

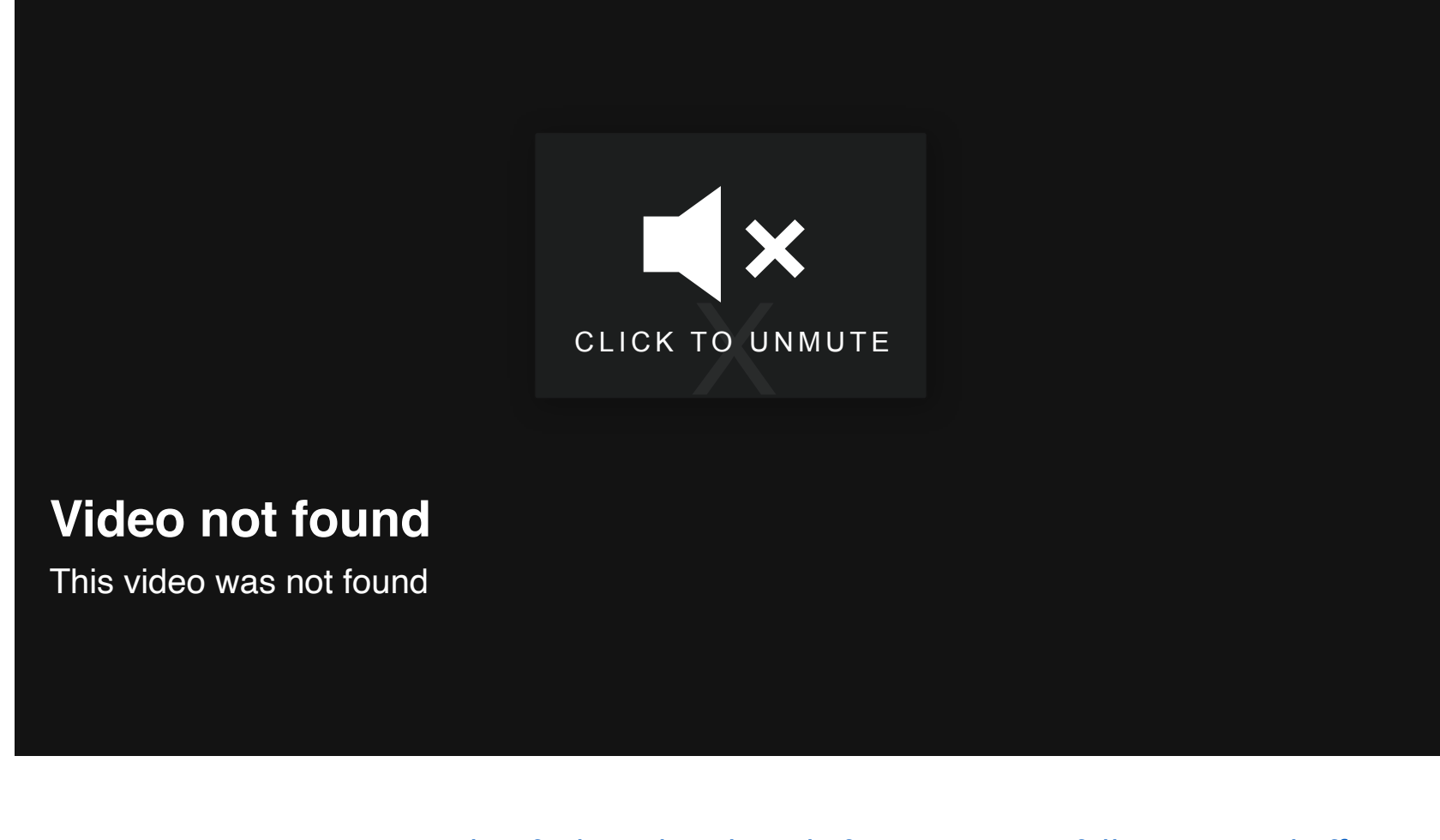
Work bans to hit as SA police dig in over compensation dispute with State Government

SOLO police patrols will be banned and some high-speed pursuits stopped - among other measures - if the dispute between police and the Government over workers compensation is not resolved.

Nigel Hunt Exclusive

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SOLO police patrols will be banned, one-man police stations in country regions face lengthy closures, foot patrols in trouble spots will be doubled up and some high-speed pursuits stopped if the dispute between police and the Government over workers compensation is not resolved.

A crisis meeting of police union delegates today is also expected to approve a major police protest march down King William St next Wednesday, culminating in a rally at Parliament House.

The proposed work bans and a wide range of other industrial measures will be pursued by the union if medical and compensation benefits for police seriously injured in the line of duty are not restored.

The move — the latest in the dispute over the new Return to Work Act — will intensify pressure on the government to back a legislative amendment to restore the benefits, that will be voted on in parliament on November 18.

SA police may begin work bans if a dispute over compensation is not resolved with the Government.

After the delegates' meeting, Police Association president Mark Carroll and secretary Tom Scheffler will meet Police Commissioner Grant Stevens later today to discuss any motions that are adopted and their ramifications.

Mr Carroll said each of the measures to be voted on by the delegates were to "ensure the safety of individual officers and reduce the risk of injury while on duty."

"If a member of the public calls for urgent police attention, we will always come," he said.

"But there are other considerations they now have to consider to minimise the risk of injury to themselves, predominantly in situations in which they are working alone."

The police march on November 18 — the first since the acrimonious 1991 pay dispute — is expected to attract thousands of police, their families and members of the public supporting them. It will start at the northern end of Victoria Square from 12.30pm.

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Under the new Return to Work Act, there are caps on compensation for all injured workers, along with a two-year cap on income maintenance and a three-year cap on medical expenses.

Only workers who exceed a 30 per cent impairment scale will receive any benefits beyond those caps — which would exclude the vast majority of police injured on duty.

Family First MLC Robert Brokenshire has introduced an amendment to the Police Act to restore compensation for police to the former level. The association has urged the Government and Opposition to support it.

After months of unsuccessful negotiations with the Government over the issue, the association launched a campaign to have the benefits restored through Mr Brokenshire's amendment.

The public face of the Police Association campaign, Senior Constable Brett Gibbons, faces an uncertain financial future while he recovers from horrific gunshot injuries suffered in 2011.

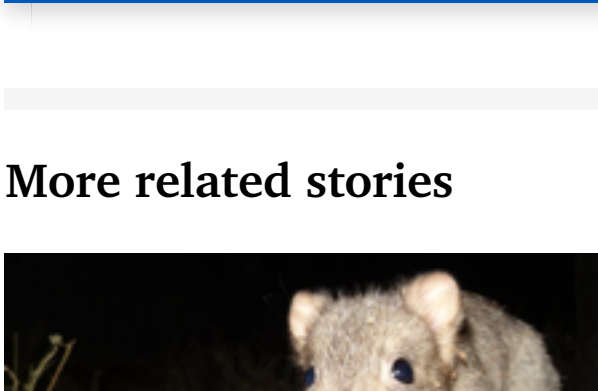
In early July, he was verbally advised by SAPOL's Injury Management Section that "you'd be lucky to make 20 per cent" of the mandated 30 per cent level for whole person impairment to qualify for ongoing financial assistance after the cut-off period.

However, on August 27, after his plight was raised publicly in the *Police Journal* the IMS advised him in writing it had made an "interim decision" that he was a seriously injured worker and his medical expenses and compensation will be paid "unless or until your work injury has stabilised" when a further assessment will then be made.

"This letter is simply a stay of execution and highlights the ludicrous situation officers such as Brett now find themselves in under this legislation," Mr Carroll said.

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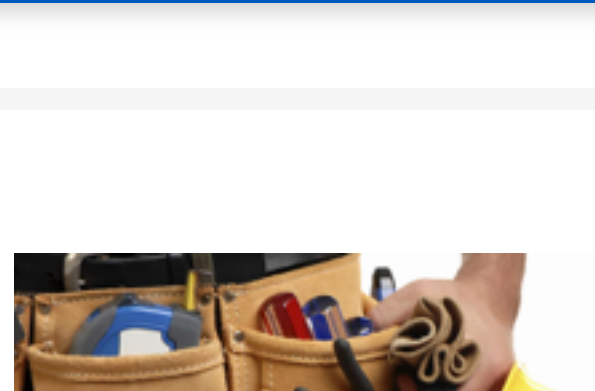
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