



Celebrating new ideas

2009 New Zealand Post Group
Local Government Excellence Awards

Project Submission Template

JOINED UP LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Name of Project

Auckland region graffiti free project

"A joint project between Police and Local Government to eradicate graffiti vandalism in the Auckland region"

Name of entering council/s

Auckland City Council

Waitakere City Council

Rodney District Council

Franklin District Council

Manukau City Council

North Shore City Council

Papakura District Council





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The headings 3 to 12 below are each “shorthand” for one of the judging criteria which are set out in full in the Call for Entries brochure. Under each heading you should insert information that addresses the relevant criteria.

1. Brief Description of the Project

The Auckland Region Graffiti Free (ARGF) project, a Local Government and Police partnership, aims to prevent and eradicate graffiti vandalism and hold offenders accountable. The ARGF involves working inclusively with key stakeholders: the business sector, service providers, utility companies, transport operators, community groups, schools and central government agencies towards a common goal of eliminating the graffiti vandalism problem.

2. Organisations Involved

Auckland Regional Council
Auckland City District Police
Waitematā Police
Counties Manukau Police
Ministry of Justice
Manukau Beautification Trust
Tag Out Trust – Waitakere
Safer Papakura Trust

3. Rationale for the Project and Expected Benefits

This project evolved from an observation that, despite individual councils' efforts in eradication and prevention of graffiti vandalism, the phenomenon was becoming more and more visible across the Auckland region.

Background and Rationale

The problems that graffiti vandalism and other quality of life crimes create, present an increasing challenge to Territorial Local Authorities (TLAs) and Police in Regional Auckland. The term “graffiti vandalism” refers to a wide range of markings and etchings that deface public or private property. It is the act of writing or drawing in a public space without permission. Like other types of vandalism, it is a crime, a social problem and a nuisance.

Graffiti vandalism places considerable costs on local and central government, private property owners and schools. As well as imposing substantial financial costs on property owners, illegal graffiti costs the community in other ways. International research suggests that graffiti and other signs of disorder deter legitimate users from entering public places, leaving them unattended and open to further criminal activity. The seemingly trivial offence of graffiti vandalism has been associated with damaged civic pride, increased criminal activity, decline in property values and heightened fear within the community.

In the mid 2000s, with the escalation of street gang activity, there was a noticeable escalation in graffiti vandalism across the Auckland region and cross boundary offending was clearly on the rise. With little coordination between Auckland's seven councils to hold cross boundary offenders accountable, it seemed very likely this growing trend would continue. With the different councils, there were also diverse graffiti eradication programs with some having a zero tolerance approach while others favoured a more social approach.

Expected Benefits

- a Graffiti Free Metropolitan Auckland in 0 -5 years
- development of a co-ordinated and collaborative approach between the Local Authorities, New Zealand Police and their communities for the eradication and prevention of graffiti vandalism across Metropolitan Auckland
- engagement with, and the active participation of, the business communities, private and public property owners, utility and service providers such as Vector, Telecom, Transit NZ, Toll, ARTA, KiwiRail, Watercare Services, etc.

- improved community safety and public confidence in TLAs and Police
- holding graffiti offenders accountable for their vandalism
- improved quality of life for communities
- improved visual aesthetics of the region
- reduced financial burden on ratepayers

4. Linkage to Council's Strategic Direction

The ARGF project has strategic alignment to Auckland City's Long Term Council Community Plan of 28 September 2007 *Building Strong and Healthy Communities*.

"Graffiti vandalism is a key factor in limiting the perceptions of public safety. To increase the perception of safety in our communities we need to address graffiti vandalism ... In doing this we ensure this service aligns even more closely to our goal and our strategic objectives."

The project has strategic alignment also, with:

- Local Government Act 2002 [sections 14(1)(e) and (g) and 91(3)(a)]
- New Zealand Police Strategic Plan to 2010 (community reassurance)

5. Project Planning

Following background research (Bradley, 2006; Collinson, 2006), Police presented a proposal to the Auckland Region Territorial Local Authorities Chief Executive (CE) Forum [Appendix 1]. A joint region wide initiative aimed at adopting a collaborative zero tolerance approach to graffiti eradication was suggested. The proposal outlined problems that would be solved, outcomes sought, the approach to achieving the outcomes, strategic alignment and scope inclusions and exclusions. Project management requirements were noted so that there was clarity around budget, tenure, reporting, milestones and evaluation.

Following agreement from the CE Forum, a meeting was convened to progress the Project. This group of relevant officers from Councils, their Trusts and Police became the Steering and Development Group whose first task was to develop a Terms of Reference (ToR) [Appendix 2].

This was prepared collaboratively to provide transparency for all partners of the strategic processes being used and ensured the required levels of trust and confidence from not only the sponsors but key stakeholders.

Using project management tools the ARGF project was developed around the four control components: response, enforcement, problem solving / intelligence and prevention.

Three key strategic themes emerged and these became the drivers for the output activities: Eradication, Enforcement and Education.

To operationalise the strategic themes, five work streams were identified and project charters developed for:

- Database
- Enforcement
- Partnership programme
- Local programmes
- Education

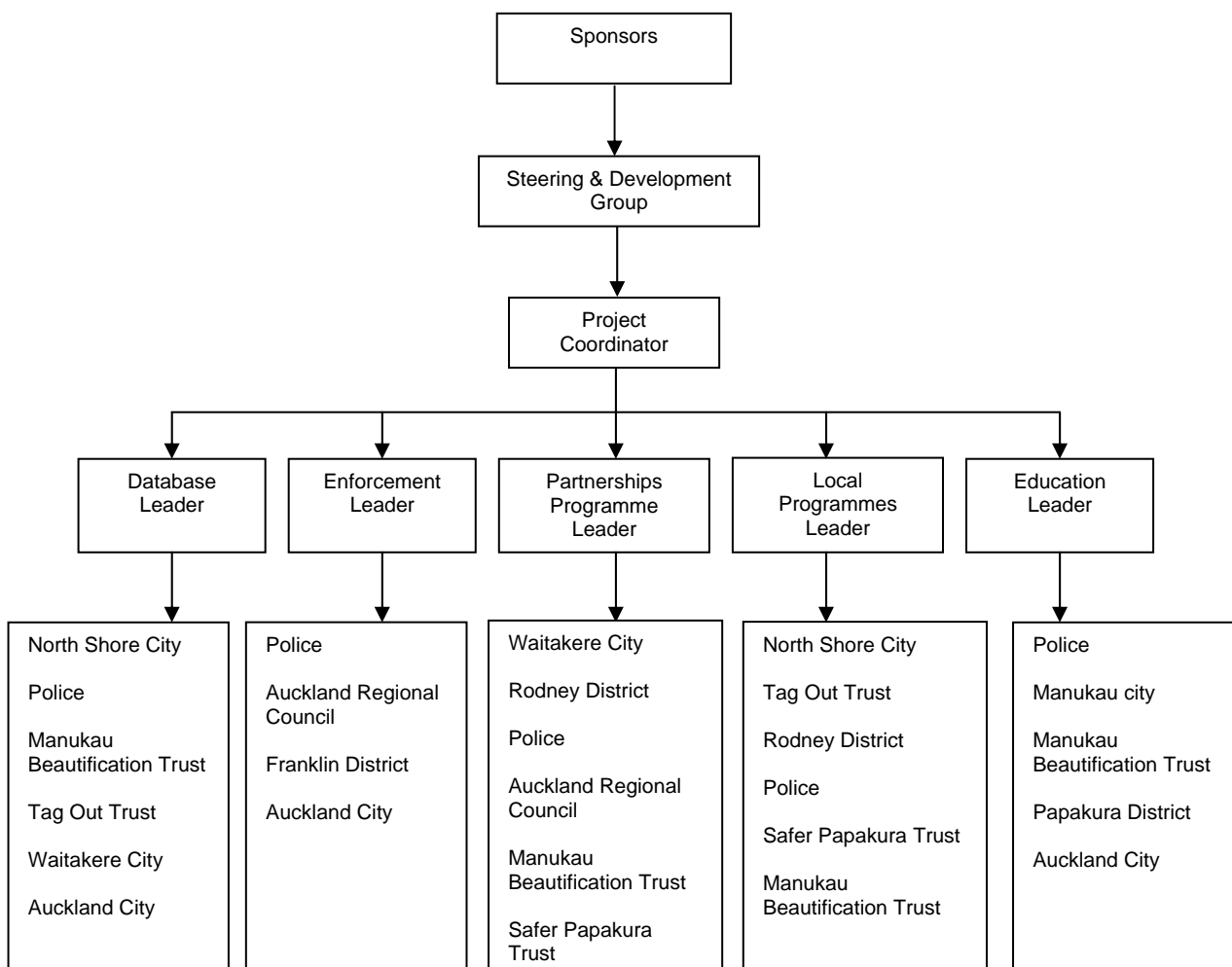
These were endorsed and signed off by the sponsors (see Section 6)

6. Project Management

Governance of the ARGF is provided by the sponsors: the CEO of Manukau City on behalf of the seven councils and the Chair of the Police Board of Management, Assistant Commissioner: Auckland on behalf of the Police. The Project Steering and Development Committee is supported by a full time Project Coordinator (P/C) who reports on progress to the sponsors every three months by written reports and/or face-to-face reports and presentations by the work stream leaders.

Resourcing for the ARGF Project was initially provided by the seven TLAs, on a population basis, and the Police, with a contribution from the Ministry of Justice. The initial set up cost was \$190,000, part of which was used to employ the P/C. Costs associated with employing of the P/C (i.e., computer, consumables, phone, vehicle) have been carried by Auckland City Council. A part-time Graffiti Analyst, employed by the ARGF, has been accommodated at North Shore City and provided with a computer, etc.

The ARGF tendered for and secured additional funding of \$180,000 from the Ministry of Justice, Crime Prevention Unit through the Graffiti Vandalism Contestable Fund.



7. Relationship / Stakeholder Management

Relationship management, internal and external, is the single most important reason for the success of the Project to date and is the under lying philosophy behind most of the decisions. The ARGF is finite and the goals strategic; it operates under the premise of bringing change through 'influence rather than management.'

The Project Steering and Development Group members communicate regularly through emails and phone calls as well as face to face meetings at least once every month. In addition, the four to six members of each of the work stream groups meet every month.

Members most suited to particular tasks were assigned to lead the work stream responsibilities which has proved effective when dealing with external stakeholders.

The Project regularly invites stakeholders to meetings and welcomes their input. This has been valuable in influencing the policy and operational decisions within their own organisations.

8. Innovation and Originality

Inter-TLAs & Police partnership – all the Auckland councils and the three Police district representatives partnering successfully together is unique.

Research – Research guided the proposal, the ToR and the deliverables set by the work streams. *

Creative concepts – Because a large number of graffiti vandalism offenders are young people, members of ARGF have been able to trace and track offenders on the social network sites available through the internet such as 'Bebo' and 'Facebook'. This has resulted in intelligence gathering, apprehensions and reparations.

Training – With the introduction of the new graffiti vandalism legislation and the employment of new police offence codes, a training package was developed by the ARGF project for delivery to police staff. Training was provided to stakeholders in Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) in prevention and management of graffiti vandalism.

Policy development – A policy, *Graffiti Vandalism Policy: Auckland Metropolitan Police*, was written under the auspices of the ARGF project and accepted for implementation in the districts.

Tag Free Kiwi - an innovative, values based education package developed under the aegis of the ARGF for delivery in schools and community groups.

9. Evaluation Framework

The outcomes of work stream activities are reported to the monthly Steering Group meetings to maintain a regular forum for evaluation of progress.

The ARGF project has a mix of internal and external, independent evaluations. As progress has been made in pilot programmes, internal evaluation with input from independent parties has helped identify those programmes worthy of including in best practice methodology (e.g. Rail Corridor Evaluation; Tag Free Kiwi)

Formative evaluations are provided via international and national conference papers and local presentations.

ARGF has contributed significantly to a Victoria University study on graffiti, commissioned by Ministry of Justice, and will look to utilise the study's findings when available.

10. Outcomes for Councils

The ARGF has resulted in the following outcomes:

- Dedicated local police working with councils on graffiti vandalism enforcement
- Database to track vandals and their offending throughout the region
- Devolution of responsibility for management of graffiti vandalism to private and commercial asset owners

* Bradley, E. (2006, December). *Graffiti vandalism: Drawing the line at graffiti vandalism in Counties Manukau*. A Briefing Report to the District Commander, Counties Manukau Police.

Collinson, C. A., Jones, G., & Higginson, R.(2008). *Graffiti Vandalism & The Auckland Region Graffiti Free Projec*. Paper presented at the New Zealand Police Research Symposium, Royal New Zealand Police College, Porirua, Wellington, 15-16 July, 2008.

- More informed communities to deal with graffiti vandalism - ARGF has provided knowledge and practical advice for reporting or eradicating graffiti vandalism
- Enhanced reputation for councils being pro-active in response to highly offensive damage
- Increased civic pride
- Improved public perceptions of safety and security
- Overcome the traditional operational practices for the common good
- Developed strategic methods for sustainable outcomes
- Partnership with Resene Paints has ensured a supply of free or low cost recycled paint for volunteer groups.

11. Benefits to Other Parties

- ARGF has significantly contributed to assisting partner organisations achieve self-reliance by assisting them with creating or re-writing graffiti maintenance policies in alignment with the STOP Strategy and with each other.
- Those partner organisations are:
 - KiwiRail
 - Telecom
 - Vector
 - Watercare Services
 - NZ Transport Agency
- The education sector will benefit from the provision *Tag Free Kiwi* for delivery in intermediate and junior secondary schools.
- Resene Paints in co-branding with ARGF in promoting an anti-graffiti message has realised a commercial benefit.
- Citizens have benefited through the ready availability of resources.
- Department of Corrections have been able to occupy their workers in a meaningful project.
- Ministry of Justice has utilised the direction of the ARGF nationally and built its STOP Strategy with the contributions of ARGF members.
- New Zealand company SmarTrak has developed new software to ARGF specifications which offers national and international opportunities

12. Results

The Project has achieved a number of results that include:

- The creation of a regional graffiti vandalism database that allows graffiti vandals and their tags to be tracked across the region.
 - Multiple levels of access allows different user groups admittance, council officers and police
 - This New Zealand designed system has been created with scalability and differing budgets in mind to allow large or small councils to employ
 - The Ministry of Justice has encouraged its use in other parts of New Zealand
- Police introducing a new code for recording graffiti vandalism to allow tracking of specific graffiti incidents.
- A strong influence in the development and creation of the government's STOP Strategy.

- Dissemination of anti-graffiti messages through Neighbourhood Support, volunteers, business associations and other community groups.
- Partnering with a local radio station (Big FM) to deliver anti-graffiti messages to the 35 to 55 age group.
- Encouraging and supporting some 1100 volunteers to eradicate graffiti vandalism across Auckland region.
- Hosting a number of workshops where all major utility companies and service providers met to discuss their graffiti vandalism issues.
- Arranging CPTED training courses for these same organisations to inform them of specific design principles that allows companies to design their future infrastructures to minimise criminal opportunities.
- Hosting a CPTED course specifically for KiwiRail and NZ Transport Agency engineers and policy writers to positively influence their asset designs.
- Pioneering the use of Department of Corrections workers to clean up graffiti vandalism on the rail corridor. *
- Engaging and positively influencing all major utility and service providers across Auckland region to better manage their own assets and structures with regard graffiti vandalism.
- KiwiRail approaching the ARGF to assist them in appointing a Graffiti Liaison Officer responsible for designing and coordinating KiwiRail's graffiti eradication programme within the rail corridor in Auckland region.
- Developing and printing a practical "How To" guide to graffiti vandalism for councils and other organisations. This has been distributed to most councils in New Zealand through the Ministry of Justice.
- The supply of Resene's recycled paint to any council or volunteer organisation in New Zealand at no charge, for the painting out of graffiti vandalism.
- Resene's provision of free overalls for graffiti eradication volunteers co-branded with Auckland Region Graffiti Free Project and Resene Paints.
- The design and printing of anti-graffiti brochures in partnership with Resene supplied to communities when assisting them with their graffiti management programmes
- A values based education package *Tag Free Kiwi*
- The increased focus on graffiti vandalism has resulted in significantly less requests for service by residents and ratepayers for graffiti eradication

13. Supporting Material

Appendix 1	Auckland Region Graffiti Free Project Proposal
Appendix 2	Project Terms of Reference

Contact/s for further information

Stewart Andrews – Coordinator, Auckland Region Graffiti Free Project
 Office Phone: 09 354 2203
 Mobile: 021 654 528
 Email: stewart.andrews@aucklandcity.govt.nz

* Evans, G. (2008, November). *ARGF evaluation report: Partnerships programme's rail corridor project*.