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Annual Reports

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Ministry Overview

The Ministry of the Attorney General (MAG) is responsible for providing a fair and accessible justice system that reflects the needs of the diverse communities it serves across government and the province. It strives to manage the justice system in an equitable, efficient and affordable way.

The ministry has five major program areas:

- prosecuting crime and preserving public order and personal safety;
- supporting victims of crime throughout the criminal justice system;
- providing criminal, civil and family courts and related justice services that are fair, timely and accessible;
- providing decision-making and justice support services to vulnerable people; and
- providing legal advice and services to government.

MAG provides expert legal services to ministries, agencies, boards and commissions. These services include: advice on legislative reform, labour relations and public law matters; litigation services relating to constitutional and civil challenges; and regulatory prosecutions.

The ministry is responsible for Legal Aid Ontario (LAO), an independent operational services agency responsible for the administration of legal aid in Ontario. Its mandate is to deliver high quality cost-effective legal aid services to low-income Ontarians. MAG is responsible for funding LAO and ensuring that the agency is accountable and ultimately responsible for the delivery of legal aid in Ontario.

The ministry became responsible for the Human Rights Code in 2003-2004 and for coordinating Ontario's obligations under international human rights treaties and agreements. The Ontario Human Rights Commission and the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario, which are arms-length, quasi-judicial agencies responsible for administering the Code, are within the Attorney General's policy and administrative responsibilities.

The ministry maintains public accountability for the administration of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board, the Assessment Review Board, the Ontario Municipal Board, the Board of Negotiation and the Special Investigations Unit. Decision-making by these bodies is independent of the ministry.

[TOP](#)

Annual Report 2007-2008

The Ministry of the Attorney General is responsible for providing a fair and accessible justice system that reflects the needs of diverse communities across the province. The ministry employs approximately 8,100 staff who:

- work in criminal, civil and family courts;
- prosecute crime;
- provide services to victims and vulnerable Ontarians;
- provide legal services to Government.

The ministry is guided by four key strategies to support the government priority of "Stronger, Safer Communities." They are:

- Improving the Effectiveness of the Criminal Justice System;
- Protecting the Interests of the Most Vulnerable;
- Ensuring Access to Victim Services;
- Delivering a Modern and Efficient Court System.

Improving the Effectiveness of the Criminal Justice System

The [Guns and Gangs Task Force](#) continued its work. There are now 72 Crown prosecutors working with police to investigate and prosecute street-level gun violence. Specially trained Crown prosecutors are deployed across the province working full-time as a resource to police and prosecutors on gun violence cases.

The ministry continued to work with its partners in Ontario and across Canada to fight crime. In June 2007, Ontario hosted the first annual inter-provincial forum on organized crime. Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Québec also took part. Experts shared advice on search warrants and wiretaps, witness protection and other tools and tactics to combat organized crime.

In July 2007, the Premier announced that the government was hiring 200 more OPP officers. 53 of these officers target illegal guns. They work with six new prosecutors to track and investigate restricted guns across the province.

That same month, the ministry created a special advisory group on organized crime. Crown prosecutors, police, retailers and other experts advise the ministry on how to better investigate and prosecute identity theft, counterfeiting and other crimes. The advisory group will focus on:

- new investigation strategies;
- how to use experts and researchers;
- creating training materials for prosecutors and police.

In August 2007, the Premier announced a crackdown on high-risk offenders. A \$21.5 million, five-year plan will:

- create six specialized regional teams to prosecute and manage dangerous and long-term offenders;
- increase efforts to monitor repeat offenders in the community and notify victims of their release;
- convene a roundtable of experts to discuss the best ways to manage high-risk offenders.

At that time, the Premier also called on the federal government to conduct a full-scale review of all of its high-risk offender legislation.

A second major crimes courtroom opened in October 2007 in Toronto at the 2201 Finch Avenue West courthouse. This court is part of Ontario's \$68 million fight against gun and gang violence.

In December 2007, the ministry announced that it would hire 40 new full-time Crown attorneys and 15 new full-time support staff. These prosecutors and support staff will be deployed across the province. There are now more than 900 Crowns who prosecute more than 500,000 charges across the province.

In 2007-08, the ministry expanded the Youth Justice Committees to eight new locations. They are now located in 57 communities across the province. The ministry has met its goal of establishing a committee in each of the province's base court jurisdictions. Youth Justice Committees are an alternative to prosecuting youth aged 12 to 17 who have committed low-risk offences such as mischief, theft or minor assault. Local volunteer committees work out an appropriate way for the young person to make amends for their actions.

In February 2008, the Attorney General announced a review of procedures for large and complex criminal cases. The Honourable Patrick LeSage, Q.C., and Professor Michael Code are leading the review. They will identify issues and recommend solutions to move large, complex cases through the justice system faster and more effectively. They will gather advice from defence lawyers, prosecutors, the judiciary, Legal Aid Ontario, the police and others.

In March 2008, the Attorney General announced that Ontario will set public targets for moving cases more quickly through the criminal justice system. The province will work with its justice partners to improve processes, use increased resources more effectively and reduce the time and number of court appearances needed to complete criminal cases.

This year, Ontario made several calls on the federal government to ban handguns. The province also asked for:

- full funding for the 2,500 additional police officers promised by the federal government;
- increased anti-gun smuggling security at the Canada-United States border.

Ontario also expressed continued disappointment in the federal government's extension of the long gun registration amnesty for the third consecutive year.

Protecting the Interests of the Most Vulnerable

The ministry continued to support and strengthen Ontario's legal aid system in 2007-2008.

The ministry increased [Legal Aid Ontario's](#) base funding by \$51 million through the government's 2007 budget. This additional funding comes over three years, including an extra \$15 million in 2007-2008. Legal Aid Ontario (LAO) used the additional money to increase the

hourly rates it pays lawyers, duty counsel and students. It also provided stable funding to the South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario.

The government appointed Professor John McCamus as the new Chair of LAO. Professor McCamus is the author of a [1997 report on Ontario's legal aid system](#). He was reviewing and updating this report at the time of his appointment. Professor Michael Trebilcock was appointed to complete the review. His report is expected in Spring 2008.

In June 2007, the ministry and LAO also began work on [a new protocol for managing court-ordered, publicly-funded criminal defences](#). This work began after developments in R. v. Wills. In November 2007, the Attorney General announced that he was accelerating its development. The protocol was finalized in December 2007.

The protocol applies when a judge orders the ministry to fund the defence of an accused person who is not receiving legal aid. LAO manages these cases according to its normal billing and payment rules and processes.

In February 2008, the government responded to the Ombudsman's report on defence funding in R. v. Wills. The ministry asked the court to review Mr. Wills' legal bills to determine whether some of the public funds paid should be returned. It also began a lawsuit against Wills to recover public funds spent on his defence.

The ministry also continued to fight internet crimes against children in 2007-2008. Together with the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, the ministry provided \$738,000 for a team of municipal, regional and provincial police, Crown prosecutors and victim service workers.

The ministry also began working with the YTV network and the [Canadian Centre for Child Protection](#). This partnership will promote online safety and help children avoid internet predators.

Ensuring Access to Victim Services

The ministry continued to expand its services for victims of crime in 2007-2008. In May, the ministry provided funding for an additional four [Victim Crisis Assistance and Referral Services](#) locations in Halton, Hamilton, Kenora and Peel. This program's provincial budget was also raised by 20 per cent.

The [Victim/Witness Assistance Program](#) continued to provide services to 66,000 victims and witnesses of violent crime throughout the court process. A new program office was opened in Elliot Lake. This program is a cornerstone of services provided to victims of violent crime in Ontario. It celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2007.

The government also announced funding for three new centres for child victims and witnesses in Ottawa and the regions of Peel and Waterloo.

In July 2007, the government began providing three new services for victims of violent crime. Financial support for emergency expenses, funeral expenses and counselling are now available province-wide.

In 2007-2008, the government provided \$1.35 million for a grant program to fight hate crimes. \$1.12 million went to community agencies for one-time projects to enhance community resources and address service gaps. The rest of the funds went to community agencies increasing information availability for hate crimes victims. This funding supported 23 projects across Ontario.

In August 2007, the government boosted funding for [Sexual Assault Centres](#) by three per cent. The government currently invests \$13 million per year in 38 sexual assault centres across the province. These centres serve more than 36,000 women each year.

In January 2008, the government invested more than \$550,000 in one-time funding for [Partner Assault Response](#) programs. This funding is in addition to the program's \$8.6 million annual budget and responds to an increased demand for service. This allows around 400 additional domestic violence offenders to receive group counselling.

In 2007-2008, the ministry continued its [Community Grants Program](#) with a \$6 million investment in 107 community agencies across the province. This program funded community organizations that assist:

- victims of hate crimes, domestic violence, and sexual assault;
- child/youth victims, including victims of sexual abuse and exploitation;
- other under-served victims groups.

In response to a report from the provincial Ombudsman in February 2007, the government provided an additional \$12.75 million to the [Criminal Injuries Compensation Board\(CICB\)](#) last year for compensation payments to victims. It also provided an additional \$2 million to allow the board to hire more adjudicators and staff to speed up the compensation process.

In order to help the CICB modernize its operations and decrease its caseload, the province further earmarked \$100 million in one-time funding for compensation awards. This money will provide compensation to 8,000 victims of violent crime and their families who have applied for compensation to the Board.

After his appointment in March 2007, former Chief Justice Roy McMurtry began his work [considering the role of direct compensation](#) within the spectrum of victim services provided by the ministry and organizations accountable to it, including the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board. His report is expected in 2008.

Delivering a Modern and Efficient Court System

The ministry continued to improve the effectiveness of the court system in 2007-2008.

In July 2007, the Legislation Act came into effect. This new law was created through the Access to Justice Act. It allows the popular [e-Laws](#) website to be used in court as an accurate statement of the law.

In November 2007, the ministry released a summary of the Honourable Coulter Osborne's report on ways to improve Ontario's civil justice system. The [report](#) is based on research, province-wide consultations and written submissions. It contains 81 recommendations on the civil justice system.

After the report's release, the Attorney General held focussed discussions with justice partners in communities across the province, including Toronto, Stratford, Sault Ste. Marie, London, Hamilton, Kingston, Ottawa, Barrie, and Oakville. Mr. Osborne's final report is expected later in 2008.

In 2007-2008, the ministry appointed 9 judges to the Ontario Court of Justice, as well as 41 full-time presiding justices of the peace. The Honourable Annemarie Erika Bonkalo was appointed Chief Justice of the Ontario Court of Justice in May 2007. In July 2007, regional senior judges Peter Douglas Griffiths and John Andrew Payne were appointed as Associate Chief Justices of this court.

The ministry continued to improve courthouse facilities this year. In June 2007, construction officially began on the Durham Consolidated Courthouse in Oshawa. The new courthouse will merge justice services currently provided in eight separate locations. The new facility will be built to top energy conservation standards. It is expected to open late in 2009.

In July, the ministry marked the opening of a consolidated courthouse in Pembroke. The renovated national heritage building brought together courts from four locations in Renfrew County under one roof. The consolidated courthouse's heritage design was awarded a Certificate of Merit by the American Institute of Architects.

The ministry improved courthouse accessibility across the province in 2007-2008. In April 2007, the Attorney General and the former Chief Justice of Ontario, the Honourable Roy McMurtry, announced a new committee to promote barrier-free courts. A project to track requests for accessibility-related information on existing court services began in 7 court sites. These projects stem from a [2006 report](#) Mr. McMurtry wrote on making Ontario's court system fully accessible.

In February 2008, the Attorney General announced that the Barrie courthouse will receive new accessible, bilingual signs. This project will improve access to justice by making the court process easier for Ontarians. The ministry will consult with court users and experts to ensure the signs meet the needs of people with disabilities. Discussions will also be held with representatives of the francophone community. The ministry will share best practices across the province.

The ministry also continued to implement the recommendations of the Panel on Justice and the Media. In May 2007, the ministry cut the

fee to photocopy documents in provincially-run courts in half, from \$2 to \$1. It also lowered the fee charged to non-parties to view civil case files in the Court of Appeal and Superior Court of Justice by 69 per cent, from \$32 to \$10.

Between September and November 2007, certain proceedings in the Ontario Court of Appeal were recorded and streamed live on the Court's website. DVD copies were available to media, along with an audio feed box for reporters. Recorded proceedings were archived on the Court's website for 90 days to increase access to justice. The "Cameras in the Courtroom" project is now being evaluated.

Serving a Vital Public Interest

The Ministry of the Attorney General continued to provide expert legal services to government in civil and constitutional litigation and legal advice to client ministries.

In May 2007, the legislature passed [a law establishing a new police complaints system](#). This system will be run by a new civilian organization, and led by an Independent Police Review Director. The Director will be hired in the spring of 2008. The new system is expected to be up and running in 2009.

In September 2007, the Attorney General helped to open the new [Law Commission of Ontario](#). The Commission works with the academic and legal communities, the judiciary and the public. It crafts practical and creative solutions to existing legal challenges. It also explores ways to make Ontario's justice system more accessible.

Patricia Hughes, a former dean of the University of Calgary's law school, is the Commission's first Executive Director.

The ministry is working to modernize Ontario's human rights system following passage of a law [amending the Human Rights Code](#) in December 2006. The Ontario Human Rights Commission will continue to promote, protect and advance human rights.

As of June 30, 2008, all discrimination claims will be filed directly with the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario. The new Human Rights Legal Support Centre will offer claims-related legal and support services to people across Ontario.

In 2007-2008, the [Civil Remedies Act](#) continued to be used to help take the profit out of unlawful activities and compensate direct victims.

In April 2007, the government returned almost \$635,000 to 39 victims of a financial scam. Also that month, an association representing businesses operating near the former "Sandbar Tavern" crack house in Hamilton received more than \$7,000 in compensation.

Other grants included:

- May 2007 - \$47,073 for the West Gray Police to purchase a new canine unit vehicle;
- August 2007 - \$14,460 for the OPP's Biker Enforcement Unit for enhanced investigative technology;
- August 2007 - \$144,000 for the OPP's Asset Forfeiture Unit to hire a forensic accountant to investigate asset forfeiture cases across Ontario;
- August 2007 - \$15,950 for the Peel Regional Police to develop officers' skills as expert witnesses.

In August 2007, the Attorney General was granted a court order to preserve and secure a Chatham "drug house." The property at 51 Taylor Avenue was frozen and temporary control was given to the Crown, pending the outcome of forfeiture proceedings.

Amendments to the Civil Remedies Act took effect in February 2008. These amendments allow the civil courts to impound and forfeit the vehicle of repeat drunk drivers. Cars could be impounded and sold if a court finds that:

- the vehicle was involved in, or is likely to be involved in, a drinking and driving offence; and
- the vehicle is owned or driven by a person whose driver's licence has been suspended for a drinking and driving offence two or more times in the preceding 10 years.

Victims may also apply for compensation from the proceeds of sale of the vehicle.

In March 2008, two Hamilton-area properties, including one used as a marijuana grow operation, cash and bank accounts with a total net

value of almost \$325,000 were forfeited to the Crown. A motorcycle gang clubhouse in Thunder Bay was also forfeited to the Crown that month.

At the end of the 2007-2008 fiscal year, the ministry had \$11.6 million in property frozen pending the completion of civil forfeiture proceedings.

In April 2007, the Attorney General appointed the Honourable Mr. Justice Stephen Goudge of the Court of Appeal for Ontario to lead a [public inquiry into the oversight of Ontario's pediatric forensic pathology system](#). His report is expected in September 2008.

Also this year, the government received the final report of the [Ipperwash Inquiry](#), and the [Cornwall Public Inquiry](#) continued its work.

Table 1: Ministry Expenditures 2007 - 2008

	Ministry Actual Expenditures (\$) 2007/08
Operating	1,471,636,514
Capital	151,272,400
Staff Strength (as of March 31, 2008)*	8,058.26

Interim Outlook 2007-08, The Ministry of the Attorney General (Excludes Consolidations)(Restated)

**Human Resources - MAG*

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Annual Report 2006-2007

The Ministry of the Attorney General is responsible for providing a fair and accessible justice system that reflects the needs of the diverse communities it serves across the province. The ministry employs approximately 8,000 staff who provide services in criminal, civil and family courts, the prosecution of crime, services to victims, support of vulnerable people and legal services to Government.

The ministry is guided by four key strategies to achieve results and support the government priority of "Stronger, Safer Communities". They are:

Improving the Efficiency and Effectiveness of the Criminal Justice System

In May 2006, the Attorney General unveiled a new "Organized Justice" strategy for fighting organized crime, comprised of seven pillars: expanding the Guns and Gangs Task Force, building a state-of-the-art provincial operations centre, formalizing an inter-provincial agreement with Manitoba and Québec to share resources and information, fast-tracking the hiring of 1,000 new police officers, establishing major crime courts to respond to large-scale prosecutions, seizing unlawful assets through criminal and civil forfeiture, and implementing a \$45 million Challenge Fund to assist high-risk neighbourhoods.

In September 2006, the Attorney General signed the Inter-Provincial Agreement on the Prevention and Effective Prosecution of Organized Crime to strengthen joint efforts to fight organized crime through better collaboration, information sharing and training.

Following the Premier's January 2006 announcement of a \$51 million package to fight gun violence, the ministry moved quickly to implement several new initiatives.

The Guns and Gangs Task Force was expanded to a total of 64 Crown prosecutors plus support staff and 12 victim/witness service staff. Comprising police officers, Crown prosecutors and staff from the Victim/Witness Assistance Program who work together from the first day of an investigation, the Guns and Gangs Task Force is a major component in the government's fight against gun and gang violence.

Three new judges were appointed to deal with the anticipated increase in the volume of work.

In November 2006, members of the Guns and Gangs Task Force and other organized crime experts came together at a groundbreaking conference to share strategies and tactics for investigating and prosecuting large-scale mega trials. The conference was the first of its kind in Canada, and speakers from the Toronto Police Service, the Ontario Provincial Police, the Federal Prosecution Service, the Centre of Forensic Sciences, as well as experts in search and seizure, proceeds of crime, organized crime and firearms and explosives, shared their knowledge and strategies for successfully prosecuting large-scale mega trials.

In December 2006, the ministry opened Ontario's first major crime court. Located at 361 University Avenue in Toronto, this facility is designed to increase the criminal justice system's capacity to respond to large-scale, gun and gang-related prosecutions. A second major crime court, to be located at 2201 Finch Avenue West in Toronto, is expected to be ready in fall 2007.

The ministry also established a state-of-the-art operations centre, which opened in January 2007. The centre better allows for highly coordinated investigations and prosecutions of guns and gang-related offences. Participants include the Guns and Gangs Task Force, Toronto Police Service, Ontario Provincial Police, victim support staff, as well as probation and parole staff.

In July 2006, the ministry expanded the Youth Justice Committee (YJC) program to 46 communities. YJCs are an alternative to the formal court process that hold low-risk young offenders accountable and addresses issues that may lead to re-offending. The ministry added 23 new locations, doubling the current number of committees to 46.

Protecting the Interests of the Most Vulnerable

The ministry increased base funding to Legal Aid Ontario by \$13 million.

In September 2006, the Attorney General asked Professor John McCamus, to update his report, "Blueprint for Publicly Funded Legal Services." As part of his review, Professor McCamus will examine possible methods of ensuring regular reviews to set and adjust the hourly rate paid to lawyers doing legal aid work.

The ministry launched a five-part, \$5-million strategy to combat Internet child pornography and luring in conjunction with the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services. For the first time, a unified provincial team of municipal, regional and OPP police officers, Crown attorneys and victim service providers is being brought together to protect children from sexual exploitation on the Internet. The strategy also includes a dedicated tip line, online undercover work, and support for victims and their families.

Ensuring Access to Victim Services

In 2006-2007, the ministry provided \$3 million from the Victims' Justice Fund in funding to 69 community agencies across the province to help them develop and enhance resources designed to empower victims and make communities stronger and better equipped to meet victims' needs.

The ministry completed the expansion of its Victim/Witness Assistance Program and its Domestic Violence Court Program.

In December, the Attorney General established new awards for excellence in victim services. Awards will be presented in spring 2007 to people or organizations who provide effective help to victims of crime when it is most needed.

Also in December 2006, the government released the report of the Hate Crimes Community Working Group. The government struck an inter-ministerial team to consider those recommendations that fall within its jurisdiction, and to plan the investment of \$1.35 million to help strengthen Ontario's communities by taking action against hate crimes.

In January 2007, the ministry placed a Crown attorney and a victim services staff member to work full-time on site at a community domestic violence program in Kitchener, the first time this approach has been used in Canada. The Catholic Family Counselling Centre's Family Violence Project takes a holistic approach to family justice, helping victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. Its resources include victim services, counselling, children's aid services, the Waterloo Regional Police Service's domestic violence unit and the Crown attorney, all under one roof.

In February 2007, the ministry received the Ombudsman's report on the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board. In response, the government announced that it will provide \$12.75 million to enable the board to directly compensate victims of violent crime, and an

additional \$2 million to allow the Board to hire additional adjudicators and staff to speed up the compensation process. In the current fiscal year, the government has allocated an additional \$6.6 million in funding, over and above the Board's current budget of \$20 million, to assist with workload and victims' compensation pressures.

In addition, the government announced it will invest more than \$6 million to establish new programs, which will provide services to victims in the immediate aftermath of violent crime, when they need and want the help most, including:

- Emergency Expenses - to reimburse eligible victims for emergency expenses incurred in the immediate aftermath of a violent crime, such as child-care or new locks/window replacement
- Funeral Expenses - to reimburse eligible families of victims of homicide
- Counselling - provided to the victims of most serious crimes to help reduce the impact of trauma.

The ministry will also provide ongoing support to the planned consultations on a new framework for victim support and compensation. The ministry announced that Chief Justice Roy McMurtry will review the province's victim compensation system upon his retirement from the Court of Appeal.

Delivering a Modern and Efficient Court System

In June 2006, the Attorney General asked former Associate Chief Justice of Ontario Coulter Osborne to propose options to reform the civil justice system to make it more accessible and affordable. Mr. Osborne was asked to deliver recommendations for action that are easily implementable and provide tangible results, and his report is expected in the summer of 2007.

In August 2006, the ministry received and released the report and recommendations of the Panel on Justice and the Media. This panel was established by the Attorney General in January 2005 as a forum for media and the justice system to engage in dialogue, and brought together representatives of the media and justice sectors.

The ministry has begun implementing the recommendations that fall within its jurisdiction, such as developing an online Ontario justice system guidebook for the media, and assigning a staff member to act as media contacts for each court location.

It has also been working in partnership with the Court of Appeal to launch a pilot project to put cameras in the Court of Appeal, pursuant to a panel recommendation and an agreement between the Attorney General and Chief Justice Roy McMurtry.

The ministry has also established a Justice-Media Liaison Committee, as recommended by the Panel. This committee brings together expertise from the judiciary, media, legal and police organizations, and the ministry, and will help to improve both interaction between media and the justice system and facilitate communication, education, and problem solving.

In September 2006, the ministry opened new civil courtrooms at 330 University Avenue in Toronto. This expanded and modern facility will accommodate civil, commercial and estates trials, as well as office space for administration and mediation.

In November 2006, the legislature passed the Access to Justice Act. This comprehensive bill modernizes and improves people's access to the justice system and provides greater openness, transparency, and accountability.

Among its provisions, the Act provides for paralegal regulation to give consumers a choice in qualified legal services while protecting those who get legal advice from non-lawyers. For the first time in Canada's history, paralegals will be required to receive training, carry liability insurance and report to a public body that can investigate complaints.

It also reforms the appointment process for justices of the peace, establishing minimum qualifications and establishing a new Justices of the Peace Appointments Advisory Committee.

The act allows retired justices of the peace to serve on a day-to-day basis as needed to help manage the caseload for criminal and Provincial Offences Act (POA) proceedings. Days after the act was passed, 21 per diem justices of the peace were authorized for assignment across the province.

The Access to Justice Act also:

- Amends the Limitations Act to give parties to potential lawsuits the opportunity to reach their own arrangements on limitation periods;
- Amends the POA to allow for some witnesses, such as police, to provide testimony electronically, using court time more efficiently; and
- Creates the Legislation Act, bringing the way our laws are published and interpreted into the electronic age.

In 2006-2007, the ministry appointed 20 judges to the Ontario Court of Justice, as well as 35 full-time presiding justices of the peace.

In March 2007, the Attorney General announced the appointment of the Honourable Annemarie Erika Bonkalo as Chief Justice of the Ontario Court of Justice effective May 4, 2007. Chief Justice Bonkalo, the first woman to serve as Chief Justice of the Ontario Court of Justice, succeeds Chief Justice Brian W. Lennox who completes his eight-year term effective May 3, 2007.

In February 2007, the ministry invested \$3.7 million to improve 18 courthouses in communities across the province. The funding comes from the government's \$190 million economic stimulus package, and will ensure Ontario court facilities remain safe and accessible.

Serving a Vital Public Interest

In addition to the four key strategies, the ministry also supported the government's priority of serving a "Vital Public Interest."

In April 2006, the government introduced legislation that, if passed, would create an independent civilian body to administer the police review system in Ontario.

The Independent Police Review Act, 2007, if passed, would implement recommendations in the LeSage Report, including creation of a new independent civilian body to administer the police review system in Ontario. On March 19, 2007, the bill was ordered for third reading in the Legislature. Third Reading debate commenced on April 3, 2007.

In June 2006, the ministry destroyed two street racing cars that had been seized and forfeited under provisions of the Remedies for Organized Crime and Other Unlawful Activities Act (Civil Remedies Act). This was the first time street racing cars have been destroyed under civil asset forfeiture legislation.

In September 2006, a notorious Hamilton crack house, forfeited under this Act was - for the first time - transferred to the community that had been victimized by unlawful activity. The Attorney General handed the property over to the city of Hamilton. The building will be redeveloped by the city to better serve the community. Cash forfeited in this case was disbursed to direct victims in March 2007.

In October 2006, a Hell's Angel's clubhouse was preserved in Oshawa under the Act, and in November 2006, the government used the Act to preserve a related crack house in Hamilton.

In January 2007, a high profile press event was held at a forfeited marijuana grow operation in Durham Region. The government also used the Act to compensate victims of fraud where \$300,000 was forfeited as a result of unlawful activity, and announced grants for more than \$750,000 to Ontario police services to assist victims and help prevent victimization. In March 2007, more direct victims of another fraud were compensated, where \$600,000 was forfeited as a result of unlawful activity.

The ministry will continue to use this Act in 2007-2008 to take the profit out of unlawful activities, and to compensate direct victims of unlawful activity.

The Attorney General announced the creation of the Law Commission of Ontario in November 2006. The Commission will work with academic institutions, the legal community, the judiciary and the public to generate practical and creative solutions to existing challenges in the justice system, and will also explore ways to make it more accessible.

In December, the legislature passed Bill 107, the Human Rights Code Amendment Act. A new complaints process is to be established, with individual claims being filed directly with the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario. The mandate of the Ontario Human Rights Commission will be balanced between its roles of investigating human rights issues and addressing discrimination in Ontario through proactive measures such as public education, promotion, public advocacy, research and monitoring. A new Legal Support Centre will be established to provide legal and other support services related to all aspects of applications to the Tribunal.

Ministry Expenditures

(\$) 2006 - 2007 Actual	
Operating	1,243,546,021
Capital	69,169,731
Staff Strength (as of March 31, 2007)* _	7,724.72

Interim Outlook 2006-07, The Ministry of the Attorney General (Excludes Consolidations)

* Human Resources - MAG

Annual Report 2005-2006

The Ministry of the Attorney General is responsible for providing a fair and accessible justice system that reflects the needs of the diverse communities it serves across the province. The ministry employs approximately 8,000 staff who provide services in criminal, civil and family courts, the prosecution of crime, services to victims, support of vulnerable people and legal services to Government.

The ministry is guided by four key strategies to achieve results and support the government priority of "Stronger, Safer Communities". They are:

Improving the Efficiency and Effectiveness of the Criminal Justice System

In September 2005, the government announced a strengthened partnership with the Toronto Police Service, with four new initiatives to fight gun violence: blitz inspections of gun-licensed businesses, a gun amnesty, improvements to the witness protection program, and a plan to allow new ways for Crown prosecutors to bring community impact evidence before the courts in seeking tougher sentences.

As a result of these initiatives, 32 gun-licensed businesses were inspected to ensure gun storage and safekeeping standards were being met, and the Chief Firearms Officer is now incorporating unannounced inspections into its regular procedures. The Project PEACE gun amnesty led to the collection of 261 guns, including 33 handguns, and 1,554 rounds of ammunition.

The ministry improved short-term protection and reduced red tape involved in obtaining admission to the witness protection program and receiving a new identity, helping to encourage more community members to come forward when they have witnessed a serious crime. The ministry is also implementing new and innovative ways for Crown prosecutors to seek tougher sentences by developing and presenting evidence to the court about the devastating impact of gun violence on individuals and communities.

In October 2005, the ministry also intensified its efforts to fight gun and gang violence by increasing the number of police and Crown prosecutors on the Guns and Gangs Task Force. 26 senior police officers joined the specialized Task Force and 32 additional Crown prosecutors began to work exclusively to both prosecute existing guns and gangs cases and support the investigation, laying, and prosecution of new gun-related charges.

The government also succeeded in building a national consensus among provinces and territories in calling for tougher federal measures to combat gun violence, following which, the federal government committed to introducing legislation aimed at increasing mandatory minimum sentences and creating two new offences for trafficking guns.

In January 2006, the Premier announced a \$51 million package of immediate funding for additional police, victim services, and Crown resources to investigate and prosecute gun crimes.

These resources included:

- Establishing a state-of-the-art Provincial Operations Centre to bring expertise and technology under one roof. The Centre's participants include the Guns and Gangs Task Force, the Toronto Police Service, Ontario Provincial Police, Crown prosecutors, support staff, probation and parole officers, and victim services staff.
- Increasing the Task Force by an additional 31 Crown prosecutors (for a total of 64), and additional support staff, and 12 victim/witness services staff.
- Providing \$5 million to the Toronto Police Service to intensify their offensive against gangs in high-priority areas of the city, by establishing three rapid response teams of 18 highly trained officers specializing in guns and drugs interdiction.
- Establishing major crimes courts, equipped with high levels of security and capable of dealing with multiple defendants to increase the criminal justice system's capacity to respond to large-scale prosecutions.
- Fast-tracking the hiring and training of the remaining 1,000 new police officers across Ontario to be on the streets by the end of 2006.
- Establishing bail teams consisting of police, Crown prosecutors and duty counsel to expedite the bail court process at certain sites for criminal cases, including those involving guns.

Protecting the Interests of the Most Vulnerable

In October 2005, the ministry improved court access for at-risk children and their families by appointing four judges to hear child protection cases in the Ontario Court of Justice. The ministry is committed to addressing potential delays in child protection cases. The government announced that a number of appointments would be made that would help to move child protection cases through the system as quickly and effectively as possible, improving court access for children and their families.

In February 2006, the legislature passed the Family Statute Amendment Act. This Act mandates that all family law arbitrations in Ontario be conducted only in accordance with Canadian law, and decrees that resolutions based on other laws and principles - including religious principles - will have no legal effect and will not be enforceable by the courts.

The Act also requires that family arbitrations be subject to the general rules of the family law of Ontario, improving legal protections for women and children, and amends the Children's Law Reform Act to ensure that violence and abuse are considered when determining the best interests of a child in the context of custody and access.

Ensuring Access to Victim Services

In September 2005, to ensure a voice for victims in developing policies and programs to help victims of crime, the ministry appointed a new chair to the Office for Victims of Crime, as well as seven new board members.

In October 2005, the ministry announced \$3.1 million in grants to assist 71 community-based projects designed to help victims of crime. The ministry funded the most promising local projects that assist victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, hate crimes, and child victims of sexual abuse and exploitation as well as under-served and unserved victims.

In December 2005, the ministry and the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services established the Hate Crimes Community Working Group. This advisory group was tasked with providing expert advice to the government and proposing approaches to address hate crimes, including measures to enhance services to victims of such crime.

Delivering a Modern and Efficient Court System

In April 2005, the ministry received the report of Patrick LeSage, former chief justice of the Superior Court of Ontario, into the province's police complaints system. LeSage was appointed in 2004 to identify ways to improve the system. The ministry intends to introduce legislation in spring 2006 in response.

In October 2005, the Attorney General introduced the Access to Justice Act in the legislature. This act, if passed, would reform the justice of the peace system and regulate paralegals. It would also amend the Courts of Justice Act and the Limitations Act, and create a new act that would be a single source for rules about Ontario's laws.

In 2005-2006, the ministry appointed 15 judges to the Ontario Court of Justice, as well as 19 full-time presiding justices of the peace.

Serving a Vital Public Interest

In addition to the four key strategies, the ministry also supported the government's priority of serving a "Vital Public Interest."

In 2005-2006, the government appointed new chairs to the Ontario Human Rights Commission and the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario. These arms'-length, quasi-judicial bodies are responsible for administering the provisions of the Ontario Human Rights Code, and are within the ministry's policy and administrative responsibilities.

In April 2005, the Attorney General appointed the Honourable Justice G. Normand Glaude to lead an independent public inquiry into the events surrounding allegations of abuse of young people in Cornwall. Justice Glaude has a broad mandate to look into the response of the justice system and other public institutions to the allegations of historical abuse.

In November 2005, the Public Accounting Act, 2004, which makes public accounting licenses more accessible, came into effect. At this time, the Attorney General appointed members to the Public Accountants Council, which will set new regulatory standards for the profession.

In January 2006, the Attorney General announced his intention to establish a new Law Commission of Ontario. This commission will be a partnership with the Law Foundation of Ontario, the Law Society of Upper Canada, Ontario's law schools, and the legal community. The ministry and its partners have begun work to make the commission a reality.

In March 2006, the ministry used the provisions of the Remedies for Organized Crime and Other Unlawful Activities Act (Civil Remedies Act) to forfeit a notorious Hamilton crack house and an associated \$10,000 bank account to the Crown as instruments and proceeds of unlawful activity. In 2006-2007 options for the future of the building and victims will be addressed.

Ministry Expenditures

	(\$) 2005 - 2006 Actual
Operating	1,170,506,674
Capital	50,168,393
Staff Strength (as of March 31, 2006)*	7,425.03

Public Accounts of Ontario 2005-06, The Ministry of the Attorney General (Excludes Consolidations)

* Human Resources - MAG

Annual Report 2004-2005

The Ministry of the Attorney General supported the government's priority of "Stronger, Safer Communities", by establishing four strategies which encompass the ministry's activities, and assist in meeting its results.

Improve the Efficiency and Effectiveness of the Criminal Justice System

In January 2004, the attorney general announced that he would be providing Crown resources to the Toronto Anti Gun and Gang task force to combat the increasing rate of guns and gang-related crimes in Ontario. Dedicated Crown resources are now available 24/7 to assist with gangs and gun related charges. These resources support investigations by providing police with pre-charge legal advice and assistance in obtaining search warrants and wiretap authorizations.

The ministry continued to support Delay Reduction Initiatives, which focus on bringing forward criminal cases at immediate risk of dismissal due to systemic delay. The overall aim of the initiative is to improve the efficiencies in the processing of criminal cases in the Ontario Court of Justice.

On June 14, 2004, the Scarborough Youth Justice Committee (YJC) was expanded to address the needs of the Malvern area, and a new committee covering both the Jane-Finch and Jamestown areas in Toronto was created. By the end of 2004-05, there were 23 Youth Justice Committees across Ontario. Youth Justice Committees are a unique type of restorative justice program that provide early intervention approaches to youth crime and actively involve community stakeholders, victims and youth offenders.

Protect the Interests of the Most Vulnerable

Given the ever-increasing number of child protection cases, the ministry provided additional resources to the Office of the Children's Lawyer to address the child protection case backlog.

In 2004, Legal Aid Ontario opened three staff offices in Barrie, Brampton and Ottawa specializing in criminal law services to fulfill its mandate of ensuring those who need legal aid get this service no matter where they live in Ontario. A new federal program funds the criminal law offices. Additional funding for duty counsel services was also provided to Legal Aid Ontario.

Ensure Access to Victim Services

The Partner Assault Program, a counselling/education program for people who have abused their partners, was expanded to an additional 8 programs, bringing the total to 68, to achieve province-wide coverage. Additionally, the Domestic Violence Court program achieved province-wide coverage this year.

Funding was also provided to 36 Sexual Assault/Rape Crisis Centres to provide services to victims and survivors of sexual violence including: a 24-hour crisis line, supportive counselling, referral to other services and supports, and improved access to French-language support services.

Additionally, the ministry expanded the court-based support it provides through the Victim/Witness Assistance Program. This program assists victims/witnesses as they proceed through the criminal justice system. Priority is given to those who are most vulnerable: victims of domestic violence, child abuse victims, victims of sexual assault, vulnerable victims with special needs, elderly victims and families of homicide victims.

Deliver a Modern and Efficient Court System

The ministry continued to focus on reducing criminal and child protection backlogs and reducing cost and delay in civil and family proceedings. The ministry reviewed options to reform the discovery process and worked with the judiciary and the bar on revisions to Small Claims Court procedures and the family law rules.

In June 2004, the Attorney General announced the appointment of Patrick LeSage, former chief justice of the Superior Court of Ontario, to lead a formal review into Ontario's police complaints system. The review was aimed at identifying ways to improve the police complaints system. LeSage explored a range of perspectives and ideas. He met personally with a variety of police professionals, community groups and concerned citizens.

In 2004, the government improved access to the justice system by regulating the way Ontarians hire lawyers on a contingency fee basis. Amendments to the Solicitors Act were proclaimed on October 1, 2004, and new rules governing the use of contingency fees in Ontario came into force. Contingency fee agreements allow a client to pay legal fees only in the event of success.

The new regulatory protections will:

- require all contingency fee agreements to be made in writing;
- prohibit contingency fees in criminal, quasi-criminal and family law matters;
- prohibit a lawyer from getting paid more than the client recovers;
- set out specific protections for minors and incapable adults.

Vital Public Interest

In addition to supporting the four key strategies, the ministry also supported the government's priority of "Vital Public Interest".

In 2004-05, the ministry through its Legal Services Division, continued to support the Attorney General's role as chief law officer of the Crown by providing the government with expert legal advice, advocacy and representation before tribunals and at all levels of court.

The ministry is also responsible for the Human Rights Code and for co-ordinating Ontario's obligations under international human rights treaties and agreements. The Ontario Human Rights Commission and the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario, which are arms-length, quasi-judicial agencies responsible for administering the Code, are within the Attorney General's policy and administrative responsibilities.

The ministry also maintains public accountability for the administration of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board, the Assessment Review Board, the Ontario Municipal Board, and the Board of Negotiation.

In June 2004, the Attorney General introduced legislation to make public accounting licences more accessible, while meeting its commitment to protect businesses, investors and the public with high regulatory standards. The legislation was passed with unanimous consent one day later.

The Public Accounting Act, 2004, enables qualified Chartered Accountants, Certified General Accountants and Certified Management Accountants to obtain a licence to practise public accounting. The proposed "parallel licensure" system will reconstitute and refocus the Public Accountants Council (PAC) as the guardian of public accounting standards in Ontario. The PAC will approve and enforce standards relating to education, experience, examinations, practice inspections, professional conduct and development, and disciplinary procedures.

Also, legislation was introduced and passed that amended more than 70 Ontario statutes to bring them in line with court decisions that found same-sex marriage to be constitutional. The legislation ensured that same-sex couples are treated with the same respect and dignity as opposite-sex couples.

Additionally, in 2004-05, the government introduced, and the Legislature passed, legislation that amended the Dog Owners Liability Act, banning pit bulls and making owners more responsible for the actions of their dogs. The legislation was aimed at protecting the public from dangerous dogs and irresponsible owners.

Ministry Expenditures

	(\$) 2004 - 2005 Actual
Operating	1,201,208,297
Capital	
- Ministry Administration - Court Services	25,922,981 4,372,073
Staff Strength (as of March 31, 2005)*	7,396.8

Public Accounts of Ontario, The Ministry of the Attorney General 2004-05

*Human Resources - MAG

Annual Report 2003-2004

Prosecuting Crime

On June 30, 2003, the ministry announced funding for the Justice Delay Reduction Initiative (JDRI) to deal with the growing delay in the processing of criminal cases in the Ontario Court of Justice. Funding was allocated for the appointment of 15 new judges to the Ontario

Court of Justice and the hiring of new Crown attorneys, and other staff to support court operations and help victims.

The ministry announced the creation of a new task force to combat the increasing rate of gun and gang-related crimes in Ontario. The ministry doubled funding for the Youth Justice Committee program to give more low risk young offenders an alternative to the court-based system.

Family Justice Services

The Ontario Public Guardian and Trustee implemented a new IT system to improve program efficiency and enable measurement of key performance indicators. Similarly, the Supervised Access program developed electronic data collection and reporting systems to streamline processes and obtain reliable, timely information for reporting and accountability.

MAG continued to work with Legal Aid Ontario (LAO) to improve governance and accountability reaffirming the provision of quality, client focused legal aid services. LAO opened three new criminal law staff offices, along with several other initiatives.

Legal Services

MAG provided high quality legal services to government in ministries, agencies, boards and commissions. The legal services supported MAG's vision by being innovative, strategic and effective. Using a coordinated management model, MAG also represented the government in high profile litigation and inquiries. As well, MAG began implementation of a cross-government IT case management system to track and monitor legal issues.

Court Services

To ensure timely and efficient case processing, MAG implemented a new electronic court case tracking system for civil and family courts in 35 court sites across Ontario.

During the previous fiscal year, MAG established a model electronic courtroom at 393 University Avenue Superior Court of Justice in Toronto. The courtroom is a test environment for the use of advanced in-court technology. Pilot testing and evaluation of the facility continued through 2003-04.

Similarly, the Video Remand Project has implemented 125 installations in courthouses, correctional facilities, First Nations buildings and Ontario Provincial Police detachments. This allows an accused person to appear in court by video conferencing from a police station or correctional institution. Video remand reduces the number of prisoners who must be transported to and from court.

MAG also initiated an annual client satisfaction survey program to regularly monitor all court services and programs.

Victim Services

The government consolidated victim services from three justice ministries into the Victim Services Division to provide a single point of accountability for the management and delivery of services to victims of crime. The Division became the Ontario Victims Services Secretariat in 2003.

The ministry awarded \$7 million to 71 community-based projects and agencies aimed at improving support and services for victims of crime. Funding was also increased to the province's 36 sexual assault crisis centres in 29 communities.

Ministry Administration

This program area provided for the overall administration of the ministry, supplying administrative and support services for operating programs. The ministry continued to implement and develop standards to improve overall service delivery.

Ministry Expenditures

(\$ millions) 2003 - 2004 Actual	
Operating	1199
Capital	24
Staff Strength (as of Mar. 31, 2004)	6890.3

NOTE: Starting in 2002-2003, major tangible capital assets owned by provincial ministries (land, buildings and transportation infrastructure) are accounted for on a full accrual accounting basis. Other tangible capital assets owned by provincial ministries will continue to be accounted for as expenses in the year of acquisition or construction. All capital assets owned by consolidated government organizations are accounted for on a full accrual basis.

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Annual Report 2002-2003

Prosecuting Crime

To improve service delivery, MAG implemented two case management pilot projects and expanded Youth Justice Committees from six to 22.

Family Justice Services

MAG expanded supervised access province-wide to more than 77 sites. The Ontario Children's Lawyer implemented a new database to improve program efficiency. The Ontario Public Guardian and Trustee introduced a new investment strategy for common fixed income funds.

Legal Services

To improve client satisfaction with services, a sub-committee was established to examine the role of the director in legal branches across government. Orientation sessions for newly hired counsel were delivered and a new Intranet website was launched for the Legal Services Division.

Court Services

MAG established the Child Protection Backlog Committee including representatives of the judiciary, bar and Children's Aid Societies to address backlog issues throughout court offices across the province. In addition, expert working groups were established to develop enhancements to information technology and to identify and develop consistent best practices for managing child protection cases.

MAG began implementation of a new case tracking system for civil, family and small-claims court cases to improve overall court services and eliminate manual data collection. A model electronic courtroom was established, resulting in integrated technologies that support in-court processes.

Victim Services

The Domestic Violence Work Team coordinated implementation of the Domestic Violence Court Program at 31 court sites across Ontario. Victim Crisis Assistance and Referral Services expanded from 35 to 38 sites and Partner Assault Response programs increased from 21 to 36 sites during fiscal 2002-03. The Victim/Witness Assistance Program also expanded from 39 to 48 sites.

Ministry Administration

MAG launched a new intranet website (MAGnet) to improve communication to staff and facilitate access to corporate resources.

Completion of a Financial Delegation of Authority included a web-based training tool kit for self-learning including relevant financial signing authority, risk assessment forms and other useful resources.

MAG continued to strengthen operating program oversight. In addition, ministry compliance rates regarding Freedom of Information requests rose to 86 per cent.

Ministry Expenditures

(\$ millions) 2002 - 2003 Actual	
Operating	1052
Capital	43
Staff Strength (as of Mar. 31, 2003)	6592.1

NOTE:

Starting in 2002-2003, major tangible capital assets owned by provincial ministries (land, buildings and transportation infrastructure) are accounted for on a full accrual accounting basis. Other tangible capital assets owned by provincial ministries will continue to be accounted for as expenses in the year of acquisition or construction. All capital assets owned by consolidated government organizations are accounted for on a full accrual basis. [TOP](#)

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