

# Accountability Report 2017–2018

Human Rights Commission



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## Accountability Statement

The Accountability Report of the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission (Commission) for the year ended March 31, 2018 is prepared pursuant to the *Finance Act* and government policies and guidelines. These authorities require the reporting of outcomes against the Commission's Business Plan for the fiscal year just ended. The reporting of the Commission's outcomes necessarily includes estimates, judgments and opinions by the Commission's management.

I acknowledge that this Accountability Report is the responsibility of the Commission's management. The report is, to the extent possible, a complete and accurate representation of outcomes relative to the goals and priorities set out in the Commission's 2017-2018 Business Plan.

Original signed by Christine Hanson

Christine Hanson  
Director and CEO

## Message from the Director and CEO

I am pleased to present the Accountability Report of the Commission for fiscal year 2017-18. The Commission has come a long way in advancing human rights awareness since its inception in 1967. 2017-18 marked the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Commission and a period of continued modernization and innovation.

On the anniversary date of the Commission's establishment, March 27, the Commission launched its first of three free online education courses. "Serving All Customers Better" was created to support Nova Scotia's business community in preventing and addressing consumer racial profiling and has already trained more than 10,000 people. On March 8, International Women's Day, the Commission launched its second education campaign, "Safe Places Make Great Workplaces" to provide resources to help organizations prevent and address sexual harassment in their workplaces.

The Commission also engaged, collaborated and partnered with many stakeholders, including various government departments and community groups, to celebrate 50 years of human rights in Nova Scotia. Initiatives included a youth art exhibit that travelled to different locations across the province; and a signature event on December 8 to coincide with International Human Rights Day. During this event, the 2017 Nova Scotia Human Rights Awards were presented to deserving Nova Scotians who contributed to the advancement of human rights in the province. On the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, March 21, the Commission, in partnership with the Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs, hosted two lectures by well-known anti-racism activist Tim Wise. During Mi'kmaw Heritage Month, the Commission also partnered with the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre on the initiative "Reconciliation: Let's Start the Conversation", which engaged various government, private sector and community partners.

In continued collaboration with the Halifax Police Board of Commissioners and representatives of African Nova Scotian communities, the Commission retained Dr. Scot Wortley of the University of Toronto to review the use of street checks by Halifax Regional Police and RCMP. Several informal meetings were hosted by the Commission to provide members of African Nova Scotian communities with an opportunity to contribute to Dr. Wortley's review and analysis of the police data.

The Commission continued refining its dispute resolution processes to ensure fair, effective, and accessible services for all Nova Scotians. Processes for reviewing complaints were improved, and the average number of days to resolve a complaint was significantly reduced.

My sincere thanks go to the staff, management, and Commissioners for their commitment and hard work to ensure the best possible service to the public throughout this period.

*Original signed by Christine Hanson*

Christine Hanson  
Director and CEO

## Financial Results

	2017-2018 Estimate	2017-2018 Actuals	2017-2018 Variance
<b>Human Rights Commission</b>	<i>(\$thousands)</i>		
<b>Departmental Expenses:</b>			
Administration	953	755	(198)
Support Services	1,711	1,865	154
<b>Total: Departmental Expenses</b>	<b>2,664</b>	<b>2,620</b>	<b>(44)</b>
<b>Additional Information:</b>			
Ordinary Revenue	0	0	0
Fees and Other Charges	0	0	0
Ordinary Recoveries	0	8	8
<b>Total: Revenue, Fees and Recoveries</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>
TCA Purchase Requirements	0	0	0
Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs)	25.2	23.5	(1.7)
<b><u>Departmental Expenses Variance Explanation:</u></b> Salary savings resulting from vacancies			
<b><u>Revenue, Fees and Recoveries Variance Explanation:</u></b> Recoveries from education training			
<b><u>TCA Purchase Requirements Variance Explanation:</u></b>			
<b><u>Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs) Variance Explanation:</u></b> Temporary vacancies			

# Measuring Our Performance

## 2017-2018 Priorities of the Commission

### #1

**Outcome:** Communities within Nova Scotia are more inclusive

**Goals:** Meaningfully engage, educate and support people and communities to raise awareness and address issues of systemic discrimination

**Actions:**

**Proactive, strategic stakeholder engagement**

1. The Commission focused efforts on increasing engagement with proactive, strategic stakeholders to strengthen current partnerships and create others. The Commission increased human rights awareness through an increased number of community-focused public events. Since the Commission's expansion in the world of social media, the number of Facebook and Twitter followers increased significantly, and a new Instagram account was launched to keep up with technology.

**Strategic partnerships and collaboration**

2. The Commission continued working with current human rights partners and identified new strategic partnership opportunities to further advance its mandate. The collaboration with the Police Board of Commissioners and affected communities examining police use of street checks advanced to the next stage with the retention of Dr. Scot Wortley of the University of Toronto, and several informal meetings were hosted by the Commission to provide members of African Nova Scotian communities with an opportunity to contribute to Dr. Wortley's review and analysis of the police data. Human rights-themed art created by Nova Scotian youth were exhibited at various locations across the province and displayed inside Metro Transit buses and at the Halifax Stanfield International Airport. The Commission collaborated with the Nova Scotia business community and launched the education campaign "Safe Spaces Make Great Workplaces" to help prevent and address sexual harassment in workplaces. The Commission also partnered with the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre on the initiative "Reconciliation: Let's Start the Conversation", which engaged various government, private sector and community partners.
3. The Commission launched and promoted free online human rights training courses, making human rights education accessible to the public across the province. The free consumer racial profiling online course, "Serving All Customers Better", continued to be promoted throughout fiscal 2017-18. In collaboration with the Nova Scotia business community, the Commission launched an education campaign on sexual harassment in the workplace on March 8, International Women's Day and will continue to be promoted throughout fiscal 2018-19. Another free online training course on accommodating people with physical and mental disabilities in the workplace was developed during fiscal 2017-18, and is expected to be launched early in fiscal 2018-19.

4. The CEO of the Commission continued to co-chair the community group, Partners for Human Rights and identified goals that align with those of the Commission.
5. The Commission provided sponsorship to 2017 Halifax Pride. Several Commission staff and Commissioners also participated in the Pride Parades in Halifax, Sydney and Digby.

#### **Support for Commissioners**

6. Commissioner engagement and participation was enhanced in 2017-18. Commissioners participated in an increased number of community outreach events outside of the regular complement of bi-monthly meetings. Commissioners marched the 2017 Halifax Pride Parade, participated in the 2017 Human Rights Awards, and attended the 11<sup>th</sup> African Heritage Month Celebration Gala and festivities in Membertou.

#### **Community Conversations Initiative**

7. The Commission hosted five community meetings related to police street checks, as well as an event at the Mi'kmaw Friendship Center on reconciliation with Nova Scotia's Indigenous communities.

#### **Inputs:**

The Commission worked within its existing budget and staffing complement to achieve this priority and complete the required actions. It engaged and continued to work with community partners, stakeholders and other government departments and agencies to achieve this outcome.

#### **Performance Measures:**

- The membership of the Commission will reflect the diversity of communities throughout Nova Scotia.
  - In 2017-18, the Commission had a staffing complement of 25, with over half of its members reflecting the diversity of Nova Scotia's communities.
- The launch of key initiatives to celebrate the Commission's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, including a signature event on International Human Rights Day, youth art exhibits across the province and a digital media engagement strategy
  - The Commission celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary throughout fiscal 2017-18. In cooperation with Partners for Human Rights, the Commission launched a call for art submissions from youth aged 12-24 in February 2017. These submissions were featured at the Halifax Central Library in May 2017, the Margaret Hennigar Public Library in Bridgewater in July 2017, Wolfville Farmer's Market during August and September 2017, and Truro Public Library during September and October 2017. Four pieces were selected to appear on Halifax Transit interior bus signs in July 2017, and a digital exhibit was featured at the Halifax Stanfield

International Airport throughout the Fall and Winter. In addition to ongoing social media posts on Twitter and Facebook, the Commission added the social media platform Instagram to engage audiences on activities related to its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. As part of the anniversary, the Commission also interviewed several community members for a series of short videos looking at the past, present and future of human rights in the province, which are posted on YouTube.

#2

**Outcome:** The Commission will be known provincially as a leader and innovator in the protection and promotion of human rights

**Goal:** The Commission will demonstrate leadership in the protection of human rights through innovation and the use of best practices.

**Actions:**

**Review and improve internal processes**

1. The Commission continued refining its dispute resolution processes and identified practices and procedures to make the delivery of services more efficient.
2. The Commission continued monitoring the processing times of complaints and board of inquiry hearings to ensure they were resolved in a timely manner. During the 2017-18 fiscal year, all protracted matters were concluded or in the process of being concluded. Dispute resolution statistics were tracked by the Commission on a bi-monthly basis.

**Sharing best practices with partners and the local restorative learning community**

3. The Commission shared its best practices and knowledge with its stakeholders and human rights counterparts locally and nationally. Members of the Commission participated in national and international conferences and brought what they learned back to the Commission.
4. The Commission continued membership in the Canadian Association of Statutory Human Rights Associations (CASHRA) for 2017-18. Several staff members continued participating in various working groups with their national human rights counterparts. Members of senior management and the Commission Chair attended the 2017 AGM and Annual Conference in June 2017, and the 2017 Mid-year Conference in November 2017.

**Reducing consumer racial profiling**

5. The Commission continued its work on reducing consumer racial profiling by continued promotion of the free online course to raise awareness and educate Nova Scotians on consumer racial profiling. The Commission also created a virtual classroom based on its "Serving All Customers Better" online course, for national use, to better support Nova



Scotian businesses operating in other parts of Canada. This initiative will be launched early in the 2018-19 fiscal year.

### **Evaluation of Dispute Resolution Practices**

6. The Commission entered into an academic partnership with Dalhousie University to carry out an in-depth assessment of the use of restorative approaches in human rights dispute resolution. The results of this evaluation will be available in fiscal 2018-19.

### **Review the *Human Rights Act***

7. The Commission continued working with the Department of Justice to draft proposed amendments to the *Human Rights Act* to reflect advancements in human rights law and to improve the dispute resolution process. The final draft of the proposed amendments was presented to the Minister of Justice in late 2017-18. Public consultations are planned for fiscal 2018-19.

### **Input:**

The Commission continued to work toward an improved and more effective implementation of the restorative approach to human rights complaint resolution. As the benefits of this model continue to be realized, the Commission will be able to better direct its human resources to focus on the education and training needs component of its mandate.

### **Performance Measures:**

- The Commission will continue to ensure that investigations of complaints are completed within one year of referral.
  - The Commission continued monitoring the investigation of complaints. During fiscal year 2017-18, investigations were completed, on average, in 231 days from the time of referral.
- The Commission will offer up to four free human rights education sessions throughout the province in the 2017-18 fiscal year.
  - During fiscal 2017-18, nine free human rights education sessions were offered throughout the province. This represents an increase from the number of sessions offered in 2016-17.
- The Commission will participate in a minimum of ten workshops, presentations and/or information sessions in the 2017-18 fiscal year.
  - A total of 19 workshops, presentations and information sessions were held during the 2017-18 fiscal year. A total of 3350 individuals attended these attendees. The large increase in the number of attendees was due to the Commission's participation in a Youth Expo which drew 2874 youth over the course of two days; while 476

persons attended the other 18 workshops, presentations and initiatives. It should be noted that while the total number of sessions is slightly below those in 2016-17, the total number of attendees increased almost two-fold.

### #3

**Outcome:** The Commission is a preferred place of employment within the network of provincial department and agencies.

**Goals:** The Commission is a respectful workplace that is dynamic, embraces differences and fosters continuous learning.

#### **Actions:**

##### **Create and sustain a workplace of excellence**

1. The Commission continued to focus on activities that enhanced overall organizational development. Learning plans and training budgets implemented last fiscal year were updated to allow staff to participate in training opportunities and conferences.

##### **Support for staff**

2. The Commission invested in technology enhancements and improved internal communications, which included several computer and cell phone upgrades. Plans for an internal website will be reviewed in 2018-19. The updated external website expected to be launched early in 2018-19.
3. The Commission reviewed its staff orientation manual during fiscal 2017-18. However, it was not operationalized as significant changes to and removal of practices, and reassignment of tasks occurred throughout 2017-18. Operationalization of this initiative was deferred to 2018-19.
4. Commission staff participated in regular learning opportunities and information sharing sessions during fiscal 2017-18. Staff were encouraged to enroll in courses offered by the Public Service Commission and other third-party training service providers. One staff member participated in the Public Service Commission's Leadership Development Program and will graduate in early 2018-19. Training session in addition to regular lunch and learn sessions to staff were offered by the Race Relations, Equity and Inclusion team.
5. The Commission continued to support workplace wellness initiatives for staff throughout the 2017-18 fiscal year. The Workplace Wellness Committee, created in 2016-17, organized several staff events aimed at promoting healthy living and included step challenges and healthy lunch challenges.

### **Learning organization**

6. The Commission reviewed and updated its organizational plan, demonstrating its commitment to continuous learning. Learning plans for all staff were reviewed and updated at the beginning of the 2017-18 fiscal year, and the number of in-house lunch and learn sessions on specific human rights topics also increased.

### **Inputs:**

The Commission worked within its existing budget and staffing complement to achieve this priority and complete the required actions. The Commission also worked with the Public Service Commission to capitalize on existing training and learning opportunities, to provide support for a healthy workplace.

### **Performance Measures:**

- All managers and staff will have learning plans completed and will have the opportunity to attend at least one professional development course or conference by March 31, 2018.
  - Learning plans were reviewed and updated for each manager and staff member at the beginning of fiscal 2017-18. One Commission staff member participated in the Public Service Commission's Leadership Development Program during this fiscal year and will graduate in early 2018-19.
- Increased understanding by all staff of the various roles and responsibilities within the Commission.
  - The Commission held several in-house lunch and learn sessions and staff meetings throughout 2017-18.
- The Commission will hold at least six training sessions for staff on issues including human rights education, complaints adjudication, and healthy workplace practices.
  - Seven training sessions were offered to Commission staff throughout 2017-18.

## Appendix A

### Annual Report under Section 18 of the Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act

The Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act was proclaimed into law on December 20, 2011.

The Act provides for government employees to be able to come forward if they reasonably believe that a wrongdoing has been committed or is about to be committed and they are acting in good faith.

The Act also protects employees who do disclose from reprisals, by enabling them to lay a complaint of reprisal with the Labor Board.

A Wrongdoing for the purposes of the Act is:

- a) a contravention of provincial or federal laws or regulations
- b) a misuse or gross mismanagement of public funds or assets
- c) an act or omission that creates an imminent risk of a substantial and specific danger to the life, health or safety of persons or the environment, or
- d) directing or counselling someone to commit a wrongdoing

Please use the following format to satisfy the disclosure obligation:

The following is a summary of disclosures received by the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission

Information Required under Section 18 of the Act	Fiscal Year 2017-2018
The number of disclosures received	0
The number of findings of wrongdoing	NA
Details of each wrongdoing (insert separate row for each wrongdoing)	NA
Recommendations and actions taken on each wrongdoing (insert separate row for each wrongdoing)	NA