

## NEWS

blacktownadvocate.com.au



Blacktown Council's anti-graffiti workshops are catching on.

## Think about graffiti impact

PRIMARY schools are taking part in a graffiti education program aimed at curbing a destructive trend of vandalism in Blacktown's streets.

The council is targeting students aged 10-12 from schools, including Matella Rd Public School, and encouraging them to think about the impact graffiti has on the community.

Mayor Alan Pendleton said the program was one of several initiatives undertaken in council's Graffiti Management Plan.

The program is the result of a recommendation handed down by the Blacktown Taskforce Against Graffiti.

Cr Pendleton wants the program to deliver a strong anti-graffiti message to young people.

"The concept of the program is to provide

a strong message to our young people by educating them on the anti-graffiti message before graffiti offending," Cr Pendleton said.

Council has enlisted the help of local performers to help engage students in the program.

"The program sends a clear message that graffiti is about choices and consequences," Cr Pendleton said.

By showing students the negatives of graffiti vandalism and presenting positive images, it is hoped young people will see how damaging and costly the pastime is to the community.

Graffiti costs the Blacktown community more than \$900,000 a year.

Check out council's Graffiti initiatives at [www.blacktown.nsw.gov.au](http://www.blacktown.nsw.gov.au)

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## Army Helicopter Training over Blacktown

Up to four Black Hawk helicopters will fly over the Blacktown area and in the vicinity of Westpoint Blacktown as part of a training exercise on 10 November 2010.

The exercises ensure pilots and aircrew are well trained for flying in all conditions across urban and rural areas. Flights will occur during the afternoon and evening, no later than 11:00pm.

The Army will aim to minimise disruptions during the training, which has been designed to have as little impact on residents as possible, however some noise will be noticeable.

The Army thanks the public for their patience and cooperation while this necessary and essential training is undertaken.

adcorp34828

## Class act kicks off council program

COUNCIL 7 NOV 10 @ 08:32AM

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Anti-graffiti campaigner Xavier Diaz (right) with students Zohal Abawi, Christian Hipolito and Jessica McMahon. PHOTO: David Marshall.

BLACKTOWN Council kicked off its graffiti education program at Plumpton Public School last Tuesday.

The program is part of its graffiti management plan and includes a 45-minute performance, teacher handbook, letter to parents, stickers, flyers, and other materials.

A council spokeswoman says the program targets years 5 and 6 students and encourages them to think about graffiti, its impact and the negative consequences of graffiti vandalism.

Blacktown Mayor Alan Pendleton said: ``The program includes a young qualified performer who uses the language of young people and involves them in ways they can identify with, giving them a clear message that graffiti is about choices and consequences.

``The concept of the program is to provide a strong message to our young people; educating them on the anti graffiti message before graffiti offending."qTo view the graffiti management plan, visit the website at [www.blacktown.nsw.gov.au](http://www.blacktown.nsw.gov.au)

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# Spreading the word

Xavier Diaz is teaching about graffiti at Schofields Public School.

Picture: CARMELA ROCHE



## @ Schofields Public

BLACKTOWN Council is tackling the scourge of graffiti with an educational blitz at local primary schools, using humour as a valuable tool.

Schofields Public School year five and six students were the first to undergo the trial education program last week.

Graffiti educator Xavier Diaz had the students in stitches, using his acting skills and accents to show

them how graffiti works before informing them of the gravity of the crime.

"I use humour to get the children interested and then take them through the legal implications of graffiti," he said.

"I tell them the main difference between art and graffiti is getting permission and they understand that.

"Blacktown Council is trialling this project to several schools and if they are successful, it is likely to be

spread to more."

The program includes a 45-minute performance, teacher handbook, letter to parents, stickers, flyers, and other materials.

Blacktown mayor Alan Pendleton said the program encouraged students to think about graffiti and the impact it has on them and the wider community, and communicate the negative consequences of being involved in vandalism.

# Time to learn respect

BY CALLAN LAWRENCE

02 Nov, 2010 01:00 AM

AUTHORITIES are taking an anti-vandalism campaign to primary schools to teach children about the negative effects on communities of vandalism.

Blacktown Council, supported by the police and schools, is giving the "Respect it, don't wreck it" workshops a trial.

Last Friday, year 5 and year 6 children at Doonside Public School took part in a 45-minute interactive presentation about the consequences of graffiti.

Professional actor Xavier Diaz, from Warner Awareness Education in Melbourne, presented the pupils with a series of hypothetical peer-pressure situations in which they might find themselves.

Mr Diaz told the children they might be under pressure to take drugs and to take part in such misbehaviour as writing graffiti. "Is it hard to say no to people you like hanging out with?" he asked, to near-unanimous response of "Yes".

He then told them that "anybody who doesn't respect you when you say 'no I don't want to do that' is not your true friend".

Mr Diaz also told them of the consequences their choices could have.

Jessica Bell, of year 6, said after the presentation that she now knew more about making choices and their consequences.

Her thoughts on graffiti are now the same as those of the wider community.

"Some graffiti looks all right," she said. "Most looks disgusting."

The graffiti education workshop has been run in Melbourne for at least five years and has received positive feedback from councils and schools.



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How to resist bad peers: Xavier Diaz in character at Doonside Public School. Picture: Gene Ramirez



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