

Submission

The subcultural heritage of hip-hop style graffiti places metropolitan train assets, and rolling stock in particular, as the highest order target. This has led to graffiti vandals developing a skillset that uses tools and expertise to bypass and evade protective security controls at heavy rail facilities such as roller stock stabling yards and maintenance facilities. The skillset of graffiti vandals, as well as the normalisation of criminal activity within their social networks, often sees them move from graffiti to higher order crimes. However, and irrespective of an ongoing criminal career, graffiti vandals have the skills akin to saboteurs and do regularly stop trains while in service and shut down networks.

Though graffiti is more evident in some cities than others, recent research, led by Transport for NSW and funded by the iMove CRC, has found that public transport rail operators in all capital cities see graffiti as a major issue that significantly hampers operations. Both Sydney and Melbourne Metro operators suggest that large “mural” train graffiti is a daily occurrence. While not as regular in Brisbane and Perth, is it still at the very least a weekly occurrence. While the cost of cleaning paint from rolling stock can range from \$AUD500-2000 per mural, estimates of the full cost, including returning the train to cleaning areas, replacing the service with new stock, and staffing both the old and new service, to be roughly AUD\$13,000. This does not take in account network downtime, which has cumulative flow-on effect on service delivery, meaning that one event affects the entire line, and in some instances can affect the entire network. Neither does it reflect the cost of repairing fences, cameras and other assets, often including parts of rolling stock themselves, which are typically destroyed during graffiti and trespass events.

Many rail operators are frustrated with the sentencing of known and repetitive graffiti vandals, and feel that vandals are receiving penalties that fail to recognise the impact and cost of the destruction that these offenders cause. Rail operators are also hampered by an inability to share data amongst jurisdictions and even between rail operators within the same jurisdiction, particularly in Melbourne with the division between tram and train. Data and information sharing between police and operators has also been noted as a high-level issue preventing the effective management of graffiti.

The 'Intergovernmental Agreement on Surface Transport Security' (IGA-STs) exists between all Australian states and territories is meant to facilitate the exchange of information about security-related threats, but needs updating and rigorous observance and could/should be the instrument to facilitate the information exchange being sought.

To this end this submission proposes the following:

- a) Attacks against rail, metro or otherwise, particularly if it affects the effective running of the network through intent or action to commit graffiti or vandalism, be considered an attack against Critical National Infrastructure and formalised as such, allowing police the opportunity to charge against it. Furthermore,
- b) To enable authorities to better manage graffiti, any data obtained from rail operators in relation to attacks on rail assets, be sharable among rail operators in all jurisdictions. Additionally, while police can share information among jurisdictions, there is a view of graffiti vandalism as lower order crime and police are often under resourced to deal with graffiti. This submission argues that police data related to graffiti vandalism on rail assets should be available to local rail operators, which should also be sharable among operations in all jurisdictions. This should be implemented through an overhaul of the 'Intergovernmental Agreement on Surface Transport Security' (IGA-STs).