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Office of the Auditor General

Nova Scotia

AUDITOR GENERAL--Performance Audit Report Released

Auditor General Michael Pickup issued his 2019 performance audit report today, May 28. The report contains three chapters of audit results.

Chapter one: Diversity and Inclusion in the Public Service: This audit examined implementation of the Province of Nova Scotia's diversity and inclusion strategy and how diversity and inclusion was promoted across the provincial government and within departments. The key conclusions are:

- the Public Service Commission is promoting diversity and inclusion, but not all actions outlined in the diversity and inclusion strategy are complete and no assessment has been done to determine whether the goals of the strategy have been met
- the Public Service Commission does not have an adequate process to identify, collect and analyze data needed to evaluate the effectiveness of diversity and inclusion work
- the Departments of Agriculture, Community Services and Justice are promoting diversity and inclusion, but improvements are needed

"Employees of the Province of Nova Scotia expect a workforce that is free of discrimination and values diversity," said Mr. Pickup. "While work has been completed to promote diversity and inclusion, more is needed."

Chapter two: Selection and Quality Management of Bridge Projects in Central and Western District: This audit examined whether the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal had adequate processes to effectively and efficiently manage the selection and quality of bridge projects. The key conclusions are:

- the department's information system does not provide management with all the necessary information needed to make decisions on bridge projects such as replacement, rehabilitation and maintenance
- the department is appropriately monitoring whether bridge projects meet established standards during construction, but failing to properly monitor warranties

"The department is responsible for about 4,200 bridges across the province. If the province wanted to eventually replace all the provincial bridges it could take 200 years at the current rate," said Mr. Pickup. "Management needs to have complete and accurate information to assist them in making fully informed decisions on which projects to do and when to do them."

Chapter three: Workers' Compensation Board Claims Management: This audit examined whether the Workers' Compensation Board was effectively managing workplace injury claims. The key conclusions are:

- the Workers' Compensation Board follows its defined policies and procedures to process claims and benefits in accordance with legislation; however, issues were identified related to timeliness, communications and the adequacy of the complaints process



- the Workers' Compensation Board follows a defined appeals process in accordance with legislation and performance expectations; however, issues were identified with privacy breaches and timeliness
- the Workers' Compensation Board does not monitor the implementation of appeal decisions and implementation was often late getting started
- the Workers' Compensation Board follows a defined process to co-ordinate return-to-work plans
- the Workers' Compensation Board administers service provider contracts appropriately and assesses whether service providers are meeting the organization's goals and objectives.

"While workplace injury claims are generally being managed in line with policies, there are a number of things that aren't working as well and need to be improved at the Workers' Compensation Board," said Mr. Pickup. "Timeliness, and processes for complaints and protection of privacy, are just some of the areas that should be addressed to improve the way claims are handled for Nova Scotians."

The report contains a total of 27 recommendations from the three audits which have all been accepted by government.

The full report, along with a short summary, highlight video, and questions Nova Scotians may want to ask government for each of the three chapters, is available at www.oag-ns.ca.

FOR BROADCAST USE:

Auditor General Michael Pickup reported today (May 28th) on his performance audit work with three separate chapters on Diversity and Inclusion in the Public Service, Selection and Quality Management of Bridge Projects in Central and Western District, and Workers' Compensation Board Claims Management.

In the report, he says the Public Service Commission has promoted diversity and inclusion in the public service, but more work is needed to promote and evaluate the effectiveness of diversity and inclusion work and to assess whether the goals of the diversity and inclusion strategy were met.

Mr. Pickup found the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal's information system does not give management all the necessary information to make decisions on which bridge projects to do and when to do them.

He also found that while the Workers' Compensation Board is managing workplace injury claims in line with policies, improvements are needed around timeliness, processes for complaints and protection of privacy.

The full report, short summary, highlight video, and questions Nova Scotians may want to ask government for each of the three chapters are available on the auditor general's website.

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