

# Anger meted out on parking meters

By CARMEL MELOUNEY

POLICE have been called in to protect new parking meters after a backlash of vandalism by irate motorists in harbourside Mosman.

In a battle that has involved police, councillors, beachgoers and radio talk-back king Alan Jones, Balmoral residents have refused to accept the installation of parking meters at their beach.

After repeated acts of vandalism, involving glue, paint and stickers, police have been asked to help Mosman council protect the unpopular meters. Residents fought bitterly against the council plan to install pay-and-display parking meters there, arguing that the beach should be free for all.

But the council persisted and meters began operation this month. Within hours of starting, nine machines were defaced with white spray paint between 5am and 7.30am on November 1.

A week later, 12 meters had stickers placed over them, reading: "Mosman Municipal Council Parking Scheme Suspended. No payment required."

Last weekend, 24 of the meters were vandalised with glue.

Broadcaster Alan Jones earlier called for the council to be sacked because "Balmoral Beach belongs to all Australians, not Mosman council".

Jones told his radio 2GB listeners recently that "the game is up for you mob on Mosman Council".

A Harbourside police spokesman

said three incidents of vandalism were being investigated by police.

He said that police "have stepped up their patrols" in the metered area and may need to conduct "an operation" to ensure the meters were protected.

The council has reported the damage to police and if the perpetrators are caught, they face criminal charges.

Mosman's corporate services director Max Glyde said the council was "very disappointed" by the vandalism.

"It's up to Mosman people themselves, whether they want to align themselves with this kind of activity," he said, noting that the council would have to pay to replace some meter parts.

Anyone with details on the vandalism should call North Sydney police.



Beachside bite: Resident Bella Yates