



Commission On The Reform of Ontario's Public Services - Highlights

February 15, 2012

Don Drummond Commission

Today, the [Commission of the Reform of Ontario's Public Services](#), chaired by economist Don Drummond released its recommendations examining government services that included identifying:

- Programs that are no longer serving their intended purpose;
- Areas of overlap and duplication that could be eliminated;
- Areas of value in the public sector that could provide a greater return on the investment made by taxpayers.

Don Drummond Commission – Key Recommendations

The *Commission* report includes 362 recommendations. Key recommendations that impact our industry include:

Recommendation 3-1: Do not simply cut costs. The imperative to restrain spending should instead be an opportunity to reform programs and service delivery. Simple cost-cutting can be effective in hitting near-term deficit reduction targets, but it does not encourage longer-run fiscal stability or allow for reforms that will generate more value for money spent.

Recommendation 9-9: Shift the responsibility for all apprenticeship administration to other actors in the sector. Functions related to the administration of apprenticeship classroom training should be given to colleges and union training centres. All other administrative responsibilities for apprenticeships should be transferred to the College of Trades over time.

Recommendation 12-5: Pursue a national transit strategy with the federal government, other provinces and municipalities.

Recommendation 12-6: Engage citizens in an open, public dialogue on how best to create new revenue sources for future transportation capital needs.

Recommendation 18-4: Enhance Ontario's ability to detect and recover revenues from underground economic activity by linking more databases to reported transactions for tax purposes.

Recommendation 18-7: Develop a public awareness campaign on the impact of the underground economy. For example, by using unregistered contractors or contractors who do not issue receipts, there are risks of not obtaining a warranty for repairs, risks of not being able to seek legal remedy for poor workmanship, and risks of liability for injuries or damages that occur on a customer's premises.

Recommendation 18-9: Establish a forum to discuss emerging issues and trends in the underground economy as well as innovations and best practices for addressing them. The forum should include representatives from various ministries, and federal and municipal governments as well as industry associations

What does this mean for the Provincial Budget?

The *Commission* recommendations are sweeping and in some cases controversial. The recommendations are considered as 'advice' and it will be up to the provincial government to make final decisions regarding which to implement. Some recommendations will be rejected, others may be adopted in the upcoming provincial budget or may take a few years to implement.

OHBA Pre-Budget Submission

OHBA has also made recommendations to the Ministry of Finance in the OHBA Pre-Budget Submission (available at www.ohba.ca). Key OHBA recommendations include:

- OHBA supports the *Seniors Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit* to improve accessibility and has recommended that both the provincial and federal governments implement a more broad based permanent tax credit to encourage consumers to utilize legitimate contractors and to create a paper trail to limit underground economic activity
- Over the long-term OHBA believes the HST threshold for the new housing rebate (\$400,000) should be reviewed on a regular basis to reflect inevitable increases in average new home prices.
- OHBA supports targeted core infrastructure investments for roads, transit, water and waste-water facilities that will stimulate economic growth as priority investments.

