

NOTE: UNDER EMBARGO to 11 a.m., June 27, 2018

## ***Annual Report 2017-2018 – Facts & highlights***

### **By the numbers – cases received**

Fiscal 2017-2018 (April 1, 2017-March 31, 2018): **21,154**

Provincial ministries and programs within jurisdiction: **11,099** (pp. 72-73)

Municipalities: General – **2,491** (breakdown pp. 74-77); Closed meetings – **80** (stats p. 80)

School boards: **871** (breakdown p. 79) Universities: **268** (breakdown p. 78)

Top provincial organizations by case volume: See p. 71

Top correctional facilities by case volume: See p. 71

**49%** of cases closed within 1 week; **63%** within 2 weeks

### **What's new – complaint trends and proactive work**

- The Ombudsman's submissions to legislative committees, based on evidence gathered in investigations, contributed to substantive reforms in three new laws (p. 5).
- When in force, the new *Safer Ontario Act, 2018* will extend the Ombudsman's jurisdiction to all of the province's police oversight bodies (p. 19).
- Correctional facility managers across one region were reminded of their obligations to complete local investigation reports in cases of inmate-on-inmate assaults after Ombudsman staff alerted them to an unreported case where an inmate was hospitalized (p. 21).
- The Ontario Parole Board improved its scheduling practices to ensure inmates' parole hearings aren't delayed past their parole eligibility dates, after Ombudsman staff flagged complaints – including one case that was delayed due to a broken fax machine (p. 25).
- The Family Responsibility Office (FRO) and its B.C. counterpart launched a pilot project to improve co-ordination of enforcement efforts after Ombudsman staff raised the case of a woman who lost out on \$1,400 due to FRO delays in sending forms (p. 28).
- 135 municipalities now have integrity commissioners, 200 have codes of conduct, 28 have local ombudsmen (p. 33), and at least 20 make digital recordings of their closed meetings (p. 40).
- Complaints about universities and colleges of applied arts and technology are on the rise, and the Ombudsman encourages them to have local accountability mechanisms; 9 universities and 4 colleges have institutional ombudsmen; 2 universities have student ombudsmen (p. 50).
- The Ministry of Transportation announced service improvements and expanded hours at some DriveTest locations after Ombudsman staff flagged a surge of 104 complaints (p. 53).

- Complaints about both the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board and its appeals tribunal declined, as officials continued dialogue with stakeholders and addressed backlogs (p. 59).

## Investigations

New and pending investigations: Driver's licence suspensions for unpaid fines, launched May 2017 (p. 53); Seizure of media property at the Regional Municipality of Niagara (p. 35); Oversight of complaints about ambulance services, launched May 2018 (p. 57).

Municipal closed meetings: 22 reports and letters published; 57% of meetings investigated (17 of 30) found to be illegal (p. 38).

New case assessment: Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation self-exclusion program (p. 62).

### Updates on completed investigations:

- *The Route of the Problem* (school busing problems in Toronto, released August 2017): The Toronto public and Catholic boards and their transportation consortium accepted all of the Ombudsman's recommendations, averting major problems in time for the school year (p. 45).
- *Out of Oversight, Out of Mind* (tracking of inmates in segregation, released April 2017): Correctional staff now enter all segregation placements in a database and data is shared and reviewed; when in force, the new *Correctional Services Transformation Act, 2018* will include a definition and limits for segregation, as the Ombudsman recommended (p. 22).
- *Nowhere to Turn* (services for adults with developmental disabilities who are in crisis, released August 2016): The Ministry continues to implement the Ombudsman's recommendations and has improved supports and communication; 128 new complaints were received and resolved case-by-case (p. 30).
- *By-law Surprise* (\$11,000 by-law enforcement fee charged to resident of St. Clair Township/County of Lambton, released April 2018): The county and township accepted the Ombudsman's recommendations to improve unfair billing practices (p. 34).
- *A Matter of Life and Death* (provincial direction on police de-escalation training, released June 2016): New standards for Ontario Police College training are expected by this summer, to ensure consistent training across Ontario, as the Ombudsman recommended (p. 19).
- *Oversight Unseen* and *Oversight Undermined* (Special Investigations Unit, released 2008 and 2011): When proclaimed in force, the new *Safer Ontario Act, 2018* will include standalone legislation for SIU and other reforms recommended by the Ombudsman and others (p. 20).

## Individual case highlights – how Ombudsman intervention helped

- An inmate experiencing mental health issues after being placed in segregation for more than a month without an explanation was transferred out after Ombudsman staff alerted administrators that the required documentation and reviews hadn't been done. (p. 24)
- A woman with a broken collarbone who was denied a sling for her arm in jail received medical treatment after Ombudsman staff alerted health care workers at the institution (p. 25).
- A man who was ordered to pay too much child support received an \$8,000 refund and an apology from the Family Responsibility Office (p. 27).

- The Family Responsibility Office took action to help a woman who was owed more than \$35,000 in support dating back 14 years after Ombudsman staff made inquiries (p. 27).
- A homeless mother and four children who had no money for food while one child was being treated in hospital received emergency funding after Ombudsman staff alerted Ontario Works (p. 29).
- A man whose Ontario Disability Support Program shelter allowance was terminated because he could not reach his case worker had his assistance reinstated after Ombudsman staff helped him determine that his worker was on a leave of absence and no one had checked his emails (p. 31).
- A resident in municipal housing had his plumbing problem fixed after he made a video of sewage bubbling up into his sink and Ombudsman staff shared it with the local services board, which had initially found no problems in his unit (p. 34).
- A couple who faced a \$600 water bill for a toilet that leaked while they were both in hospital had the interest reduced after Ombudsman staff spoke with municipal officials (p. 34).
- A 16-year-old girl who had moved out on her own was able to register with a new school board after Ombudsman staff confirmed her situation with the board (p. 45).
- A student who transferred from one college to another had his tuition refund expedited after eight weeks of waiting after he complained to the Ombudsman that he could not pay tuition at the new institution without it (p. 49).
- A man whose driver's licence was suspended for medical reasons had it temporarily reinstated after he complained to the Ombudsman that he was not given a chance to demonstrate that his condition had no impact on his ability to drive (p. 53).
- After being shunted between her local government and the province, a woman finally received \$1,100 in compensation for damage to her car caused by a pothole, after Ombudsman staff helped confirm it was the province's responsibility (p.54).
- A Northwestern Ontario woman who was initially denied compensation for painkillers because they were dispensed in Manitoba (by the nearest specialist to her) received a \$4,539 refund after Ombudsman staff prompted the Exceptional Access Program to review her case (p. 56).
- A man with physical disabilities and cancer whose porch lift had to be torn down because his contractor didn't build it to code was provided with funds to build a proper one after Ombudsman staff explained his situation to relevant officials (p. 62).
- A woman received an apology from ServiceOntario after Ombudsman staff determined that it accidentally transferred ownership of her new car to someone else (p. 65).
- A mother received amended birth certificates for her two boys just in time for the family's trip to Disneyland after Ombudsman staff helped speed up the process (p. 66).