

'Bugging Device' Found In All Blacks' Meeting Room

It was reportedly planted inside a chair and discovered during a routine sweep for bugs ahead of the match against Australia.

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The New Zealand rugby team pictured ahead of their match against Australia

A sophisticated bugging device has been found in the All Blacks' hotel meeting room in Sydney, New Zealand rugby union officials say.

It was reportedly planted inside a chair and discovered during a routine sweep for bugs ahead of the team's Bledisloe Cup game against Australia on Saturday, which the Kiwis won 42-8.

The foam of the seat appeared to be deliberately and carefully cut and then sewn or glued back together to make the device almost undetectable, the New Zealand Herald claimed.

Hiding it "was a highly skilled and meticulous act" and the person who put it there would have needed "a significant amount of time", the paper said it had been told.

The object was found at the Intercontinental Sydney Double Bay Hotel, where the All Blacks have been staying.

It was discovered on Monday but police said they were only told about the allegation on Saturday.

Asked whether the six-day delay made the investigation harder, Superintendent Brad Hodder said "any delay in any investigation's always tough, but we'll look at that information".

"We will be looking at all the avenues and what part of the legislation it comes under, in particular ... we'll look at telecommunications offences and the Devices Listening Act," he said.



The Australian rugby team during training

A hotel spokesman said management was investigating the team's complaint.

New Zealand Rugby chief executive Steve Tew said: "A listening device was found in a meeting room this week during a routine security check.

"The hotel immediately launched an investigation, we have informed the Australian Rugby Union, and jointly we have now decided to hand over the investigation to the Australian police.

"We are taking this issue very seriously, and given it will be a police matter, it would not be prudent to go into further details."

Australian Rugby Union chief executive Bill Pulver told the New Zealand Herald his organisation had nothing to do with the device.

He said: "Of course (the ARU is not involved). It is completely ludicrous. I just think it's a ludicrous concept that there are listening devices being placed in team rooms. I don't know how that could happen.

"I'm utterly disappointed the story would break on match day and frankly, that's all I've got to say. We are going to focus on a game of rugby that we've got tonight and we will deal with this matter after the rugby."

Saturday's game was the first of three matches in the annual Bledisloe Cup between the two southern hemisphere sides.

It is the only game in this year's tournament which took place in Australia - the other two are scheduled to be held in New Zealand.