New Chief Commissioner of the Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission

Lindsay Blackett, Minister of Culture and Community Spirit, has announced that, after 14 years of service on the Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission, Charlach Mackintosh will step down as Chief Commissioner. He will be replaced by David Blair Mason, a retired judge from Calgary. Mason plans to make it a priority to add sexual orientation to the grounds of discrimination prohibited by Alberta's human rights legislation.[1]

Blackett has indicated that the Sheldon Chumir Foundation's recommendations[2] for reform of the Alberta human rights regime will be part of the government's review of the Alberta human rights commission. The foundation's recommendations include increasing the profile of the human rights commission and bettering its reputation, and improving Albertans' access to the commission by making legal assistance available to those involved in human rights disputes, both to those making complaints and to those accused of violating human rights law. The Sheldon Chumir Foundation also recommends that the Chief Commissioner report directly to Alberta legislative assembly and that it add "Aboriginal heritage" as a prohibited ground of discrimination under the legislation.

Further Reading:

- Alberta, *Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Act*, R.S.A. 2000, c. H-14.
- Sheldon Chumir Foundation, *Toward Equal Opportunity for all Albertans: Recommendations for Improvement of the Alberta Human Rights Commission* (Calgary, 2008).

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[1] Thaddeus M. Baklinski, "New Alberta Human Rights Chief Commissioner to Work to Add 'Sexual Orientation' to Legislation" (6 February 2009), online: LifeSiteNews.com <http://www.lifesitenews.com/ldn/2009/feb/09020606.html>.

[2] Sheldon Chumir Foundation, *Toward Equal Opportunity for all Albertans: Recommendations for Improvement of the Alberta Human Rights Commission* (Calgary, 2008).