

For Immediate Release  
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## **MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT RECEIVES RECOMMENDATIONS OF ONTARIO PANEL ON JUSTICE AND THE MEDIA**

*Panel Proposes Ways To Improve Understanding Between Media And Justice System*

TORONTO — The McGuinty government welcomes the report of the Ontario Panel on Justice and the Media that aims to promote mutual understanding between media and the justice system, Attorney General Michael Bryant said today.

“I established the Panel because I was concerned that there was no forum for media and the justice system to engage in dialogue and I have been looking forward to this report,” said Bryant. “I will be asking ministry staff to immediately begin implementation work on a number of recommendations that fall within the government's jurisdiction. I will also initiate discussions with the Chief Justices and police on those that fall within their authority.”

The ministry will begin implementation work on recommendations such as developing an online Ontario justice system guidebook for the media in conjunction with justice and media representatives, and assigning an appropriate staff member to act as a media contact for each court location to help resolve issues.

The Ontario Panel on Justice and the Media was established by the Attorney General in January 2005, and brought together representatives of the media and justice sectors. The Panel members held discussions and received public input through written submissions and meetings. They also studied best practices from other jurisdictions.

The Panel submitted a report to the Attorney General containing 17 recommendations in the areas of openness, education, working in the electronic age and the ongoing relationship between justice and the media. The report is now available on the ministry's website at [www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca](http://www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca).

“I would like to thank the Panel members for their incredible contribution to this important initiative,” said Bryant. “We will do everything we can to improve operations and understanding between media and the justice system.”

The panel members are:

- Chief Paul Hamelin, past president of the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police
- John Honderich, former publisher, editor and reporter for the Toronto Star
- Paul Lindsay, Assistant Deputy Attorney General, Criminal Law Division, Ministry of the Attorney General
- Justice James MacPherson, Court of Appeal for Ontario
- Trina McQueen, broadcaster and journalist, Professor of Broadcast Management, Schulich School of Business, York University
- Ralph Steinberg, past president, Criminal Lawyers' Association
- Benjamin Zarnett, past president, The Advocates' Society.

The McGuinty government is committed to improving access to justice. The government has implemented a number of initiatives to modernize and improve access to the justice system, including:

- introducing the Access to Justice Act, 2005 that would, if passed, reform the justice of the peace system and regulate paralegals
- introducing the Human Rights Code Amendment Act, 2006 that would, if passed, improve and strengthen the promotion, advancement and enforcement of human rights in Ontario
- increasing funding to Legal Aid Ontario (LAO) by \$13 million in 2006/07. Since October 2003, the McGuinty government has increased base funding for LAO by 10 per cent, or \$25 million.

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