

Government News

## **Sign of the times**

Skateboarders at Maroubra Park were a key concern for Randwick City Council. Regulation signs needed to be onsite 24 hours at the skate park because of liability risks.

However, the replacement of damaged or weather-worn signs invariably meant their removal to be cleaned, repaired and repainted in the council's workshop.

"We could not afford not to have a regulation sign there because of the liability implications," said Ms Gigi Lombardi, landscape design coordinator at the council.

The solution to their signage dilemma came in the form of a new technology called ALUimage enabling Randwick City Council to keep the signs onsite when cleaned.

The signs – the technology of which is distributed by Duragraphics and supplied to Cunneen Signs for their construction – are colour printed anodised aluminium where the images and text are imbedded into the sign. This means the signs are scratch-resistant, can not be damaged through graffiti, are able to have modern metallic colours, and they are long-lasting in all weather conditions.

"The process of cleaning is quicker because you spray and wipe [the signs] clean on the spot, and it's finished, whereas before we had to disassemble them and take them to the workshop for repainting and repairs," Ms Lombardi said.

Choosing the right product, finish and material for the location is a major factor in selecting a manufacture for councils.

According to Ms Lombardi, the main factors Randwick City Council looks for are the durability of the material and the overall quality of the finish product for the sign. She said that while all councils look at the problems of vandalism and graffiti, another factor that needs to be considered is the environmental effects on the sign.

"Apart from the colour fading from the sun exposure, we also have to consider sea salt degradation and the effects of strong winds," Ms Lombardi said.

"We have had the regulation signs at Maroubra skate park for 18 months now. As well as being easily cleaned, they haven't faded either, and the life expectancy of the new signs is around 10 years compared with four or five

years for the previous signs -- which also needed paint touch ups during that time.”

The technology has been so successful that the Randwick Council is in the process of replacing all its outdoor coastal signs with the ALUimage technology, as part of its outdoor facelift – which also includes using stainless steel for coastal furniture and bin-surrounds.

The council’s first stage has included new coastal signage for park names and regulation signs including Malabar and Coogee rock pools as well as the Hoopers Cottage historical site which will have interpretative plaques with photos and text on a sandstone block.

While Lombardi says the new signs are initially more expensive, she sees them as a long-term investment and expects the Council to recoup its investment through reduced hours in maintenance and the advantages of having longer-lasting signs.

Currently there are 10 councils adopting the ALUimage technology with Pittwater Council following Randwick’s lead in replacing all its regulation signs.

*For further information on the ALUimage technology, contact Neil Cunneen, managing director at Duragraphics on 1300 138 442 or see [www.duragraphics.com](http://www.duragraphics.com)*