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**BLOG**

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### **A RENEWED HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION IN BC**

The provincial government has announced plans to reinstate the B.C. Human Rights Commission.

Human rights commissions are typically arms-length agencies of the government that promote and enforce human rights and engage in education, policy development, public inquiries, litigation and research. For example, the Ontario Human Rights Commission provides commentary on current human rights issues, as well as practical guides on topics such as collecting human rights-based data or designing a workplace human rights policy.

A commission is distinct from a tribunal. The BC Human Rights Tribunal is an independent, quasi-judicial body created by the BC *Human Rights Code*. The Tribunal is responsible for accepting, screening, mediating, and adjudicating human rights complaints.

BC is the only province in Canada that does not have a commission. Beginning in September, a consultation process will be taking place to influence what the renewed human rights commission will look like. Legislation for the new commission is expected to be tabled in 2018.

Local governments are encouraged to participate in the consultation process, and identify how a commission may be a useful resource in promoting human rights in their communities.

***Stefanie Ratjen***