

Vandals make mark

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THE jury is out on whether a new graffiti prevention law is stamping out vandalism.

But graffiti vandals have wasted no time spray-painting a fence on a new Greensborough housing development.

No houses have been built on the development, tucked in between Greensborough Highway, Grimshaw St and the train line, but potential buyers are greeted by a sprawling mess of "tags" on the wooden fence backing on to the train line.

Greensborough Sen-Sgt Lou Pontonio said police were aware of the fence, which is hundreds of metres long.

"Unfortunately, areas along the railway line seem to cop a fair bit of this type of thing," Sen-Sgt Pontonio said.

He said the new law, which came into force in June, allowed police to issue infringement notices against people found carrying spray paint cans without a valid reason.

"This is part of the solution but the community has its part to play by staying vigilant," he said.

Rodney Mackenzie, of Bundoora-based graffiti removal business The Graffiti Eaters, said it was too early to judge the full impact of the law.

"We can't say it has helped," Mr Mackenzie said.

"We're doing a higher turnover in graffiti than we were last year.

"It really comes back to whether police can enforce the law."



Graffiti vandals have taken the opportunity to showcase their "tags" on the back fence of a new housing development.

Picture: MARK FRECKER N08DV455

University of Melbourne graffiti culture expert and criminologist Professor Alison Young believed police had yet to be fully trained in

the enforcement of the new law. Prof Young said the State Government and councils needed to consult more widely on graffiti-prevention

strategies. Many of the submissions submitted when the Act was proposed did not appear to have been taken into account, she said.