



Backgrounder

Independent Review Panel for April Tragedy

On July 23, 2020, the Governments of Canada and Nova Scotia announced the establishment of a three-member independent Review Panel to conduct a joint review into the April tragedy in Nova Scotia. The Review Panel has a broad mandate to investigate what happened on April 18 and 19, and make recommendations on preventing and managing such events.

This Review will be conducted by an independent and impartial Panel at the request of the Governments of Canada and Nova Scotia. The Panel will undertake a broad review of the events, including the causes, context and circumstances giving rise to them, the response of police and steps taken to inform, support and engage victims, families and affected citizens.

The Panel is tasked with finding answers to the most central questions related to the actions of the perpetrator, the police and other law enforcement agencies, and the experiences and impacts on victims and families. The Panel has a mandate to investigate, identify lessons learned and make recommendations on actions that should be taken at both the provincial and federal levels to address what happened and improve public safety in the future.

The Panel's independence is supported by the submission of both an interim and final report to the Ministers, which will be made public. The cost of the review will be shared equally between the Government of Canada and the Province of Nova Scotia.

The independent Review Panel, Chair and Members

The three members jointly appointed to conduct the review were selected because of their experience in fact finding and independence, in-depth knowledge of public safety and policing, gender-based and intimate-partner violence, and understanding of shared federal-provincial relations and responsibilities.

Chair – The Honourable J. Michael MacDonald served as Chief Justice of Nova Scotia until his retirement in 2019. As Chief Justice, he led, or promoted, several judicial outreach initiatives with Nova Scotia's Mi'kmaw and Black communities. He also led initiatives to enhance diversity on Nova Scotia's benches, including a judicial mentorship program for Black and Mi'kmaw lawyers and justice day camps for students from Nova Scotia's marginalized communities. The Honourable Michael MacDonald was a member of the Canadian Judicial Council for 20 years, and

chaired several of its committees. After retiring from the bench, he has joined Stewart McKelvey as counsel. In that capacity, he promotes similar initiatives through the firm's Diversity and Inclusion Committee. The Nova Scotia Branch of the Canadian Bar Association awards annually the J. Michael MacDonald Access to Justice Award to honour his work in the area of access to justice. He is a recipient of both the Queen's Golden Medal and the Diamond Jubilee Medal.

The Honourable A. Anne McLellan was born and raised on the Noel Shore in Nova Scotia. Ms. McLellan is currently a Senior Advisor in the Public Policy Practice Group with Bennett Jones LLP. She obtained her law degree from Dalhousie University where she later served as seventh Chancellor. Ms. McLellan has a Master of Law degree from King's College, University of London and has also taught law at the University of New Brunswick and the University of Alberta. She served four terms as a Member of Parliament. During that time she served as Deputy Prime Minister and held several federal ministerial portfolios including Public Safety, Justice and Attorney General. Ms. McLellan serves on several boards, including Pearson College UWC, TELUS Edmonton Community Board, and the Institute for Research for Public Policy, all of which she chairs. She recently served as Chair of the Task Force on the Legalization and Regulation of Cannabis for the Government of Canada.

Ms. Leanne J. Fitch retired from 34 years in municipal policing in 2019. She served seven years as Chief of Police for the Fredericton Police Force, seven years as Deputy Chief and 20 years in a range of front-line operational policing roles. Ms. Fitch is a former roundtable member for the provincial Department of Public Safety on Crime Reduction and Domestic and Intimate Partner Violence, and former member of the New Brunswick Domestic Violence Death Review Committee. Ms. Fitch has Bachelor and Master's degrees in sociology, and graduated from the Ontario Police College. She has taught criminology at St. Thomas University, and is a published author on many topics including intimate partner violence and community policing, and has presented locally, nationally and internationally on these topics. She is currently involved in three research projects on intimate partner violence, namely IPV Coercive Control (Dr. C. Gill et. al) at the University of New Brunswick in connection with "National Framework for the Prevention of Violence in the Home During and Post COVID-19" (Dr. F. Munger et. al). Ms. Fitch is the past co-chair of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police Crime Prevention, Community Safety and Wellbeing Committee where she was instrumental in developing the National Framework for Intimate Partner Violence. She has been a community volunteer throughout her career.

The Independent Review Panel and Restorative Principles

The Review Panel is mandated to investigate and to report its findings and recommendations. The use of restorative principles will assist the panel in ensuring their work takes a human-centred and trauma-informed approach to those individuals most affected and impacted by the tragic events of April 18 and 19, 2020.

In this case, the restorative principles do not refer to any particular practice or process and do not entail a particular outcome (i.e. they are not aimed at healing relationships between or among the parties). The principles will help guide the panel

members to carry out their work in a manner sensitive to the needs of those most impacted (i.e. the perpetrator's surviving victims and families of deceased victims).

The restorative principles most relevant to this work are:

Comprehensive, holistic/integrative

- Connecting dots between issues, incidents, contexts, causes and circumstances
- Working in integrated, not siloed or fragmented ways

Inclusive and participatory

- Attentive to first voice
- Trauma-informed/Do no further harm
- Culturally aware
- Needs-based – attentive to safety and well-being of participants

Focus on responsibility

- Individual and collective

Responsive

- Contextual, flexible practice
- Focused on need
- Informed by data and knowledge

Forward-focused

- Educative, problem solving/preventative and proactive
- Outcome focused

Ce document d'information est aussi disponible en français.