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## Rock and royal music at Her Majesty's request

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# FOXPILOT

REVIEW HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY HANSARD 3-4<sup>th</sup> June 2002

## How animal dumpers escaped law

By MICHELLE PAINE

AUTHORITIES believe they know who brought foxes into

Whinny



# finds doggie heaven



**DITCHED:** The wasted Whippy with vet Moira van Dorsseleer after he was found by the road.

**By DANNY ROSE**

FOUR weeks after being found unconscious and starving in a ditch, "Whippy" has found dog heaven on earth.

The little Italian greyhound has been adopted by Cremorne's Mundy family after he appeared as an abused pet, just skin and bone, in *The Mercury* on May 1.

A caring passer-by had stopped to collect his seem-

ingly spent body from the side of the Tasman Highway at Cambridge.

"Four weeks ago this little dog was lying in a gutter wishing it was dead," adoptive owner Dean Mundy said yesterday.

"Now he's sitting in a nice house in Cremorne, with a family and kids who love him — and his owner is a butcher."

So it's no surprise that

Whippy has doubled in weight from the deathly 4.9kg he was when rushed to the Hobart Animal Hospital and placed on a drip.

And after two weeks of settling in to the Mundy household, he bounds about the back yard with the family's other Italian greyhound, Hannah.

Or he relaxes with the kids and watches a wide-screen TV, when he's not sleeping on their beds re-

**LUXURY:** A much-recovered Whippy with Jonathon Mundy in dog heaven yesterday. Picture: JAMES KERR

flecting on Mr Mundy's job — truly the stuff of doggie dreams.

Whippy has been dining out on his favourite "pet loaf", which Mr Mundy makes at his Lauderdale butchery.

"There's no such thing as a fat whippet but he's certainly doubled his weight," Mr Mundy said.

"He's eating like a horse to make up for lost time."

The Mundys, including



Tasmania. And they believe young foxes were dumped with their litters at four separate sites around the state.

But under existing laws the fox smugglers will not be charged as the statute of limitations has run out.

The likely fox plot was revealed yesterday by state Environment Minister David Llewellyn.

He said the environmental vandals had brought the foxes into the state to use them for shooting as sport.

However, Mr Llewellyn — who is also Police Minister — said the likely suspects might still face charges.

He confirmed he was reviewing the statute of limitations as part of a general review of the Parks and Wildlife Act.

## Charges

Those responsible for the fox dumping may yet be answerable if the Government decides to make the law change retrospective.

Mr Llewellyn said the allegations, which had been made 18 months ago, could not be substantiated at that time to the point where charges could be laid.

He outlined the series of events to a Budget estimates committee after Nelson MLC Jim Wilkinson asked whether the existence of foxes was certain.

"There were allegations that several litters of foxes were brought in. Police worked some time on that and a lot of people were interviewed," Mr Llewellyn said.

"[The series of reports of sightings match] the original allegations. Clusters of sightings match the belief of the original distribution of foxes for the purpose of hunting.

The dumping sites were:

- At Longford.
- South of Oatlands
- Near Campania
- Near St Helens.

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P.T.O.

# A moral tale as 4776 kids suspended

By ALISON RIBBON

ALMOST 4800 Tasmanian school students were suspended last year — most of them for physically and verbally abusing teachers.

Australian Education Union state president Mike Poate said abuse was an increasing problem that needed attention.

"I know a child suspended for assaulting a teacher and other pupils — he was in kinder or prep," Mr Poate said.

"One kid has gone right through primary school and cost the Government probably \$250,000 in workers compensation claims."

The figures were revealed by Education Minister Paula Wriedt at a Budget estimates committee hearing in Hobart.

The State Opposition said the figures showed there had been a 35 per cent rise in suspensions in four years.

Opposition education spokesman David Fry said Labor had failed to properly address the issue of problem students.

However, Ms Wriedt cautioned that the figures might not be reliable.

She said figures showed suspensions rising from 3538 in 1996 to 4776 in 2001. However, those collated before 2001 were not done on the current electronic database and should be considered inaccurate.

She said it was "mischievous" to assume they showed an increase in suspensions.

Mr Poate blamed children's behaviour on violence in video games, movies and television.

Ms Wriedt and Education Department deputy secretary



**CAUTION:** Education Minister Paula Wriedt reveals the school suspension figures with department secretary Dr Martyn Forrest.

"Many children believe physical and verbal abuse is a way of life because of their environment," he said.

"And it is happening inside and outside school. We've just had a few teachers retire because of this. They can't shop in their local town because they get harassed. Even their houses are targeted."

It was also revealed at the committee hearing that 13.6 per cent of suspensions were for the use of alcohol, cigarettes and illicit drugs. And there were also a small number of suspensions for sexual harassment and for possessing dangerous objects.

Ms Wriedt and Education Department deputy secretary

Tim Doe said they had never heard of cases of suspension involving ecstasy, speed or heroin.

And Mr Doe said while there had been cases of students appearing at school after smoking marijuana, none concerned students being found with the drug.

Mr Poate said that in his 15

years as a teacher he had mostly dealt with cases of alcohol and cigarettes.

"Cigarettes would account for 90 per cent and next on the list is alcohol and it's very rarely kids bring alcohol into school," he said.

"But as for other illicit drugs, the incidence is so rare as to be negligible."



**HOTLINE:** David Llewellyn, taking no risks.

## How fox dumpers escaped the law

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Since the time of the allegations, circumstantial evidence pointed to their being correct.

The two shot foxes' DNA matched the allegations.

Mr Llewellyn said most significant had been analysis of the Symmons Plains carcass revealing a small animal found only in Tasmania.

"But on top of that, DNA assessment showed the second fox was a sibling or close relative of the first fox — having their origin in southern Victoria," Mr Llewellyn said.

He was hoping for further information.

"We've issued the \$50,000 reward and there has been quite a big response from Crime Stoppers and all are being investigated," Mr Llewellyn said.

The fox hotline receives six to eight sighting reports a week, 80 per cent estimated reliable.

"Foxes have been reported just a few metres from people

ishing, to investigate what is going on before disappearing," Mr Llewellyn said.

"Some people are dubious but certainly I am not and I can't afford to take risks."

He estimated the fox population at 11 to 20. There had been speculation the young had been eaten by Tasmanian devils, keeping numbers low.

## Disagreement on literacy rate

NEW figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics showed Tasmania had almost the lowest literacy levels in the country, the State Opposition said last night.

Opposition education spokesman David Fry said Tasmania was ranked seventh among states and territories.

However, Education Minister Paula Wriedt said the report showed the opposite to be true.

"The only state or territory that performed statistically better according to the report than Tasmania was the ACT," she said.

"The mean scores for Tasmania, Victoria and

Queensland were very similar."

It was revealed earlier in the day that retention rates in government schools had increased 14 per cent under the Labor Government.

Ms Wriedt said retention rates of 68.5 per cent were higher than the national average of 67.8.

## Diver dies at Kingston

A DIVING expedition ended in tragedy at Kingston last night with the death of a 44-year-old man.

The man was with a group of three others diving near the Kingston Beach Sailing Club.

Police said the man became separated from his companions about 6.45pm.

The group searched the immediate area and located the man in 1.5m of water about 10m from the shore.

Police said there were no suspicious circumstances but inquiries into the death would continue.

A report will be made to the Coroner's Office.

## Tassie woman jailed for

Matt's Meats