

# GRAFFITI MANAGEMENT POLICY

2021



CITY OF MELBOURNE



# A CITY THAT CARES FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Environmental sustainability is the basis of all Future Melbourne goals. It requires current generations to choose how they meet their needs without compromising the ability of future generations to be able to do the same.

## **Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians**

The City of Melbourne respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land, the Bunurong Boon Wurrung and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung peoples of the Eastern Kulin Nation and pays respect to their Elders past, present and emerging. We are committed to our reconciliation journey, because at its heart, reconciliation is about strengthening relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples, for the benefit of all Victorians.

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June 2021

Cover Image: Stevenson Lane.

## Disclaimer

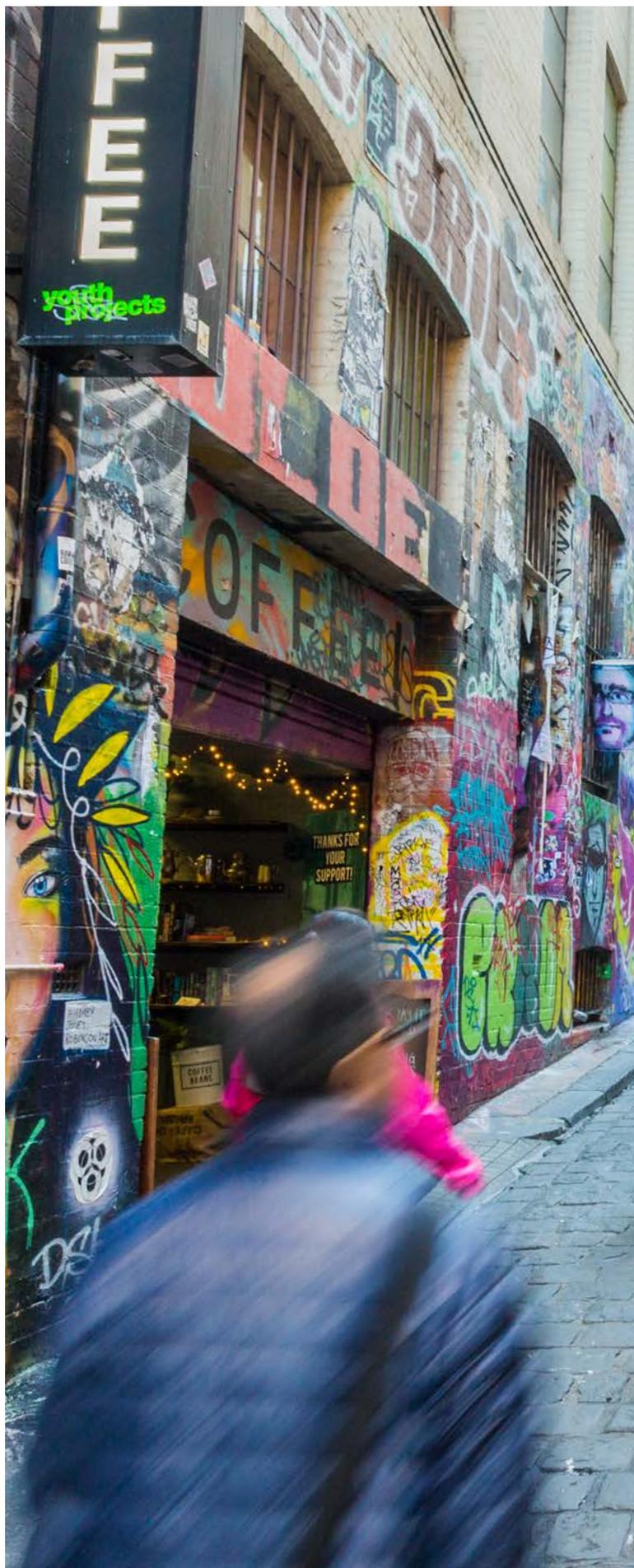
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# 1. INTRODUCTION

City of Melbourne is committed to providing safe and welcoming public spaces and supporting its artists and broader creative community. City of Melbourne's approach towards graffiti management is to remove illegal graffiti and street art quickly and embrace legal graffiti and street art.

The aim of Graffiti Management Policy 2021 is to deliver best practice graffiti management across the City of Melbourne municipality, taking into consideration Melbourne's unique environment of being a capital city and having a rich history of street art culture. Graffiti Management Policy 2021 replaces Graffiti Management Plan 2014-18.



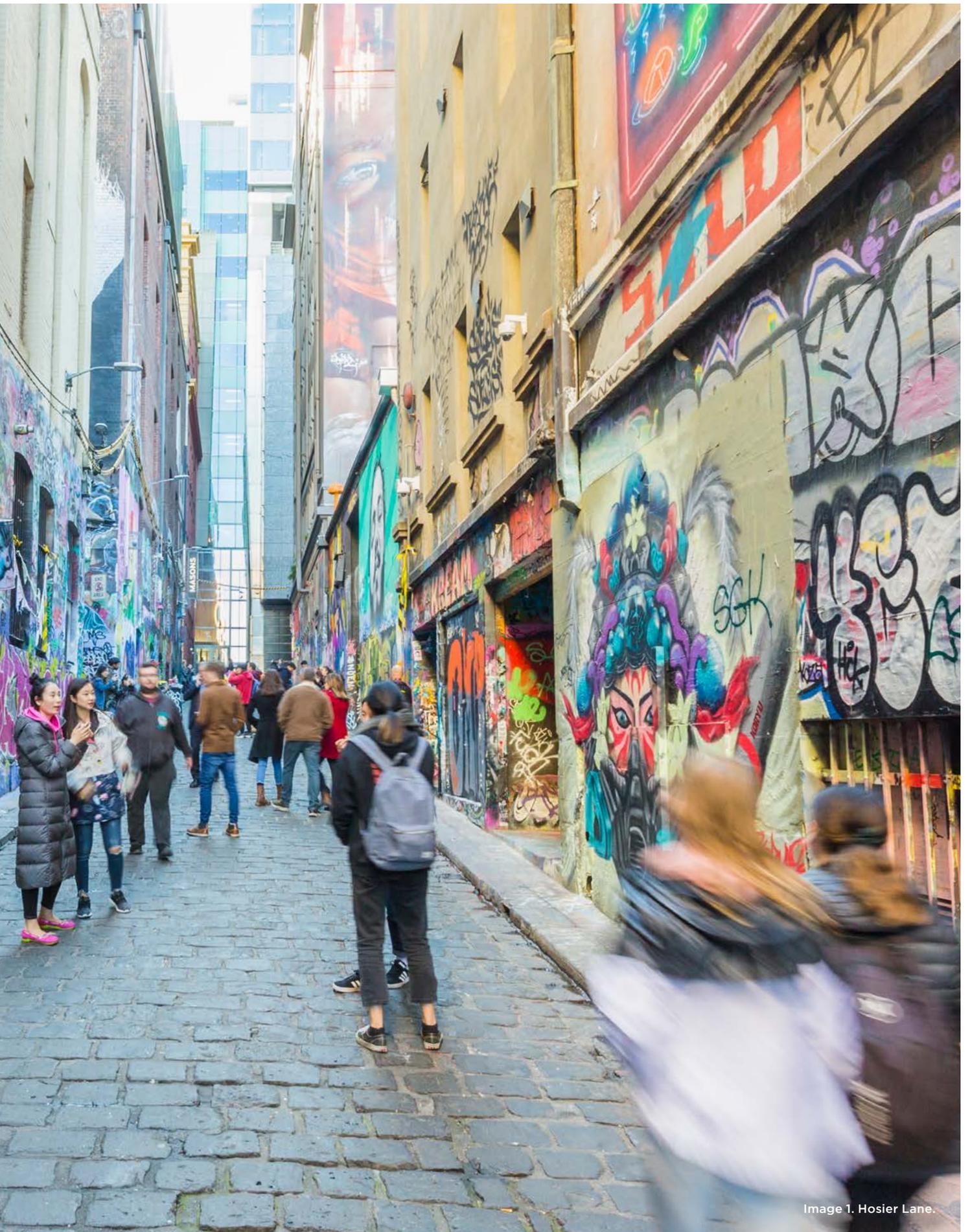


Image 1. Hosier Lane.

## 2. DEFINITIONS

Graffiti is defined as writing or drawings scribbled, scratched or sprayed on a wall or other surface in a public place. Graffiti can include images, writing, posters, stickers and stencils, but is often word based and can span complex or abstract letter based designs called tagging. A graffiti tag is a personalised signature of the graffiti writer.

Street art is a 2-dimensional, visual art form presented on surfaces in public places. It can include murals, graffiti, stencilled painting, paste up or sticker art, video projection, sculpture or material surface treatments.

If graffiti or street art is placed on building facades or infrastructure without the permission of the owner, it is classified as illegal graffiti or street art and can be removed.

If graffiti or street art is placed on building facades or infrastructure with the permission of the owner, and complies with planning and heritage regulations, it is classified as legal graffiti or street art.

**“If graffiti or street art is placed on building facades or infrastructure without the permission of the owner, it is classified as illegal graffiti or street art and can be removed.”**

## 3. RESPONSIBILITIES

City of Melbourne removes graffiti from the external facades of private property, and City of Melbourne owned buildings, infrastructure, parks and artwork.

Infrastructure that is not owned by the City of Melbourne, such as poles, cabinets, post boxes, telephone boxes, substations, tram stops, bus stops and some roads and bridges, are maintained by the organisation that owns the asset.

Organisations such as state and federal governments, energy and telecommunication companies, public transport organisations, hospitals, education institutions and places of worship are responsible for removing graffiti from their own buildings and infrastructure.

Building developers and property owners are required to remove graffiti from construction sites, hoarding and scaffolding under the conditions of the building permit.

The Graffiti Prevention Act 2007 allows, but does not require, Council to remove illegal graffiti from private property that is accessible from the street, by serving a notice to the property owner or occupier at least 10 days prior to action being taken. The Act also allows Council to enter private property to remove illegal graffiti by serving a notice at least 28 days prior to action being taken.

Property owners and occupiers can provide consent for the City of Melbourne to remove illegal graffiti that is accessible from the street, which is valid for a 12 month period. If consent has already been provided, graffiti can be removed prior to the 10 day period. Consent to enter private property to remove illegal graffiti cannot be provided in advance and consent is required for each individual job.

Property owners and occupiers are required to contact Council, and comply with the Activities Local Law 2019, prior to installing legal street art on external surfaces of buildings.



Image 2. Croft Alley.

# 4. GRAFFITI MANAGEMENT

City of Melbourne employ various interventions to manage graffiti in the municipality. The approach towards management is outlined below. Individual actions are subject to Council budget provisions.

## 4.1 Prevention

Prevention of illegal graffiti and street art is the most effective graffiti management approach. City of Melbourne supports prevention in the following ways:

- 4.1.1 City of Melbourne considers graffiti management during the planning and design of buildings and public place infrastructure. For example, large blank external walls are minimised, surface materials are chosen that are most receptive to effective graffiti removal, and anti-graffiti coating is used where possible.
- 4.1.2 Other preventative techniques include landscaping, vegetation, planter boxes, green walls, decorative screens, legal street art murals, other forms of public art, lighting, and security cameras.
- 4.1.3 Public space activation of susceptible areas, such as CBD laneways, can help prevent illegal graffiti and street art through natural prevention and surveillance. Activation can include outdoor dining, coffee shops, bars, beer gardens, busking, street performers, events, lighting and pedestrianised zones.
- 4.1.4 Community education and mentoring programs are employed to encourage legal graffiti and street art to all demographics of the community. Opportunities are also provided to the community for legal graffiti and street art. This includes connecting property owners and street artists, supporting existing artistic spaces, and providing new public legal street art and graffiti spaces such as facilitation of legal street art murals.
- 4.1.5 Rapid removal of graffiti reduces the likelihood of it returning in the same location.
- 4.1.6 Surveillance programs are employed where practical to identify and remove graffiti quickly which prevents further graffiti.

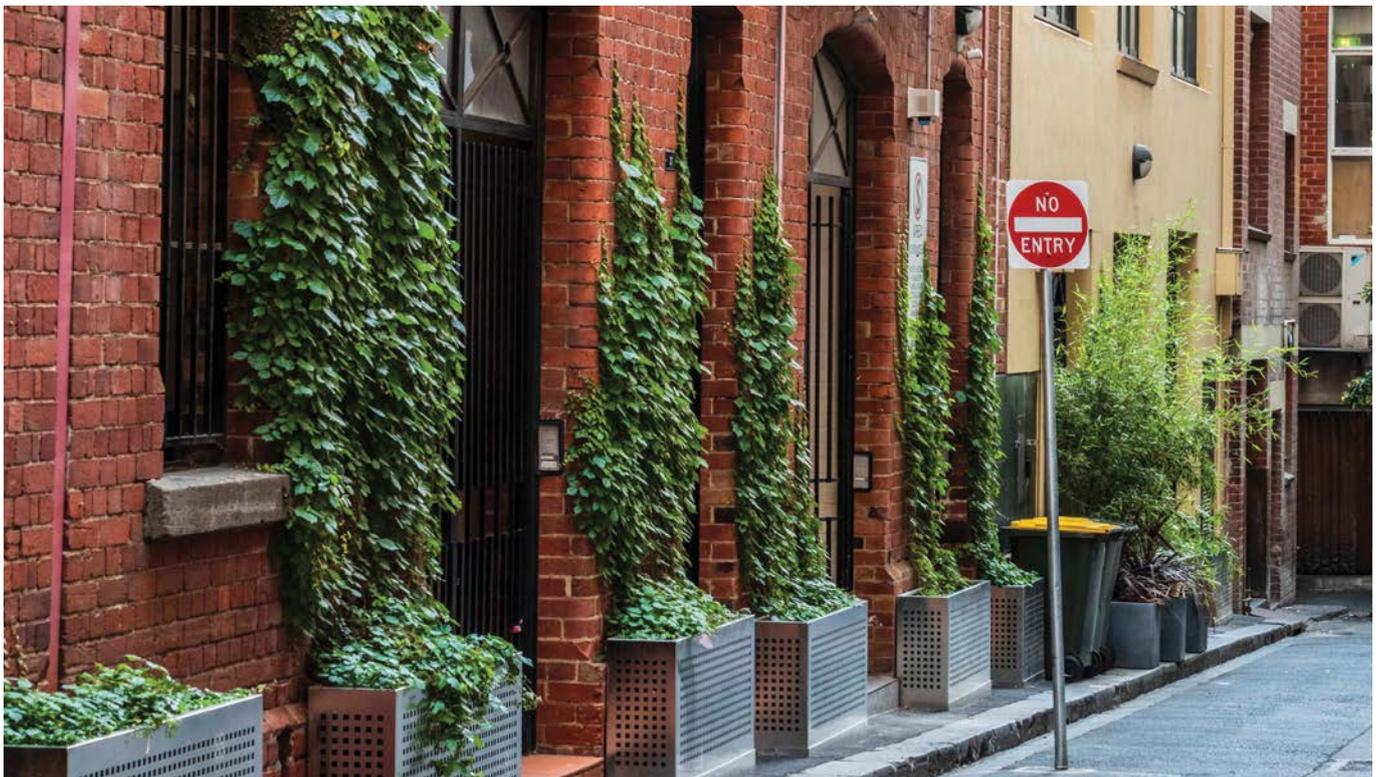


Image 3. Coromandel Place.

## 4.2 Removal

City of Melbourne provides a graffiti removal service to residents and businesses to help manage illegal graffiti on their property and maintain the amenity of the city. Consent is required from property owners or occupiers to remove graffiti from private property. The following are taken into consideration when removing graffiti:

- 4.2.1 The preferred approach to graffiti removal is a regular surveillance and proactive removal program. Where practical, this method is utilised in high profile locations, and in hotspot areas where graffiti regularly occurs. Graffiti is removed from other areas in response to community reporting under a reactive removal service.
- 4.2.2 Graffiti removal data such as location of jobs, volume of graffiti, method of graffiti removal, and before and after photos, is recorded and used to identify hotspot locations and trends of illegal graffiti or street art activity. It is also used to plan graffiti removal resources, surveillance and proactive removal areas and graffiti prevention opportunities.
- 4.2.3 Graffiti is removed to the highest quality standard practicable, using techniques to ensure the graffiti is completely removed, shadowing is not visible, paint is accurately colour-matched to the existing surface colour, and the affected area is painted to the nearest architectural feature.
- 4.2.4 Graffiti removal is prioritised on building frontages, high pedestrianised streets and laneways, suburban shopping strips, parks, and areas within close proximity to train stations.
- 4.2.5 Illegal graffiti is removed as quickly as possible to reduce the likelihood of future occurrences. Specific timeframes are dependent on the location and whether the graffiti is offensive. Examples of offensive graffiti include inappropriate language and images or derogatory comments that target particular groups. Removal times can be delayed if property owner or occupier consent has not been provided, inclement weather or complexity of the surface.
- 4.2.6 Illegal graffiti or street art that has been applied to difficult to access surfaces such as elevated building walls and external surfaces of bridges may require specialised equipment such as elevated work platforms and water vessels. As such, this graffiti removal is prioritised according to Council resources and funding availability.
- 4.2.7 Graffiti removal techniques can include colour-matched paint, high pressure washing, and chemical removal using environmentally friendly and sustainable products. Where graffiti cannot be removed due to being etched or scratched into the surface, attempts will be made to ensure the surface is replaced. Risk assessments and measures are incorporated into the graffiti removal process to ensure no damage is incurred to the property or surrounding areas.
- 4.2.8 City of Melbourne has a significant number of heritage listed buildings, artwork, statues and fountains that have masonry surfaces such as sandstone, bluestone, granite, marble and concrete. As a result of this complexity, City of Melbourne utilise specialist methods and techniques, undertaken by highly qualified and experienced service providers.
- 4.2.9 Where practical, anti-graffiti coating is applied to protect surfaces and enable quick removal from locations that have complex surfaces, legal street art murals or areas of repeated illegal graffiti.
- 4.2.10 City of Melbourne continuously improve processes to ensure community can report graffiti quickly, easily and accurately. Processes which enable property owners and occupiers to provide consent for graffiti removal are also continuously reviewed to allow for illegal graffiti to be removed without delay.

**“The preferred approach to graffiti removal is a regular surveillance and proactive removal program.”**

## 4.3 Enforcement

The Victorian Graffiti Prevention Act 2007 defines illegal graffiti as a criminal offence. The Act stipulates that ‘a person must not mark graffiti on property if the graffiti is visible from a public place unless the person has first obtained the express consent of the owner, or an agent of the owner, of the property to do so’.

- 4.3.1 Victoria Police enforce The Graffiti Prevention Act 2007, and can serve an infringement notice on a person who the police officer has reason to believe has committed an offence.
- 4.3.2 City of Melbourne collaborates with Victoria Police to provide graffiti management data such as illegal graffiti hotspot locations, graffiti tagger IDs, graffiti removal costs and images.

## 4.4 Collaboration

Within the City of Melbourne there are many private and public organisations that own and maintain buildings, infrastructure and assets. A collaborative approach between organisations is required to achieve the most effective graffiti management outcomes across the City of Melbourne.

- 4.4.1 City of Melbourne is committed to collaborating with organisations to provide a consistent approach towards graffiti management across all buildings and infrastructure located within the City of Melbourne municipality. This can take the form of the City of Melbourne’s graffiti removal service provider removing graffiti from non-City of Melbourne assets either proactively during scheduled surveillance or reactively at the request of the asset owner or a customer. Agreements between the City of Melbourne and organisations can be used to specify service provision, cost arrangements and reporting requirements.
- 4.4.2 The sharing of data between all organisations strengthens consistency of graffiti management across the City of Melbourne municipality.

**“A collaborative approach between organisations is required to achieve the most effective graffiti management outcomes across the City of Melbourne.”**

# 5. LEGAL STREET ART AND GRAFFITI

City of Melbourne recognises the importance of legal street art in contributing to a vibrant, urban culture. Street art can enhance the appearance and amenity of public spaces that people can visit and enjoy.

Legal street art requires the permission of the property owner, and is to comply with City of Melbourne planning regulations, and heritage overlays. Artists are required to gain written approval from the property owner, and contact City of Melbourne for advice, including images of the proposed design and location.

Advertising, including logos and branding, in the form of street art is subject to separate planning regulations governing advertising.

Property owners and occupiers are required to contact Council, and comply with the Activities Local Law 2019, prior to installing legal street art on external surfaces of buildings.

Further information on [street art](#) is available on the City of Melbourne website.

**“City of Melbourne recognises the importance of legal street art in contributing to a vibrant, urban culture.”**

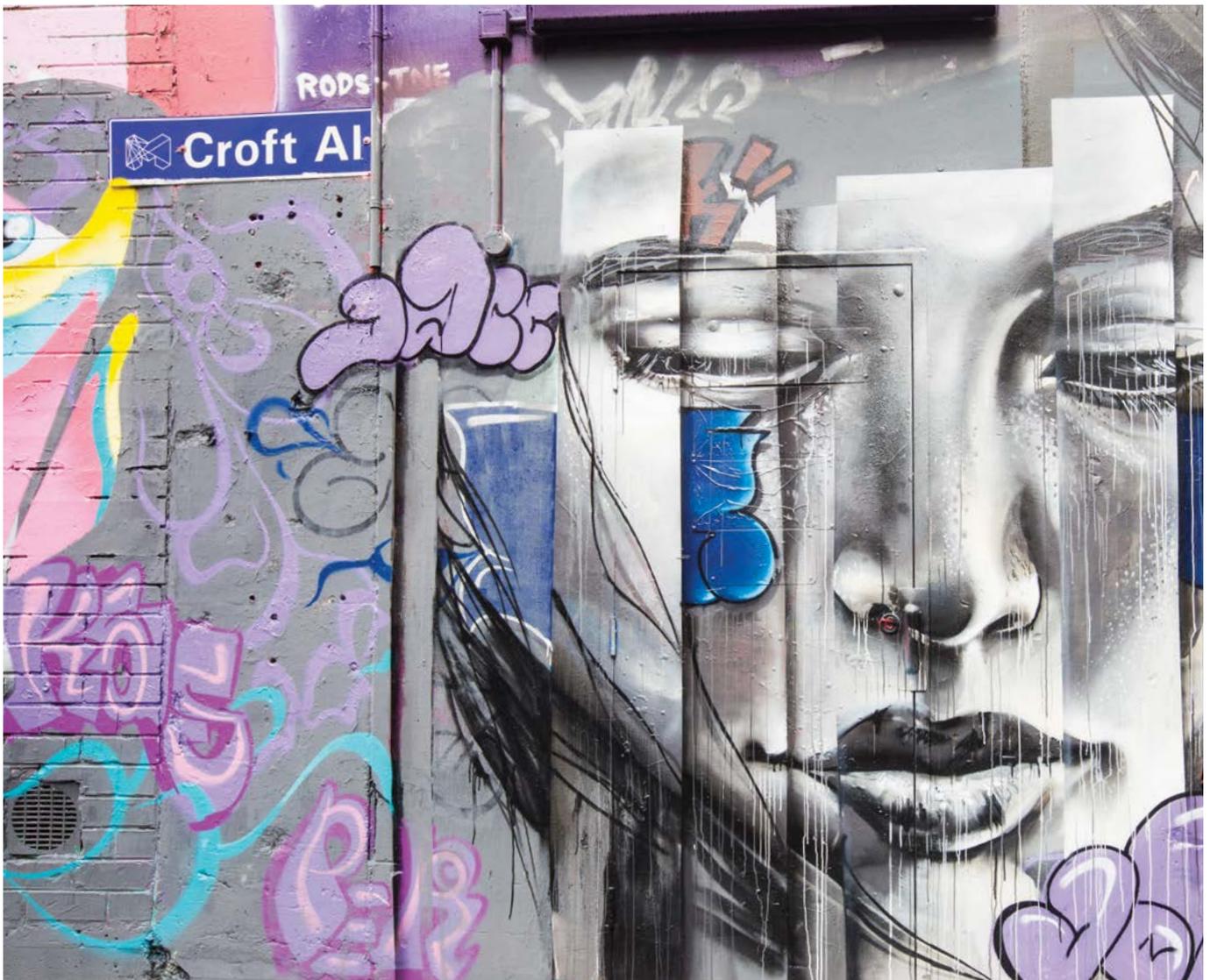


Image 4. Croft Alley.

## How to contact us

### Online:

[melbourne.vic.gov.au](http://melbourne.vic.gov.au)

### In person:

Melbourne Town Hall - Administration Building  
120 Swanston Street, Melbourne  
Business hours, Monday to Friday  
(Public holidays excluded)

### Telephone:

03 9658 9658  
Business hours, Monday to Friday  
(Public holidays excluded)

### Fax:

03 9654 4854

### In writing:

City of Melbourne  
GPO Box 1603  
Melbourne VIC 3001  
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### National Relay Service:

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