

Message from our Chair (Acting)

In keeping with the requirements of a Category 3 entity under the **Transparency and Accountability Act**, I am pleased to present the Commission's 2017-18 Annual Report. This report covers the period April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2018, and reports on the objectives, measures and indicators for the 2017-18 timeframe.

The Annual Report summarizes the work of the Human Rights Commission in the service of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, as per the Newfoundland and Labrador **Human Rights Act, 2010**.

My signature below indicates that the Human Rights Commission accepts accountability for the preparation of this report and the actual results reported.



Kim Mackay, Chair (Acting)



Overview

The Human Rights Commission is an independent at arm's length government agency that is responsible for promoting an understanding of, acceptance of, and compliance with the provisions of the **Human Rights Act, 2010**.

The **Human Rights Act, 2010** is a provincial law that protects people in Newfoundland and Labrador from discrimination and harassment. The **Act** recognizes the inherent dignity and worth of all people, that we all have equal rights and opportunities and should live free from discrimination and harassment.

What we do?

- Receive, resolve and investigate individuals' written complaints that allege violations of the **Human Rights Act, 2010**;
- Promote the **Human Rights Act, 2010**;
- Educate and research issues designed to eliminate discriminatory conduct; and
- Advise and help individuals, groups, organizations and governments on matters related to human rights.

“The Human Rights Award is held every year ... to coincide with International Human Rights Day, which is recognized annually on December 10. It is awarded to people who make or have made a meaningful contribution to advancing & furthering human rights in NL and Labrador, either in a work or volunteer capacity. They take action to combat discrimination, increase awareness of human rights, promote the dignity & worth of people, recognize the rich diversity of the people of NL and Labrador....”

*Kim Mackay
Chair (Acting)*

Who we are?

The Human Rights Commission (Commission) was established by legislation in 1971. The Commission is responsible for promoting an understanding of, acceptance of, and compliance with the provisions of the **Human Rights Act, 2010** (the Act). The Lieutenant-Governor in Council appoints commissioners, one of whom serves as Chairperson, and another who serves as Vice-Chairperson. At March 31, 2018, the Commission members were:

- Kim Mackay
- Christopher Sheppard
- Ray McIsaac
- Darlene Didham
- Smita Joshi

2017-18 Highlights

Human Rights Award

The 2017 Human Rights Award winner was Ms. Susan Rose. Ms. Rose is a former teacher, current National Vice-President of EGALE Human Rights Trust, and lifelong advocate for LGBTQ2S rights, protections, and visibility in education and beyond.

At a time when it was not popular or safe to do so, Susan pushed for changes in the school environment and curriculum. She developed workshops, helped organize gay-straight alliances, facilitated research on homophobia and transphobia in education, and was a personal support to countless families and educators.

Beyond the classroom, she dedicated her own time and resources to improving the lives of LGBTQ2S people across the island.

Two people were named Human Rights Champions in 2017:

- Dr. Lloydetta Quaicoe is founder and CEO of Sharing Our Cultures, an organization that encourages intercultural communications between students.
- Dr. Pauline Duke is an award-winning physician, educator and advocate for refugee healthcare.



Pictured from left to right: Dr. Duke, Susan Rose and Dr. Quaicoe.

Use of Technology

The Human Rights Commission updated website has a new modern look, increased accessibility features and has more public education resources on the site. The Commission is committed to access to justice principles by using plain language, simplifying the complaint process and introducing on-line forms.

The Commission continues to have a strong social media presence. Follow us on twitter at: [@nlhumanrights](https://twitter.com/nlhumanrights)

Issue 1: Public Education and Awareness

The Commission recognizes that education and awareness are key components to preventing and reducing discriminatory attitudes and behaviours. The Commission launched its re-branded website, increased the number of publications on the website and continues to have a strong social media presence. Follow us on twitter at: @nlhumanrights

Goal 1: By March 31, 2020 the Human Rights Commission will have enhanced its public education and awareness activities.

Objective 1.1: By March 31, 2018, the Human Rights Commission will have begun work towards enhancing its public education and awareness activities.

Indicator: New website launched

The Human Rights Commission launched its re-branded website in August 2017. The website has a new, modern look, increased accessibility features and more public education resources. The Commission is committed to access to justice principles by using plain language, simplifying the complaint process and introducing on-line forms. Visit our new website at: <https://thinkhumanrights.ca/>

The Commission increased the number of guidelines and FAQs on its website. These documents outline basic information about the protected grounds, what constitutes discrimination, and where the legal burden rests. They also provide new information about the human rights complaints process. The Human Rights Commission will continue to identify, develop, and make public additional educational materials.

Indicator: Public education and awareness activities delivered

The Commission delivered over 46 public education presentations to employers, government agencies and community groups and at conferences. The Commission's Executive Director spoke at the Women's March held January 20, 2018.

Indicator: Community outreach activities completed

The Commission continues to work with community partners, such as the A2J committee, MNL respectful workplace committee, PLIAN legal aid clinics and Relationships First.

Objective 1.2: By March 31, 2019, the Human Rights Commission will have continued work towards enhancing its public education and awareness activities.

- Online forms implemented
- Public education and awareness activities delivered
- Community outreach activities completed



Women's March
– January 2018

Issue 2: Resolving Human Rights Complaints

Over the next two years, the Commission will implement a new case management system. This will enable the generation of more timely statistics and provide the functionality to identify trends in human rights in the province. It will also provide data that will enable the identification of areas requiring improvements within the case management process. Additionally, the current information management system will be reviewed and updated to reflect changes in the case management process.

Once the case management system has been implemented, the Commission will be better positioned to review the Act to determine if legislative changes are required to improve information availability and efficiencies.

Goal 2: By March 31, 2020 the Human Rights Commission will have enhanced the case resolution process.

Objective 2.1: By March 31, 2018, the Human Rights Commission will have implemented a new Case Management/Information Management system.

Indicator: Case management system developed

The Commission worked closely with OCIO to develop a new case management system. The development was finalized in June 2017.

Indicator: Case management system tested

The case management system was tested using a development website created by OCIO for this purpose.

Indicator: Case management system operationalized

The case management system was implemented for testing and review its database functionality. The Commission and OCIO worked together to find workable solutions to the data needs of the office.

Objective 2.2: By March 31, 2019, the Human Rights Commission will have researched human rights legislative frameworks and practices in other jurisdictions to inform its work.

- Research on human rights legislative frameworks and practices compiled
- Research on human rights legislative frameworks and practices analyzed
- Feasibility of new legislative frameworks and practices assessed for Newfoundland and Labrador

Did you know?

- 1131 inquiries were made in 2017-18
- 80 official complaints were accepted
- The majority of official complaints were based on the prohibited grounds of mental and/or physical disability
- 83 official complaints were closed – either by mediation, commission dismissal, judicial decision or by other means
- 20 official complaints were referred to a human rights hearing

Financial Statements

Expenditure and revenue figures included in this document are un-audited and based on public information provided in the “Report on the Program Expenditures and Revenues of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the Year Ended 31 March 2018”. The Human Rights Commission is not required to provide a separate audited financial statement.

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

		Estimates		
		Actual \$	Amended \$	Original \$
01. Salaries		692,024	692,900	705,400
Operating Accounts:	Employee Benefits	8,309	7,900	7,900
	Transportation & Communications	14,520	19,900	15,000
	Supplies	10,182	9,500	9,500
	Professional Services	27,399	37,000	18,000
	Purchased Services	86,531	103,600	69,700
	Property, Furnishings and Equipment	564	-	-
02. Operating Accounts		147,505	177,900	120,100
Total Human Rights		839,529	870,800	825,500

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