

Commission on Effective Electoral Representation of Acadian and African Nova Scotians

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the mandate of the Commission?

Government has established an independent commission to consult with the Acadian and African Nova Scotian communities to determine what effective electoral representation could mean.

The Commission will consult with individuals and groups and make recommendations to government by November 1st, 2017.

Who are the members of the Commission?

The three commissioners are Doug Keefe, chair, Dr. Kenneth Deveau, and Sharon Davis-Murdoch.

Can you tell me more about the commissioners?

Doug Keefe is an independent consultant and former deputy minister of Justice with the Province of Nova Scotia.

Dr. Kenneth Deveau is a vice-president at Université Sainte-Anne. Dr. Deveau has done extensive research on the overall vitality of Acadian and francophone minority communities in Canada has authored more than 40 publications on the subject.

Sharon Davis-Murdoch is co-president of the Health Association of African Canadians and the health lead for the local immigrant partnership. A social justice champion, Ms. Davis-Murdoch was a public servant for more than 20 years and led the development of the first Provincial Guidelines for Culturally Competent, Primary Health Care.

How were the commissioners chosen?

The commissioners were chosen for their competencies by the Premier after consultation with members of the Acadian and African Nova Scotian communities.

What is the budget allocated for the Commission?

Remuneration, costs and expenses payable in respect of the Commission will be paid out of the General Revenue Fund of the Province. The Commission is founded on the principles of independence and accountability, and all expenditures will comply with established government processes and will be fully disclosed upon completion of the report.

How much are the members paid?

Members of the Commission are paid \$150 per work hour for a maximum of \$1200 per work day plus expenses in accordance with the Government of Nova Scotia rates.

When will the report be available to the public?

A written report will be provided to government by November 1st, 2017. The ministers of Office of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie, and African Nova Scotian Affairs will determine if they are to release the final report to the public.

What type of information will be included in the report?

After completing its public consultations, the Commission will prepare a report, outlining its recommendations to inform the province on how best to achieve effective representation for all Acadian and African Nova Scotians. The commission's report will contain a detailed analysis of how the Commission arrived at each recommendation and will provide the supporting reasons/rationale for how the Commission believes each recommendation will achieve effective representation for Acadian and African Nova Scotians.

What does “effective electoral representation” mean/ where does the term come from?

The courts have determined that the right to vote in section 3 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms is a right to effective electoral representation; essentially, the right to be heard and to participate in public affairs. The courts have also said that this may include special measures to ensure the “diversity of our social mosaic”; and recognition of cultural and group identity. The Commission’s task is to give guidance on practical ways to implement this in Nova Scotia.

Will this Commission set electoral boundaries?

No. The government has promised to initiate an electoral boundaries commission early in 2018.

What is the difference between this and the electoral boundaries commission?

In Nova Scotia an electoral boundaries commission must be established at least every ten years to recommend the boundaries of each constituency. While such commissions have wide discretion with regard to boundaries, they have no other function. Our Commission’s mandate is broader. Its job is to provide guidance on how to improve the effectiveness of representation of Acadian and African Nova Scotians. It may comment on the desirability of using constituency boundaries as a vehicle for effective representation.

What is the purpose of the report?

The final report will provide recommendations to government on what effective representation could look like for Acadian and African Nova Scotians.

Will there be public consultation?

Yes. Part of the mandate of the Commission is to consult with Acadian and African Nova Scotians across the province to help in determining what effective representation could mean for Acadian and African Nova Scotians in the Province of Nova Scotia.

Where will the consultations take place?

Members of the Commission will be visiting Acadian and African Nova Scotia communities across the province. The schedule can be found on the Commission’s website.

When will the consultations take place?

The consultations are to take place in September and October 2017. The dates and places for public consultations will be posted on the website, Facebook page and announced in the media.

Will there be consultations in French?

Yes. Consultations with the Acadian and francophone community will be held in French.

I would like to share my opinion on effective electoral representation with the Commission.

There are many ways to provide comments on effective electoral representation:

- You are encouraged to participate in one of the public meetings;
 - You can submit a brief or comments to:
representation@novascotia.ca
- OR
- Commission on Effective Electoral Representation
for Acadian and African Nova Scotians
P.O. Box 2125 Stn Central
Halifax, NS B3J 3B7*
- You can call us at our toll-free number:
1-844-868-0233.

I would like to speak with a commissioner.

The Commission wants to ensure that all comments it receives are represented and recorded accurately, in the words of the participants. You are encouraged to provide your comments during one of the public meetings, in writing or on a voice mail message on our toll-free number.