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Nova Scotia's Information and Privacy Commissioner releases 2020-2021 Annual Report

HALIFAX – Today, Tricia Ralph, Nova Scotia's Information and Privacy Commissioner, released her annual report for 2020-2021.

The annual report outlines that the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner (OIPC) continues to have a backlog of cases reaching back to 2017. However, the office has recently learned that it has been allocated three two-year term positions to address the backlog. These positions will be filled as soon as possible. In addition, the OIPC implemented several new processes over the past year, with a goal of improving efficiency. On this matter, Commissioner Ralph notes, "Our number one priority is to reduce the backlog. With these new resources and with the changes to our internal processes, I am confident we have the tools to address our backlog in a meaningful way."

In addition, the Commissioner once again calls for modernization of Nova Scotia's access to information and privacy legislation. This past year, only 37.5% of the Commissioner's recommendations were accepted by public bodies, municipalities and health custodians. "In an environment where the legislation has not been substantially updated since 1993 and where recommendations are rejected at an alarming rate, it's long past time that the structure of the recommendation-making model be reviewed."

The report outlines the Commissioner's optimism arising from the previous government's directive to strike a committee to review the legislation. The Commissioner is hopeful that the incoming government will take swift steps to modernize the legislation. To provide meaningful change, it is the Commissioner's position that a reviewing committee should be independent and must seek stakeholder input, including from the OIPC.

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