



SMIRV a scientific success story

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If you thought television's police drama *CSI* represented the cutting edge of police forensic technology, think again.

Move over *CSI* – SMIRV is here.

The Queensland Police Service has rolled out an upgraded one-stop-shop forensic vehicle that takes the laboratory to the crime scene.

The Scientific Major Incident Response Vehicle (SMIRV) is the evolution of a concept developed over 10 years which allows police investigators to bring a fully equipped forensic laboratory out to the crime scene, saving time, costs and most importantly reducing the double-handling of evidence.

No one is more pleased with the outcome than scientific officer Senior Sergeant Brad Hall who conceived the idea of an all-in-one scientific vehicle in 1997.

He realised the existing fleet of station wagons would not be able to meet the growing demand for on-scene technology.

"We would be continually travelling to and from the scene as our investigations required further items of equipment," Senior Sergeant Hall said.

Thanks to the SMIRV everything a scientific officer requires now arrives on a custom-built Ford F250 truck complete with nationally accredited lab bench, testing facilities and wireless connections to QPS data systems.

Forensic police can digitally record data, chemically test samples, store crime scene evidence in heat-sealed bags and keep perishable exhibits in refrigerated compartments.

The truck also carries protective chemical suits and breathing apparatus for investigators as well as pop-up tents to set up sites for

additional equipment and examination areas.

But taking the lab on location does not mean more police are required at the scene.

Thanks to cutting edge digital technology forensic officers can enter crime scene data directly into a central forensic information management system at the point of collection.

Senior investigators can conduct virtual crime scene examinations without leaving a major incident room many kilometres from the site.

Senior Sergeant Hall said previously investigators had to wait many hours for a crime scene to be forensically examined before having the opportunity to physically enter and view the area.

"Now, thanks to digital technology, investigators can view a crime scene via virtual digital transmissions almost immediately.

"The potential now exists for a scenes of crime officer to lift a fingerprint at a scene and have it identified by experts at a major incident room far removed from that location," he said.

Back at the scene one of the unique features of the SMIRV is the use of "slideaway" design, which allows the scientific officer to access all equipment and resources from ground level without the need to be continually climbing in and out of the vehicle.

"It saves critical time and makes life a little easier for the scientific officer as well as providing a clear accessible layout of equipment.

"But most importantly the design creates a safer working environment.

"In a state as geographically remote and diverse as Queensland this kind of technology is exactly what police need," Senior Sergeant Hall said. ■