get to, or are enclosed increase the potential dangers of working with chemical removers. In such circumstances, these products should not be considered.

Return to [Select a removal method](#).

Pressure Washing

Be careful to read and understand all safety precautions prior to using any pressure washing equipment. Significant damage and/or injury can occur if used improperly.

Pressure washing a surface to remove graffiti can be accomplished with three types of washers:

- 1 Pressure washers
- 2 Power washers
- 3 Jet washers.

There are also additives used with pressure washing that enhances graffiti removal.

For further information see [Alternative blasting media](#).

Each is affected by a combination of factors:

- **Pressure rating**
This refers to the intensity of the water stream. General cleaning usually requires medium to high pressure (500-1500 psi).
- **Water flow rate**
This refers to the supply of water to the spray head, and determines the impact force of the spray just as much as the pressure rating.
- **Spray nozzle design**
Nozzle design determines the shape of the spray and has a strong bearing on the success of the cleaning process. A fan-type nozzle providing a spray fan angle of 15-50 degrees is considered best for graffiti removal and general surface cleaning. Larger angles reduce spray impact but increase area coverage, while a 0 degree pencil jet produces an intense impact harmful to soft or crumbly masonry and wood surfaces.
- **Water temperature**
Heated water is useful for graffiti removal from metal surfaces where expansion of the metal helps break the bond. Heated water used in combination with solvents, may reduce their removal effectiveness.
- **Chemical or abrasive additives introduced into the stream**
Apply the chemical product first. Agitate surface and allow for proper dwell time. Follow these two steps with water blasting. When combining chemical removers with water, ensure that the chemical is effectively diluted (neutralised).
- **Cleaning angle**
It is recommended that the graffiti to be removed be approached at a steep angle (as close to the wall with the spray wand as possible) to undercut the graffiti as much as possible. This will allow it to peel from the surface. Coming straight at the graffiti to be removed may drive it further into the surface.
- **Precautions**
Never use a power washer on glass. The pressure will break it. Never aim a power washer at another person or animal.

Return to [Select a removal method](#).

Alternative blasting media

Be careful to read and understand all safety precautions prior to using any blasting equipment. Significant damage and/or injury can occur if used improperly.

During the past decade, alternatives to conventional sandblasting have evolved that are effective and environmentally friendly:

- **Ground walnut shells**

Ground walnut shells offered one of the first viable options to silica sand. The walnut shell is softer than sand and less abrasive to walls and structures. Upon impact, most walnut shell particles shatter into fine dust, minimising surface damage. The downside is the increased cost and reduced speed of removal.

- **Baking soda crystals**

Armex technology (baking soda) emerged shortly after use of ground walnut shells. The Armex medium is softer than both sand and walnut shells, and, in many cases, it is softer than the building materials being cleaned. Upon impact the baking soda crystal shatters to a dust. Depending on the availability of water with the blasting equipment used, the soda crystal dust is dissolved and rinsed into the drainage system as a non-toxic residue.

Soda crystals, although more expensive, use less volume by weight per minute of operation and take less than 5% of the clean-up time than conventional sandblasting. Soda crystals have been combined with both air and water delivery equipment with preferences for each depending on the application used. This type of blast method, however, is not designed for repeated use as some surface damage is done after each blast. Consider an anti-graffiti protective coating as soon as possible to eliminate blasting damage.

- **Dry ice**

Dry ice pellets have recently been introduced as a blast medium. Here the pellets are discharged via an air delivery system, disintegrating on impact. Both the defacement of paint residue and the dry ice are shattered, with the dry ice returning to the atmosphere, and the paint pulverised to a size that is undetectable around the work vicinity.

Dry ice is available in different size pellets.

The size of the pellet containers and the need for specialised blasting equipment limit this method to cleaning large areas of graffiti.

The cost for using the dry ice pellet method is much higher than traditional blasting. When faced with removing graffiti from a historic building, however, costs may not be the primary consideration.

Return to [Select a removal method](#).

Protective coatings

Two types of protective surface coatings are currently available – sacrificial coatings and non-sacrificial surface treatments.

Each is available in clear or pigmented form. A clear coating maintains the natural appearance of the substrate. These are available in a range of gloss levels to suit the original finish. Pigmented coatings perform the dual function of obliterating existing graffiti and providing a surface from which graffiti may readily be removed.

Both sacrificial and non-sacrificial coatings can be applied by brush, roller and/or spray. Brushing is the simplest means of application. Coatings can be applied faster with rollers. Both of these methods maintain a low solvent release rate (allowing for interior surface application). Most manufacturers, however, encourage the spray technique. It is significantly faster, but the rate of solvent vapour release is much higher, preventing its use in poorly ventilated areas.

Sacrificial

A sacrificial coating is a removable, protective film that acts as a barrier to defacement materials. It is often referred to as a catcher-coat, as it catches would-be defacement inks, dyes, and resins and prevents surface penetration.

There are currently two types of sacrificial coatings: a solvent-based silicone/wax coating and a water-based polysaccharide coating. Be sure to select the appropriate coating and use high-quality products to avoid yellowing.

Surface preparation for either type is critical. All surfaces need some form of cleaning to remove dust, dirt, grease, or other contaminants before coating. Smooth hard surfaces need thorough abrasion to promote good adhesion. Poor adhesion can reduce the durability of the coating or cause delamination in the event of a fire (allowing flames to spread rapidly across the coated surface).

Typically, sacrificial coatings are not toxic, and, once in place, they often eliminate the need for a solvent or chemical graffiti remover in subsequent graffiti clean-ups.

Non-sacrificial

Non-sacrificial coatings are basically chemical resistant paints. They allow solvent blends to dissolve defacement paints, inks, and dyes, while leaving the non-sacrificial paint or coating unaffected by the cleaning or removal process. Most of these hard, impervious anti-graffiti coatings are polyurethane resin systems.

Recently, two-component aliphatic-polyurethane water-based coatings have become popular. These products often have 5-10 year warranties, regardless of the number of cleanings. The porosity of the surface determines cost.

Manufacturers have enhanced these coatings by adding slip additives, which cause defacement paints to 'crawl' or loosely adhere to the protective silicone, polyethylene or Teflon. The graffiti is unable to adhere to these additives so that, if it sticks at all, the graffiti can be easily removed.

When removing graffiti from a surface coated with a non-sacrificial product, obtain a chemical remover (this can often be purchased by the manufacturer of the protective coating), and spray on defaced surface, agitating slightly and allowing proper dwell time. Follow this with water application. Small surfaces can be cleaned with water-filled spray bottles. Larger surfaces, however, may require the use of a water blaster (keep pressure under 1500 psi).

In conclusion – always consider consulting your local government (council) for additional information regarding graffiti management.

Prevent

To step up graffiti prevention efforts, consider the following:

- **Keep up the neighbourhood**
Make every effort to keep the appearance of a neighbourhood clean and neat. Remove rubbish, fix broken fences, trim landscape, and ensure all lighting is working properly. An exterior appearance that suggests apathy and neglect attracts vandals.
- **Remove graffiti quickly**
Rapid removal of graffiti is an effective prevention tool. Data shows that removal within 24 to 48 hours results in a nearly zero rate of recurrence. Rapid removal is credited for the reduction in graffiti in communities.
- **Encourage reporting**
Anyone can report acts of graffiti vandalism against public assets, community facilities or private property. If graffiti vandalism occurs you should report the incident as soon as possible. For more information on how to report graffiti, visit [Report](#) in this document.
- **Encourage creativity**
Use a community mural to restore a graffiti hot-spot wall. Graffiti vandals only occasionally tag a mural, and they are a great way to get the community involved in graffiti prevention. Murals can involve local artists, youth and community volunteers and property owners.
For further information see [Creative response](#).

Prevention through design

Make changes to build-in graffiti prevention:

- Incorporate natural deterrents, such as landscaping. Shrubs, thorny plants and vines will effectively restrict vandal access.
- Plan or add lighting to promote natural surveillance.
- Use fences, controlled entrance and exits, rails, and other barriers that discourage through traffic.
- Limit access to roofs by moving bins and other objects away from walls and covering downpipes to prevent vandals from climbing them.

Use graffiti resistant surfaces to vandal-proof targeted areas:

- Graffiti resistant materials or coatings.
- Sacrificial coatings, which allow graffiti to be washed off, must be re-applied after each graffiti clean-up.
- Textured surfaces, which are less attractive to graffiti vandals.
- Dark-coloured or colourful surfaces; neither of these provide a good canvas for a graffiti vandal.

For additional information see [Protective coatings](#).

Prevention through design

Graffiti prevention is a challenge for all communities. Graffiti can be reduced and even prevented through improved landscaping, lighting, early intervention programs, offender community service programs and community partnerships with local governments and the Queensland Police Service.

Improved landscaping

It is well known that crime can be prevented through improvements in 'environmental design'. Removing access by planting vegetation in front of walls or fences is a great way to reduce opportunities to graffiti public property. The use of easy to clean surfaces will assist with rapid removal of any unwanted graffiti and deters would be offenders.

Improved lighting

Offenders dislike well lit areas. There is a bigger chance of being spotted and caught after being seen by a member of the community in the process of committing an offence. Crime in well-lit areas is not common. Sensor lighting or motion detected lighting that fills a dark space assists with preventing graffiti application.

Early intervention programs

Many local governments provide staff to speak with youth and adults about graffiti crimes and the impact they have on the community. Some local governments also facilitate community art and murals as part of urban art features. These strategies decrease the opportunities for would be offenders.



Creative response

Artist or creative responses can be an effective graffiti prevention strategy, if undertaken at a graffiti hotspot location with appropriate approvals and community consultation.

Unlike graffiti vandalism, 'urban art' is where permission to mark the surface has been granted by the owner of the property. Urban art projects are often completed through local councils, schools, businesses and not for profit organisations. State Government agencies and large corporations also participate in urban art projects, recognising that when undertaken properly, art can play an important role in our community.

These creative responses can be used as a graffiti prevention strategy, often most effective at hotspot locations.

Other benefits of undertaking art projects may include:

- the development of artistic skills in legal settings
- enhance public spaces through exciting and innovative artworks
- improve the rapport between the artists and community
- enhance the participant knowledge on the issues surrounding graffiti vandalism and associated consequences.

The [Sunshine Coast Drawn Together Program](#) is an example of a local creative response.

Community murals

The benefits of commissioned or community murals are many. Not only do they beautify and enhance the urban environment they can help:

- prevent graffiti vandalism
- foster community partnerships and pride
- boost the local economy.

It is worth noting when undertaking an urban art project to avoid lettering in the design. Lettering is very prominent with graffiti vandals and at times have been known to integrate their 'tag' into artworks. It is believed that this reinforces the notoriety aspect of tagging and is something that should be discouraged.

For further information see [Guide to creating a mural](#).



Guide to creating a mural

This guide aims to assist artists, community organisations, business and property owners and arts and heritage organisations by recommending best practices in mural production.

The guide is to be used after consultation with council's Public Art Officer.

Roles

- **Property owner**
The property owner (be it private or council) provides the surface for the mural. It is the property owner's responsibility to be familiar with regulations and procedures prior to commissioning a mural.
- **Artist**
The artist is the communicator, who is engaged to depict a particular style and body of information. The artist can work alone or lead a community group in the development of a mural.

Planning phases for creating a mural

Implementation phase

- 1 Confirm scope, budget and materials for project
- 2 Ensure funding is in place and determine a pay schedule
- 3 Create a timeline
- 4 Assess conservation needs
- 5 Ensure compliance to local laws and regulations
- 6 Write and sign a contract with the property owner and/or artist
- 7 Obtain appropriate insurance
- 8 Purchase materials and arrange for equipment hire
- 9 Decide which method will be used to install the image to the wall
- 10 Engage the community through consultation/hands-on involvement, and/or workshops
- 11 Arrange for publicity and a launch event.

Installation phase

- 1 Document site before, during and after installation
- 2 Prepare and clean the surface
- 3 Create the mural adhering to the appropriate safety precautions
- 4 Provide updates to the property owner and council
- 5 Schedule an inspection of the final painted/installed mural
- 6 Clean up.

Evaluation/completion phase

- 1 Final photographs should be taken and documented into an archive maintained by the council.
- 2 Maintenance requirements (e.g. paint colours) should be recorded
- 3 The artist's contact info should be recorded and kept up-to-date
- 4 Public launch of mural (press and community event)
- 5 Inspect routinely for maintenance needs.

Conservation and maintenance

- Typically the person/organisation who commissioned the piece is responsible for its maintenance. The contract should clearly outline who is in charge of maintaining the work and who will provide funding for maintenance.
- If the commissioner of the mural is to be left in charge it is the artist's responsibility to update their contact information for future assistance. If the artist cannot be reached, the commissioner is typically permitted to take action for the repair and maintenance.

Additional information

Also consider the following information during planning and implementation:

- [Artistic process](#)
- [Selecting an artist](#)
- [Budget](#)
- [Payment schedule](#)
- [Identification](#)
- [Contracts and legal issues](#)

Artistic process

Community arts process for mural art

Community art involves collaboration between a professional artist and a community/cultural group. This process involves the community in the artistic process whether through artist selection, project conceptualisation, or actually having a hand in its creation.

Community arts project

An artist leads/facilitates a community in the conceptualisation and creation of a mural. These types of projects are very good in breaking boundaries, team-building, increasing creative capacity, and building ownership of a community space.

- Ensure that the artist chosen for these types of projects has experience with the community group, is patient, flexible, can communicate clearly with others, can facilitate the creative process of a group (small or large), has team-building and motivational skills and can negotiate within the team dynamics. An arts education background is an asset.
- Educational components around painting techniques, historical aspects of the community etc. are also a key component of this type of project.
- A project of this nature may take several weeks to months of planning before the actual mural production begins.

Commissioned project

Commissioning an artist for the project promotes artistic excellence and usually involves a competitive process.

- A professional artist is paid to conceptualise and create the work of art.
- Once designs have been approved the creation of the work can commence.
- The community gets involved in the selection of the artist and should be consulted in the concepts and themes represented in the mural.

Direct commission project

A property owner may approach an artist or invite artists on his or her own or vice versa. At a minimum the following should be considered:

- Prepare and have signed a contract that clarifies roles and responsibilities
- Require an artist resume and examples of recent work.

Selecting an artist

Call to Artists

A Call to Artists reaches a varied and broader artist base and provides opportunities to all.

- A notice should be posted wherever it is attainable to artists; consider your community newspapers to target a smaller community, or an electronic bulletin board that artists reference.
- Allow at least a month from the time you post the notice to the submission date.

Budget

The budget is conditional on many things, including quality, size and location. Components include:

- Artist fees
- Mural materials
- Wall preparation
- Installation (equipment and fees)
- Applicable permit fees
- Liability insurance – consider time frame of coverage from initial creation of mural to end of installation
- Provision for ongoing maintenance costs
- Publicity (may include a planned launch with an opening reception).

Payment schedule

The payment schedule should be clearly outlined in the contract. Most of the expenses will be incurred prior to the start of work. The artist should be given at least enough money to cover these costs:

- 40% upon signing the contract
- 30% during the Installation phase
- 20% upon completion of the mural
- 10% after inspection.

Return to [Guide to creating a mural](#).

Identification

When the mural has been finished the artist(s) should sign their work. This could range from a simple painted signature to an interpretive label or plaque. Signage should include:

- Artist name(s)
- Title of the work
- Date of the work.

Contracts and legal issues

Contracts for a mural should include the following:

- Outline roles and responsibilities of all parties involved. For example, who is responsible for installation, conservation, clean up, storage, and maintenance
- A description of the artwork, design, location and anticipated lifespan
- A timeline outlining how long the project will take
- Payment Schedule
- Liability insurance
- Ownership/copyright
- Maintenance requirements and responsibility
- Artist moral and copyrights.

Queensland law

- In Queensland it is against the law for anyone to sell a spray to a person under 18. If they do, they may face a fine.

A shop assistant can ask for identification for proof of age. If proof of age is not provided the shop assistant can refuse the sale.

- In Queensland it is against the law for anyone under the age of 18 to carry a graffiti tool such as a spray can, or anything used to make an etching, like a pocket knife or a nail.

It is also against the law to have any graffiti tool that has been used for illegal graffiti or that the police think was or will be used for illegal graffiti.

Legal graffiti walls on the Sunshine Coast

- Currently the Sunshine Coast Council does NOT have or manage any legal graffiti walls in the local government area. Any person found to be placing graffiti on a public asset without council's written consent is committing a crime and will be reported to the Queensland Police Service.
- Council discourages property owners providing blank walls for graffiti tagging. Tagged walls can become unsightly and adds to the perception that the location is unsafe, reduces civic pride and can have the potential to negatively impact on property values.

Safety precautions

- Make sure that the worksite is safe for the public and that artists are familiar with required materials, protection techniques and safety equipment.

Insurance

Multiple parties are involved when producing a mural. To protect these individuals, insurance should be obtained:

- If you are an artist you should obtain personal accident injury insurance.
- If you are the organisation or private business managing the project you should have third party liability insurance.
- If the work is commissioned by a community association.
- If volunteer labour is used – a volunteer waiver form should be signed by all participants.

Return to [Guide to creating a mural](#).



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