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Anti-graffiti plan gaining momentum

BRAD WORRALL
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POLICE and Albury Council are on track to deliver programs that would see graffiti vandals clean up the damage they and others cause.

Superintendent Gary Commins said the innovative idea to get juvenile offenders to clean up graffiti has already been floated with mayors in his area and member for Albury Greg Aplin.

Meanwhile, Albury councillor Neville Hull believes his call for a vandalism taskforce will gather momentum at a council meeting on Monday night.

He said community service orders policed in partnership with the parole board and community groups would be the key objectives for the taskforce.

Vandalism, including graffiti, has cost Border ratepayers almost \$150,000 over the past year.

This week \$200 fines for acts of graffiti on Lavington Centro met a harsh community rebuke, led by Mr Aplin.

Cr Hull said it was less than a fine for parking in front of Albury High School.

"Clearly if ever there was a case of a community service order being appropriate that was it," he said.

"Greg Aplin was right to call for the courts to get tough on these crimes, those people.

"He was right to suggest they should be made to clean up graffiti around the city."

Supt Commins said he would support any proposal that had juvenile offenders get rid of graffiti.

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"And we are already looking at a voluntary process, that has been used with some success on the Central Coast, that does just that," he said.

"It deals with those people in the juvenile system before they get to the point of going to court.

"It works because it gives them the opportunity to understand the extent of their damage — the negative is it's voluntary.

"The idea already has the support of our community safety precinct committee that includes all mayors and the local member for Albury."

On Monday night an Albury Council committee will meet to give the initial nod to Cr Hull's proposed taskforce.

Cr Hull says the committee can put the plan to a full council meeting.

"I'm not on that committee, I can speak to the plan, I just can't vote," he said.

"At the moment I'm unsure of exactly what the officers will be putting to the committee, that comes out on Friday.

"But my idea, if it progresses past Monday night, is a taskforce that will look at all the options being used to fight graffiti and vandalism."

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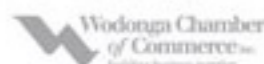
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