

ONTARIO HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
COMMISSION ONTARIENNE DES DROITS DE LA PERSONNE

Message from Keith C. Norton, Chief Commissioner Ontario Human Rights Commission

In keeping with its mandate to eliminate discrimination through enforcement, promotion and advancement of human rights, the Ontario Human Rights Commission recently concluded a Policy Dialogue on Racial discrimination and racism. The Commission is pleased to have worked in partnership with the Association for Canadian Studies on this initiative, and to have the Association include a number of the papers presented at the Dialogue in this edition of *Canadian Diversity.* It is partnerships such as this one that enhance the Commission's own efforts in promoting understanding of human rights issues.

The three-day Dialogue, held in Toronto, gave experts and key stakeholders involved in dealing with race issues a unique opportunity to consult and exchange ideas with Commission staff on social, legal and policy trends and developments at the domestic and international levels. The discussions and debates that took place provided valuable information that will help the Commission in formulating its policy on racial discrimination and race.

The Dialogue session is another step in the Commission's recent work in the area of racial discrimination and race, which includes an inquiry into racial profiling, the publication of a consultation report entitled, *Paying the Price: The Human Cost of Racial Profiling,* a submission and report on the *Ontario Safe Schools Act: School Discipline and Discrimination,* and the discussion paper *An Intersectional Approach to Discrimination Addressing Multiple Grounds in Human Rights Claims.*

Developing policies and guidelines are a key function for the Commission in advancing human rights protections for everyone. They set out the Commission's interpretation of the *Human Rights Code,* offer recent case law and provide principles and standards to ensure that individuals, employers, service providers and policy makers comply with human rights law. They also help the Commission deal with cases in a consistent and informed manner.

Each one of us has an important responsibility in protecting and promoting human rights. The Commission's new policy on racial discrimination and racism is, therefore, intended to serve as a practical tool that the public, human rights practitioners and advocates can refer to and apply in addressing issues involving race and racial discrimination.

The Commission plans to release its policy on racial discrimination and racism later in 2005. We welcome your views on the issues raised in this edition of *Canadian Diversity.* Please visit our Web site at www.ohrc.on.ca for details on how to make a written submission.

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Chief Commissioner