



Police hit out at ill treatment

NICK CLARK

A DECORATED policeman has hit out at his treatment by Tasmania Police after diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder.

Adam Pratley, a veteran of 17 years with the force, was terminated at Christmas time because he was no longer considered fit for frontline duties.

Mr Pratley, 37, developed post-traumatic stress disorder after three life-threatening incidents since joining the force as a 19-year-old.

In 1993, he was threatened with a shotgun at Cataract Gorge in Launceston and developed the disorder.

Despite the diagnosis by Tasmania's Police's psychologist, he was returned to duty.

In 1994, he was shot at and threatened in the Re-

treat Hotel in Launceston with a .22 rifle. The perpetrator, Patrick Burling, later shot Sgt Les Cooper on the Midland Highway and was jailed for 15 years for attempted murder.

In 2007, his life was threatened by a man with a knife while he was on duty at Lake Leake.

"My record speaks for itself. I never once took a backward step in the execution of my duty and I was formally commended for my performance," Mr Pratley said.

In 2009, as a senior constable, he was awarded for ethical and diligent service by the Acting Commissioner Darren Hine.

Mr Pratley said no follow-up or support had ever been provided after the incidents.

"The fact the police department acted negligently in returning me to

the frontline after an injury of which it was aware, is a concern."

Mr Pratley said the issue of stress in the police force was significant.

"I believe the community understands the difficult work police do and they'd expect police officers are supported when injured," he said.

Police Association of Tasmania secretary Randolph Wierenga said members were deeply concerned by moves to "transition" officers who had been deemed not capable of being operational.

"Within the police department there are a number of positions that could be filled by people who can't undertake a full range of duties, such as in the radio room or in intelligence roles."

"There seems to be no compassion for people injured while on duty."