

**15. PROPOSED GRAFFITI ART MURAL – LINWOOD PARK
TOILET BUILDING**

RR 9780

Officer responsible Leisure Unit Manager	Author Aroha Rangi – Community Arts Coordinator – Maori & Cultural and Lesley Symington, Team Leader, Recreation and Arts
Corporate Plan Output: Community Arts	

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on progress with the proposed graffiti art mural on the Linwood Park toilet building.

BACKGROUND:

On the 6th of May 1998, a presentation was made to the Hagley/Ferrymead Community Board by the Community Arts Coordinator – Maori & Cultural along with aerosol artist - Joe Moses and Manager of Pacific Underground – Anton Carter. This presentation was to:

- a) explain the concept of the ‘BOMB SITES’ project undertaken in Waltham Park and
- b) request funding so a project of a similar nature could be achieved in Linwood Park.

The idea for ‘BOMB SITES’ was initially submitted to the Christchurch City Council in January 1998 by Pacific Underground Inc. Soc. Pacific Underground’s focus was to organise and create a series of aerosol art pieces to be located in public places which would reflect the diversity and uniqueness of each community and locality.

‘BOMB SITES’ advanced as a partnership project between the Christchurch City Council and Pacific Underground. Funding was granted by the Spreydon/Heathcote Community Board to former Community Arts Coordinator – Janet Luxton. Pacific Underground’s role was to develop and implement a two week training programme for participating youth, repaint an existing, badly tagged mural and create an aerosol art mural around the rugby/storage shed in Waltham Park.

Aim:

To main aim of BOMB SITES was to encourage youth from areas around Christchurch to participate in the creation of art in their community.

Objectives:

- To empower youth with alternative ways of expressing themselves while channelling their energies into activities that are positive for their environment.
- To encourage youth to express themselves through art
- To instigate a new art initiative that would utilise artistic talent within local youth in the community not recognised at present within Christchurch
- To offer youth an opportunity to learn new skills
- To challenge mainstream perception of Aerosol Art – showing it can be a positive form of artistic practice

Outcomes:

- A large work of aerosol art inspired by a youth culture was created in a community space
- 'BOMB SITES' generated a great deal of positive community feedback with many members of the local community commenting on how good the mural looked
- Ten Christchurch youth were directly involved in 'BOMB SITES', participated in the two week programme and maintained a commitment to the project
- Youth were involved in an initiative that fostered artistic development in youth in positive areas as opposed to destructive tagging.
- One local Christchurch artist was employed to tutor youth
- The Waltham shed and surrounding area were rejuvenated

ISSUES

A number of issues arose from this pilot project, which need to be addressed before further initiatives of this type can go ahead. They include:

- a) **THE NEED TO UNDERSTAND GRAFFITI CULTURE:** Graffiti culture was born in the streets of lower-socio economic areas in America. "Graffiti" was the expression of youth who could not find a voice elsewhere in society. Graffiti is illegal and that is part of the culture – part of the enjoyment for some participants – BUT NOT ALL! The illegality of graffiti not only includes the tagging of private and public property without permission but often stealing cans, pens etc to tag with. In Christchurch there are around ten "crews" of taggers, each with their own "territories" and behaviours. An understanding of this culture and the development of initiatives to replace this anti-social behaviour are required before any lasting, effective change in these young people can be accomplished.
- b) **THE NEED FOR "HANDS-ON" CO-ORDINATORS / SUPERVISORS:** Due to the nature of the young people often involved in projects of this type, there is a need for "hands-on" co-ordination/supervision. This is extremely time consuming and would require at least one person dedicated to coordinate each project and work with the youth involved. This person should have a good understanding of graffiti culture and the youth involved and be able to model appropriate behaviours and provide good supervision.

DEVELOPMENT OF A METROPOLITAN STRATEGY FOR ADDRESSING GRAFFITI IN CHRISTCHURCH

Currently staff of the Leisure Unit are researching the issues around graffiti in Christchurch, including consulting with various key agencies such as the Police, Youth Justice and the Safer Community Council, as well as examining successful models both in New Zealand and overseas for managing this issue in a holistic and effective way. This followed an informal initiative by Councillors Anna Crighton and Carole Anderton.

An information seminar will be held on 26 July, 1999 to inform Councillors from the Parks and Recreation, Community Services and Environment Committees, Community Board members and key Council staff with an involvement in the area, of the issues around graffiti and the opinions of key stakeholder groups in Christchurch (Police, etc)

From there a metropolitan strategy will be developed to address this issue, including methods of managing the issues brought to light by the BOMB SITES pilot project.

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It is recommended that work on this project be delayed pending the development of a metropolitan strategy for addressing graffiti in an effective and lasting manner, and that the Hagley/Ferrymead Community Board allocate funding from its 1999/2000 Project and Discretionary Fund for a project to be completed in the second half of this financial year.

- Recommendation:**
1. That the Hagley/Ferrymead Community Board delay commencement on the proposed graffiti art mural on the Linwood Park toilet building until the completion of a metropolitan strategy to address and manage the issue of graffiti in Christchurch.
 2. That a sum of \$6,000 be allocated from the Board's 1999/2000 Project and Discretionary Fund for the project to be completed in the second half of the financial year.

**Chairman's
Recommendation:** For discussion.