

# Annual Report 2014



# Mandate of the NCC Ombudsman

The mandate of the NCC Ombudsman was established by the NCC Board of Directors in 2009. The Ombudsman's mandate is to provide members of the public with an independent, neutral, fair and confidential process to resolve complaints concerning the activities of the NCC. The Ombudsman is required to keep the NCC Board of Directors and NCC senior management informed about complaints, on a need-to-know basis.

The Ombudsman's aim in investigating a complaint is to reach the best possible understanding of the situation that gave rise to the complaint and to form a view of a fair way to resolve it. After completing the investigation, the Ombudsman explores the possibility of resolving the complaint informally, by agreement between the complainant and the NCC. If this is not feasible, the Ombudsman will submit a recommendation to the complainant and the NCC.

A person with a complaint against the NCC must start by trying to resolve it directly with the NCC. If this approach is unsuccessful, the Ombudsman can investigate the complaint.

The Ombudsman is not able to investigate complaints concerning the appropriateness of NCC policies, compliance with contracts or legislation or issues before the courts.

**The Ombudsman is not an advocate for the complainant or for the NCC.**

## What is an Ombudsman?

The word *ombudsman* is of Swedish origin. The role was established in Sweden to create a process to address complaints made by individuals against public agencies.

An ombudsman is an independent, neutral official who investigates complaints against an organization in the public or private sector. The ombudsman's mandate and processes are established either administratively by the senior management of the organization or by law.

The ombudsman must assess whether or not a complaint falls within the ombudsman's mandate, and if so, whether the complaint has merit. The ombudsman must work independently and impartially, meaning that the ombudsman's only interest in the outcome of the complaint is to reach a fair resolution.

December 31, 2014

*National Capital Commission Board of Directors*

Dear Members of the Board,

I am pleased to submit the Annual Report of the NCC Ombudsman for 2014. This annual report summarizes the activities of the NCC Ombudsman during its sixth year of operation.



Yours truly,

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ellen Fry'.

Ellen Fry  
NCC Ombudsman

**“Thank you very much... the latest response did provide the information we needed... Thank you very much for your help.”**

**“I have read your report thoroughly. It's great.”**

### How to contact the NCC Ombudsman confidentially

#### EMAIL

[info@ombudsman.ncc-ccn.ca](mailto:info@ombudsman.ncc-ccn.ca)

#### WEBSITE

[www.ombudsman.ncc-ccn.ca](http://www.ombudsman.ncc-ccn.ca)

#### MAIL

NCC Ombudsman  
311-40 Elgin Street  
Ottawa ON K1P 1C7

#### TELEPHONE

Direct Line: 613-947-4330

Toll Free: 1-877-947-4330

TTY: 613-947-4339

Toll Free TTY: 1-877-947-4339

#### FAX

613-947-4311



# The Year in Review

In 2014, as in previous years, the Ombudsman received communications from the public about a wide range of issues concerning the NCC. The Ombudsman investigated and resolved complaints filed with the Ombudsman, using approaches to seek informal resolution where feasible. The Ombudsman also ensured that members of the public who had not yet tried to resolve their issues through NCC internal processes were put in touch with the NCC. In instances where the issues were urgent, the Ombudsman assisted in ensuring that they were addressed promptly.

The following are complaints by members of the public to the Ombudsman in 2014:

- An individual complained that the NCC was not taking appropriate action to enforce the ban on commercial vehicles on Island Park Drive. The Ombudsman identified 9 potential changes to the NCC's approach and recommended that the NCC consider the feasibility of each of these potential changes.
- An individual complained that the NCC was discriminating against mature students by denying them student rates for Gatineau Park ski passes. In response to the complaint, the NCC changed its policy to give mature students the benefit of student rates
- An individual complained that inappropriate activities took place on land owned by the NCC near his home. He had requested information from the NCC about who to contact to have these activities stopped and complained that the NCC did not respond fully to his questions. The NCC provided the further information that the individual had requested.
- An individual complained that although he obeyed the parking signage at Remic Rapids, his car was ticketed and towed away. The NCC reimbursed him for the amount he paid as a result of this incident.
- A contractor complained that the NCC showed bias in administering a contract. The Ombudsman conducted a thorough review of the extensive file documents and interviewed the parties on both sides. The Ombudsman did not find information to support the allegation of bias.

“Thank you for responding in such a timely fashion.”

“Thanks. I really appreciate the thoroughness of your response!”



## Types of Complaints

The Ombudsman can investigate complaints concerning the full range of NCC activities. Complaints can involve

- NCC property maintenance
- Compliance with NCC and government policies and procedures
- Communications issues
- Service issues
- Tenant issues
- Contractor issues

“Thank you for so graciously assisting me today.”

## Numbers at a Glance

In 2014, there were 87 issues and inquiries from the public.

TYPE OF ISSUE/INQUIRY	NO. OF ISSUES/INQUIRIES	ACTION
Complaint Investigation	5 investigations, including 7 issues	Investigated the complaint and recommended resolution
Inquiry about the Ombudsman's role	1	Explained the Ombudsman's role
Issue within the NCC mandate, but NCC internal resolution has not yet been tried.	61	Referred to the NCC
Issue outside the NCC mandate	20	Suggested a more appropriate organization to contact

## Complaint Resolution Process

The complaint resolution process requires complainants to try to resolve their complaints directly with the NCC before filing a complaint with the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman is required to keep the NCC Board of Directors and NCC senior management informed about complaints, on a need-to-know basis.

