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Behind the mask – no security for criminals

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TOP MARKS: DNA Solutions CEO Tania Jolley and chief technology officer Andrew Taft with the DNA spray. Picture: MIKE BURTON



HOSPITALITY businesses are adding to their crime-prevention toolkit as masked customers become the new normal.

Adelaide company DNA Security Solutions, which has a strong footprint in the hospitality area, especially in pubs and clubs, says it is seeing increasing demand for its unique DNA Guardian marker equipment.

DNA Guardian technology uses a patented solution that can mark a perpetrator exactly to the scene at the time of the crime, but the focus is also on deterrence with signs indicating the use of the spray on the premises.

DNASS co-founder and chief executive Tania Jolley said criminals had been hardpressed to find premises to rob during the COVID-19 lockdown.

“Serious criminals have gone underground because their targets – mainly gaming venues such as pubs and clubs

– are closed,” Ms Jolley said.

Now, as restrictions are eased, businesses are getting more prepared as they face the “new normal”.

“Wearing a mask is no longer an obvious indicator of a person trying to conceal their identity,” Ms Jolley said.

“The issue with masks is also that facial recognition algorithms use the nose, mouth and chin – without these features, the certainty of identification is heavily compromised.

“That makes CCTV cameras next to useless in providing evidence that will stand up in court. The police we work with say our technology unquestionably ties the suspect directly to the crime scene at the exact time of the attack.” The company says it also has verifiable data that shows premises that display a DNA warning notice are highly effective in deterring criminals. The tracker is installed as a wireless security system, triggered by staff or an existing alarm system. It operates without a sound, so the criminal does not even know they have been tagged. It is safe, non-toxic and invisible, with a unique synthetic DNA code. The solution can stay on skin for up to six weeks and remain on goods and weapons for years, providing a clear link to the crime scene.

The EDP Hotels group has installed DNA Guardian across its 17 properties, including the Little Pub on Hindley following a spate of hold-ups and robberies in SA in 2019.

“We wanted to protect our staff more than anything else, and put some deterrence in place,” Darren Steele, EDP’s general manager of operations in SA, told The Advertiser.

“DNA’s solution has given us that extra edge that is helping keep our staff and properties that much safer.”