

This graffiti is put community use

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In a bid to curb vandalism and graffiti, Dandenong Council has given two local teenagers permission to paint a mural on a property adjoining parkland in Dandenong North.

Adam Knapper, 17, and Jodie Williams, 16, of Dandenong North, will put their artistic skills to the test on a garage wall in Gatley Court in an effort to brighten up the park for the young children who use it.

Adam said: "We live in the area and are into art so we had the idea of brightening up the park for the kids. The wall already has graffiti on it and rude things, so being artists we would like to make it attractive".

Once the artists decided they would like to beautify the wall, they made a submission to Dandenong Council and its former youth development worker Mark Searle. Mr Searle said: "I was approached by Adam and Jodie who had the idea for a number of walls in the city and this was one of them. We took photographs of the wall and put their sketches of the mural together submitted them to council, which saw the mural as an improvement."

"Approval for the artistic design has also been forthcoming from the property owner so now the young artist simply need to get the nod from the Division of Youth Affairs for the paint money which will be between \$150 and \$200", according to Mr Searle.

He said this approval should be announced within a week or two and work on the mural would get under way as soon as the money was granted.

Adam, who is currently doing his TOP at Dandenong TAFE which involves fine arts, has painted a mural through the TAFE and undertaken a major mural at Fountain Gate Shopping Centre, painting construction boards.

Jodie, a photography student at Huntingdale Technical School, has painted a few small murals around the city and assisted Adam in looking after the paints at the Fountain Gate job.

The final design for the mural has not been decided by Adam and Jodie but both agree it will contain plenty of colour. Once started they said it should be completed within two weeks. Adam, Jodie and Mr Searle hope the mural will spark a chain reaction within Dandenong which will see permission forthcoming for other murals.

Mr Searle said there were a number of vandalised walls in the city which could have murals painted on them or be used to convey messages such as those from the anti-smoking campaigns.

Mr Searle said "if we put up a mural which reflects the interest of everyone, then the young people and locals will make sure there is no further damage to the walls".

"The council is currently working with a group including Adam and Jodie, which hopes to paint a mural on the wall of an elderly citizens' club once permission is granted". "The centre has been hit by vandals and this is one avenue of addressing the problem".

•••• editorial, p.2 "An exercise in public goodwill".