



turning off the taggers

Inspiring the community to take pride in their environment, the Manukau Beautification team has many colourful projects on the go.

In summer, it's not unusual to spot teams of school children with paintbrushes in hand, carefully adding bold flourishes to large murals that enliven fences and walls in public places around Manukau City. Sometimes you see groups tending gardens, even cleaning up footpaths and streets. It's all part of an initiative by the Manukau City Council to inspire pride in the community.

About 10 years ago, the then-mayor of Manukau City, Barry Curtis, established Manukau Beautiful to provide and promote projects that enhance the visual beauty of New Zealand's biggest city. In 2001, the project became the Manukau Beautification Charitable Trust, supported by Manukau City Council and companies like Resene. As well as offering an affordable rate for its anti-graffiti products, Resene donates recycled paint through the Resene PaintWise programme to cover graffiti and for use on

murals and public spaces to deter graffiti.

The trust's operations manager, Barbara Carney, explains that the projects undertaken include graffiti removal, painting murals, education and garden competitions. "But, by default, by far the most time is focused around graffiti eradication." A graffiti removal team has seven vans that travel throughout the area every day, removing graffiti from beside main arterial routes, on fences and council property.

The trust helps commercial property owners by planting trees and shrubs next to 'high risk walls' – a proven deterrent to tagging and vandalism. It also gives property owners advice on protective coatings and other tagging preventative measures. To monitor the success of the project, the trust keeps tabs on the number of tags they've dealt to; the area of tags in square metres and the litres of paint

used to cover up graffiti (see box).

Staff also spend time educating young children, working closely with primary and intermediate schools in Manukau. "For that age group," says Barbara, "education is focused on prevention. Once children are at high school, it's almost too late."

There are also Manukau School's Fun and Activity Days held at the Auckland Botanic Gardens where children take part in a variety of hands-on activities including planting pot plants, making scarecrows and painting colourful mural tiles with images of flora and fauna.

The school programme aims to encourage pride, respect and responsibility in the students towards their environment. Barbara takes a police officer with her to schools to discuss the legal implications of tagging. "We usually take the children to



Barbara Carney of the Manukau Beautification Trust with the type of community mural used to deter graffiti.

In first six months of this year

Number of tags removed 17,811
 Square metres painted 37,998

top tips

For more ideas on dealing with and deterring graffiti, you can visit www.graffitifree.co.nz.

If you are constantly being tagged, you can get Resene Uracryl, an anti-graffiti finish, applied to the graffiti prone areas. Once cured you will be able to quickly wash away any graffiti using Resene Graffiti Cleaner without damaging the paint finish.

a local reserve or walkway to paint out the graffiti. We talk about taking ownership of their community and taking pride in what they've done. I try to encourage discussion by asking 'what does the mural artist have that the graffiti artist doesn't?' – it's permission."

The typical tagger, she explains, repeats their scrawl as many times as possible to gain recognition and status from other taggers. If graffiti is removed quickly, taggers are denied their glory. Graffiti vandalism is a community problem that encourages more vandalism and other types of crime, she says. "We need to send clear messages to those involved in tagging that we won't tolerate it."

Only time will tell if the education measures will make a difference in Manukau, says Barbara. Statistics show that there has been a decrease in graffiti, but it won't be

being paintwise

Groups such as the Manukau Beautification Trust keep their costs down by benefitting from Resene's paint recycling scheme, and your unwanted paint.

The Resene PaintWise programme allows you to simply bring unwanted paint and paint containers into your local Resene ColorShop (these should not be thrown out with your normal rubbish). Resene offers good quality paint to community groups for reuse, recycles packaging materials, sends solventborne paints to solvent recovery and finds alternative uses for waterborne paints (such as graffiti abatement).

Selected Resene ColorShops have been designated as Resene PaintWise Collection Centres. Drop off your unwanted paint and paint containers to any of these designated Resene ColorShops at any time during their opening hours.




You can return any brand of decorative paint but a small charge applies to non-Resene branded product and trade returns to help offset the costs of the PaintWise programme.

See www.resene.co.nz/paintwise for more information

known for a long time just how successful the programmes have been. "A handful of taggers keep on at it and unfortunately some children look up to them. But I can see a difference, so I think we're having an impact. But with the technology and TV promoting tagging, I don't think it will ever disappear."

The trust also runs the hugely popular Manukau in Bloom Garden Awards each year in which hundreds of homeowners receive vouchers from Resene and Mitre 10 as prizes, prompting them to further invest in their property to make Manukau beautiful. **H**

words Vicki Holder
 pictures Mark Heaslip

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