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Spray delivered in attempt to ban the can

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NSW will become the first state in Australia to ban spray cans of paint under radical anti-graffiti reforms being considered by the State Government.

Documents from the Attorney-General's Department reveal that recommendations for changes to the law will go before Cabinet within months.

The sweeping review will examine the "feasibility, effectiveness and potential implications of a complete ban on the sale of aerosol paint in NSW".

But paint manufacturers, artists and even anti-graffiti campaigners vowed yesterday to fight the "draconian proposal", comparing the Government to "nazis".

A spokesman for the Attorney-General's department said the office had submissions from paint and retail industries, youth-focused agencies, local councils, RailCorp, State Transit Authority, the NSW Police Association and the Department of Juvenile Justice.

But anti-graffiti lobby Graffiti Hurts Australia CEO Scott Hilditch warned a total ban on paint spray cans would open the way to more damaging alternatives.

"We would not encourage law makers to go down that track. Banning the product is not going to work," he said.

Chicago is the only American city to ban (spray cans). But an analysis of Chicago graffiti one year after the ban showed "a modest reduction in spray paint graffiti, with an offsetting increase in glass etching and marker (pen) graffiti."

Paint makers slammed the ban as "morally bankrupt, draconian legislation".

"Bans have not worked overseas. Knee-jerk reactions and heavy-handed reactions do not solve the social problem. It will remain and manifest itself in other ways," the Australian Paint Manufacturers Federation's Michael Hambrook said.

"It's a nazi response."

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