

## Fox find in Tasmania raises fears of ecological disaster for the state



The fox carcass which was found in Tasmania's north.

**MATTHEW DENHOLM** THE AUSTRALIAN 4:14PM October 31, 2016

A fox has been found in Tasmania, prompting fears the island state may not be fox-free after all.

The discovering of a dead male fox on the Frankford Highway in the state's rural north on Sunday has prompted an investigation to determine if it had lived locally — or was brought from interstate and “planted” as a hoax.

“Currently, what we have is the carcass of a young male fox, which died as the result of traumatic injuries,” said Tasmanian government biosecurity chief Lloyd Klumpp.

“Much more investigation is required to see if any information can be identified that helps with understanding how it came to be at this location, including the possibility that it was dead prior to being at this site.

“Until we have the full results of veterinary examination and further investigation is completed, it is not possible to speculate in any way on the history of the carcass.”

The establishment of foxes in Tasmania would be a major ecological disaster for a host of native wildlife accustomed to surviving with few large land-based predators.

It would also be a serious blow to hopes the Tasmanian devil will recover from the disease that has wiped out an estimated 85 per cent of the carnivorous

marsupial, as foxes could quickly fill their niche in the ecosystem.

The issue of whether Tasmania does or does not have foxes is controversial; with claims some previous evidence has been invented, and debate over how much money the state should devote to guarding against their introduction.