

News

CRANBOURNE

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Pressing on with spray can ban

THE City of Casey initiated the formal process to restrict the sale of spray paint at a council meeting on Tuesday night.

The proposed law will outlaw the sale or supply of aerosol spray paint to those under 18, and requires retailers to store and display the cans in an area which was not accessible to the public.

It will also be an offence to possess an aerosol spray paint container on public land without permission of the owner.

Casey manager community safety Brendan Fitzsimmons said notice of the 'Casey Community Graffiti Prevention and Control of Aerosol Spray Local Law Number Three' would now be advertised and published in the Victoria Government Gazette to allow time for submissions to be received.

Those submissions and any further recommendations are to be considered by council in November.

A background document presented to council said Casey may face legal challenges should the law be made, and would be "going it alone", as no other municipality had shown the propensity to follow Casey's lead.

"(The proposed law) has generated a good deal of comment in the media, the general public and seems to have significant public support," the report said.

The report also ruled out a voluntary code of practice, saying retailers who adhered to this would be penalised, as those that did not abide would have a significant business advantage.

This point was raised at the council meeting by River Gum Ward Cr Wayne Smith, who said he had asked shopkeepers in Hampton Park if they would agree to a voluntary code, and only one said yes.

Residents Against Graffiti Everywhere (RAGE) spokesperson Steve Beardon said the group supported Casey in showcasing itself as a crime-fighting model and in the need to keep clean-up costs and vandalism to a minimum.

"RAGE supports a restriction to graffiti and aerosol implements across the state, but also warns that this law would need to be coupled with state legislation giving councils the power to remove graffiti from private property (as in Casey) for free.

"It is well-known that part of graffiti culture is to steal graffiti implements and such legislation will reduce theft," he said.

Mr Beardon invited Premier Steve Bracks to examine Casey and initiate a state program.

"We are one of the few councils in Australia with such a comprehensive program in place encompassing eradication, education and enforcement of penalties," he said.