

ID-IT ...

The dot with the lot



When 17-year-old Brooke's house was robbed she was disappointed but knew insurance would cover the cost of her missing possessions. However, when she learned her CD collection had been stolen she was devastated.

"The collection had taken her years to compile," said her mother, "Her music was a part of her and she'll never get it all back."

"It's the emotional attachments to specific items of property that cause the most pain when they're taken – irrespective of the cost," said Metropolitan North Regional Crime Prevention Coordinator Senior Sergeant Helen Barnett.

"Items such as Brooke's CDs were, until now, hard to mark for police identification, so the likelihood of Brooke getting them back was unfortunately quite low.



“No amount of insurance can replace sentimental items such as these.”

Senior Sergeant Barnett’s project team have just completed a six-month trial on Brisbane’s Northside that includes a radically new microscopic property marking technique.

“Its superior application promises to complement current property marking strategies, and give police

an unprecedented identification rate for recovered stolen property”.

The preliminary results of Project ID-It, embracing this microscopic property marking technique (also known as microdot technology) indicate that it will have far-reaching benefits for the way personal property is identified, both as an invisible way for owners to mark

their property and as a huge deterrent to thieves.

The project was launched in the Sandgate Police Division after initial findings in the Metropolitan North Police Region showed that 60% of all crimes reported related to property.

District Crime Prevention Officers set out to educate the community about the importance of marking their property and quickly established that almost 90% of people were reluctant to mark goods using established methods such as engraving. Microdot technology compliments current property marking techniques used by police.

Microdot technology actually originated in the cloak-and-dagger world of cold war spies and James Bond action novels. This technology has since been refined to the point where it is readily and economically available to any marking purpose.

To explain microdot technology further, a single pin-head dot bonded to an item of property can carry enough information when scanned to identify its legitimate owner from a central data bank.

The dot can be applied quickly and relatively easily from a pressure pack spray can or swab and marks many items previously considered too delicate or valuable to be engraved.

This technology is already extensively used in the top end luxury car market and by major companies interested in discretely marking property to reduce theft. As another amazing example of the versatility of microdot technology, the Northern Territory Government has chosen to adopt this technology to authenticate Aboriginal art acquisitions.

Project ID-It also continues to provide and recommend traditional property marking options such as engraving and photographing.

“I believe the accuracy and reliability of microdot technology is going to change the way police deal with property by increasing the likelihood of property being returned to its owner, a capability police have not generally enjoyed in the past,” said Senior Sergeant Barnett. “It will also mean that ‘smart’ thieves will know their time is at an end. We are confident there will also be a reduction in the amount of unclaimed property accumulating in our property offices awaiting auction.”

Acting Sergeant Cherie Crane, creator of Project ID-It stated “microdot technology can now provide police with another investigative tool to identify lawful owners of property, while also greatly increasing police identification and arrest of serial offenders.

“This new technology now provides added peace of mind for members of our community who are serious about protecting their most treasured possessions.”

The ID-It team has been busy conducting community education days across the Sandgate area as well as providing access to microdot technology kits through the Sandgate PCYC.

Any inquiries about obtaining a property marking kit for your home or business please contact Senior Sergeant Helen Barnett on 3354 5053 or Acting Sergeant Cherie Crane on 3354 5054.