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Review of Taser burns case

WESTERN Australia's Corruption and Crime Commission will review an internal police report that cleared an officer who shot a petrol sniffer with a Taser in the remote desert community of Warburton.

Ronald Mitchell was engulfed in flames and suffered third-degree burns to up to 30 per cent of his body after the incident last July. The internal police report into the incident found Sergeant Nick Hamer was justified in using his Taser because he fired it in self-defence. No changes to police procedures were recommended.

At the time of the incident, police claimed Mr Mitchell ran towards Sergeant Hamer with a container of petrol and a lighter and WA Police Commissioner Karl O'Callaghan said there was a "strong possibility" that the fire

was caused by the lighter.

The report could not establish what started the fire that engulfed Mr Mitchell but assumed it was the Taser shot.

Police internal affairs Detective Inspector Paul Langdon said police were advised not to use Tasers around flammable liquids, but in this case Sergeant Hamer's actions were warranted. "A police officer made a decision at the time under extreme circumstances to use his Taser, albeit in contradiction to policy," he said.

"The investigation found that he was justified in its use . . . to prevent any injury to a person."

In another incident, in January, a Perth man threatening to burn his house down was set alight after police fired at him with a Taser.

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