



Letters from the LCC President

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In the lead-up to Canada Day 2026, Canadians from coast to coast celebrated a key FIFA win by our national men's soccer team. It was a wonderful moment of elation and joy, combined with more general pride in bringing together players, fans and teams from around the world this summer. Prompted by Canada's confidence as host and participant, this July letter selects and

reflects on some "Canada moments" over recent weeks in the life of the Law Commission.

The first captures an experience of standing up for Canada, the second provides an illustration of acting on behalf of Canada, and the third offers an example of an everyday Canadian encounter.

First, let me share an experience of standing up for Canada in the life and work of the LCC. In early May, the Commission was invited to appear before the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance to present and answer questions on its 2026-27 Main Estimates. "Main Estimates" constitute an integral part of the government's financial cycle: granted the parliamentary authority to spend public funds, federal government departments and agencies are accountable to all Canadians for the planning and implementation of their spending.

This was a serious occasion for the Commission and a true highlight in our existence to date. In our allotted time before the Committee, we took the opportunity to introduce the LCC, its mandate, and its vision to the assembled Senators. We answered a broad range of questions and were delighted to sense keen interest in the programs and potential of our small and energetic agency. This form of accountability and transparency is an important pillar of our democracy and what it means to uphold the rule of law in this country. Thanks to the work of the LCC's financial officers who manage our budget with serious care and responsibility, we were proud to show in this special moment why and how we serve Canadians.

Second, let me turn to an illustration of acting on behalf of Canada. In mid-July, the Law Commission participated in an intensive two-day conference of the Commonwealth Association of Law Reform Agencies. Organized around the theme of "Law Reform in a Changing World" and held in Singapore, this was the 11th meeting of the Association. It was Canada's first-time appearance.



The conference kicked off with a keynote address delivered by Justice Hri Kumar Nair of Singapore's Court of Appeal who noted that 2026 marks the 200th anniversary of the "Second Charter of Justice" and thus of the rule of law in Singapore. Topics addressed in the following sessions included law reform in Southeast Asia and in the Pacific Islands, the functions and forms of regional associations in law reform, the challenges and possibilities for law reform in small jurisdictions and states, and ways to connect law reform, academic research and writing, and legal education.



Participants were treated to singing and storytelling by the Acting Chief Justice and Lord Chancellor of the Kingdom of Tonga; we learned about ambitious programs of reform taken on by Commissions in many countries including Mauritius, the Seychelles and Malawi; and we heard about "seed" and "tree" models for contributing to processes of legislative revision. The Chair of the Kenya Law Reform Commission spoke of the crucial combination of wisdom to identify the need for change and skill to design paths forward. The Institute of Commonwealth Studies described the process of developing a human rights-based approach to decriminalizing poverty and the Tasmania Law Reform Institute, established in 2001, acknowledged the Alberta Law Reform Institute as its model.

Speakers shared their approaches to the teaching of law reform, to the inclusion of students in the work of law reform, to the value of comparative research, and to the importance of travelling far and wide to connect and consult with people keen on sharing their lived experience with law. In the last session, an audience member floated the idea of creating an international law reform appreciation day to underscore the quality and seriousness of law reform work underway around the world! As LCC president, I was honoured to address the group twice – first, to share news from the Canadian network of law reform agencies and, second, to describe the central significance of our country's university scholars in the projects and programs of the Law Commission of Canada.

Third and finally, let me share an everyday Canadian encounter in the form of a much less formal example of the LCC's presence and engagement. In sharing this little story from a Via Rail station, I am inspired by the Chair of the Solomon Islands Law Reform Commission who spoke in Singapore of the importance of visiting small villages to listen to individuals. A delayed train departure – something that many Canadians have experienced – provided a wonderful opportunity for an unplanned conversation connected to law, democracy and hope.

Informed of the late departure and less than enthusiastic about using the time to catch up on email, I struck up a conversation with the Via employee at the gate. He turned out to be someone whose energy and positive spirit nicely outweighed the disappointment (and 1.5 hour wait) caused

by a mechanical problem with the train. After hearing that I was responsible for heading up the Law Commission, he told me he had studied Political Theory at the Master's level and was particularly interested in the potential for ground-up participation in decision-making starting at the municipal level.

At that point in the conversation, one of the LCC's summer research interns – also waiting for the train – joined us. One had recently finished law school, the other had thought about law but decided against that path. The central argument of the Master's thesis in political theory was that democracy sits on thin ice when it is more representative than participatory in nature and function. As conventional democratic institutions fail to live up to their promise, populist movements receive increased support; all of this underscores the need for effective participation in democratic decision-making. Together, we talked about optimism and citizen capacity, drawing on comparative examples. The conversation then moved on to features of Canadian culture: poutine and hockey, hospitality and respect for rule of law all made the list!

The three distinctive Canada moments highlight the potential for meaningful exchange on the part of the LCC. The first was firmly anchored in downtown Ottawa, the second took us overseas to an international gathering, and the third accompanied travel between one place and another within Canada. All combine responsibility, cooperation, and communication – precisely the factors that lead to success on a soccer pitch or in the organization of an international soccer tournament. Beyond Canada Day and FIFA 2026, they provide cause for ongoing celebration and inspiration for continued hard work. Happy continuation of summer!