



Police probe crash after chase claims

DANIELLE MCKAY

TASMANIA Police is investigating a serious crash between a young driver and an unmarked police car following reports of a police pursuit over the weekend.

Acting Deputy Commissioner Scott Tilyard said yesterday a review and investigation into an "incident of this nature" was protocol.

While there is no legislation governing police pursuits in Tasmania, only police policy, Insp Tilyard said preliminary investigations suggest police had acted according to the policy.

Liberal MP Rene Hidding said he was astounded no one was killed in the incident, which he believed highlighted a need for increased driver training for the force.

The 21-year-old man, who had been tracked by police, remains in a stable condition in the Royal Hobart Hospital after crashing into an unmarked police on Saturday morning.

Police had been tracking the young man, who was driving a red Suzuki Swift, after he was seen



ASTOUNDED:
Rene Hidding



PROTOCOL:
Scott Tilyard

hooning through Hobart's northern suburbs.

Police reportedly stopped following the Suzuki near the Berriedale turn-off on the Brooker Highway.

Minutes later, about 12.25am, the Suzuki crossed to the wrong side of Queens Walk at New Town and collided head-on with a second unmarked police car.

Police emphatically denied they were in a chase before the crash.

However, witnesses have since stated they were forced to take evasive action to avoid a speeding unmarked police car that was pursuing the Suzuki.

Mr Hidding commended Tasmania's police for their tough front-line work, but believed they should look to Victoria for guidance and increase driver training.

"Our officers walk a very fine line when trying to protect other drivers from an unguided missile such as a hoon," he said.

"What we'd like to see is more specialised high-speed driver training offered to police - they could practise on any of our tracks.

"We should be more like Victoria where unless the officer has that training a pursuit will not take place."

Insp Tilyard said Tasmania Police used a risk management approach.

"The policy covers circumstances under which a pursuit will be terminated, or not initiated, if the risk is too great," he said.

"Preliminary inquiries indicate that the actions of the officers were in accordance with the policy.

"Our normal protocols are that incidents of this nature are subjected to extensive review and investigation as a matter of course, and that is now occurring."