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St Kilda Junction Mural offers colourful welcome

The “Gateway to St Kilda” is now home to a colourful mural celebrating St Kilda Junction’s history and heritage.

The St Kilda Junction Mural Project is also aimed at reducing graffiti, as studies suggest vandals are less likely to graffiti public spaces featuring art out of respect for the artists.

The artwork was commissioned under the theme of ‘Welcome to St Kilda’, creating a sense of place and pride.

Seventy-five artists came together in a four-day graffiti jam to contribute to the creation of the mural along 1500 square metres of subway walls and road sidings owned by Yarra Trams and VicRoads.

Usually, councils can’t remove graffiti or touch assets owned by the Victorian Government and third parties, such as utilities suppliers and transport providers.

Under this partnership with Yarra Trams and VicRoads, however, Council’s efforts to deter graffiti have been strengthened through this artwork created on third-party public assets, with the funding for the project secured via the Department of Treasury.

A highlight of the artwork includes the instantly recognisable words “Welcome to St Kilda” in large lettering on a feature wall leading to the St Kilda Junction tram stop.

Renowned artist Paul from Urban Enhancement put the final touches to the mural after the graffiti jam.

“One of the best things is the use of colour. As you walk through each section, another colour appears on the walls which shows you’re entering a new section created by a different group of artists working together,” he said.

“A tram stopped before and the driver said to me, ‘I drive through here every day and it was really ugly, now it looks beautiful, thank you so much’. We’ve been getting that response from people of all ages, coming through on their bikes or pushing a pram.”

Mayor Marcus Pearl said: “This new street art helps connect our community through a shared appreciation of what makes our City unique.

“St Kilda Junction is often referred to as the ‘Gateway to St Kilda’, so we’re excited to see this colourful artwork appear to deter graffiti while welcoming visitors,” Cr Pearl said.

The St Kilda Junction Mural Project was undertaken following strong interest from the community, led by St Kilda Junction Area Action Group (JAAG).

Council completed 4493 graffiti removal requests in the 2020-2021 financial year, which included the removal of 24,810 square metres of graffiti across the City. These figures include three months where limited removals could take place due to lockdown restrictions.

