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Ombudsman report on the *Police Powers (Internally Concealed Drugs) Act 2001*

Yesterday the Attorney General tabled the Ombudsman's report on the *Police Powers (Internally Concealed Drugs) Act 2001*. The Act was introduced as part of the "Cabramatta Anti-Drug Strategy" and gave police officers new powers to detain and search a person using medical imaging, where the person is suspected of swallowing prohibited drugs to conceal evidence of an offence.

"The internal search laws, in their current form, are clearly not working. This is despite the best efforts of police and others," said Ombudsman Bruce Barbour.

The internal search powers were used only once during the two year review period. On that occasion, the search did not identify any internally concealed drugs.

Industrial issues about retrieving evidence, doubts about the efficacy of X-rays and scans to identify drugs, and high costs are the main reasons the internal search powers have been largely unused.

The report recommends that Parliament consider whether the Act should remain in force.

For a copy of the report or other inquiries, please contact Lisa Du, Public Relations Officer at the NSW Ombudsman. Phone 9286 1008 or 0417 233 320. The report is also available on the Ombudsman's website www.ombo.nsw.gov.au.