

LCO / CDO

## LIAISON

**GLOBAL TIES**

LCO staff shared notes and explored collaborative solutions with the



Honourable Sir Grant Hammond, president of the New Zealand Law Commission, during his visit to Toronto in January.

**FULLY FUNDED**

The Law Society of Upper Canada has joined the Law Foundation of Ontario, Ministry of the Attorney General and Osgoode Hall Law School, along with York University, in renewing its financial support for an additional five-year term for the LCO. A huge thank you to all our funders!

**Message from the Executive Director**

Happily, our funders and the law schools have now signed the agreement renewing the LCO for another five years. As we begin our new mandate, we'll release final reports in three of our biggest projects and will begin new projects this summer. Keep an eye on the LCO website for more news

on releases and new projects. Also look to the website for our new Strategic Plan; Accessibility Policy; and Use of Information, Privacy and Confidentiality Policy.

Our Strategic Plan 2012-2016 reaffirms our commitment to a mixed bag of projects and to the centrality of community engagement in our projects. To that end, we have formed a new Community Council (see more on page 2, on the website and in my blog). We've also reinforced our relationship with the law schools by creating the Law School Research and Liaison Group.

We welcome two new Board members: Mark Berlin, formerly a lawyer in the federal Department of Justice, who has had a professional and personal long-term interest in access to justice, and Maria Páez Victor, a policy consultant. Dr. Páez Victor will challenge us as she brings a new perspective to the Board, the viewpoint of someone trained in sociology, but not in law.

Hope everyone has a wonderful summer!

Visit Patricia's blog at [www.lco-cdo.org/blog](http://www.lco-cdo.org/blog)

Get instant updates on Twitter at @phugheslco

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# Provincial Offences Act report raising awareness

## LCO recommendations linked to Ontario budget

When the 2012 Ontario Budget was released on March 27, Barry Randell flipped to the section on the *Provincial Offences Act* and breathed a sigh of relief. “The province is paying attention,” he says. “We’ve raised a level of awareness that has allowed key individuals in the provincial government to look at where improvements are possible.”

Randell, director of court services with the City of Toronto and president of the Municipal Court Managers Association of Ontario, was hoping the budget would reflect the need to make

better use of limited court resources — one focus of the 47 recommendations highlighted in the LCO’s recently released report on the *Provincial Offences Act*. The report calls for an assessment of a tax diversion program as a method of enforcing unpaid POA fines. While not a direct reflection of the LCO’s recommendations, the province’s proposed budget does note a commitment to working with municipalities and the Canada Revenue Agency on POA collection methods.

“We’re keen to be part of the dialogue,” says Jane Moffatt, president of the Prosecutors’ Association of Ontario.

In a joint letter to Ontario Attorney General John Gerretsen, Randell and Moffatt encouraged the government to engage in broad consultation about the LCO’s recommendations, which have also figured in a handful of cases at the Ontario Court of Justice and Ontario Court of Appeal.

“It’s important for the justice community to keep pressure on the Attorney General’s office to consider the recommendations of the LCO report,” explains Moffatt, “because, in my view, it’s too important to gather dust.”



## Community perspectives on law reform

As a member of the LCO’s new Community Council, Jamie Baxter hopes to give voice to young law practitioners.

Established in January 2012, the 12-member Council aims to connect the Law Commission’s reform work with the community, attracting interests and perspectives that might not be reflected in the traditional consultation process.

“New grads have a lot of creative ideas and questions about the justice system,” says the 2010 U of T JD, including how to structure a legal practice to allow full participation in access to justice issues.

Fellow Council member Julie Mathews, executive director of Community Legal Education Ontario, hopes to help the LCO gain perspectives from front-line community workers. “CLEO can help the LCO connect with communities on issues like accessing family law information. These are the kinds of issues community workers are concerned about.”



Participants at the LCO's stakeholder event in November, 2011

Left to Right: **Harold Braithwaite**, Retired Teachers of Ontario; **Jan Goddard**, Jan Goddard and Associates; **Kim Ibarra**, Toronto Central Community Care Access Centre; and **Carol Abugov**, Toronto Council on Aging.

## Older adult framework of international significance

### Advisory Group members anticipate widespread interest in report

Months before its release by the Board of Governors later this year, the final report of the LCO's Older Adults project is being credited for its universal appeal.

"People and organizations right across the country are interested in this report," says Gerda Kaegi, professor emerita of politics and public administration at Ryerson University and member of the project Advisory Group. "It's got caregivers, LHINs, CCACs and hospitals thinking about their policies and practices related to older adults."

"The report will be useful around the world as we think about how the law affects aging and how aging affects the law," agrees fellow Advisory Group member Nina Kohn, an associate professor of law at Syracuse University College of Law in New York state. "These are issues policymakers are considering or should be considering as they develop policies that are consistent with the needs of older adults."

The result of four years of research and consultation, the LCO report presents a legal framework for evaluating laws, policies and practices affecting older adults. The framework is based on six principles for an anti-ageist approach to the law, including the need to foster autonomy and independence. It applies to older adults of every sexual orientation, to those with disabilities and from diverse cultures, and to those receiving care in hospitals and long-term care.

The widespread interest in the report isn't a surprise to LCO staff lawyer Lauren Bates, who led the stakeholder event, six focus groups and a 300-person questionnaire, and received input on the framework from stakeholders province-wide. "With current demographic shifts, there is growing attention to issues relevant to older persons, and a need for comprehensive, holistic and principled approaches to law and policy development."

"The LCO has done a really nice job of capturing the issues policymakers face when developing laws affecting older adults," says Kohn. "It gives legitimacy to things I've been saying for a long time — these issues exist everywhere."

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And supported by the Faculties of Law at:

**Queen's University, University of Ottawa, (Common & Civil Law Sections) University of Toronto, University of Western Ontario and University of Windsor.**

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