

**NEWS RELEASE**

**For immediate release**

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**25 Years of Access and Privacy Service – Nova Scotia’s Information and Privacy Commissioner releases 2018-2019 Annual Report**

HALIFAX – Today, Catherine Tully, Nova Scotia’s Information and Privacy Commissioner, released her annual report for 2018-2019. This year marks the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner. With the rapid development of technology and its capacity to process enormous volumes of information, particularly personal information, a watchdog for access to information and privacy rights has never been more necessary.

Over the last 25 years, the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner has become a trusted voice in Nova Scotia. More than a thousand citizens call us each year with concerns about their access and privacy rights. Hundreds of public bodies, municipalities and health custodians seek our advice, recommendations and guidance on the complex access and privacy issues that arise in the digital age. And, thousands of Nova Scotians attend OIPC-led presentations on issues ranging from big data to privacy breach management to open government.

Nova Scotians, through their desire for transparency, accountability and knowledge, have helped transform this office from a small, yet important, operation which dealt almost exclusively with access to information appeals to an influential, dynamic and proactive democratic institution.

When the first Commissioner was appointed 25 years ago, clouds were only in the sky, cities were dumb and discs were floppy. Today, the office handles complex files reflective of the opportunities and challenges of our modern world. We provide advice on issues ranging from the privacy risks of facial recognition, cloud storage and smart cities to managing the accountability obstacles inherent in modern data communication and storage technology.

The 2018-2019 Annual Report includes details of the extraordinary increase in the caseload of the office and the challenges we face with very limited resources. The Service Plan, included with the report, highlights a number of concerning trends in Nova Scotia.

Commissioner Tully concludes by noting, “The future of access and privacy rights in Nova Scotia depends on us keeping pace with technology and ensuring that our rights are subject to meaningful and effective oversight. It will take courage and determination on the part of politicians and likely a push from the public to bring our access and privacy laws into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.”

For more information, contact:

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