

Jail graffitists says council

CASEY Council has endorsed a draft Bill that could see graffiti vandals jailed for two years. Released by Victoria's Police Minister Tim Holding in October, the Bill, would also give police the power to search people and seize their spray cans without a warrant. Community Safety manager Caroline Bell said the Bill would provide a consistent statewide approach to graffiti management and prevention and send a clear message to the community that graffiti was an illegal activity. "It's important that council actively encourage the State Government to adopt the proposed anti-graffiti legislation to support local government authorities in the prevention and removal of illegal graffiti," she said. Casey councillors have welcomed the Bill. Long-time anti-graffiti campaigner Casey councillor Steve Beardon said the government needed to introduce the tough new laws. "Graffiti is a gateway crime. Offenders regularly graduate into other criminal activities, are exposed to drugs and gangs," he said. "Zero tolerance to graffiti not only protects ratepayers, but protects kids from committing a crime." But Cr Michael Farley said he believed the Bill went too far.