

fitzroyresidents.org.au
@fitzroyresidents.org.au

fitzroy residents' association

Established in 1969 to promote, protect and enhance residential amenity

Endorsement of the Graffiti Management Framework 2020 – 2022

FRA Submission (please see page 3&4 for FRA Proposals)

Council is aware that within our membership, within Fitzroy and across the municipality , there is considerable concern about graffiti and the FRA receives frequent feedback on this issue.

The recent graffiti attack on the Royal Exhibition Building (May 16 2020) highlights the issue faced by Yarra residents on a daily basis where the acts and perpetrators of vandalism are becoming more bold and brazen requiring a 'whole of community' response. The FRA believes that the new Graffiti Management Strategy 2020-2022 is starting to address the 'whole of community' response. Given this, there is much more work to do.

In July 2019, when Council requested that the presented strategy was to be reworked, the FRA had been heavily involved in the Yarra Council Graffiti Assessment Strategy. The FRA had been assigned Area 6; Johnson St, Brunswick St, Greeves St, Fitzroy St and Victoria St. This study commenced in June 2018.

This longitudinal study has reinforced the following;

- 1) that graffiti detracts from the areas in question and promotes further vandalism and anti-social behavior,
- 2) that quick removal is the most cost effective and efficient means of dealing with the issue,
- 3) that effective management of the issue is managed through community awareness and education, private resident removal and a level of Council support that is supplementary, and
- 4) the need for new and improved methods of prevention and management through paint treatments, green walls and lighting.

FRA Purpose:

The Fitzroy Residents' Association (FRA) has a core purpose to keep Fitzroy liveable. Our mission statement is to promote, protect and enhance residential amenity.

The FRA sees the issue of graffiti control and management as a key plank in supporting residential amenity in much the same way as garbage collection and hard waste removal.

The FRA's position with respect to graffiti control and management is informed by the current state legislation.

Graffiti Protection Act (Victoria 2007)

In the State of Victoria, it is unlawful to:

Create graffiti on property if the graffiti is visible from a public place, unless you have the owner's consent,

Create offensive graffiti that is visible from a public place if that graffiti would offend a reasonable person, and

Stick or post any kind of signs, poster, sticker, paper on any part of building, wall, vehicle, structure or a tree, unless you first get the permission of the owner.

Strategy History

In 2014, Council decided that private residence support for graffiti removal was being withdrawn and that focus would be provided on commercial strips and council property. This approach resulted in widespread community disapproval. A series of extensive community consultation sessions were held and the creation of the municipality-wide Graffiti Assessment Strategy Study, which involved community participation and assigned area management/surveillance. The FRA fully participated in this study.

Since 2014, the Fitzroy area has degraded further in terms of graffiti/tagging, so much so that above ground graffiti/tagging is now becoming the 'new' norm. Action needs to be taken that is based on a 'whole of community' approach. Given this, the FRA is fully supportive of the proposed changes in the new strategy, Graffiti Management Strategy 2020-2022.

Budget Allocation

The FRA acknowledges that the annual spend on graffiti management is significant at approx \$800K per annum. The FRA also believes that providing removal services to all ratepayers as essential.

The Graffiti Assessment Strategy undertaken and led by Mr Joe Agostino was a longitudinal study on graffiti frequency, removal and methods to alleviate/lessen the issue. This study has provided insight into moving this issue forward within the municipality and is based on quantitative fact. As a result, the efficiencies highlighted and demonstrated in terms of

removal and the resultant cost have been captured in the new strategy, Graffiti Management Strategy 2020-2022.

The FRA full supports the new strategy and the changes proposed.

FRA Position: Graffiti Management Strategy 2020 - 2022

The FRA's response to the Graffiti Management Strategy 2020 – 2022 is in support of the strategic actions outlined in the various sections and key result areas (KRA's). We believe that this strategy is an improvement on the prior strategy, but there is still more to do.

4.1.1.2 Private Property

We support the proposal where in addition to resident education, utilisation of different surface treatments, and private resident removal (owner occupied and rental property) , that Council will support this programme with two removal services per annum to properties outside of High Prominence Zones. Thus, providing a level of 'umbrella' protection to our heritage sensitive municipality.

This removal service is to apply to prominent walls adjoining street paths/streets, parks and does not include 'nigh-soil' laneways. The exception is where a laneway is a major thoroughfare for residents.

We believe that this proposal is based on solid insight and financial analysis via the extensive community driven graffiti management trials. This recommendation in our opinion is measured, realistic, community responsive and most of all budget responsible. **Council is to be congratulated for this strategy inclusion.**

Heritage Overlays and the World Heritage Area

Our municipality contains significant built heritage, in fact 70% of Fitzroy is subject to heritage overlay and contains a large section of the Royal Exhibition Building precinct. We are supportive of the approach proposed in terms of heritage protection with respect to graffiti management.

We support the resident facility whereby advice and guidance will be provided to residents by Council to undertake their own graffiti removal combined with the removal service provided by Council that conforms to heritage management 'Best Practice'.

Again, Council is to be congratulated for considering heritage sensitivity within this strategy.

In response to the strategy KRA's, we wish to highlight the following in terms of FRA support;

*KRA 1.10 : Council will explore the potential for a fee for service graffiti removal service for residential property outside of high prominence zones beyond the 2 allowable removal per annum by June 2021,

*KRA 1.15 : Investigate the feasibility of entrepreneurial and innovative solutions/enterprises for removal and treatments of graffiti and tagging eg : fee for service.

and

* KRA 3.10 : Test the VANDALTRAK system and the state based Graffiti Reporting System. The FRA fully supports the development, roll-out and community education programme that will make this tool successful.

FRA Proposals:

1. With respect to Graffiti on Second Storey Surfaces, Graffiti Management Strategy, 2020-2022, the FRA would like to see the following considered and adopted in the future;

***Graffiti on Second Storey Surfaces**

Council has placed considerable focus in past year's on 'high streets'. With this, the vandals have moved above street level detracting from the 'look and feel' of these high streets.

We encourage Council to engage with property owners to;

- a) Secure their premise from trespass,
- b) Install security devices (where possible),
- c) Educate their above street tenants regarding their responsibilities, and
- d) Issue notices to address and fix graffiti on the premise which is particularly important where the property is subject to heritage protections and overlays.

2. We encourage greater commitment from building owners and developers who apply for a planning and / or building permit be required to secure their site from graffiti. In NSW, a planning condition is that the owner/manager is responsible for the removal of all graffiti within 48 hours of its application.

3. With a 'whole of community' approach being essential we encourage changes to Local Law Clause 41 / Unsightly Land 41.1 ; 'The owner of any land must not cause or allow the land to be kept in a condition which is unsightly or detrimental to the amenity of the neighbourhood.' The law should be extended to include buildings and a requirement to remove graffiti.

4. Planning approvals should consistently include a condition along the lines of, 'Before a building is occupied, any wall located on a boundary facing the public realm must be treated with a graffiti-proof finish to the satisfaction of the responsible authority'.

FRA Recommendation:

The FRA urges Council to adopt this 'whole of community approach' that this strategy is designed to address in managing graffiti/vandalism. We believe that the strategy proposed will reinstitute an equal and opposite force to unwanted vandalism in the municipality, in short, create an equilibrium. Please approve the strategy in full.

In closing, the FRA wishes to thank, Mr Joe Agostino for his leadership, persistence and dedication with this strategy and Mr Chris Leivers. We believe that this strategy (although improvements could still be made) is now community, heritage responsive and budget responsible.

Brad Reynolds
Fitzroy Residents Association – Committee Member
May 18 2020