

---

## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
2013PREM0094-001406  
Sept. 20, 2013

Office of the Premier  
Ministry of Justice

### **Crime reduction panel members named, terms released**

VANCOUVER – A blue-ribbon panel comprised of criminologists, former RCMP leaders and a former federal deputy solicitor general will study and recommend ways to drive the province's record-low crime rate down even further, Premier Christy Clark announced today.

"B.C.'s crime rate is at its lowest level in four decades, partly because our government has given police, municipalities and other partners innovative tools and supports over the past 12 years," said Premier Clark. "To further reduce crime, this expert panel will collaborate with stakeholders across the justice system toward concrete solutions."

Chaired by Parliamentary Secretary for Crime Reduction and veteran criminologist Darryl Plecas, the blue-ribbon panel on crime reduction includes as its volunteer members:

- Criminologist and former RCMP Deputy Commissioner Canada West Gary Bass
- Criminologist and substance abuse expert Geri Ellen Bemister
- Former RCMP commissioner Beverley Busson
- Professor, criminologist and justice policy and law reform expert Yvon Dandurand
- Recently retired federal deputy minister and former deputy solicitor general Jean Fournier

Members will begin meeting in October and will examine existing crime-reduction initiatives and research from other Canadian provinces and other countries throughout their appointments. Beginning early next year, the panel will hold regional roundtable consultation sessions at which stakeholders will have opportunities to discuss current crime reduction approaches in the context of successes, challenges and gaps, as well as new opportunities.

"Collaboration turns our crime-fighting investments and innovations into successes – like our civil forfeiture program, our provincewide police information-sharing system, and traffic fine revenue sharing with local governments," said Attorney General and Minister of Justice Suzanne Anton. "This panel is about informing how we might adjust priorities and resource commitments to further reduce crime and increase public safety."

"With 34 years as a criminologist and researcher, I'm intensely familiar with B.C.'s criminal justice evolution and those who've helped to make it happen," said Plecas. "The calibre and depth of expertise of our panel membership is superb, and I look forward to hearing from many stakeholders who've been part of B.C.'s success in addressing crime in the past, as well as newer voices that may bring fresh, workable ideas forward."

The panel will seek to engage stakeholders from police, local government, corrections, criminal justice, academia, health and social services, and other relevant fields. This approach acknowledges that crime reduction initiatives typically focus resources on specific crime problems in local communities, and are generally evidence-led and multi-agency in nature, requiring collaboration between law enforcement, governments and other partners.

Plecas will deliver a summary of the panel's findings to Anton by June 30, 2014. The report is to summarize current crime reduction initiatives, identify potential challenges and concerns, provide the broader results of the stakeholder consultation and recommend opportunities and next steps.

#### **Quick Facts:**

- Invitations to the regional roundtable consultation sessions will be sent to stakeholders in November, after the panel finalizes related logistics.
- The blue-ribbon panel responds to lawyer Geoff Cowper's call, in his report to government entitled A Criminal Justice System for the 21st Century, for development of a provincewide crime reduction plan.
- Government subsequently identified crime reduction initiatives as a priority for action in White Paper Part Two: A Timely and Balanced Justice System.
- Police-reported crime statistics for 2012, released in July by the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, show B.C.'s crime rate remains at its lowest level in four decades.

#### **Learn More:**

The panel's terms of reference are at: <http://pssg.gov.bc.ca/public/policeservices/crime-reduction-tor.pdf>

Cowper's report A Criminal Justice System for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is at:

[www.ag.gov.bc.ca/public/justice-reform/CowperFinalReport.pdf](http://www.ag.gov.bc.ca/public/justice-reform/CowperFinalReport.pdf)

White Paper Part Two: A Timely and Balanced Justice System is at:

[www.justicebc.ca/shared/pdfs/WhitePaperTwo.pdf](http://www.justicebc.ca/shared/pdfs/WhitePaperTwo.pdf)

The Ministry of Justice's Police Services main page: [www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/policeservices/](http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/policeservices/)

Minister Anton's mandate letter is at:

[www.gov.bc.ca/premier/cabinet\\_ministers/suzanne\\_anton\\_mandate\\_letter.pdf](http://www.gov.bc.ca/premier/cabinet_ministers/suzanne_anton_mandate_letter.pdf)

Parliamentary Secretary Plecas's mandate letter and terms of reference are at:

<http://pssg.gov.bc.ca/public/policeservices/plecas-crime-reduction-tor.pdf>

A backgrounder follows.

Contact:

Sam Oliphant  
Press Secretary  
Office of the Premier  
250 952-7252

Government Communications and Public Engagement  
Ministry of Justice  
250 356-6961

# BACKGROUND

## Blue-ribbon crime reduction panel member biographies

### **Darryl Plecas (chair)**

Darryl Plecas was elected MLA for Abbotsford South on May 14, 2013, and appointed Parliamentary Secretary for Crime Reduction on June 10, 2013. Previously, Plecas was the RCMP research chair and director for the Centre for Public Safety and Criminal Justice Research at the University of the Fraser Valley (UFV), where he has worked for 34 years. He holds two degrees in criminology from Simon Fraser University (SFU) and a doctor of higher education degree from the University of British Columbia (UBC).

Plecas has volunteered on advisory committees to the Correctional Service of Canada and the Justice Institute of BC, and on the selection advisory committee for the appointment of the Chief Justice of the Provincial Court of B.C. He has also served as a campaign cabinet division chair for the United Way, chair of the Long-Term Inmates Now in the Community (LINC) Society, a member of the Abbotsford Police Department's scholarship committee, a director on the Fraser Valley Child Development Foundation Board, and an appointee on the board of the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse.

### **Jean Fournier**

Over his 46 years with the federal government, Jean Fournier oversaw important and sensitive government initiatives related to substance abuse, Aboriginal and northern affairs, the DNA Data Bank, land claims negotiations, pension reform, official languages amendments and agreements, the Canadian Multiculturalism Act, the Japanese Canadian Redress Agreement, the Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre (FINTRAC) and the senate ethics and conflict of interest regime. At the international level, Fournier chaired a committee of the Organization of American States to strengthen member states' capacity to deal with drug abuse and trafficking. He served as a deputy minister from 1986 to 2000 – the latter half of this time as deputy solicitor general. He also worked on two royal commissions.

Fournier joined the board of the non-profit Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse in 2006; he currently chairs its finance committee and is involved with nominations and governance. Previously, he served as a member of the board of the Vanier Institute of the Family from 1997-2000 and 2005-11, where he had been vice-president and chaired the executive committee for several years.

### **Yvon Dandurand**

Canadian criminologist and professor Yvon Dandurand has decades of experience in justice policy and law reform. His work has involved law reform and criminal justice capacity-building and evaluation projects in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. His current areas of interest include child protection, juvenile justice, violence against women, organized crime, human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children.

For the last 18 years, Dandurand has worked and published in international criminal justice co-operation, treaty implementation, rule of law, human rights, criminal justice and law enforcement reform, capacity building and technical assistance, and post-conflict reconstruction. He has led numerous criminal law reform initiatives as a senior associate of the International Centre for Criminal Law Reform and Criminal Justice Policy, an affiliate of the United Nations. He has taught criminology and sociology of law at various Canadian universities and is currently associate vice-president, research and graduate studies at UFV and senior associate, International Centre for Criminal Law Reform and Criminal Justice Policy.

### **Geri Ellen Bemister**

Geri Ellen Bemister is an instructor in the Department of Criminology at North Island College in Courtenay. Previously, she worked in research and analysis with the RCMP research chair at UFV's Centre for Public Safety and Criminal Justice Research. She holds an MA from UFV – where she received the Wally Oppal Endowment Leadership Award in 2011 – and a range of certificates in counselling and addiction services.

An expert on substance abuse issues, Bemister has undertaken addiction consultation for a wide range of agencies, including the Correctional Service of Canada. She owns and operates a practice providing counselling to individuals, groups and families, and has served as team lead at Kinghaven Peardonville House Society, an Abbotsford treatment centre. She has also volunteered widely, including as board chair with Recovery Day Nanaimo, and with the Kids4Kids Afterschool Program and Edgewood Treatment Centre in Nanaimo.

### **Beverley Busson**

Bev Busson joined the RCMP with its first class of female members in 1974. Initially stationed in Salmon Arm, she later served in Kelowna and North Vancouver. Following studies in criminology, completion of a law degree at UBC in 1990 and work at RCMP headquarters in Ottawa, she eventually returned to Vancouver in 1995, where she led an elite team dedicated to covert surveillance.

In 1997, she became the first woman to serve as chief superintendent in charge of criminal operations for Saskatchewan. The following year, she became the first female commanding officer, also in that province. In 1999, Busson returned to B.C. to head the newly designated British Columbia Organized Crime Agency. She returned to the RCMP in 2000 as B.C.'s commanding officer and received an additional role – deputy commissioner for the Pacific Region, which included the Yukon – in 2001. In 2004, the University College of the Fraser Valley awarded her an honorary doctor of laws; a second, from SFU, followed in 2010. In 2006, she became the 21st commissioner of the RCMP and the first woman in that position, as well as the first police officer awarded the Order of British Columbia. She retired from the force in 2007.

## **Gary Bass**

Gary Bass served nearly 40 years with the RCMP, including as Deputy Commissioner Canada West. During his RCMP career, he developed expertise in drug and organized crime investigations, terrorism and homicide investigations, major case management and crime reduction strategies. He has been extensively involved in the international development of training in advanced investigative techniques and has been qualified as an expert witness in relation to several of these activities. His many awards include two Commissioner's Commendations, Commanding Officer's Commendations, and awards from the lieutenant governor for outstanding service and meritorious service.

Bass holds an MA in criminal justice and is currently a senior research fellow with the Institute for Canadian Urban Research Studies in SFU's School of Criminology. His research interests include developing meaningful performance measures for policing and integrated criminal justice system structures, understanding the impact of falling crime rates on the future of policing, effective drug treatment programs, and First Nations, rural and northern policing.

Contact:

Sam Oliphant  
Press Secretary  
Office of the Premier  
250 952-7252

Government Communications and Public  
Engagement  
Ministry of Justice  
250 356-6961

Connect with the Province of B.C. at [www.gov.bc.ca/connect](http://www.gov.bc.ca/connect)