

Police taped Tyler's family

Source: AAP

DETECTIVES urged the family of a Melbourne teenager shot dead by police to "...trust us..." as they covertly recorded a conversation with them, an **inquest** has heard.

Two days after Tyler Cassidy, 15, was shot dead by police in December 2008, detectives wore a digital recording device when they went to the home of his grieving mother, the Coroner's Court was told yesterday.

During the conversation, Det-Sgt Allan Birch told the family:

"I think you will trust us with time," as he explained the investigation process.

The family was also told the investigation would be professional and conducted *"...without any fear or favour"*.

State Coroner Jennifer Coate was not told of the secret recordings until August this year, the court heard.

Tyler was shot dead after confronting police while armed with two knives at a skate park in Northcote on December 11, 2008.

Other homicide squad detectives yesterday defended the covert recording. Det Acting Sgt David Barry, who was with Det-Sgt Birch during the conversation, said it was done for the benefit of both police and the family.

"Based on the previous communications between Victoria Police and the Cassidy family, it was clear there were some problems. It seemed a sensible idea in these circumstances to record what was being said," he said.

He admitted it was the first time he had covertly recorded a victim's family, and he had not done so since.

Det Acting Sgt Nigel L'Estrange told the court he also covertly recorded the Cassidy family in January 2009. He said there had been issues with the family who were *``...understandably angry and hostile towards police''*.

Det-Sgt L'Estrange said that if police had alerted the family to the fact that they were being recorded, they would have been *``...on edge...''* and felt they were being treated like suspects.

``I was quite comfortable with doing it in a covert manner,'' he said. *``It is something I had done on previous occasions as well.''*

The secret recordings were revealed ONLY AFTER a complaint was made about the information sharing process with the family, the court heard.

The inquest yesterday also heard the four police involved in the 9.30pm confrontation with Tyler were not drug and alcohol tested until about 6am the next day.

Det-Sgt L'Estrange said there was confusion in Victoria Police and other forensic testing organisations as to whose job it was to conduct the test.