

Commission for Alberta Workers' Compensation is a quasi-judicial tribunal operating under the authority of the Workers' Compensation Act. It is the final level of appeal for decisions made by a review body appointed by the system administrator, the Workers' Compensation Board (WCB). Our mission is to provide a timely, fair, and independent appeals process consistent with legislation, policy, and the principles of natural justice. The Appeals Commission is independent of the WCB and reports to the Minister of Labour. This reporting relationship is guided by the Appeals Commission's Mandate and Roles Document, which is housed with the Agency Governance Secretariat.

OUR PEOPLE Adjudicators, including the Chief Appeals Commissioner, are merit-based appointments recruited through public competition. The competition process is based on a competency matrix, which ensures that our adjudicators meet a high standard of clear and unbiased decision making. Adjudicators are appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council as representative of either the interests of employers or the interests of workers. Presently, there are 43 adjudicators consisting of 20 full-time hearing chairs and 23 part-time commissioners. The Chief Appeals Commissioner also acts as the CEO of the Appeals Commission, directing its operations with the support of an executive team comprised of two vice-chairs, general counsel, and the executive director.

WHO WE WERE THEN The Appeals Commission for Alberta Workers' Compensation was established on November 1, 1988 with the proclamation of Bill 30 – The Workers' Compensation Amendment Act. The Commission was created to provide injured workers and their employers with the opportunity to have appeals of Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) matters heard by an organization independent of the WCB. From its inception, the Appeals Commission has been separate from the day-to-day operations of the WCB. Throughout its history, the Commission has demonstrated an ongoing commitment to deciding the matters which came before it based on the relevant legislation and policy and the merits of each case. **THE PEOPLE** In 1988, the Appeals Commission introduced its first Chairman and Chief Appeals Commissioner. It also welcomed its first two hearing chairs, along with eight part-time Commissioners. The Chairman and hearing chairs, along with two administrative staff members, made up the full-time employees of the Appeals Commission. These individuals built the foundation for the dedicated organization we are today. ■

CHANGE is one of the few certainties in any business or organization. It is constant. Managing change requires the ability to adapt, work as a team, and remain optimistic.

Today, even in the face of uncertainty created by the departure of a Vice-Chair and seven Commissioners, as well as the imminent retirement of the current CEO and Chief Appeals Commissioner, the Appeals Commission remains resilient. Our members and staff look forward to meeting the challenges brought by these changes and continuing to provide the high level of service that defines the Commission.

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ALBERTA
LABOUR

*Office of the Minister
MLA, Edmonton - Mill Woods*

Accountable to the Minister of Labour, the Appeals Commission for Alberta Workers' Compensation is an impartial tribunal independent of the Workers' Compensation Board (WCB). The Appeals Commission hears worker and employer appeals from decisions made by the Dispute Resolution and Decision Review Body of the WCB. The Commission maintains a timely and fair appeals process to ensure the delivery of appeals services to workers and employers in Alberta.

The Ministry of Labour ensures our province's workplaces are safe and healthy for Albertan workers. Our Ministry is committed to investing in skills training and programs that benefit individuals, families, and communities, and enable Albertans to enter the workforce equipped with the skills they need.

In ensuring that benefits to workers and employers in Alberta are improved, we introduced Bill 30, amendments to the Workers' Compensation Act this year, and established a panel to review Alberta's workers' compensation system. I am pleased with the Appeals Commission's contribution to the WCB review process. The Commission is dedicated to fulfilling the recommendations defined in the review and continuing to provide Albertan workers and employers with an effective appeal process to ensure fair compensation.

The Appeals Commission's 2017/2018 Annual Report, has outlined several achievements that are noteworthy. I look forward to the Commission continuing to build on their steadfast efforts to improve the appeal process.

I am very proud of the Appeals Commission for their important work on providing fair and timely appeals services for all Albertans. I look forward to working together to support the development of our province's workforce and making the lives of Albertans better.

The Hon. Christina Gray

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Christina Gray', written over a horizontal line.

Minister of Labour

Letter from the Chief Appeals Commissioner



I am pleased to present the Appeal Commission's annual report for the 2017/2018 fiscal year. As I reflect upon the past year, I feel proud that we have continued to reach high standards of excellence in our service to the public and our stakeholders.

In June 2017, the Appeals Commission's new website was launched and made accessible to the public. Our Information Technology team and contract graphic designer worked diligently to revamp the website and ensure that it is informative and current. As a result, the public can now access a website that is user-friendly and houses valuable resources and information.

In March 2016, the Government of Alberta commenced a formal review of the workers' compensation system in Alberta, including the Appeals Commission and the WCB. In July 2017, the review panel finished its work and submitted the final report, which includes a summary of recommendations. The report recognizes and commends the quality and timeliness of our decisions, and also contains several recommendations about how the appeal process might be strengthened. We are on track to implement the recommendations outlined in the report.

We welcomed a new cohort of Commissioners and commenced training in September 2017. As part of our commitment to continual improvement in quality assurance, knowledge management, and succession planning, we overhauled our orientation program, which now includes mock documentary and in-person hearings, interactive learning, and hearing observation sessions. These pioneering additions to our orientation program exemplify the Commission's dedication to education and training.

The Commission held our annual Fall Training Conference in September 2017 based on a theme of Service Excellence. Through the conference sessions, we aimed to better understand and meet the needs of our clients, and improve our plain language skills in the decision writing process. Our annual conferences serve as an opportunity to supplement our regular training calendar with focused, intensive sessions.

An employee engagement survey was circulated to the Commission in October 2017. The purpose of this survey was to glean meaningful opinions, comments, and feedback on workplace culture and engagement. I am very excited to say that the survey results were well above the benchmark, placing us in the top 10% of the public sector. The Commission is made up of an enormously engaged group of individuals who are fully committed to making a positive impact.

I have every confidence that we will continue to work as a cohesive team focused on providing fair, timely, and independent appeals to workers and employers in Alberta.

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Douglass M. Tadman'. The signature is fluid and stylized, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Douglass M Tadman, QC

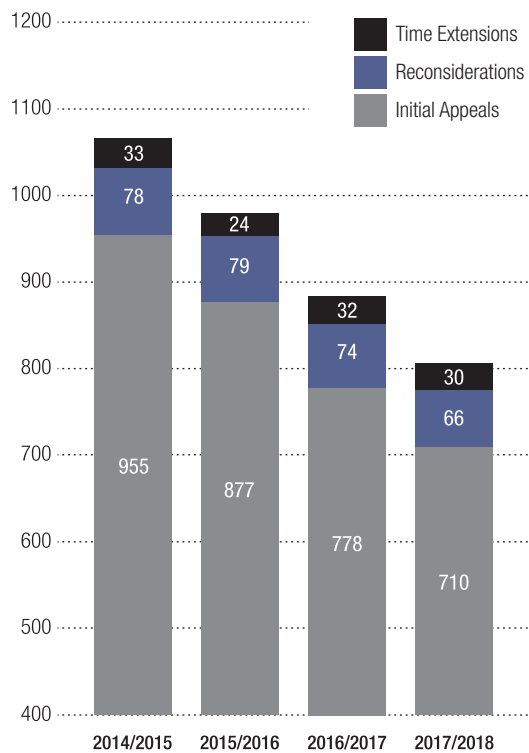
CEO and Chief Appeals Commissioner

Review by the Courts

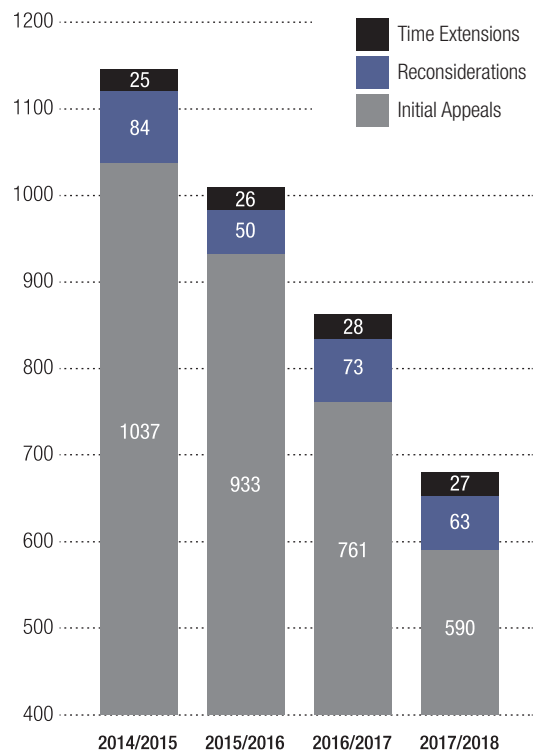
From April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2018, the Alberta courts issued one decision in respect of judicial review/appeal of decisions of the Appeals Commission.

1. In *Lester v. Appeals Commission* (January 19, 2018, unreported), the Court reviewed the Appeals Commission’s decision that Ms. Lester’s ongoing eye symptoms and vision loss were not related to her compensable injury. The Court gave deference to the Appeals Commission’s assessment of medical evidence and found that the Appeals Commission’s decision was reasonable. The application for judicial review/appeal was dismissed.

Appeals Received



Appeals Concluded



1988

■ The Appeals Commission was created on November 1, 1988 with the declaration of Bill 30 – The Workers’ Compensation Amendment Act.

■ The first Chairman and Chief Appeals Commissioner, Morris Bahry, and the first two hearing chairs Garry Shury and Paul Tichinoff, begin work at the Commission, as well as eight part-time members and two administrative staff.

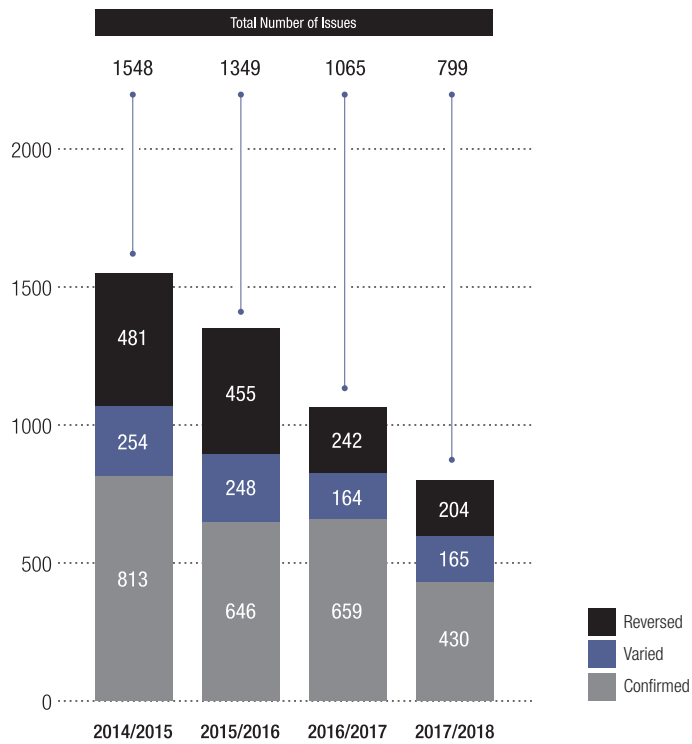
■ The first Appeals Commission report was published. It contained information about the role of a Commissioner and short biographies of the individual members of the Appeals Commission.

Garry Shury, Appeals Commissioner, Morris Bahry, Chairman and Chief Appeals Commissioner, and Paul Tichinoff, Appeals Commissioner.



Garry Shury, Appeals Commissioner, Morris Bahry, Chairman and Chief Appeals Commissioner, and Paul Tichinoff, Appeals Commissioner.

Finalized Issues of Appeal



1989

- The first full year of operation for the Appeals Commission.
- The number of full-time Commissioners increased from three to five, and the number of temporary Commissioners increased to 10.
- The average number of appeals being reviewed and decisions rendered each month increased to 70 from an average of 48.
- The first phase of a computer tracking system for appeals was installed.



Review by the Ombudsman

From April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2018, the Appeals Commission was notified of 15 complaints to the Office of the Ombudsman regarding decisions made by the Appeals Commission. In the same time period, the Ombudsman concluded 15 investigations dealing with Appeals Commission matters. None of the investigations resulted in a recommendation from the Ombudsman.

2017/2018	Concluded	Actions
Ombudsman	17	0
Court (QB and Appeal)	8	0
Reconsideration Requests	63	3



1990

- The number of Commissioners was streamlined to actively address the number of appeals received.
- Four hearing panels were established to conduct appeals on a day-to-day basis. Each panel was comprised of a Chairman and two Commissioners with an industry or labour background, as well as registrars and a secretary to streamline processing appeals.
- The Appeals Commission completed a set of Appeals Management Guidelines to ensure that appeals were dealt with consistently.



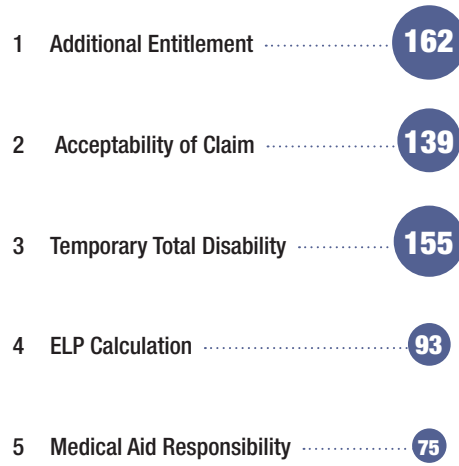
Susie Wong, Commissioner

Top Five Issues of Appeal

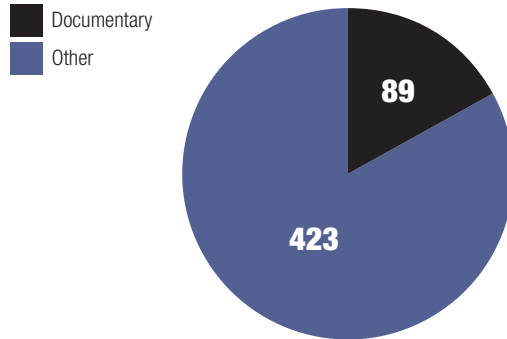
2016/2017



2017/2018



Types of Hearings



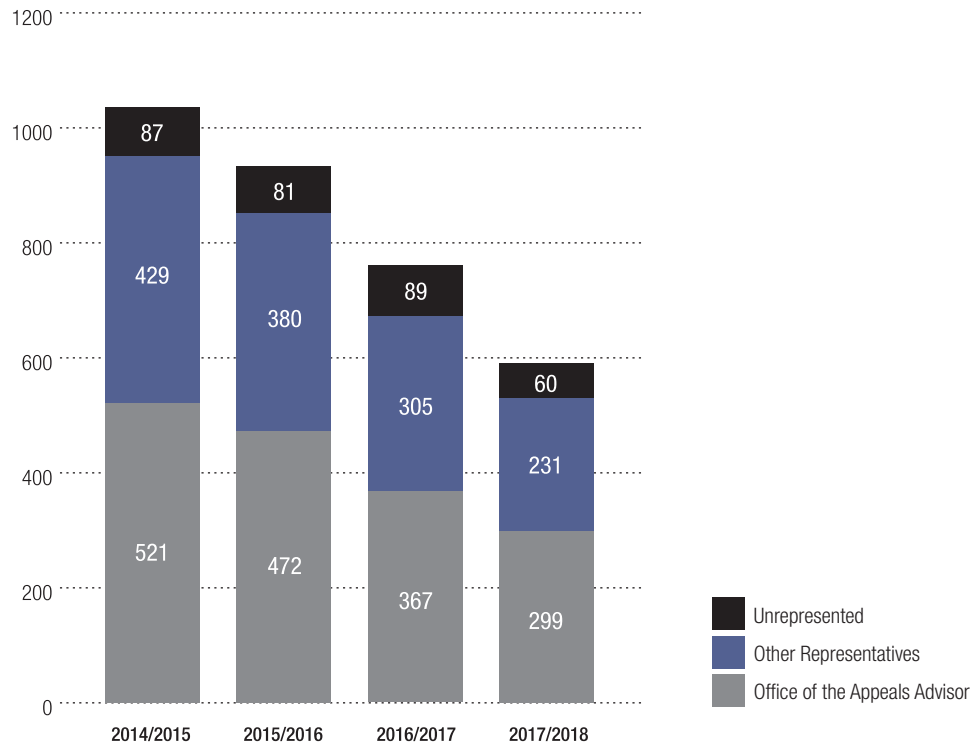
1991

- Fourteen Commissioners served on the Appeals Commission.
- Commissioners were appointed for either one-year or five-year terms by the Lieutenant Governor in Council.
- The hearing panels and Appeals Management Guidelines were fine tuned.
- A new visual identity was developed to emphasize the Commission's independence from WCB.



1991 Logo

Representation Before the Commission



1992

- The Appeals Commission increased communication with stakeholders in meetings with employer and worker organizations.
- Full-time operations began in our Calgary office.
- **15** Commissioners served on the Appeals Commission.
- **5** actions were filed in the Court of Queen's Bench.

1993

- Appeal applications grew by **31.1%**.
- **20%** more appeals were processed.
- **88.8%** of appellants chose in-person hearings.



Appeals Services Accomplishments

Timeliness

In the 2017/2018 fiscal year, the Appeals Commission maintained its excellent timelines in processing appeals. We continue to work toward providing a hearing date for parties as quickly as possible. We are currently able to offer a hearing date within 127 days of filing an appeal, which is three weeks faster than our target of 150 days. We continuously review processes and procedures, and use technology to ensure that appeals are processed in the most effective and efficient manner possible.

Appeals Timelines

Target	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018
150 days	144.92 days	130.91 days	127 days

Average number of days from the date the appeal is filed to the first hearing date offered

Target	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018
30 days	28.06 days	30.16 days	37.19 days

Average number of days from hearing to the decision issue date

Access to Appeal Resources

The Appeals Commission underwent a complete redesign of its website in the 2017/2018 fiscal year, with a focus on providing clear, easily understandable information to guide parties through the appeal process. The content was re-written with a focus on plain language and three short informational videos have been uploaded to provide additional assistance to those with limited literacy skills.

Staff Engagement

Continuous professional development continues to be an important part of the Appeals Commission’s culture. Appeals Services staff are involved in a variety of training and development programs, including the Foundation of Administrative Justice certificate programs, Occupational Health & Safety certificate programs, and the Government of Alberta’s Supervisory Certificate Program. The Appeals Commission staff club is active and encourages collaboration between adjudicators and staff. This year, our staff was involved with a variety of charitable activities, including a river valley clean-up and a blood drive.

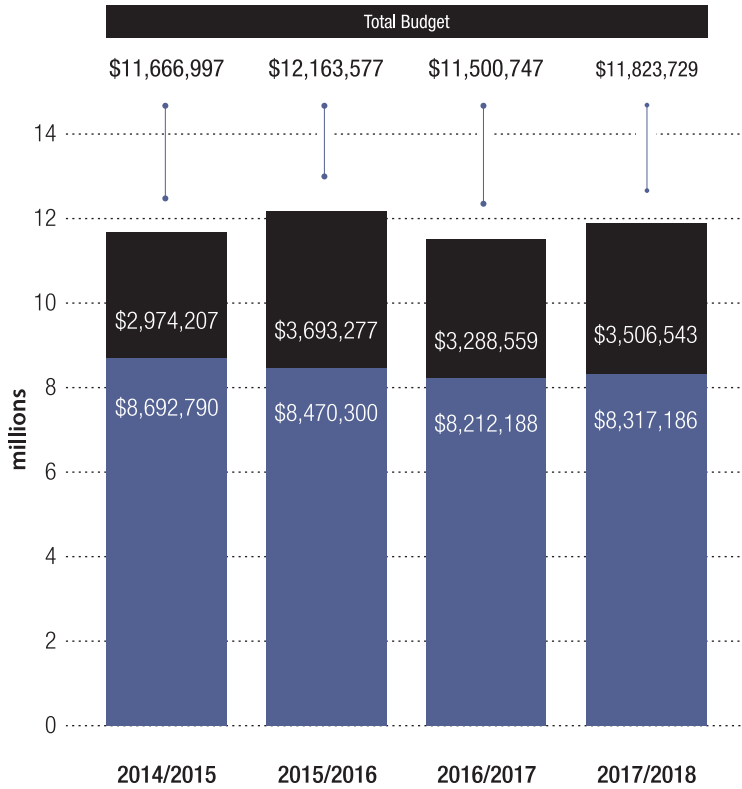
1994

- The Appeals Commission initiated the Work Optimization Study Project to increase hearing output using existing manpower and financial resources.
- All staff received training to incorporate the Work Optimization Study Project changes into work methods.
- Additional Commissioners were recruited to ensure adequate staff for the increased hearing schedule and expiry of three Order-in-Council appointments.

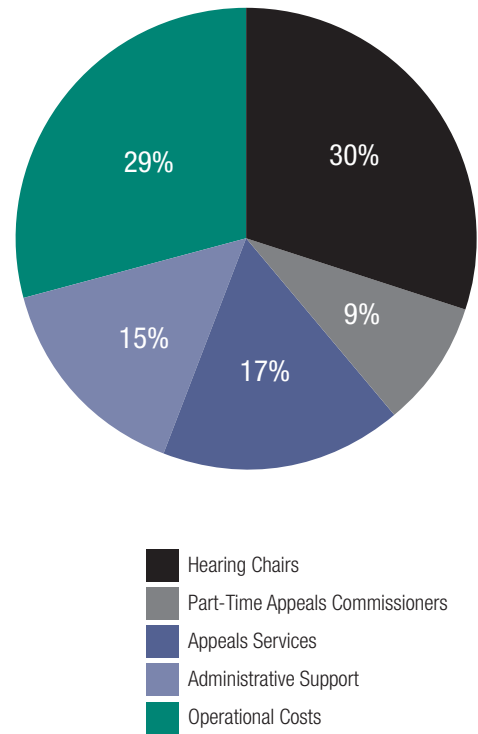


Finance Accomplishments

Budget Overview



Budget Details



Administrative Costs
 Staffing Costs

1995

- From the point an appeal is ready for hearing to final decision disposition, the average was a three-month cycle time.
- The Sims Report, analyzing the operations of the Appeals Commission, was published.
- The Appeals Commission made decisions on **1,069** appeals, an increase of **198** decisions in 1994.
- Appeals were completed in an average of **176** days.



Legal Services Accomplishments

Legislative Amendments

The Appeals Commission's lawyers were part of the team that supported the 2017 introduction of legislative amendments to the *Workers' Compensation Act*. These amendments were a result of feedback obtained and recommendations received in the course of the workers' compensation system review.

Commitment to Communication

In June 2017, the Appeals Commission's Legal Services team welcomed a new Communications Coordinator. This position supports all levels of the Appeals Commission in our commitment to clear, transparent communications with our internal and external stakeholders.

Commitment to Education

In September 2017, the Appeals Commission welcomed a number of new Commissioners, all of whom participated in a revitalized and enhanced orientation program spearheaded by the Commission's Manager of Knowledge, Quality and Training. Legal Services team members were active participants in the delivery of the orientation program, which included substantive education on policy and procedure, as well as practical, hands-on sessions and a formal mentorship program.

Additionally, to support the Appeals Commission, our Manager of Knowledge, Quality, and Training completed the following further education:

- University of Alberta Change Management credential, which examines the key concepts and skills required to initiate, lead, and manage change
- Introduction to Unconscious Bias, a workshop on unintentional and subconscious attitudes, behaviours and actions that affect decision making
- Gender Based Analysis (GBA+), which introduces a process designed to integrate the gender perspective into the development of policies and programs



New Commissioners

1996-97

■ George Pheasey was appointed as the Chairman and Chief Appeals Commissioner, which marked the second appointment of a Chief Appeals Commissioner in the 10-year history of the Appeals Commission.

■ The Appeals Commission established an independent Legal Services team.

■ Hired two contract medical specialists to provide medical advice.

■ Published the first issue of the quarterly newsletter, "In Review."

1998

■ A comprehensive quality assurance program was implemented to ensure excellence and quality of service.

■ A Quality Management Specialist was hired on a full-time basis.

■ **1239** hearings were conducted.



George Pheasey, Chairman and Chief Appeals Commissioner

WCB Review Recommendations

The workers' compensation system was reviewed by an independent, three-member panel with a view to improving the system as a whole. The Appeals Commission was included in this review. The WCB review panel released its WCB Review Report in June 2017 and made 60 recommendations to move the workers' compensation culture towards a more worker-centred model. These recommendations led to significant changes to the *Workers' Compensation Act*.

The Appeals Commission is in the process of implementing recommendations related to interim relief, alternate dispute resolution, reconsideration of decisions, and others matters with a view to enhance fairness and efficiency at the appeal level. The recommendations will see an updated version of the Appeals Commission's *Appeals Rules* and Practice Guidelines in place by September 1, 2018.



1999

- Completed the new Appeals Management System to integrate the processing of information for all applications into one database.
- Adopted a "Code of Conduct for Appeals Commissioners," which set out the principles that guide Commissioners in their work.
- Implemented a new decision document format.
- An Administrative Procedures Specialist was appointed to develop document internal procedures for policies, guidelines, operational and administrative processes, and information systems.



Information Technology (IT) Accomplishments

Website Project

Phase 1 of the website upgrade project was completed on June 16, 2017. At this time, our newly designed website was made available to the public. The Appeals Commission's contract graphic designer redesigned our website and an IT provider completed the technical requirements.

Over the course of the year, additional updates were made to our website in preparation for phase 2 of the project. Phase 2 will include a sign-on portal, which will allow users to access online forms and submit documents.

Using Electronic Appeal Documents Packages (ADPs) in the Adjudication Process

This is a continuation of last year's project to experiment with using technology in the adjudication process. A focus group of adjudicators was created to help define, develop, test, and improve the use of electronic ADPs in the hearing and decision writing process. As a result of this focus group, requirements for the project were defined and a proof of concept was developed and tested. The use of electronic ADPs was readily adopted by the focus group and the Appeals Commission. It was apparent by November that a process for creating and using electronic ADPs needed to be implemented to meet the high demand. In January 2018, the process was employed and fully transitioned to the Appeals Secretaries in mid-February 2018.

The focus group continues to meet to discuss the use of electronic ADPs and technology involved in the adjudication process. Additional training continues to be provided to effectively support the Commissioners in the adjudication process.

Continuous Improvement of the Appeals Commission Electronic System (ACES) and the ACES Upgrade Project

The claims management application used by the Appeals Commission to manage and maintain all appeal-related information is called ACES. It was implemented in November 2012 and has since been updated to align with the continued improvements the Appeals Commission has made to its business processes and procedures.

Since 2012, ACES has become quite outdated. In 2016, we developed plans to upgrade ACES to the latest version of Microsoft Customer Relationship Management Dynamics (technology platform). The upgrade will provide the Appeals Commission with the latest technology, increased collaboration, improved functionality, and the ability to use the application on mobile devices.

2000

- Decision-making and decision writing models were developed and implemented.
- Decisions were written by Hearing Chairs.
- The ADP was shared with all parties.
- The Appeals Commission played an instrumental role in the formation of the Alberta Foundation of Administrative Justice.

2001

- Launched Appeals Commission website.





In preparation for the upcoming ACES upgrade from Microsoft Customer Relationship Management Dynamics 2011 to Customer Relationship Management Dynamics 365, several updates were made to bring the application up-to-date with the new functionality and features of the new version. In parallel to the updates made to ACES, an evaluation of the upgrade required moving ACES to the most recent version of the technology platform. Customer Relationship Management Dynamics 365 was provided by our current IT provider in September 2017. The project officially started in November 2017 and is scheduled for completion in summer 2018.

Updating Hearing Rooms with For the Record (FTR) Gold Software

An evaluation of FTR gold software (digital court recording device) and equipment in the hearing rooms was conducted. As a result, new FTR gold software was installed, which reduced risks of failure and eliminated clutter.

Video Conferencing

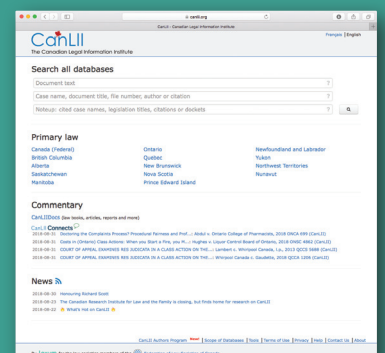
Currently, video conferencing has not been used in hearings because of the various nuances that accompany it. Evaluating and investigating the use of video conferencing in hearings was completed and technological options were presented to the executive team in September 2017. The next step is submitting a privacy impact assessment and a business impact assessment to help address potential privacy risks and identify the most effective solution.

2002

- The Appeals Commission became an independent Government of Alberta Department.
- The parties and the WCB were provided with the right to appeal decisions to the Court of Queen's Bench on questions of law or jurisdiction.
- All in-person hearings were recorded.

2003

- Decisions were published on the Canadian Legal Information Institute website (CanLII).
- The Appeals Commission held its first Annual General Meeting.
- The team system was discontinued and the pre-hearing unit was established.



Appeals Commission Accomplishments

Workers' Compensation Appeals Tribunals

The first initiative to bring together Workers' Compensation Appeals Tribunals across Canada began in March 2018 with a teleconference that included representatives from Ontario, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, the Northwest Territories & Nunavut, British Columbia, and Manitoba. This group will provide the Appeals Commission with a forum for discussing respective opportunities and challenges, and for sharing best practices, statistics, and approaches to adjudication. The Commission's Manager of Knowledge, Quality, and Training has been named as the group Secretary. An in-person meeting at the Canadian Council of Administrative Tribunals Conference took place in June 2018.

Employee Engagement Survey

On October 2, 2017, the executive team distributed an employee engagement survey to the Appeals Commission. Employee engagement is a heightened emotional and intellectual connection that employees have for their job, organization, manager, or co-workers that, in turn, influences them to apply additional discretionary effort to their work. The purpose of this survey is to measure how content employees are with their work and the organization.

According to the results, 85% of Commission personnel completed and responded to the survey, which greatly exceeds the 60% benchmark (the average response rate). The survey also measured several of the following attributes:

- *Work environment*
- *Senior leadership*
- *Professional growth*
- *Immediate management*
- *Organizational vision*
- *Innovation*
- *Teamwork*
- *Information and communication*
- *Work environment*
- *Performance feedback*
- *Compensation*
- *Client focus*
- *Work/life balance*

Employees believe that the Appeals Commission is very well-led and exemplifies effective governance on initiatives, encourages learning and development, and recognizes personal success. In addition, 92% of employees enjoy their time and work at the Appeals Commission and 81% see opportunities for professional growth. Overall, employees are highly engaged and consider the Appeals Commission to be a positive and involved work environment. This translates directly into exceptional service to the public.

2004-05

- The average number of days from appeal to issuing a decision was **243** days.
- There were no decisions sent back by the Courts for the Appeals Commission to rehear.
- The Appeals Commission held an Annual General Meeting where stakeholders were provided with a summary of activities for the year.

2006

- Implemented a new appeal process, where parties were required to submit the Certificate of Readiness to Proceed before a hearing was booked.





Medical Panel Office

Thanks to efforts from Appeals Commission personnel, the workers' compensation Medical Panel Office was successfully relocated to newly developed facilities in January 2018. The new Medical Panel Office is located on the second floor of the Standard Life Building in Edmonton and includes a reception area, hearing rooms, and workstations.

Canada's Top 100 Employers Competition

Canada's Top 100 Employers is an annual competition that recognizes the best places in Canada to work. The purpose of the competition is to single out the employers that lead in exceptional working conditions and progressive Human Resources (HR) policies. The Appeals Commission was included on the shortlist for the 2018 edition of Canada's Top 100 Employers. In addition to being shortlisted, the Appeals Commission has also been listed in *The Career Directory*, Canada's Top 100 Employers' annual guide to Canada's best employers for students and new graduates. Their editorial team looks for employers that have entry-level recruitment programs for recent graduates and progressive HR policies of interest to young people starting their careers. This year, the Appeals Commission applied for the 2019 Canada's Top 100 Employers competition. The winners will be announced in a special magazine in *The Globe and Mail* in early 2019.

2007

- The first practice guidelines and forms were published.



2008-09



- Revised Appeal Rules were published.
- **98.1%** of decisions issued were not challenged.
- **952** appeals were received.

Educational Accomplishments

Educational and professional development is a vital part of the Appeals Commission's commitment to ensuring that our team has opportunities to further cultivate their talents and develop new skills in their areas of expertise.

The Appeals Commission encourages participation in educational courses and programs focused on learning and gaining experience that will help keep work skills current, meet fluctuating business needs, and contribute to the success of the Appeals Commission.

Continuous training and formal education boost motivation and morale, and are an important part of the Appeals Commission's culture. Yearly performance management sessions occur with an emphasis on training plans and opportunities to expand skills. The Appeals Commission believes that educational development creates a supportive environment where individuals feel valued, appreciated, and challenged.

The Appeals Commission's educational and professional development opportunities include:

- *Job shadowing*
- *University courses*
- *Committee work*
- *Short-term acting assignments*
- *Position enhancement*
- *Secondments*
- *Job swaps*
- *Job rotation*
- *Cross-training*



2010-11

- **1034** of initial appeals were received.
- **29** Ombudsman investigations were concluded.



2012

- Reviewed Appeal Rules and Practice Guidelines.
- The new electronic appeal management system, ACES, was implemented.
- The appeal process was adjusted and hearings were booked when a Notice of Appeal is received.
- George Pheasey retired.

Educational Highlights

The Appeals Commission is proud of our team members who have completed the following courses to further enhance their role and develop their skills:

Brian McLeod (Commissioner) and Gene Dumont (Commissioner) completed the Effective Hearings workshop and the Principles of Administrative Justice course (Foundation of Administrative Justice). The Effective Hearings workshop equips tribunal members with the information and skills to conduct fair hearings. The Principles of Administrative Justice course provides participants with an understanding of tribunal processes, as well as their role and responsibilities as a tribunal member.

Ashley Linhart (Appeals Secretary) is completing the Supervisors Certificate Program (Government of Alberta Learning Centre). The program provides a training curriculum for aspiring supervisors, new supervisors, and experienced supervisors. The Supervisors Certificate Program focuses on developing the skills, knowledge, and competencies identified as the keys to success in the Alberta Public Service. The program is comprised of nine courses, which must be completed to receive the certificate.

Gene Dumont (Commissioner) completed the Decision Writing workshop (Foundation of Administrative Justice). The workshop focuses on how to effectively write decisions, which involves: organizing and revising decisions to enhance logic and flow, writing clear, concise, and coherent decisions, and gaining confidence in decision writing.

Kaitlyn Young (Appeals Officer) completed a certificate in Public Policy and Governance. It focused on public policy, managerial theory (ethics, strategic planning,) and governance theories.

Simon Speichert (Appeals Officer) is completing the Professional Development Certificate in Leadership (MacEwan University). The course provides students with fundamental skills to lead and support organizational change, foster creativity, and build a positive environment. Students also acquire tools to encourage change and inspire innovation within teams.

2013-14

- This year marked **25** years of service at the Appeals Commission.
- Douglass Tadman was appointed as Chief Appeals Commissioner.
- The Alberta Public Agencies Governance Act was proclaimed.
- The Edmonton office moved to the Standard Life Building.
- Recruited an Information Technology Manager.



*Douglass Tadman,
Chief Appeals Commissioner*

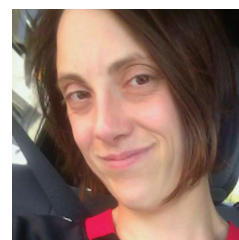
Staff Recognition

The Appeals Commission employs staff from a variety of backgrounds and disciplines. We are able to meet our standards of excellence because of the diverse knowledge base and strong work ethic of the talented individuals who work here. We value our staff and the passion with which they serve Albertans.

Meet Our Team

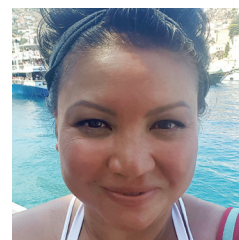
Crystal Grimsen, Appeals Secretary

Before joining the Appeals Commission, Crystal worked in the legal field, specifically litigation and electronic case management. From 2010 to 2013, Crystal obtained a Legal Assistant Certificate and a Journalism Diploma at SAIT while working full-time at several law firms in Calgary, including Gowlings LLP and Parlee McLaws LLP. In October 2013, Crystal began her role as an Appeals Secretary at the Appeals Commission. This position has given her the opportunity to be a member of the website development team and play an instrumental role in the Electronic Appeals Document Package project. Crystal continues to be involved in numerous projects at the Commission. In her spare time, Crystal works part-time at the Athletic Development Center in Calgary. Currently, she is pursuing high-level athletics, competing both at National and World levels with the Canadian branch of the Global Powerlifting Committee.



Gia Wong, Hearing Chair

Gia holds an undergraduate degree from the University of Calgary and a law degree from the University of Alberta. After completing law school, she practiced in Edmonton. Gia was a civil litigator; in-house legal counsel at a multinational insurer; managed the Western Region Casualty Claims Department for the same insurer; acted as conduct counsel at the Law Society of Alberta; and worked at the Legislative Assembly. Gia started working at the Appeals Commission in September 2017 as a Hearing Chair.



2015-16

- The Appeals Commission was chosen as a finalist for the Institute of Public Administration of Canada's award for innovative management.
- Recognized for its Electronic Information Project, which facilitated efficient and secure electronic document exchange between the Appeals Commission and the WCB.
- Recruited an in-house Knowledge Officer.
- The Government of Alberta launched a formal review of all of Alberta's agencies, boards, and commissions, including the Appeals Commission.

IPAC  IAPC

Shannon Jacobi, Hearing Chair



Shannon started at the Appeals Commission in September 2017. She began working as a part-time Commissioner, and then transitioned to a full-time Hearing Chair position in January 2018. Shannon holds a diploma in nursing from the Saskatchewan Institute of Technology. She has worked in adult medicine, coronary care, and emergency until enrolling in the Bachelor of Science in Nursing Program at the University of Alberta. Her career focus has been in many industry roles in occupational health and safety, disability management, and rehabilitation. Shannon has also completed a Master of Science in Occupational Health with environmental speciality from Columbia Southern University.

Katy Fernandez Ojeda, Information Management Assistant



Before joining the Appeals Commission, Katy worked at the City of Medicine Hat as a Customer Service Representative as part of a work practicum while completing the Administrative Office Professional Certificate Program at Medicine Hat College. Katy started her career at the Appeals Commission in October 2016 as a Receptionist. In August 2017, she became the successful applicant for the Information Management Assistant position covering a maternity leave, and began cross training as a Business Services Coordinator in February 2018. In April 2018, Katy was nominated for the IPAC New Public Servant Award for Excellence, an achievement she is very proud of.

2016-17

- A proof of concept for an electronic ADP was presented to an internal working group for testing.
- Presented to the independent panel that evaluated the WCB system and worked closely with the Ministry of Labour, the Medical Panel Office, and the WCB.
- Appeals Commission decisions were the subject of three Court of Appeal decisions, four Court of Queen's Bench decisions, and 24 concluded Ombudsman investigations.



Contact Information

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