



# NEWS RELEASE

## For Immediate Release

March 9, 2017

### **Government has good practice for ethics, but needs to tie it all together**

VICTORIA – The Office of the Auditor General of British Columbia has released “An Audit of B.C. Public Service Ethics Management.”

Auditor General Carol Bellringer’s office looked at government’s framework for managing ethics in the core B.C. Public Service – the ministries and central agencies.

Government has set ethics expectations for public servants through various standards, policies and good practices to support ethical behaviour and prevent and detect problems in the core public service. However, Bellringer’s office recommends that government establish clear leadership and accountability for ethics management.

“An overarching plan that ties it all together would allow the B.C. Public Service to determine if its efforts to support ethical behaviour are effective,” said Bellringer.

This audit was not a response to allegations of unethical behaviour, nor did Bellringer’s team look for cases of wrongdoing. The report did not set out to conclude whether the public service is ethical – it’s not that simple.

The report does however make recommendations for government to better communicate and provide guidance around ethics to public service employees, evaluate safeguards, and provide staff with a clearer way to report unethical conduct with clear protection.

“Maintaining the public’s trust is a constant consideration for government,” said Bellringer. “High ethical standards are fundamental to good governance and good government.”

Bellringer’s office surveyed approximately 25,000 public servants on their perceptions of ethics in the workplace, and 50% responded. Many had positive feedback about ethical behaviour in their workplace and generally saw the chance of unethical behaviour as low. However, survey results revealed that leaders can do more to engage with staff on how well ethical culture is being fostered and protected in the workplace.

Bellringer’s office also surveyed the board chairs and CEOs of all the broader public sector organizations to learn about their efforts regarding ethics management. The results of both surveys are in the report.



OFFICE OF THE  
**Auditor General**  
of British Columbia

The full report is available on the Office of the Auditor General website at: [www.bcauditor.com/pubs](http://www.bcauditor.com/pubs). Auditor General Carol Bellringer will answer questions pertaining to the report via a news conference.

News Conference Date: March 9, 2017

Time: 1 p.m. (Pacific time)

Dial-in Information:

From Vancouver: 604 681-0260

From elsewhere in Canada and the USA: 1 877 353-9184

Participant Pass Code: 44848#

During question and answer period, to ask a question: Press 01

During question and answer period, to exit the question queue: Press #

**About the Office of the Auditor General of British Columbia**

The Auditor General is a non-partisan, independent Officer of the Legislature who reports directly to the Legislative Assembly. The *Auditor General Act* empowers the Auditor General and staff to conduct audits, report findings and make recommendations.

Contact us:

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For general questions, call Colleen Rose, Manager, Communications: 250 419-6207

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