Established 1833 | Friday, November 19, 2010 | thewest.com.au $1.30
METRO †☆
Gascoyne, Shark Bay $1.35; Pilbara, Kimberley $2.15. GST INC.

The West Australian

CLAREMONT INFERNO

Fire destroys council chambers and library

FULL REPORT PAGE 3

GRAFFITI HIT LIST

Train vandals caught red-handed in secret camera sting

GABRIELLE KNOWLES
EXCLUSIVE

At least 115 vandals have been caught in a secretive eight-month sting on Perth's train network that has led to a 75 per cent decrease in repairs for damage and graffiti.

Clean carriages are being used as $3 million pieces of bait under Operation Cleanskin to catch adults and youths who damage rail cars.

The Public Transport Authority launched the strategy in March to reduce its multimillion-dollar annual graffiti clean-up bill after successfully using it on buses several years ago.

High-resolution security cameras on the pristine carriages are checked daily. Staff photograph any damage, study the CCTV footage to capture images of the vandals at work and then pass them to police.

Police said 115 adults and youths, just two of them females, had been charged with 144 offences and hauled before the courts since the crackdown started. Most of those caught had allegedly scratched train windows with sandpaper or other items, often in front of other passengers.

Police want the public's help to identify another 13 adults and 19 youths, some of them pictured above, for questioning over vandalism of trains on the Mandurah and Clarkson lines since March.

Carriage windows, which cost $920, are protected with special film so they rarely need replacing, but the authority spends about $450,000 each year on new protective film.

Public Transport Authority security services manager Steve Furmedge said graffiti across the Transperth system cost the authority — which in turn cost WA taxpayers — $2.8 million a year.

"Cleanskin has reduced this cost dramatically in just eight months," Mr Furmedge said.

Acting Sen. Sgt Mike O'Leary, of police transport Perth, said vandals should be aware they were being watched. When they damaged trains, they would be caught and taken to court.

Sen. Const. Chris Bown said some of those convicted of criminal damage had been fined up to $1500. Adults were also ordered to repay the transport authority for repairs, which in some cases had been thousands of dollars. Jail terms of two to 10 years and maximum fines of $36,000 could apply to criminal damage convictions.

Several repeat offenders were caught in the first months of the operation.

Anyone with information should call Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000.

PERTH 23-39 Details, P58

Very hot. Tom: partly cloudy, 21-36. Yest: 18.5-37.2

WIN $20,000 CASH FOR CHRISTMAS
Week 2 coupon PAGE 70

HOME DELIVERY
Call **1800 811 855** to get *The West* home delivered.