

Item 11: Community

11.1 Public Spaces Vandalism

REPORT BY THE MANAGER - RECREATION SERVICES
TO 19 OCTOBER 2022 ORDINARY MEETING
GOV400098, F0650008

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. **receive the report by the Manager - Recreation Services on the Public Spaces Vandalism;**
2. **note the recent increase in vandalism and graffiti incidents in public spaces; and**
3. **amend the 2022-23 budget to include \$60,000 from unrestricted cash for the installation of camera surveillance and security lighting in public spaces where vandalism is a proven concern.**

Executive summary

This report seeks Councils support for the installation of surveillance cameras and security lighting in selected public spaces to assist in reducing the acts of vandalism and malicious damage to public assets.

Disclosure of Interest

Nil

Detailed report

A key component of creating a vibrant and sustainable environment for residents and visitors to Mid-Western is the ongoing consideration of the community's safety. Unfortunately, in recent time there has been an increase in the number of vandalism and graffiti incidents throughout Council's recreation and building assets. Vandalism and graffiti have a negative impact on the attractiveness of open space facilities, increase down time of facility access and in some instances lead the community to feeling unsafe to access and use public spaces.

This report aims to highlight the on-going challenges currently being faced with providing safe and pleasant public spaces. It highlights the need for additional security measures to be implemented to assist in reducing the acts of vandalism and malicious damage to public assets. It is proposed that Council support the installation of camera surveillance and security lighting at selected vandalism and graffiti hotspots- where public safety/crime is a proven concern.

The current cost to Council over the past 18-month period for the repair and replacement of Council's assets exceeds \$40,000. This figure excludes the cost associated with Council Officers time to report, record and action reports of vandalism and graffiti. Council Officers are constantly working

with local Police Officers to reduce the level of asset damage. NSW Police have since formally requested that Council consider implementing additional safety measures such as security cameras and lighting. Recent examples of acts of vandalism and malicious damage reporting and graffiti are provided in Attachment 1.

As at September 2022, the following open space sites are proposed to have camera surveillance and security lighting installed:

- Adventure Playground, Gulgong
- Anzac Park, Gulgong
- Apex Park, Gulgong
- Victoria Park, Gulgong
- Billy Dunn Oval, Gulgong
- Waratah Park, Kandos
- Victoria Park, Mudgee

Councils Camera Surveillance Policy supports the installation of surveillance cameras in public spaces to protect community assets. Surveillance of Council assets include amenity buildings, recreation and parks assets (play/exercise equipment, seating, bins etc.) in public places. In-line with this Policy, Council will continue to inform people attending these facilities that video recordings are occurring and maintain detailed privacy and storage obligations.

It is important to note that the proposed additional camera surveillance and security lighting is to be considered as only one item in continuing to provide safe and secure public spaces. A whole-of-community approach is required where police, residents and local community associations continue to work in close partnership to create a widespread all-inclusive approach towards safeguarding public space assets.

Community Plan implications

Theme	Looking After Our Community
Goal	A safe and healthy community
Strategy	Support networks, program and facilities which promote health and wellbeing and encourage healthy lifestyles

Strategic implications

Council Strategies

Asset Management Plan
Recreation Strategy

Council Policies

Camera Surveillance Policy
Vandalism Policy

Legislation

Surveillance Device Act 2007
Privacy and Information Protection Act 1998
Local Government Act 1993

Financial implications

There is currently no budget allocated for the supply and installation of surveillance cameras and security lighting in public spaces where safety and crime are a proven concern. It is recommended that Council commit a budget of \$60,000 from unrestricted cash to support this initiative to safeguard Councils assets.

Budget Year	Operating Performance Ratio	Own Source Revenue	Building & Infrastructure Renewal
2022/23	—	—	—
Future Years	✓	—	✓

Associated Risks

The inclusion of camera surveillance and security lighting will assist in safeguarding Council's public spaces assets. In the event that this initiative is not support it is highly likely that Council will need to continue to devote a high level of funds from operational budgets to undertake reactive maintenance for the repair and reinstatement of any damaged assets.

PETER RAINES
MANAGER - RECREATION SERVICES

SIMON JONES
DIRECTOR COMMUNITY

5 October 2022

Attachments: Nil

APPROVED FOR SUBMISSION:

BRAD CAM
GENERAL MANAGER