



Ombudsman



# National Capital Commission Ombudsman

## Annual Report 2025-2026

*June 2026*

*National Capital Commission (NCC) Board of Directors*

Dear Members of the Board,

We are pleased to submit the NCC Ombudsman's Annual Report for 2025–2026. This report summarises the office's activities for the period from April 1, 2025, to March 31, 2026.

The NCC Ombudsman has played an important role in promoting fairness, accountability, and public trust since its establishment in 2008, and the JustEquitable Inc. team is honoured to have been selected to continue this work. We extend our sincere appreciation to Oriana Trombetti, who served as NCC Ombudsman for the past five years, in particular for her generous assistance during our transition into this role. We share her perspective that it is essential that members of the public have an accessible and independent means of raising concerns about NCC's activities and decisions. An ombudsman office supports transparency, accountability, and good governance.

This reporting year was somewhat unusual, with a large number of contacts relating to a single public issue. Overall, most matters involved referrals to the NCC through existing administrative channels, consistent with our role as an office of last resort. We also assisted with informal resolutions and supported communication between visitors and NCC staff where additional clarification or follow-up was helpful.

As a newly appointed ombudsman team, over the past few months we have been committed to relationship-building and deepening our understanding of NCC operations, processes, and complaint trends. We would like to thank the Board of Directors, Client Services, and NCC staff more broadly for their openness, professionalism, and collaboration during this transition period.

Looking ahead to 2026–2027, our priorities include increasing public awareness of the NCC Ombudsman, clarifying its mandate and processes, improving intake and case management systems, and supporting early and informal resolution of concerns. We also look forward to continuing to work constructively with the Board and NCC administration to strengthen fairness, accessibility, responsiveness, and public confidence in the NCC's services and decision-making processes.

Respectfully submitted,

**Brent Epperson, Ombudsman**

**Heather McGhee Peggs, Associate Ombudsman**

**Julie Boncompain, Associate Ombudsman**

## Contents

Introduction .....	3
Year in Review.....	4
How many visitors were there in 2025/2026? .....	4
How did the NCC Ombudsman help?.....	5
Observations about complaints in 2025/2026 .....	7
Our priorities for 2026-2027 .....	8



## Introduction

The National Capital Region is located on the traditional territory of the Algonquin Nation. The NCC recognizes the deep connections that the Algonquin Nation has to these lands and the Ottawa River.<sup>1</sup> In alignment with our commitment to fairness and equity, the NCC Ombudsman is committed to learning from Indigenous knowledge systems and perspectives and to fostering respectful and meaningful engagement with the Indigenous communities on whose lands we are privileged to work.

The mandate of the NCC Ombudsman is to provide members of the public with an independent, impartial, and confidential process for resolving complaints about the NCC's activities. As an ombudsman, we advocate for fairness, not for individuals or the NCC. We report directly to the Board of Directors. We advise the NCC of issues of concern, trends, and systemic issues through regular consultation and annual reporting.

As an office of last resort, we ensure that the NCC has an opportunity to review a concern before we intervene or investigate. While there are limits to what the NCC Ombudsman can investigate, in general, we can review the fairness of NCC processes or policies, and actions taken (or not taken) by NCC staff. Examples of complaints include:

- NCC property maintenance
- Activities on NCC property
- Compliance with NCC policies / procedures
- Communication issues
- Service issues

The NCC Ombudsman can make non-binding recommendations to the NCC to address any unfairness in administrative practices and to ensure fair treatment for those who live, work, and visit the National Capital Region. We take a collaborative, practical approach to ombudsing, with a focus on prevention and early resolution. Accordingly, NCC staff can contact us for confidential, informal advice on fair and effective complaints handling, including strategies for managing challenging behaviours.

The NCC Ombudsman is a part-time role, working informally and independently of NCC administration. JustEquitable Inc. was appointed as the new NCC Ombudsman team in late autumn 2025. We adhere to the [Statement of Ethical Principles](#) of the Forum of Canadian Ombudsmen.

More information is available on the NCC Ombudsman [website \(www.ombudsman.ncc-ccn.ca\)](http://www.ombudsman.ncc-ccn.ca) and in the office's [Terms of Reference](#).

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://ncc-ccn.gc.ca/indigenous-engagement>

## Year in Review

Individual members of the public who contact our office with complaints are referred to as “visitors”. NCC staff members may also reach out to the NCC Ombudsman to discuss ways to resolve a complaint from a member of the public that has come to their attention, or we may reach out to staff to have an informal conversation about a trend or systemic issue that we have identified. Staff consultations are one of the ways that our office works to promote fairness and effective complaint resolution. For data purposes, we do not include staff as “visitors”. As this is a new distinction, we are not reporting any staff consultations for this year, however, we may report on this in the future.

Our team began engaging with visitors in November 2025, and we are updating the NCC Ombudsman intake form and case management processes.

### How many visitors were there in 2025/2026?

Between April 1, 2025 and March 31, 2026, **111 visitors contacted the NCC Ombudsman.**



30% of visitors used our webform to file a complaint, 60% emailed, and 10% called our office (toll-free).



60% of visitors shared their home address or location, and a majority indicated they were in Ontario.

While this may seem surprising given the office’s typical complaint volume, we note that 50% of those complaints were about a single issue. These 55 complaints were submitted during a 2-week period in May 2025; all were related to Stornoway residence. The visitors had not raised these concerns with the NCC before raising them with our office. The Ombudsman highlighted this as a complaint trend for the NCC, and visitors were referred to the NCC.

Excluding the Stornoway complaints, there were **56 complaints to the NCC Ombudsman**, which is slightly higher than the adjusted average over the past 5 years (average ~52 visitors, excluding the 55 complaints about Stornoway).

## How did the NCC Ombudsman help?

The table below shows the actions taken by the NCC Ombudsman in response to complaints:

*April 1, 2025 to March 31, 2026<sup>2</sup>*

Action taken by NCC Ombudsman	Number of complaints
Information / Advice <i>*NEW*</i>	3
Referral to the NCC	82
Informal Resolution	5
Investigation / Review	0
Outside of NCC Ombudsman's Mandate	15
Unactioned / Withdrawn <i>*NEW*</i>	6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>111</b>

For this reporting year, we have updated the categories for actions taken to improve clarity and to better align with ombudsman best practices. Here is how we define these actions:

- **Information / Advice:** A visitor may contact us with a question or concern that while within our mandate, can be resolved by providing the visitor with information, for example, a link to an NCC webpage or news release (a referral to the NCC is not required).
- **Referral to the NCC:** If the NCC has not had the opportunity to review a complaint, we will provide the visitor with information on how to contact the NCC or facilitate a connection with the NCC. Referral actions may include: clarifying with the NCC who the visitor should contact, summarising complaints, and following up with the NCC to confirm the response to the complaint.
- **Informal Resolution:** In some cases, we may need to contact NCC staff for information to address a complaint (fact-finding), to inquire about options for resolution, to engage in shuttle communication between the NCC and the visitor, to facilitate a joint discussion, or otherwise intervene to facilitate a resolution of a complaint.

---

<sup>2</sup> We had a small number of files that were still in progress as of March 31, 2026. We made the decision to include these files in the data for this report rather than next year, as the files were closed as of the preparation of this report.

- **Investigation / Review:** Where appropriate, we may investigate or review a complaint about a decision, recommendation, act or omission by the NCC, including its agents, employees or other persons carrying out duties on its behalf.
- **Outside of the NCC Ombudsman’s Mandate:** If a complaint does not fall within our mandate or does not constitute a complaint, we will try to redirect the visitor to the appropriate person or place to address their concerns.
- **Unactioned / Withdrawn:** If we are unable to obtain the information needed to proceed from the visitor, if our office is only cc’d on correspondence to the NCC, or if the visitor does not wish to proceed with their complaint, we may not take any further action.

The following table summarizes actions taken by the NCC Ombudsman over the past five (5) years in response to visitor complaints:

***Actions taken - December 1, 2020 to March 31, 2026***

Year	Referral to NCC	Informal Resolution	Investigation / Review (*NEW*)	Outside NCC Mandate	*NEW* (Unactioned / Withdrawn; Information / Advice)	Total # Complaints
2021-2022*	43	4	3	8	n/a	58
2022-2023	34	3	0	14	n/a	<b>51</b>
2023-2024	34	1	0	16	n/a	<b>51</b>
2024-2025	30	1	0	11	n/a	<b>42</b>
2025-2026	82	5	0	15	9	<b>111</b>

*\*note additional 4 months (Dec 2020-March 2021) included in 2021-2022 data to align the ombudsman reporting year to the NCC fiscal year*



## Observations about complaints in 2025/2026

Our office's primary contact for **Referral to the NCC** is Client Services. We would like to express our appreciation to this team for engaging actively with us since we took on the ombudsman role.

Of the 5 complaints that involved **Informal Resolution**, 3 concerned the adequacy of the NCC's response to a decision and/or maintenance regime. As a result of our office's intervention, the NCC provided additional information.

Regarding the 15 complaints **outside the NCC Ombudsman Mandate**, although this category covered a range of issues, we note two themes: human resources/employment matters and locations not under NCC's jurisdiction. Moving forward, we will seek to clarify the information provided on the NCC Ombudsman website about the office's mandate.

Regarding the **55 complaints in May 2025 about the Stornoway residence**, which were all brought to the attention of our office before being addressed by the NCC, if such a grouping of complaints were to occur in the future, we would work with the NCC to explore opportunities to communicate proactively with the public on where to send such concerns (e.g., a dedicated email for this issue) and/or on the steps NCC is taking to address the issue (e.g., a notice on the website).

# Our priorities for 2026-2027

## *Increasing awareness of the NCC Ombudsman*

As a first priority for the coming year, we will continue to get to know the NCC and work to ensure that members of the public are aware of how and when to contact our office, and when to connect with the NCC. This will include updating the NCC Ombudsman website, reviewing the intake process and webform, and undertaking additional public outreach.

We note that **International Ombudsman Day (Ombuds Day) is October 8, 2026**. This day is dedicated to recognizing and celebrating the vital role of ombuds in promoting fairness, resolving conflicts, and upholding ethical standards.

## *Clarifying actions taken by NCC Ombudsman*

As an office of last resort, the NCC Ombudsman must give the NCC an opportunity to review a concern before our office intervenes or investigates. However, we have observed that in some cases, visitors have reported that they had already reached out to the NCC but had not yet received a response. In these cases, the NCC Ombudsman helps to reconnect the visitor with the NCC.

Moving forward, in our reporting we will track this distinction so we can gather insights into when members of the public contact us because they have not received a response from the NCC. This may help us to identify opportunities for more direct pathways for members of the public with concerns (i.e., understanding when and how to connect with the NCC directly rather than with the NCC Ombudsman with initial concerns).

## *Engaging with NCC staff to prevent and resolve concerns*

As we get to know the NCC and the types of concerns raised, we may identify additional opportunities for informal resolution and ways to support NCC staff in resolving concerns and preventing similar future complaints.

As an independent and impartial resource, we approach every conversation with fairness, respect, and discretion.



Ombudsman



Canada