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## **Tougher State Government Graffiti Penalties**

Dr Mike Nahan, the Member for Riverton said that graffiti was rapidly becoming one of the biggest problems facing the community.

"Over the last few years, the reported incidents of graffiti have grown from around 10,000 in 2003/04 to nearly 16,000 in 2007/08. That's a 30 per cent increase and the cost to the community is huge – estimated to be around \$25 million per annum to clean up and remove," said Dr Nahan.

"Graffiti is an act of vandalism. It makes our suburbs look unsightly and it damages the community's sense of safety and security. Considerable research has shown that failure to adequately police low level, anti social behaviour can also result in increases of overall crime rates."

Dr Nahan said there were numerous examples of areas being vandalized by graffiti within this electorate.

"Recently, the traffic lights at the corner of High Road and Herald Avenue, a nearby Western Power transformer box, footpaths and street signs all had graffiti plastered on them over a weekend. A local constituent complained to me that the area looked more like the Bronx than a local residential suburb," said Dr Nahan.

"I have also received several complaints from residents who live near Telstra's Riverton Telephone Exchange about the graffiti on their building in Corinthian Road. Telstra says it has a policy of not removing graffiti unless it is offensive but nearby neighbours have told me that all graffiti is offensive and they want it off."

"They have said that if Telstra is not prepared to clean up its building then it should put in screening shrubbery to hide the mess from the nearby neighbours."

"Similarly, the industrial areas of Willetton and Canning Vale also cop plenty of graffiti, as do the local shopping centres and many of the back fences along the cycle ways throughout the area."

Dr Nahan said the State Government's crackdown on people who deface public and private property with graffiti was a step in the right direction.

"There has to be a significant penalty so that people understand that doing graffiti is not acceptable," said Dr Nahan.

"The Attorney General, Christian Porter, has introduced new laws into Parliament as part of the Government's crackdown on antisocial behaviour. The new penalties for graffiti will double the maximum time in prison from one year to two years, and double the maximum fine from \$12,000 to \$24,000."

"In addition, it will be an offence for retailers to sell graffiti implements such as spray cans to children, with the maximum penalties set at \$6,000 for a first offence and \$12,000 for subsequent offences."

"The State Government has also reinstated the Graffiti Taskforce, provided more than \$600,000 to local governments and non-profit organisations to help with various graffiti reduction strategies, and is introducing a curriculum in schools to support specific anti-graffiti education."

"Other new measures have included a graffiti clean-up referral pilot program to make juvenile graffiti offenders accountable for their actions and help them realize the cost, inconvenience and risks associated with graffiti."

"I support the State Government's drive for tougher penalties for anti-social behaviour, including graffiti, rock throwing, arson offences and identity theft and the implementation of prohibited behaviour orders. The past soft-on-crime approach has not worked and cannot be allowed to continue."

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