

Bomb Drama in Australia

Wednesday, 03 August 2011

THE investigation into a Mosman bomb incident is now being headed by the robbery and serious crimes squad, which also deals with extortion attempts.

Assistant police commissioner Mark Murdoch did not confirm whether the 18-year-old girl was a victim of an extortion attempt - instead he said police were still unsure what they were dealing with.

"We don't know what we are dealing with...we are working very hard to find out exactly what it is, and equally important, what it isn't," Mr Murdoch said.

He said the girl was extremely calm despite the ordeal, with specialist officers with her.

Assistant police commissioner Mark Murdoch described the situation as a "very serious and sensitive matter".

"We are still treating the suspicious package as live," he said.

"I can't confirm whether it is strapped to the woman involved but she is still in the vicinity of the device."

When asked whether the girl could move away from the bomb, Mr Murdoch said: "No, she can't get away from it."

Mr Murdoch said police had to "hasten slowly" in a situation as delicate as this.

The drama unfolded at 2.40pm Wednesday afternoon when an 18-year-old girl called police to the mansion in Burrawong Avenue, Mosman 'following discovery of a suspicious device'.

It was not clear how the device came to be strapped to the girl but it is understood she did not place it there herself.

A senior police officer described the device as an unusual 'collar bomb' which has never been seen before in Australia.

He said they believed it was an extortion attempt and that the initial details of the situation were being conveyed to police via the girl's father.

The girl, who is part of one of Sydney's wealthiest families is understood to be 'absolutely petrified'.

Police believe the ransom note is attached to her neck but bomb experts have been unable at this point to read its contents.

The street is home to racing identity Gai Waterhouse, ex-Wallaby Phil Kearns and John Eales.

Do you know more about this story. Contact us at news@dailylegraph.com.au or 9288 2618

Police cordoned off the house and a command post has been set-up on the corner of Burrawong Ave and David Street.

Police Bomb Squad officers are currently examining the device, while other emergency services are in support at the scene with the teen's parents.

A third police rescue vehicle has entered the crime scene, as well as a number of detectives.

The girl is only in Year 12 and is believed to be studying her HSC this year. She celebrated her 18th birthday three weeks ago.

Her parents are outside the home comforting each other.

Police said they could not elaborate except to say a 'delicate operation' was in progress.

Assistant Commissioner Mark Murdoch described the operation as a "very painstaking" one.

"The device we are examining is proving a tough nut to crack and we are trying to determine what it is and what it isn't," he said.

Four police officers, including specialist negotiators, were with the girl all afternoon.

Not even the panic-stricken parents have been able to talk to their daughter.

"The officers with her are doing their utmost to keep her calm," Mr Murdoch said.

"It is extremely tough for her but she's holding up very well.

"The parents are doing it even tougher than she is...they are certainly parents who care a great deal about their daughter."

The street remained in lockdown late last night, with many confused residents and friends of the family still at the scene at midnight.