



Police push on chief role

Union's call for certainty

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THE Police Association has called for the swift appointment of a new police commissioner to end nearly two years of uncertainty in the police force.

Darren Hine has been acting in the role since Jack Johnston voluntarily stepped aside in August 2008 amid an investigation into allegations he disclosed official secrets.

But the search for a permanent replacement was delayed last month by code of conduct complaints against Mr Hine, lodged by another former commissioner, Richard McCreadie.

Those complaints were dismiss-



HINE



WIERENGA

ed by an independent investigation conducted by retired Federal Court judge Peter Heerey.

Government spokeswoman Margaret Lindley said yesterday the position would be advertised nationally soon.

"The Department of Premier and Cabinet is progressing the advertising of the position and undertaking all necessary preliminary work to enable the position to be advertised as soon as possible," she said.

"The recruitment of a new Commissioner of Police will involve an open and transparent process."

Police Association president Randolph Wierenga called for an

end to the uncertainty surrounding the position.

"We would hope we can get the ball rolling now that matters involving Mr Hine have been cleared up," Sergeant Wierenga said.

"It has been exceptional circumstances and under those circumstances the acting commissioner has been doing a very good job.

"But to have someone who has the full authority of the job would be a better situation.

"In terms of a preference for a commissioner, we would prefer to see one of our members.

"We believe the talent is there in Tasmania."



TIMELINE

August 14, 2008: Jack Johnston voluntarily steps aside after revelations he is being investigated over whether he disclosed official secrets to possible political suspects relating to a corruption investigation. Deputy commissioner Darren Hine assumes command of the police force.

October 14, 2008: Mr Johnston is charged with two counts of disclosing official secrets.

October 16, 2008: Premier David Bartlett tells Parliament he has asked former police commissioner Richard McCreadie to take over as interim police commissioner.

October 21, 2008: Mr Bartlett reveals he was "unable to progress the appointment" of Mr McCreadie because of advice from the Director of Public Prosecutions.

August 5, 2009: Justice Peter Evans orders a permanent stay of proceedings in the Johnston case.

August 6, 2009: Three new code-of-conduct complaints

are made against Mr Johnston, claiming he has broken the police code of conduct by threatening police officers who investigated him with the loss of their jobs.

December 11, 2009: Full Court of the High Court rejects the Crown's application for an appeal against the Supreme Court of Tasmania, ruling that the case against Mr Johnston should be scrapped.

December 21, 2009: Victorian judge Geoffrey Eames is appointed to inquire into the code-of-conduct claims against Mr Johnston.

February 1, 2010: Mr Johnston agrees to resign in return for a termination payout and the dropping of all complaints against him.

May 4, 2010: Former Federal Court judge Peter Heerey appointed to investigate misconduct claims made against acting chief Darren Hine by Mr McCreadie.

May 14, 2010: Code-of-conduct allegations against Mr Hine are dismissed.