



What does it take to produce the BC Provincial Court's highly rated annual reports?

Posted online in December, the BC Provincial Court's 2022/23 annual report has been praised as "fantastic" and "amazing". Readers have said that it provides a succinct and comprehensive overview of the Court's work while the photos, graphics, and design make it engaging and readable.

What does it take for the Court to produce a report like this?

The first element is a commitment to openness, transparency and accountability. A belief that the public has a right to know how the Court is functioning. That belief is held not just held by Chief Judge Gillespie, but by people in every sector of the Court.

The next component is judicial officers and staff who appreciate the importance of communicating with the public about their work. The Court's judges, judicial justices and staff members all make contributions that are essential to provide comprehensive information and present it effectively.

The Court has a small core production team. Under the direction of Associate Chief Judge Susan Wishart, Judicial Coordinator Rebecca Jensen manages every aspect of annual report production while Digital Communications Coordinator Ann Rounthwaite takes care of writing and features. But they rely on reports from the Court's Executive Director, Ryan Mahar, the five Regional Administrative Judges, the Administrative Judicial Justices and the judges who volunteer as chairs of the Court's Criminal, Family and Civil Law Committees. These reports summarize the Court's activities during the fiscal year. Other staff members, judges and judicial justices provide additional details needed to ensure the report's accuracy.

BC Provincial Court judges sit in more than 80 court locations in a province as big as France, Germany and the Netherlands combined. For the last three years, the Court's annual reports have included photographs taken and submitted by judges, judicial justices, and the Integrated Judicial Services staff members who work for the Court around the province.

Commenting on the images of remote court locations featured in this year's report, a journalist who follows the Court on X said, "I enjoy how much of this report is photos judges took of their adventures getting to/from small town circuit courts."

The BC Provincial Court has been praised for the quantity of data on the Court's operations that it analyses and shares in its reports. Under the direction of the Manager of Judicial Resource Analysis Grant Marchand, Anton Seliverstov and Nicole Doucette analyse data collected by the Court Services Branch (CSB) of the BC government and the Court itself. They typically don't receive all of CSB's data until the autumn, and then work swiftly to prepare it in digestible chunks, complete with a variety of tables and graphs, so the report can be issued without further delay.

In addition, every year, Legal Counsel Karen Leung prepares summaries of complaints made about the Court's judicial officers and their outcomes. And the Court's Finance Manager Hristijan Lozanoski prepares a financial report.

The final component is a gifted graphic designer. Travis Dudfield has been able to bring the production team's ideas to life with fresh, colourful designs for the last three years. Attesting to the success of this year's design, one reader mentioned how the visual elements pulled him in so successfully when he opened the report to have a look, that he read it cover to cover in one sitting.

The team working on the BC Provincial Court's annual reports actually consists of dozens of people contributing their time, interest, information and photos. There is always room for improvement, but with the continued support of judges, judicial justices and Integrated Judicial Services staff, the Court is well-equipped to produce more "fantastic" reports in future.

Chief Judge Melissa Gillespie says, "The dozens of judges, judicial justices and staff members who contribute to our annual reports enable us to fulfill our commitment to openness and accountability by providing comprehensive information about the Court's work, including context and illustrative images. We couldn't do this without their help. I am grateful to everyone who contributes to this major undertaking."

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