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Magazines are a vandal's brag book

Article from: **Daily Telegraph**

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By *Richard Noone*
November 20, 2008 12:00am

WHILE taxpayers foot an estimated \$200 million clean-up bill for graffiti, new shops are capitalising on underground magazines dedicated to teaching young artists how to "bomb" trains, buildings and other public spaces.

Ranging from \$12 to \$120, the magazines, books and DVDs feature young people with covered faces using bolt-cutters to break into train yards to tag, stencil and spray graffiti.

A disclaimer says the images are sent in anonymously and the magazines do not condone illegal activity.

Not-for-profit lobby group Graffiti Hurts Australia has called for age restrictions to be placed on the sale of graffiti magazines and DVDs.

Graffiti vandals trashing our lives

Spokesman Scott Hilditch said as well as promoting illegality they eroded the best graffiti deterrent - early removal.



It's a bomb ... Bobby Thomas in the Aerosol Kings shop in Gosford.

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"The publication of these images enables them to be widely seen through the graffiti sub-culture, which is what they want. We'd like to see them restricted to over 18s," he said.

Mr Hilditch said while underground graffiti magazines had been around for years overseas, the internet made it easy for Australian retailers to import them.

This led to the emergence of new shops such as Aerosol Kings at Gosford, opening solely to sell spray cans, tagging pens, magazines and paraphernalia.

While graffiti costs Central Coast councils more than \$250,000 a year to remove, Aerosol Kings owner Justin Ridgeway said he had as many "positive responses to the shop as negative ones". The self-confessed former tagger and illegal graffiti artist, 26, said opening the shop "legitimised aerosol art".

The graffiti debate reignited this week after *The Daily Telegraph* revealed NSW police handled a record 107,586 graffiti and malicious damage reports last year - an incident every five minutes.

But Mr Ridgeway, who said he does not condone illegal behaviour, said the figures lumped all types of vandalism together - from tagging to smashed windows - painting graffiti artists in a poor light. "It does make it hard for artists trying to do the right thing."

Source: [The Daily Telegraph](#)

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