

## MEDIA STATEMENT

**EMBARGOED: 10am Wednesday 24 April 2024**

### Use of Police dog in Auckland not justified

The Independent Police Conduct Authority has found that a Police dog handler's decision to use his dog to apprehend a young person was not justified.

On 22 April 2022, Police in Auckland followed a stolen car containing seven young people after one of the occupants attempted to steal another car in the North Shore. A Police dog handler signalled the car to stop, but the female driver, aged 13, fled from Police. She rammed a stationary vehicle and drove onto the wrong side of the road several times.

Police successfully spiked the car's tyres and the driver eventually pulled over. Five teenage occupants got out and ran away. The driver got out but remained nearby. One young person remained inside the car. The car began rolling slowly backwards down the slight incline. The young person inside the car called out to the driver for help.

Police arrived and a dog handler instructed the driver to get on the ground. We accept the driver backed away from the dog handler at this point. The dog handler again instructed her to get on the ground.

The driver says she was about to do so. Conversely, the dog handler says the driver turned around and was about to run away so he released his dog, and it bit her leg. She received medical treatment.

The Authority has found that the dog handler did not have reasonable grounds to conclude that the driver was attempting to escape, and using the dog to apprehend her was not justified.

**Media Enquiries:** Judge Johnston KC, (04) 978 5005

A copy of the IPCA report is attached

IPCA: 22-13429