

## **Our rights are more than 'red tape', Commissioner**

It's alarming that NSW Police Commissioner Andrew Scipione thinks the need for police to seek a warrant from a judge before engaging in unusual police activity is just "red tape", Civil Liberties Australia said today.

"The Police Commissioner seems to think judges are just clerks. He also seems to think police shouldn't have to get judicial warrants to undertake the heavy end of policing, like sniffing at people's crotches while they are sitting quietly on trains," CLA Director and National Media Spokesperson Tim Vines said.

"Mr Scipione's comments show how much the police miss the point about citizen's rights. The Police Commissioner said that getting rid of the need to swear an affidavit before deploying sniffer dogs was just a 'red tape removal strategy'.

"Judges keep watch on potential police excesses. They are much more than a clerical tick. Warrants are a vital part of making sure everyone in society, including the police, obey the rule of law.

"CLA welcomes the fact that the NSW Government is putting more money into patrolling and monitoring Kings Cross. But we are somewhat alarmed that it is doing so by a Big Brother approach of mandatory ID scanners, surveillance cameras and sniffer dogs.

"We think there needs to be a public monitoring committee to keep an eye on the implementation of these Cross proposals. It should include local citizens, community groups and civil liberties people, as well as police and bureaucrats.

"The committee should also make sure police don't exceed the bounds of propriety in what they do with their warrantless crotch-sniffing by dogs...at the Cross, and across all the metropolitan train network.

"That's a massive extension of police dog powers, and it needs close watching," Mr Vines said.

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