

A research officer's travel diary

Research Officer Jade Hill, from the State Crime Operations Command's Research Unit, is currently studying investigative interviewing techniques in the United Kingdom as this year's winner of *The Courier-Mail* Police Scholarship Fund.

Mr Hill is also undertaking his PhD in investigative interviewing and is heading the research projects for *Project 2010*, the Queensland Police Service's development of an investigative interviewing framework.

June 12, 2008

Alarm rings and I think "Yes, the day I've been waiting for!" It's the day I will leave Australia on a mission to discover the best practice in relation to interviewing suspects, witnesses and victims.

I have read the books, conducted the research and spent hours talking about investigative interviewing. Now I want to experience it first hand; I want to say I've been through the most challenging training this field has to offer. In other words, I want to get out of the books and into the real world of investigative interviewing.

June 15, 2008

I arrived at the Quebec National Police Academy yesterday after catching a bus with delegates from all over the world. It's exciting to be at a conference with like-minded people and experienced investigators. I've been to a workshop this morning run by Ronald Fisher and Becky Milne—they developed the 'cognitive interview' and are renowned in the world of forensic psychology. It was great to participate in their workshop. After lunch I'm attending a suspect interviewing workshop which should also be really interesting.

June 16, 2008

Today was an exciting day—I presented the largest Australian study on investigative interviewing to an international audience. Thanks to the 2,769 Queensland police officers who participated in the study, this is actually the largest study in the world that looks specifically at the attitudes, perceptions and interviewing techniques of police officers. By conducting such a study, we've demonstrated that we view investigative interviewing as crucial in terms of conducting investigations and we are dedicated to improving the skills of officers who interview victims, witnesses and suspects of crime.

The Research Unit conducts research to assist State Crime Operations Command management in decision-making and the resolution of operational and managerial issues.

In the past 12 months the Unit has been involved in numerous projects encompassing a diverse range of subjects including drug enforcement strategies, investigative interviewing, agricultural terrorism and stock-related crime, intelligence-based research on serious crime groups, and a review of a civilianisation initiative within the Command.



Jade Hill (centre) with *The Courier-Mail*'s General Manager Shane Rodgers (left) and Commissioner Bob Atkinson.

July 7, 2008

I am now in the UK and over the next 12 weeks will be undertaking several courses in investigative interviewing, conducted at various locations around the country. These will range from introductory courses through to advanced suspect and witness interviewing, with the highest level being an advisory course. I've been told that some of the courses rate as the most difficult investigative courses in the country.

I realise I'll have to step up a few levels and fast. I've been spending the days interviewing and the nights studying (and I'm sure this cycle will continue for the duration of training).

July 29, 2008

I've got a week to go on an advanced suspect interviewing course at Bishopgarth Police Training Centre in Wakefield, which has its own Advanced Interviewing Unit. There are only eight officers on the course and two trainers, allowing for a really personal training environment.

The National Interview Adviser, Gary Shaw told me this course was the hardest in the country and I soon knew what he meant. We've been putting in very long days but I have learnt so much.

I had my second last suspect interview today and it went well, but it's not just the interview that gets assessed. I had to lead a team of eight investigators on a mock murder case with multiple suspects. We're assessed on many levels from analysing the witness statements, forensic evidence, CCTV evidence through to briefing the solicitor, discussing policy decisions with the Senior Investigating Officer, managing a team that monitors the interview as it happens, developing interview strategies with behavioural interview advisers, and that's not all of it.

August 7, 2008

Over the next few weeks I will be receiving training at an advisory level and will also be accompanying the National Interview Adviser on his operational visits in Ireland.

This is one of the best experiences I have ever had but I look forward to returning home in October and seeing my family, friends and colleagues. Investigative interviewing needs to be seen as a specialist skill and I feel that I have so much to bring back to the Queensland Police Service to assist in developing our own investigative interviewing framework.