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## **NSW GRAFFITI LAWS CRIMINALISE HOPSCOTCH**

“Laws that make criminals of children chalking hopscotch courts are an outrage,” said Simon Breheny, Editor, *FreedomWatch* at free market think tank the Institute of Public Affairs.

The *Graffiti Control Amendment Bill 2013* (NSW) would make it illegal for people “to intentionally mark any premises or other property” without the consent of the “person in charge” of the building or premises. Individuals face fines of \$440 for offences under the proposed law.

“The proposed legislation is so broad that it would criminalise the most routine of acts. Children could be fined for chalking hopscotch squares on footpaths, without first getting approval from bureaucrats at their local council,” said Mr Breheny.

“The bill allows police discretion as to who they will prosecute for offences committed under the act. Police should not have arbitrary power to decide how the law should be applied,” said Mr Breheny.

“It is good that the NSW government is taking steps to protect private property from vandals but this bill is not the answer. The proposed legislation should be abandoned as it criminalises behaviour that poses no threat to the community at all,” said Mr Breheny.

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