

'Police future' turns public into spies

By **Stephanie Gardiner**

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A PROJECT that will allow people in NSW to send photographs and video footage of crimes to help police will be carefully tested before it begins operation, the NSW Government says.

Project View - Video Image Evidence on the Web - will allow film taken by the public to be sent to a police website, Police Minister David Campbell said.

The footage could then be used by police as evidence to prosecute crimes.

"This is about the future of policing in NSW," Mr Campbell said.

"The opportunity is there with the mobile phone, for example, to take a picture, take some video of something and then transfer that to police with the push of a button."

Mr Campbell said the \$8 million project would be carefully tested and designed to ensure security.

"Police are working very hard on it. It's some months away ... (they) need to work through it, design it and test it and police will be going through that process in the future," he said.

Mr Campbell said the system was aimed at helping police broaden their evidence gathering, rather than being solely used to convict criminals.

"This would be about police gathering evidence as they do now as they build their case to lay charges," he said.

"Just because someone sent a text message of something ... doesn't mean that there will be charges, doesn't automatically mean that someone will be convicted. But police will use that as part of gathering their evidence to present a case to the court and the courts then to pass sentence."

Mr Campbell said the use of similar internet footage in police cases had been useful in the past and had been used in court.

"What we know is that information of this nature, over the net for example, has been used in court," he said.

"YouTube footage has been used in court where people have taken footage of themselves painting graffiti on trains for example. That's been used to support a conviction."

He said minute details of the project were still to be confirmed but people may be able to use the service anonymously.

