

MEDIA RELEASE

Nanotechnology Brassing off Canberra Crooks

With copper fetching more than \$9000 a tonne, the metal has become a prime target for thieves. It is estimated that the cost in materials and in disruption to services, caused by copper theft, is some \$100 million a year.

In the ACT last financial year there were 40 incidents of copper theft reported, valued at \$250,000.

Canberra multi-utility provider ActewAGL, has turned to revolutionary nanoparticle tracers, less than the width of a human hair, in the fight against theft, and in particular copper theft. The product DataTraceDNA, supplied by Australian company, DataDot Home & Business, has been applied to assets such as copper cabling, hand tools and machinery.

“Since using this technology we have experienced a dramatic reduction in theft, which is saving us time, money and more importantly preventing the disruption of services to the community”, reported ActewAGL Manager Group Security, Luke Montgomery.

The molecular tracers, invisible to the naked eye and impossible to remove without defacing the product, are simply sprayed onto equipment.

Each tracer is embedded with ActewAGL’s name and ABN, making all property identifiable. Police use a digital reader to scan the tracers and identify the rightful owner.

Crime Stoppers Australia believes the DataDot products, including DataTrace DNA, can be valuable theft deterrents.

The technology can also assist Police with charging thieves and returning stolen goods to their rightful owner. Recently Police were able to arrest and charge thieves with copper theft when they caught two thieves with a car and trailer load of stolen copper, marked with DataTraceDNA.

Police were able to identify the owner of the copper using a digital reader, establish it had been stolen, lay charges and return the copper to the owner.

National Manager DataDot Home and Business, Stewart Woodger said the advanced deterrent and tracing technology was created through a joint venture that involved the CSIRO and provided businesses with an opportunity to authenticate and identify their products and equipment.

“Copper is stolen every week from construction sites, electrical substations, power distribution systems, rail power lines, and communications networks. Even church roofs, steeples and grave plaques have become targets”.

“Copper theft can be stopped by educating the community, reporting the crime and improving security measures by using products like DataTrace DNA”, Stewart said.

The public is also urged to report copper thefts to Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000.

ENDS

Further information:

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