

Tasmania Police report gives fox inquiry insight

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Tasmania Police has chosen to withhold most of its intel about allegations of fox evidence tampering.

A police report into allegations of fox evidence fraud was completed earlier this year (<http://www.examiner.com.au/story/4072926/fox-assessment-complete/>), after Windermere independent MLC Ivan Dean made an official complaint to the force in February (<http://www.examiner.com.au/story/3757326/police-may-investigate-taskforce/>).

After months of inquiries, the organisation determined in October that police were not in a position to charge anyone (<http://www.examiner.com.au/story/4219930/no-charges-over-fox-documents-police/>).

Tasmania Police instead handed the file to the Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment Department.

Mr Dean had alleged staff had planted evidence and DPIPWE covered it up to keep the program alive and to keep people in jobs.

The inquiry resulted in the collection of three binders of information and thousands of pages of material, but the organisation only released 50 pages to Mr Dean under Right to Information laws, the report shows.

Almost half of the 50-page report is redacted, due to concerns over the identification of witnesses and fears some of the information might derail ongoing investigations by DPIPWE and the Integrity Commission.

The document shows police interviewed at least 17 different people over the allegations.

It also concluded that police were not able to charge anyone over the importation of fox material during the time in question because the five-year statute of limitations had expired.

During the process, Acting Assistant Commissioner Peter Edwards sought information from DPIPWE on numerous occasions over a three-month period, who sent the force “three arch lever folders containing over 1000 pages of documents”.

Advice from Tasmania Police’s principal legal officer Mark Miller was also sought.