

Cave Creek file not missing, lawyer says

Nothing stands in the way of police reopening the file into why 14 people died at **Cave Creek**, **Grant Cameron**, a lawyer representing families of the 1995 West Coast tragedy, says.

Charges were never laid following the disaster.

Detective Inspector Kevin Burrowes headed a homicide investigation at the time and recommended a number of Department of Conservation (Doc) staff be charged as a result of tragedy.

Fourteen people died and four were injured on April 28, 1995 when a Doc-built viewing platform collapsed and plunged 30m into a rocky chasm at **Cave Creek** in Paparoa National Park on the West Coast.

Mr Burrowes' report has never been seen or made public. It was sent to Wellington for legal opinion.

Police, who later said there was no clear liability, have recently said the report was "missing".

They have appointed Detective Superintendent Malcolm Burgess to find out where, when and why the report went missing.

However, Mr Cameron said yesterday Mr Burrowes' full investigation file was still "boxed up" and the only missing parts were a few pages recommending which people should be charged with manslaughter.

Mr Burrowes could not be contacted for comment. It is understood the Burrowes file -- minus his recommendations -- is still in the Christchurch central police station building.

Canterbury district police commander Sandra Manderson was unavailable for comment.

-- NZPA

Supplied by New Zealand Press Association

Section: NEWS

Sub-Section: NATIONAL

Topics: DEATH ; INQUIRIES AND DISCIPLINE ; CONSERVATION

Sub-Topics: GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS ; WESTLAND

© Waikato Times Limited 2002, All rights reserved.