



MEDIA RELEASE

Take A Stand For The Anzacs

Thursday April 2, 2009

National anti-graffiti education charity group, Graffiti Hurts – Australia has called on all State and Territories Governments to join together and expand on the NSW's legislation that would see harsher penalties for those charged with vandalising war memorials, cenotaphs and other culture significant buildings in the run up to Anzac Day.

Chief Executive, Scott Hilditch said the public outrage that followed the graffiti attack on the Mildura War Memorial just before Remembrance Day last year, and the vandalism in Albury yesterday should be a wake-up call to all governments that more needs to be done in tackling graffiti and vandalism towards the memory of our Anzacs.

“While some states have harsher penalties for graffiti vandalism, NSW has special legislations for those that attack or vandalise buildings of cultural significance and War Memorials. We believe that as graffiti knows no borders all state and territories governments should look at NSW's lead on this issue, said Hilditch.”

Graffiti Hurts – Australia is calling for similar legislation across the country that would take a vandalism attack from the Summary Offences Act to a ‘Criminal Act’ in its own right which would also include;

- **A minimum fine of \$10,000,**
- **Full restitution to the organisation of that property for the total restoration costs of cleaning the vandalism,**
- **Undertaking an educational program on the significance of the meaning of that property and the events it represents.**
- **Undertaking a community service work order**
- **And in some cases criminal convictions being recorded against the vandal.**

Hilditch said, “We'd like to see Governments send a clear message to vandals that want to desecrate culturally significant places and that as a multicultural society no Australian will stand for this type of senseless act.

Graffiti Hurts – Australia with the support of the National RSL, ran a public awareness campaign in the run up to Anzac Day 2008 to engage the public to keep a watch on their local memorials and for the first time in 13 years saw no report of vandalism. The incident of vandalism in Mildura shows the need to continue the public campaign and education.



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“While in the past, governments have been left to worry about graffiti vandalism we believe that it’s the community that needs to become educated and active on this costly act to the community. But, it is the role of government to ensure that the penalties are in place that represents the communities view.”

“The NSW legislation shows that the government understands that graffitiing culturally significant buildings is a premeditated act and we cannot see why all states and the territories cannot join together to introduce standardised penalties across the country which could be in place this year,” said Hilditch

As we get closer to Anzac Day the community are encouraged and reminded that if they see anyone defacing any building to contact the Police Assist line 131 444 (all states except Victoria) or Crime Stoppers 1300 300 000 to report it.

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For more information and interviews please contact Mr Scott Hilditch, CEO, Graffiti Hurts – Australia on 03 9720 7356 or 0411 596 634.

Graffiti Hurts – Australia is the only national not for profit community education charity institution that relies on supporters and partners and grants to research, develop and educate the community on the issue of graffiti vandalism.

Background brief on NSW Legislation:

On November 14 2007 the NSW Parliament passed the War Memorial Legislation Amendment (Increased Penalties) Bill 2007 that doubled the maximum penalties for anyone who defaces, vandalises, deliberately damages or behaves inappropriately around a war memorial. This increased the fines from a maximum \$2200 to \$4400 while still keeping any of the above offences under the Summary Offence Act. The Act also enables a court to order an offender to perform community service work as punishment for damaging or desecrating a war memorial.