

Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management

SECTION/AREA

GPO Box 308 HOBART TAS 7001
Phone (03) 6230 2111
Email tasmania.police@police.tas.gov.au



Our ref:

22 June 2023

Hon. Megan Webb
Independent Member for Nelson
3/32 Channel Hwy
KINGSTON, 7050

Dear Ms Webb

APPLICATION FOR INTERNAL REVIEW – RTI 56/2023

I refer to your recent applications under the *Right to Information Act 2009* dated 20/02/23 (RTI 56/23) and your request for an internal review dated 19/04/2023. I also refer to our recent discussions and confirmatory emails surrounding scope refinement between 18/05/23 and 24/05/2023.

Thank you for your patience regarding time frames associated with this application.

I have assessed the decision by the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management Right to Information Delegate to refuse your recent applications on the basis the combined requests are voluminous and responding would substantially and unreasonably divert agency resources. As discussed, I am of the opinion each application requires individual assessment with a greater emphasis on consultation regarding scope refinement. I thank you for your willingness to refine the scope of your request to reduce the resourcing impact.

This report will provide the results of my internal review relevant to the agreed refined scope associated with RTI 56/2023. My discovery process has centred on identifying documents associated with:

1. The packaging, transport and storage of forensic exhibits by Tasmania Police and Forensic Science Services Tasmania (FSST).
2. Policy for independent testing.
3. The application of section 9.2 of Australian Standard AS5388.4 and how it relates to FSST.
4. Any issues raised by the National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA) in relation to exhibit management.

Response

- (1) Discovery has located 12 documents that are relevant to your request for information surrounding packaging, transport and storage of forensic exhibits. The documents relate to FSST and Tasmania Police and are marked accordingly. Each discovered document is listed in the attached schedule with page numbers (1-97), title and notations surrounding any exemption/redaction that may have been appropriate. Exemptions have been applied to parts of the document detailing FSST security systems pursuant to section 30(1)(c). I am of the view the release this information would unnecessarily disclose methods likely to prejudice future investigations. Further minor redactions have been made throughout the training documentation removing personal information pursuant to section 36(1). Please note, further information surrounding exhibit management has been proactively released and can be found within the Tasmanian Police Manual which is available online.
- (2) No documents have been discovered regarding independent retesting of items. I am advised by the Director FSST that independent retesting can be arranged and is assessed on a case-by-case basis. Items can be retested within FSST or alternately referred to an independent lab where appropriate.
- (3) No documents were discovered relating to accreditation under Australian Standard AS5388.4. FSST advise they are accredited under International Organization for Standards (ISO) 17025 which enables laboratories to demonstrate that they operate competently and generate valid results. FSST also subscribe to the National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA) to provide an auditing service against the requirements of (ISO) 17025.
- (4) Discovery has located 7 documents within FSST that are relevant to your request for information relating to correspondence from NATA regarding exhibit management. Each discovered document is listed in the attached schedule with page numbers (98-131), title and notations surrounding any exemption/redaction that may have been appropriate. Minor redactions have been added relevant to remove personal information pursuant to section 36(1) of the Right to Information Act 2009.

In the event you disagree with my decisions, section 44 of *Right to Information Act 2009* provides you with an opportunity to make application for a further external review.

Yours sincerely,



John King
Inspector