

CRANBOURNE
INDEPENDENT

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Graffiti vandal stake-out

By Amber Morrey

CASEY'S local laws officers are closing in on graffitists "trashing" parts of Endeavour Hills.

The officers believe they know the taggers responsible and, together with police, plan to conduct stakeouts to catch them.

Council's contracts and compliance manager Brendan Fitzsimmons said Endeavour Hills was "continuously being trashed" and surveillance cameras could be installed to help stamp out the problem.

Mr Fitzsimmons said greater community involvement was needed to help deter the graffiti vandals.

He attributed the successful graffiti clean-up in other parts of the municipality to people "getting on board" and reporting it as soon as it appears.

"This is the key: if people report it and we get it off as quickly as possible it discourages (graffiti vandals)," Mr. Fitzsimmons said.

Since the introduction of council's graffiti management program back in March, almost all the unsightly scrawl has been removed in Cranbourne, Hampton Park, Narre Warren and Berwick.

As part of its crackdown on graffiti, council introduced a toll-free number and urged residents to report graffiti as soon as it appears. The initiative has so far proved a hit.

Mr. Fitzsimmons is now encouraging Endeavour Hills residents to report any graffiti by calling the toll-free number 1800 826 325 (easily remembered as 1800 VANDAL).

Residents Against Graffiti Everywhere (RAGE) president, Steve Beardon, believes Cranbourne is "the best example" of graffiti management anywhere in Victoria.

Mr Beardon praised the Cranbourne Chamber of Commerce, mayor Graham Smith and residents for helping to achieve the result.

RAGE will now call on the City of Casey, City of Melbourne and the State Government to jointly invite former New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani to Victoria next year.

Mr Beardon said the erstwhile mayor was instrumental in significantly reducing New York's crime rate by first targeting graffiti.

"We believe his presence in Victoria would further highlight to Australia the success we have achieved here in Casey."

RAGE: Lobbying for safer, cleaner suburbs