



The Jamaican Canadian Association (JCA) is to deliver programs and services, provides a physical hub, and to advocate to improve the well-being and equity of Jamaican, Caribbean & African-Canadian communities within the Greater Toronto Area.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Final Report of the Independent Police Oversight Review

April 11, 2017

On April 6, 2017, Justice Michael Tulloch, head of the Independent Police Oversight Review, released his far-reaching recommendations for greater transparency and accountability within Ontario's three civilian police oversight bodies: The Special Investigations Unit (SIU), the Office of the Independent Police Review Director (OIPRD), and the Ontario Civilian Police Commission (OCPC).

The first of Justice Tulloch's 17 public consultations was hosted by the Jamaican Canadian Association (JCA) in September 2016. There, community members shared their experiences with police oversight bodies and called for more openness, including public release of SIU Director's reports, clear end-to-end information about the processes within each body, and proactive public outreach by the OIPRD to make the complaints process more accessible, especially for Black and racialized people, newcomers, people facing language barriers, and other marginalized groups.

The JCA's Board of Directors and membership are heartened that these concerns are not only reflected in the final report, but addressed with concrete proposals. We are also encouraged that Justice Tulloch has moved the needle even further with many other wide-ranging recommendations that, once implemented, will lay the foundation for renewed public trust in the police and oversight bodies.

Of particular import are recommendations that police oversight bodies have their own distinct legislation; that they are diverse in their composition; that they collect demographic data such as race, age, religion, mental health status, and disability to support evidence-based decision- and policy-making; that they enhance their cultural competency when interacting with a wide range of communities and individuals, including Indigenous peoples, Black and other racialized people, people affected by mental health issues, people with disabilities, and women, especially those facing gender-based violence. Other key recommendations include the SIU concluding its investigations within 120 days and if not, updating the public then as well as every 60 days thereafter; and, the OIPRD tracking complaints to identify officers with multiple complaints lodged against them.

The JCA commends the Ontario Government's early action on some of the most critical of Justice Tulloch's 126 recommendations by committing to releasing all past SIU reports on police interactions resulting in death and establishing a process to make future reports publicly available, as well as enabling mandated race-based data collection by police oversight bodies by supporting the proposed Anti-Racism Act. However, these are just first steps in a long road ahead to restore confidence in the ability of the SIU, OIPRD and OCPC to effectively and fairly represent Ontarians in the discharge of their duties.

We challenge the Government to stay the course and implement the full suite of recommendations, and we thank Justice Tulloch and his team for their thoughtful and thorough approach to advancing dialogue and action on this critical issue.

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