

Senator Murray Sinclair, chair of TRC, named as Thunder Bay police board investigator

Sinclair will investigate variety of issues including investigations into deaths of Indigenous youth

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The Ontario Civilian Police Commission has appointed Murray Sinclair - retired judge, Senator and chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission - to investigate the actions of the Thunder Bay Police Services Board. (CBC News)

- [No 'designated spots' for Indigenous people as Thunder Bay Police Services Board seeks new member](#)
- [First Nations teen died by drowning, police in Thunder Bay, Ont. say after post mortem](#)
- [Josiah Begg's family says person pulled from river in Thunder Bay, Ont., was missing First Nations teen](#)
- [Thunder Bay police chief charged after disclosing information concerning city's mayor](#)

The Ontario Civilian Police Commission (OCPC) announced Monday that it has appointed retired judge and current Senator, the Honourable Murray Sinclair as the independent investigator addressing the commission's concerns over the state of civilian police oversight and public confidence in the delivery of police services in Thunder Bay.

- [Thunder Bay police chief charged after allegedly disclosing confidential information concerning city's mayor](#)
- [Nothing criminal about Tammy Keeash's 'tragic' death, say police in Thunder Bay, Ont.](#)
- [Body of teen Josiah Begg found in Thunder Bay, Ont., river](#)
- [Province seeks new member for Thunder Bay Police Services Board](#)

Sinclair brings a wealth of experience to the task, including serving as the co-chair Aboriginal Justice Inquiry of Manitoba, which studied the relationship between Indigenous People and the Justice system in Manitoba and presiding as the chair of Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

In that role, Sinclair participated in hundreds of hearings across Canada, culminating in the final report of the TRC, which was delivered in 2015.

The OCPC stated in a written release Monday that Sinclair will be investigating the commission's concerns around:

- "The Thunder Bay Police Services Board's ("the Board") ability to address matters raised by Indigenous leaders relating to a recent series of deaths of Indigenous youth and the quality of the investigations into these deaths conducted by the Thunder Bay Police Service (the "Service")
- "Board representatives stating that the public's concerns about systemic racism existing within the Service and the quality of the Service's investigations are without basis"
- "the recent criminal charges that were laid against the Thunder Bay Police Service's (the "Service") Chief of Police, who was charged with breach of trust and obstruction of justice"

To ensure public confidence in the delivery of police service in Thunder Bay, the OCPC stated that it has initiated an investigation into the board and its compliance with a variety of sections of the Police Services Act (PSA) including:

1. The Board's performance in carrying out its responsibilities to ensure the provision of "adequate and effective" police services in Thunder Bay
2. The Board's role in determining "objectives and priorities with respect to police services" in Thunder Bay
3. The Board's role in establishing policies for the effective management of the Service
4. The Board's role in ensuring that police services provided in Thunder Bay are provided in accordance with the following principles:
 - the need to ensure the safety and security of all persons and property in Ontario
 - the importance of safeguarding the fundamental rights guaranteed by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Human Rights Code.
 - the need for co-operation between the providers of police services and the communities they serve. - The importance of respect for victims of crime and understanding of their needs

- the need for sensitivity to the pluralistic, multiracial and multicultural character of Ontario society.
- the need to ensure that police forces are representative of the communities they serve.

The commission stated that it will ensure this investigation does not interfere or duplicate the systemic review currently being conducted by the Office of the Independent Police Review Director (OIPRD) or any other ongoing coroner and police investigations. However, whenever practical, it will cooperate with other organizations carrying out related investigations.

Sinclair's interim report will be completed by October 31, 2017, with a final report expected by March 31, 2018.

The reports will be made available to the public and provided to the police service and its board, the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, and Indigenous communities.

The OCPC is an independent, quasijudicial agency. Its investigation is not punitive and not directed to any specific conduct issues.