

THE Daily Telegraph

CCTV database to fight terror

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Article from:

Daily TelegraphBy **Bruce MacDougall**

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POLICE are stepping up the heat on potential terrorists by seeking access to "tens of thousands" of closed circuit television cameras.

Police will store every NSW camera location in a central database so that terrorists and other criminal activity can be speedily tracked.

Owners of large and small businesses who have installed CCTV cameras in customer areas or outside their premises will be asked to register them with police.

The information will be used to create a map of CCTV locations, allowing police to quickly source footage showing suspects and crimes.

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Police are citing the London terrorist bombings in July 2005 as a classic demonstration of the value of CCTV.

British investigators used the imagery to identify potential suspects and within 24 hours were able to create a visual history of the terrorists' activities and movements prior to the attacks.

In NSW CCTV systems are extensively used around commercial premises, automatic teller machines, airports, shopping centres and on public transport for crime prevention.

But until now there has been no central database to help police track down crime footage.

Head of the operational communications and information command, Assistant Commissioner Bob Waites, said yesterday a register of CCTV locations would have helped investigations into the Cronulla riots in 2005.

Mr Waites urged business owners to get behind the new initiative and register online.

"Once up and running this register will be a crucial investigative tool for the state's police officers," he said.

"They will be able to quickly identify whether there is a CCTV system installed in and around the area where an offence has occurred, and if so, source the vision as part of their inquiries.

"CCTV is also a great crime prevention tool with criminals less likely to commit offences in areas monitored by security cameras.

"The benefits of CCTV don't stop there. CCTV can be crucial in identifying offenders and solving crimes and also serves as an important evidentiary purpose."

NSW business owners can register details of their CCTV systems by clicking on to http://www.police.nsw.gov.au/cctv_register.

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Eyes of the city ... police will create a comprehensive map of the city's CCTV locations

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