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Police tried to stop man before tragedy

Fleeing driver dies in smash



COP PROBE: Scott Tilyard

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A MAN was killed in Hobart yesterday after speeding from an unmarked police car, sparking the second investigation in 10 days into the role of police in serious crashes.

The 45-year-old man's car slammed into the concrete wall of a Moonah gymnasium about 2.30am, after speeding down Florence St and across Main Rd.

Initial investigations suggest the man did not slow down before

hitting the building and was not wearing a seatbelt.

The death has been referred to the coroner and a police internal investigation has started.

Police said officers tried to intercept the man, driving a white Ford Laser, for a random check on Charles St, but he failed to stop.

Police had switched on their flashing lights and followed the vehicle as it turned left on to

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FATALITY: The man's Ford Laser did not appear to brake before crossing Main Rd, Moonah, and ploughing into the white wall of the Zap Gymnasium opposite.



Fleeing motorist fatality



DEADLY: The scene of the fatal crash where a driver fled police and smashed into a gymnasium wall at Moonah.

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Florence St, where it accelerated before crashing into Zap Gym in Main Rd.

A Glenorchy officer and a Police Academy trainee tried to revive the man but he died at the scene.

Police had been contacted about the man about 6pm on Sunday because of concerns for his welfare.

Acting Deputy Commissioner Scott Tilyard said it had not been determined whether the incident was a pursuit: "Our investigation will examine whether or not it was technically a pursuit as defined by our policy."

Mr Tilyard said there was no reason for heightened concern despite two potential police pursuits involving crashes leading to serious injury and a death in little more than a week.

The first incident sparked calls from the Police Association of Tasmania for tougher laws to deter people from evading police.

Liberal police spokesman Mark Shelton said he was concerned.

"It is concerning to see two

incidents in such a space of time," he said. "It does highlight that there could be an upcoming problem."

A 21-year-old remains in Royal Hobart Hospital after the first instance of an alleged police pursuit on Saturday July 17.

Police had been tracking the young man, driving a red Suzuki Swift, after he was seen hooning through the northern suburbs.

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

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

Police have denied being involved in a chase before the crash.

Mr Tilyard said the female officer in the unmarked car hit by the 21-year old was sore but recovering and expected to return to duties this week.

No charges have been laid in relation to the incident and an internal police investigation continues.