

# ***NEWS RELEASE***

**For Release:** January 17, 2011

## **Ombudsman Releases First FIPPA Access Practices Audit Report**

Manitoba's Ombudsman released her first report to Manitobans about the performance of five public bodies audited under her FIPPA Access Practices Assessment initiative.

The 2010 FIPPA Access Practices Assessment examined key components of a public body's processing of an application for access made under *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. Each audit focused on four components: compliance with time requirements of FIPPA; compliance with the requirements of a response to an applicant; adequacy of the contents the FIPPA file; and adequacy of a public body's records preparation. The audits examined files from the previous year where decisions were made to refuse access to records in full or in part, or where it was indicated that records did not exist or could not be located.

In 2010, five public bodies were audited: Manitoba Hydro; Manitoba Innovation, Energy and Mines; Manitoba Justice; the Workers Compensation Board of Manitoba; and the University of Manitoba. Over the next several years, five different public bodies will be audited each year and the results will be released in a report to the public.

Ombudsman Irene Hamilton noted, "For the most part we observed genuine efforts by the five public bodies audited to assist FIPPA applicants. In several cases though, we identified fairly modest changes that could be made to how a public body processes requests under FIPPA that would help strengthen the access practices process. In these cases, we made recommendations for improvement."

Section 49 of FIPPA outlines the Ombudsman's authority to conduct investigations and audits and make recommendations to monitor and ensure compliance. As a result of the 2010 audits, recommendations were made to four out of five public bodies. Only the Workers Compensation Board did not receive recommendations.

The 2010 Access Practices Assessment Report is available on Ombudsman's website at <http://www.ombudsman.mb.ca>

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