



LAW & ORDER

Vandals leave a costly mark

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 THE ADVERTISER

GRAFFITI vandals are trashing new trains worth millions of dollars as the clean-up bill for taxpayers increases.

There has been extensive graffiti damage in the past month to the \$10 million electric trains servicing the Seaford line.

The cost of repairing graffiti and vandalism to public transport trains alone was more than \$643,000 in 2013/14 — and the State Government is warning that bill will be “even higher” in 2014/15.

Transport Minister Stephen Mullighan said “highly organised interstate gangs” were among the vandals wrecking Adelaide trains.

He said the Transport Department and police have been increasing their efforts in tackling the vandals.

The latest figures on the cost of vandalism come as the department proposes a

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- Transport Minister Stephen Mullighan

new high security depot at the Adelaide rail yards.

Documents show the proposed depot would accommodate 36 rail cars.

The \$10 million depot would be “fully fenced with gated access, CCTV and intrusion detection to secure trains”, according to the proposal.

The depot would also allow “quicker departures from Adelaide Railway Station on special events” and “improve operational capability” while reducing “unnecessary railcar travel”.

The Opposition says it supports the department’s proposal and wants security at the Dry Creek and Seaford depots increased.

Liberal transport spokesman Corey Wingard said: “The department sees this as a clear issue because of the dollars being wasted.”

“Having to take these new trains out of service from the upgraded Seaford line to be cleaned up would also frustrate passengers.”

Mr Mullighan said both existing depots had state-of-the-art security, including extensive CCTV coverage.

“We are increasing and improving CCTV coverage across the network, increasing penalties for graffiti vandalism, with offenders now facing up to 12 months imprisonment,” he said.

“In addition, police have the power to clamp, impound, crush and sell the cars of these vandals.”

Latest figures show only two \$270 on-the-spot fines for graffiti of a passenger vehicle were issued last financial year. Court documents show there were 492 charges for all graffiti offences in 2013-14 — up from 430.