

DNA project awareness welcomed



The Specialist Forensic Trainer, Rhys McColl during his informative presentation



Representatives from SAPS, emergency rescue and security companies listen attentively

The DNA Projects recently visited Newcastle to engage with SAPS, emergency services, security companies and business people about the South African DNA Database.

At the workshop held at Farmers Hall, Specialist Forensic Trainer,

Rhys McColl said that the DNA database contains profiles from certain suspects arrested for criminal offenses which were collected from crime scenes.

"Our country is in the process of expanding the size of the database because it has been noted that the

greater the number of DNA profiles on the database, the greater the chance of solving crimes and catching criminals," he said.

McColl touched on the process in which DNA is collected and how it is preserved. He further elaborated on the steps to adhere to should

any of his workshop attendees be first on the scene.

"It is important that nothing is touched, you need to note, record and observe anything unusual and also provide assistance by requesting witnesses to wait at the crime scene for an Investigating Officer," said McColl.

He went on to stretch the importance of offering comfort and support to victims, the prevention of unnecessary access to the crime scene as well as ensuring that no one interferes with the scene, as it contains valuable evidence. McColl added that moving forward, suspects arrested by SAPS, once charged would have to provide a saliva sample which will be collected and sent to forensics for a DNA analysis and further more added to the database. "The process is in place, we now have to wait for the Department of Health to provide the accurate training of police," he concluded.