

# Tasmanian fox samples sent to Canberra

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A fox carcass found 30km from Exeter last month. Picture: DPIPWE

Samples from a fox carcass found in the state's North late last month have been sent to Canberra for testing.

The dead fox was found along the Frankford Highway, about 30 kilometres from Exeter, north-west of Launceston on October 30. (<http://www.examiner.com.au/story/4263401/fox-carcass-found-poll/>)

In response to questions by Windermere independent MLC Ivan Dean during Question Time on Tuesday, Primary Industries Minister Jeremy Rockliff said stomach and faecal samples were among those sent to the University of Canberra for further analysis.

"A small amount of non-descript stomach contents were obtained from the carcass as well as faecal material," he said.

"Buccal swabs, scat swabs, stomach and intestinal swabs were also taken and have been sent to the University of Canberra for genotyping and DNA sequencing to try to identify any prey species the fox had consumed prior to death.

"Other material from the carcass has been retained for further testing if required as part of the ongoing investigation."

Mr Rockliff said the pathology results would be made public once the investigation is complete.

The fox's discovery was the first in Tasmania in more than 10 years.

University of Canberra has been responsible for testing fox samples found in the state in the past.

The university's testing found that 56 scats located in Tasmania since 2002 contained fox DNA.

Five of those scats were later deemed to belong to completely different animals. (<http://www.examiner.com.au/story/4033580/fox-collection-flawed/>)



A fox DNA-positive scat that was deemed to belong to a bird in 2009. Picture: DPIPWE

Since the discovery of the carcass last month, the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment has remained tight-lipped about the find's legitimacy.

Early analysis on the carcass suggested the animal died from road trauma, according to DPIPWE.

Mr Rockliff said "no conclusions have been reached as to whether the fox has been active locally or it has been placed at the site after death".

Anyone with further information about the fox carcass is urged to contact DPIPWE.

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