

STATE GRAFFITI TASKFORCE

Statement by Minister for Police

MRS L.M. HARVEY (Scarborough — Minister for Police) [12.14 pm]: The State Graffiti Taskforce has now been in operation since shortly after the Liberal–National government was formed. It first met in December 2008, and has met on 20 occasions since that time. This is therefore an appropriate time to look at what it has been doing and what it has achieved. Following a 2010 review of the manner in which graffiti offences were dealt with, the taskforce developed a five-year strategy. The Liberal–National government has set aside funding of \$1 million per annum to allow the taskforce to undertake its work, and the cross-agency participation on the taskforce has seen the various government and non-government agencies involved implement several key operations, including Operation Eraser and Operation Cleanskin. The results of those operations speak for themselves. Operation Eraser has been a phased operation involving the public release of images of persons of interest, targeting the illegal sale of graffiti implements and the surveillance of graffiti hotspots. The operation has involved close cooperation between the police transport unit, the Public Transport Authority, local government and Education security. To the end of September, Operation Eraser had resulted in 344 people being charged with 1 331 offences.

Operation Cleanskin, which was initially a six-month joint operation between the Public Transport Authority and WA Police to target graffiti damage on the metropolitan rail network, resulted in an 83 per cent clearance rate of outstanding files, and 67 offenders charged with 118 offences resulted in 47 arrests, 40 summonses, 12 juvenile justice team referrals, 10 cautions and nine PTA infringements. Another highly visible and highly successful initiative of the taskforce has been the piloting, in 2010, of a 12-month juvenile clean-up program. That program resulted in a completion rate of 98 per cent by participants, and has continued to operate. This program takes six to eight referrals per month, with an average of 36 sites per month being cleaned. In addition to these operations, the Goodbye Graffiti hotline and website continues to operate, offering a 24-hour service for members of the public to report graffiti vandalism, to facilitate rapid graffiti removal and provide information about graffiti prevention.

These are not the only elements of the ongoing work of the Graffiti Taskforce, but they illustrate what a group of well-coordinated and motivated police and public servants can achieve within a clear strategic framework. I note that since 2007–08, the number of reported graffiti offences has declined by 73 per cent, and the clearance rate has increased from 8.8 per cent to 30 per cent. We are on the right track and we are winning the fight against graffiti vandalism.

I would like to take this opportunity to express the government's thanks to everyone who has cooperated in the work of the Graffiti Taskforce over the past four years, and express the Liberal–National government's commitment to supporting its excellent work into the future.