



Yukon
Ombudsman

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NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
OCTOBER 12, 2023

Yukon Ombudsman marks international Ombuds Day with podcast calling for a new and improved *Ombudsman Act*

WHITEHORSE – Ombudsman Jason Pedlar is speaking out about the need for revisions to the *Ombudsman Act* in the Yukon, as part of activities to mark international Ombuds Day on October 12th.

Ombuds Day is held on the second Thursday of October each year to highlight and promote the work of Ombuds worldwide. It is an opportunity to educate and raise awareness about the history and practices of the ombuds profession, including the various ombuds models, the roles they play, the services they offer, and the value provided.

“Ombuds Day seemed to be the perfect opportunity to speak about the *Ombudsman Act* in the Yukon, and the need for pressing changes that would improve the effectiveness of our legislation,” said Pedlar. “The Act was passed in 1995 and there have been very few substantive changes to it since then. I believe it is high time that improvements are made to the Act to reduce the barriers and challenges we have experienced in dealing with complaints to our office under the *Ombudsman Act*.”

About a year ago, the Canadian Council of Parliamentary Ombudsman (CCPO) launched a series of podcasts entitled *Making It Fair*. The podcasts feature Ombudsman from across Canada speaking about fairness in public administration and about issues being faced in each of their jurisdictions. This month, Pedlar is the featured speaker in the podcast series.

(more)

One of the key recommendations that Pedlar discusses in the podcast is the need for own motion authority. “The Yukon is the only jurisdiction in Canada, perhaps even the world, where the Ombudsman cannot investigate a matter on their own discretion,” said Pedlar. “This means that even if I become aware of a potential unfairness, I cannot investigate the matter without someone walking through my door with a complaint form.”

Own motion authority was added to the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (ATIPPA) in the Yukon in 2018.

Pedlar also recommends that the Ombudsman’s jurisdiction be expanded to include municipalities and that the authorities under his jurisdiction be clearly defined in a schedule of the Act, similar to the way it is done in ATIPPA and the *Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act*.

For more detail, the public is invited to listen to the podcast on the CCPO website [here](#). Six other episodes are also available on the website, highlighting issues of fairness in public administration in other jurisdictions of Canada.

The Ombudsman is an independent officer of the Yukon Legislative Assembly that looks into complaints from citizens of unfairness in the delivery of services by the Yukon government and other public authorities. The Ombudsman also serves as the Information and Privacy Commissioner (IPC) and Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner (PIDC) for the territory.

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