

Criminals cop a spray

RENATO CASTELLO

LOOKING like he is afflicted with an exotic disease, Andrew Taft is actually armed with the latest weapon in the fight against criminals.

A wave of an ultra-violet lamp reveals his face splattered in an invisible DNA fluid his firm is selling to businesses seen as "soft" robbery targets, such as hotels and service stations.

The Ovingham electronic engineer has developed a wall-mounted "trap" - the only one of its type in Australia - that sprays crooks in a colourless DNA signature, forensically linking them to the crime scene.

And it appears businesses are jumping at the technology. Mr Taft's firm, DNA Security Solutions, has installed traps in about 20 pubs, chemists and service stations in South Australia and interstate in the past 12 months.

He said a similar system had been used in the UK for the past 10 years and this had helped cut crime in some areas by 80 per cent.

"Most people have got CCTV cameras, but there's been problems getting convictions because either the photo is not that good or people have alibis," he said.

"This closes the gap between CCTV footage and a conviction.

"This system will place the criminals at the crime scene, but what we want this unit to be more than anything is a



WEAPON: The DNA unit deterrent in the first place."

In the event of a robbery, a staff member primes the unit by pressing a panic button under the counter or on a remote control.

The units, which cost \$3000 each, then bathes anyone passing underneath in a 4m-wide mist of the non-toxic fluid, which looks like water.

Once a suspected offender is apprehended, the DNA fluid, which stays active for six weeks even if washed, is revealed under UV light. A swab is taken and processed and hopefully matched back to the scene of the crime.

Businesses in Adelaide using the trap include the Southern Cross service station, at St Peters, and the Feathers Hotel, at Burnside.

No two units contain the same DNA signature, with each able to pump up to 15 times before it must be refilled.

**On your bike, bandit,
Page 80**

**See how it works on
www.adelaidenow.com.au**

