

Spray and pay

By CHRIS TINKLER

A GRAFFITI vandal has been ordered to pay the clean-up costs of his scrawls. In a Victorian first, the successful court action opens the floodgates for more action to strike at vandals' hip pockets.

Chris Major, of Narre Warren, was ordered by Dandenong Magistrates' Court to pay \$20,996 compensation to Casey Council and Connex.

Major, 20, was convicted of nine charges relating to a host of graffiti attacks on trains, public buildings and fences between March 2005 and February this year. As well as being ordered to pay compensation, he received a six-month suspended jail sentence.

Major was identified as responsible for the graffiti thanks to an extensive tagging database developed by Casey Council with Victoria Police.

The database enables authorities to identify how much graffiti each vandal is responsible for and calculate the removal costs.

More graffiti vandals face court in the coming months.

Casey councillor Steve Beardon said the decision showed vandals that "if you spray you pay".