

Graffiti hits at fighter

By Mary Bolling

A CHEEKY vandal has spray-painted walls with the name of Melbourne's leading anti-graffiti campaigner.

Casey councillor Steve Beardon, who founded Residents Against Graffiti Everywhere, has led the charge for zero tolerance.

The Fitzroy tags are the latest in a line of incidents personally aimed at the campaigner, including phone threats and internet messages.

Cr Beardon, who wants jail terms for "hardcore graffiti vandals," said he doesn't regret taking on the issue.

"I think a lot of the vandals see zero tolerance as a challenge to keep going, but at the end of the day what they're doing is criminal," he said.

Many of Cr Beardon's views are reflected in the Victorian Government's draft Bill to stamp out illegal graffiti.

The legislation would mean anyone found on public transport with a spray-paint can would need to prove that they had a lawful excuse for carrying it, or face fines of up to \$2700.

The proposed Graffiti Prevention Bill reverses normal procedure, of the prosecution having to prove guilt. It would also include a two-year jail term for graffiti.