

Death threats may backfire

By Alison Noonan [Cranbourne News](#). 2004.

GANG members are risking their lives to make graffiti death threats on the tracks at Merinda Park Railway Station.

The number 187, which is frequently used in gang graffiti around the United States, is clearly visible from the platform on the inside of the rail corridors.

The number 187 is the California Penal Code for homicide and indicates a threat to kill.

Members of Residents Against Graffiti Everywhere (RAGE) and Cranbourne North resident Steve Beardon said young people were placing themselves in danger by tagging the rail corridors and using train tracks as an escape route.

“Gangs cross out local graffiti by criminal gangs marking their turf, they spray 187 and then their gang graffiti tag.”

“When 187 is used in graffiti it is a challenge to rival crews that another criminal gang is challenging for their turf.

“This is a big issue,” he said.

Mr Beardon said he believed there was a strong need for council by-laws officers, police and transit police to patrol the station to create a safer and more user friendly environment.

A Connex spokesman said Merinda Park was one of 20 stations in the metropolitan region to receive a greater daily staff presence and was installed with passenger assistance buttons and CCTV surveillance cameras.

“Authorised officers visit Merinda Park on a daily basis. The officers are deployed to attend the station at different times throughout the day to ensure that, whilst providing a uniformed presence, attendance times are not routine and therefore harder to predict by potential loiterers,” he said.

The spokesman said the station had recently been installed with a safety zone which has improved lighting and immediate access to an emergency button.

“Deterrent music, a successful safety initiative which is currently being rolled out across the network, will be operating at Merinda Park within the next week or so.

“Connex works closely with Victoria Police, Transit Safety Division mapping trends on incidents which enable greater efficiency of staff deployment.

“Concerns involving youth are not isolated to Merinda Park Station and we are happy to continue working with local authorities to tackle this community issue,” he said.

The City of Casey’s manager of community safety Brendan Fitzsimmons said it was now possible for residents to report graffiti via email directly to the council’s contractor.

“There are several people in the community who are very active in reporting graffiti. “To enable them to report graffiti more efficiently, instead of having to spend a good deal of time on the free call number reporting each location and the call operator having to record the details, it is now possible for graffiti to be reported by email directly to the contractor,” he said.

The new email address to report graffiti in Casey is casey@ums.com.au