

1. Mandate

In June 2004 the Ontario Government asked me to review the provincial system dealing with public complaints regarding the police. My mandate was to advise on the development of a model for resolving public complaints about the police, to ensure that the system is fair, effective and transparent.¹ At my request, Messrs. John Lee, John Twohig, and Graham Boswell, all counsel from the Policy Division of the Ministry of the Attorney General, assisted me in discharging this mandate. I also appreciate the assistance of Mr. Mark Leach, Assistant Deputy Attorney General, Policy. Ms. Sarah Perkins and Mr. Grant McLeod, articling students at Policy Division, provided additional valuable support. I was able to access information at any time from the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services and am grateful for the assistance of Mr. Ron Bain, Assistant Deputy Minister of the Policing Services Division. I very much appreciate the administrative support of Ms. Iris Wordsworth of Gowlings and Ms. Monica McCorquodale of the Policy Division, and am also most grateful to Dean Nathalie Des Rosiers of the University of Ottawa's Faculty of Civil Law who moderated public meetings held in Ottawa and Toronto and to the University of Windsor Law School's Professor Rose Voyvodic who moderated the Windsor public meeting. Mr. Jerry Amernic provided excellent communications support services for those meetings. While I appreciate the assistance of all of those who assisted in the creation of this report, the views expressed and recommendations made are my own.

¹ The full details of my terms of reference are found in Appendix A.

The Government asked me to consult widely with interested parties to determine their views on the police complaints system. During the first half of the year, the Attorney General had written to key groups and all Members of the Provincial Parliament requesting that they submit names of parties who would be interested in participating in the review. Upon my appointment, I contacted over 200 groups and individuals and I requested that they present written submissions on the topic by August 16, 2004. This deadline was later extended to September 21, 2004.

At the beginning of July, a website was set up to provide information about the review and to solicit submissions. The Ministry of the Attorney General was able to provide a prominent link to it on its own website.

On June 21, 2004 I began to hold informal meetings with groups and individuals that have historically been interested in policing matters. Among those participating in meetings were a broad range of community groups and police organizations. In addition to those that I specifically invited to meet with me, I met or spoke with many groups and individuals who contacted me and expressed an interest in sharing their views on the subject. While I was unable to meet or speak with every interested party, everyone was encouraged to provide a written submission.

Private meetings were held with over 200 individuals, representing more than 85 groups and organizations. I met privately with these groups and individuals to allow for full and frank discussions that otherwise may not have been possible in a public environment. Private meetings were held in Toronto, Kingston, Ottawa, Thunder Bay, Kenora, Windsor, London, Hamilton, Oshweken, and Sault Ste. Marie. I also received written submissions from over 100 groups and individuals from across the Province, all of which I read.

Public meetings were held at the Ottawa City Hall Council Chamber, the Windsor Public Library, and Toronto's Metro Hall Council Chamber on October 18, 25, and 28 respectively to reach out to those from whom I otherwise would not have heard. These meetings allowed those with whom I met informally to hear what others were saying about the system and allowed members of the general public to better understand the issues. Fifty presentations were made at these meetings. Additional comments in reaction to the public meetings were accepted in written form until November 12, 2004. All three meetings were recorded and transcripts were posted on the website. I also held a number of follow-up meetings with some groups that I wanted to meet again and requested additional submissions so that I could fully understand their positions.