



OFFICE OF THE
POLICE COMPLAINT COMMISSIONER

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NEWS RELEASE

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**OPCC Public Hearing results in Demotion for Senior Vancouver Police Officer
and Recommendations for the Vancouver Police Department**

Victoria – Adjudicator Carol Baird Ellan, K.C., has issued her decision following a Public Hearing into allegations of sexualized misconduct involving Keiron McConnell of the Vancouver Police Department and several women who either worked with the member or had been taught by him at various post-secondary educational institutions.

McConnell has accepted responsibility for sexual harassment involving five women with whom he was in a position of authority or mentorship. He has admitted to sending “unsolicited and unwanted” electronic messages of a sexual nature and trying to initiate physical contact with a former student that was unwanted. Adjudicator Baird Ellan determined that these admissions revealed a pattern of inappropriate behaviour with multiple women.

Adjudicator Baird Ellan accepted a joint proposal to resolve this case and imposed significant consequences, including a reduction in rank from Sergeant to First Class Constable, a substantial period of unpaid suspension, working under close supervision, and mandatory counseling and training. Adjudicator Baird Ellan described the penalties as falling “just short of dismissal,” and said they will likely have a significant educative and deterrent effect on members of the Vancouver Police Department as well as other police departments.

Adjudicator Baird Ellan also issued a number of recommendations aimed at the Vancouver Police Department and Vancouver Police Board citing the need to create a dedicated workplace policy and training program dealing with sexual harassment and develop systems to prevent the victimization or re-victimization of those who come forward.

The full decision can be found [here](#).

Statement from Prabhu Rajan, Police Complaint Commissioner:

“Today’s decision emphasizes the necessary and appropriate expectations placed on police officers in how they conduct themselves in the workplace and beyond, and reaffirms the

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importance of denouncing sexual misconduct. I am grateful for the participation of the women impacted by Keiron McConnell's behaviour and appreciative of their courage, strength, and resilience in bringing to light the harmful effects of sexualized conduct. The joint proposal presented by the parties, and accepted by Adjudicator Baird Ellan, resulted in an early resolution with significant consequences for McConnell and avoided those affected from being subjected to a long and difficult legal proceeding.

"While the Public Hearing would have benefited from the participation of the Vancouver Police Department, I look forward to their adoption of Adjudicator Baird Ellan's recommendations and their focused and immediate attention to the issues raised by this case. I am also hopeful that this decision will lead to broader and meaningful attention paid by municipal police departments in eliminating and preventing sexualized misconduct by their members.

"The misconduct admitted by McConnell does not develop in a vacuum. We must seek to address any officer behaviour that causes victims not to come forward due to fear of intimidation and retaliation. Police officers hold influential positions in society and sexual harassment must be assessed in the context of inherent power imbalances and dynamics. My office is committed to addressing sexualized misconduct in policing and we will continue to use our authorities under the *Police Act* in seeking to effect meaningful change and improve public trust in policing and police oversight."

About the OPCC and Public Hearings:

- The Police Complaint Commissioner is a civilian, independent Officer of the Legislature overseeing complaints, investigations and discipline involving municipal police in British Columbia. For more on the OPCC, visit <https://opcc.bc.ca/about-us/>
- The OPCC does not investigate or adjudicate misconduct allegations, instead ensuring that allegations are fully investigated and fairly adjudicated according to the *Police Act* and administrative law principles.
- A public hearing is not limited to the evidence and issues canvassed at the discipline proceeding.
- A retired judge is appointed to sit as the Public Hearing Adjudicator and review the evidence, hear sworn testimony, and arrive at a decision as to whether there is misconduct and, if necessary, determine the corrective and/or disciplinary measures to be imposed. The appointed retired judge can also make recommendations to the Chief Constable or Police Board concerning any changes in policy or practice that the retired judge considers advisable.

- Independent public hearing counsel is appointed to present the allegations of misconduct to the Public Hearing Adjudicator. The Police Complaint Commissioner appears at the public hearing through Commission Counsel.

For queries related to this Public Hearing, please contact: media@opcc.bc.ca

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