

Scrub out vandals for better transport

Paul Nicolaou



The August 4 start of Sydney's \$21.6bn Metro extension is unvarnished good news for our city.

But let's also recognise Sydney will soon be a tale of two public transport systems – one shiny and new and the other looking decidedly down at heel.

The new Chatswood to

Sydenham Metro link is in stark contrast to our legacy suburban rail system. Graffiti vandals have had a field day along our rail corridors leaving almost no trackside structures or buildings free of disfiguring spray paint.

It's time to spread the euphoria of the Metro opening to clean up the existing system. Premier Chris Minns and Transport Minister Jo Haylen inherited hundreds of urgent rail maintenance tasks.

And there is the operational challenge of maintaining services while having 'possession' of rail corridors to paint over the offending graffiti.

The outstanding tasks have been done so the time is right to turn attention to the graffiti scourge. We've long known that other artwork is an antidote to graffiti vandalism.

The Devonshire St pedestrian tunnel near Central Station where wall art depicting rail heritage has largely remained graffiti free.

Former Sydney resident, Adam Hardy, now a Queenslander, shares our disdain

for graffiti vandalism. He was visually offended by the sight of graffiti attacks on an 800m pipeline at Tempe bringing water from the desalination plant.

Indigenous artwork now decorates the length of the pipeline and passengers arriving at Sydney Airport are no longer greeted by the previous urban blight. Adam also shares our concern that Sydneysiders and visitors to our city are exposed to graffiti vandalism on the rail system. He says it's "beyond belief" that visitors are "confronted with a rail corridor plastered in hideous graffiti".

Our public transport experts must know that graffiti vandalism on public transport systems is not a 'benign condition'.

It shakes community confidence in using the system. So, let's put a concerted anti-graffiti clean-up project on the task list for Sydney's rail system.

And in doing so, spread the undiluted joy of the Metro opening.

Paul Nicolaou is executive director of Business Sydney