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Ombudsman reviews new ‘lockdown’ powers

The NSW Ombudsman, Bruce Barbour, is reviewing the new public disorder powers that enable police to create ‘lockdown’ zones and roadblocks, and impose emergency alcohol controls.

“Parliament included provisions in the new Act that require me to scrutinise the main powers conferred on police and provide a report to the Attorney General for tabling in Parliament,” Mr Barbour said.

The new police powers were introduced following violent incidents at Cronulla and other south-eastern Sydney suburbs in mid-December, to help police to prevent or control ‘large-scale public disorder’ incidents.

The measures centre on changes to the *Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002* (‘the Act’) that creates special powers in relation to targeted areas, including laws enabling police to:

- Impose an emergency closure of licensed premises and liquor outlets
- Establish emergency alcohol-free zones
- Establish special ‘lockdown’ zones and roadblocks where police may stop and search persons and vehicles, require persons to disclose their identity and seize vehicles, mobile phones and other communication devices.

Mr Barbour called for submissions from all interested persons for the purpose of the review.

He has also established an email address – review@ombo.nsw.gov.au - to encourage direct feedback from a variety of sources.

The Ombudsman is required to provide his report to the Attorney General and Minister for Police in late 2007.

For more information about the Ombudsman’s review please call 0438 248 617.