

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

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Nova Scotia’s Information and Privacy Commissioner releases 2019-2020 Annual Report

HALIFAX – Today, Tricia Ralph, Nova Scotia’s Information and Privacy Commissioner, released her annual report for 2019-2020.

The Commissioner once again calls for modernization of the legislation. “Updates to the legislation are urgently needed. Work is required to implement modern legislation that can better protect the access and privacy rights of Nova Scotians,” says Commissioner Ralph. Nova Scotia was an early adopter of access and privacy legislation but it has fallen behind its counterparts in other Canadian jurisdictions. The annual report outlines review files and inquiries from the past year that show the ongoing impact of the failure to implement past recommendations to improve Nova Scotia’s access and privacy laws. Issues highlighted by these cases include:

- removing the burden on applicants to go to court when public bodies refuse to follow the Commissioner’s recommendations;
- mandating privacy breach reporting to the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner;
- creating a positive duty to document government business and decision-making; and
- correcting the lack of privacy oversight for municipalities and the lack of authority to review privacy complaints about municipalities.

The annual report also identifies that the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner has a backlog of cases reaching back to 2016. On this matter, Commissioner Ralph notes, “Administrative bodies were designed to resolve matters more expeditiously. Waiting for more than three years to have one’s review heard challenges this objective.” The 2019-2020 Annual Report includes details of the increased caseload of this office, the resources that have not kept pace and the corresponding challenges to the delivery of administrative justice.

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