

Help is on its way

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Tim Payne and Jeremy Stewart from Swann presenting the new crime app. 101964 Picture: DAMJAN JANEVSKI

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By XAVIER SMERDON

A WYNDHAM based team is hoping they can help save lives by creating a new smart phone application that will allow residents to secretly call the police if they find themselves in danger. Community Against Crime (CAC) are getting ready to release Help, an application that will target street crimes, domestic violence, child abductions and incidents on public transport. The program allows users to press a large panic button which automatically makes their phone start to record audio and video. After 30 seconds any information that has been captured is sent to a switchboard that will be manned 24 hours a day along with the location of the person that pressed the button, their exact latitude and longitude, their phone number and their registered address. This information is immediately forwarded to the police along with an update of the victim's location every 30 seconds. Director of CAC, Tim Payne, who lives in Wyndham, said the application had the potential to save victims of violent crimes, such as the several high profile sexual assault incidents that have happened recently in Melbourne. "If a woman is walking along and she thinks she is being followed all she has to do is press the app and start talking about what is happening. The phone will automatically send the audio and video to the switchboard," Mr Payne said. "If someone is attacked in an alley, they can get a quick shot of the offender with the camera, which could help the police track them down." Once the panic button is pressed, the screen on the phone also goes black meaning that anyone threatening another person's safety would not know they are being recorded. If the phone is unlocked, it simply shows the home screen, making it seem as though the phone is operating normally. Mr Payne said the application had been in the making for about one year. "We were going to wait a bit longer before we released it but after the spate of sexual assaults in Melbourne recently, we just thought this has to happen now," he said. "I think it could absolutely save lives." He said he hoped it would be used throughout Australia, and eventually become an international system. CAC, a not-for-profit group, has been supported by Swann Security in releasing the application. In the applications first update, users will be able to edit its icon so that someone looking at their phone will not know it has been downloaded. Mr Payne said this would be particularly useful for people who may be victims of domestic violence. It is expected that Help will be available for download by the end of the month. For more information visit www.communityagainstcrime.com.au



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