



## **OMLET Annual Report 2013-2014 – Facts and highlights**

**The “Sunshine Law”** = The open meeting requirements outlined in the *Municipal Act, 2001*

**Number of complaints received – Sept. 1, 2013-Aug. 31, 2014:** 149 – down from last year’s total of 293, but up from the previous year’s 128 (even though that covered a longer period, April 1, 2011 to Aug. 31, 2012)

**Number of complaints within Ombudsman’s jurisdiction:** 89

**Number of councils and local boards complained about:** 40 councils, 2 local boards

**Number of meetings complained about:** 49

**Illegal meetings found:** 11 (22%, up from last year – 19 out of 96, or almost 20%)

**Procedural violations found:** 13

**Best practices recommended:** 31

**Number of municipalities using the Ombudsman as closed meeting investigator between Sept. 1, 2013 and Aug. 31, 2014:** 196 (up from 191 in the past two years)

**Municipalities that switched from another investigator to the Ombudsman between Sept. 1, 2013 and Aug. 31, 2014:** Northern Bruce Peninsula, Madawaska Valley, Owen Sound, Central Frontenac, Mulmur, Schreiber, Brockville, Saugeen Shores, Chatsworth.  
(NOTE: Since Aug. 31, 2014, Brighton, Sudbury and Zorra & Tillsonburg Twp. have also switched to the Ombudsman; Leeds and the Thousand Islands left the Ombudsman in December 2013 but has since switched back.)

**Municipalities that switched from the Ombudsman to another investigator between Sept. 1, 2013 and Aug. 31, 2014:** Tiny and Hanover.

**Time it takes to resolve complaints:** 68% of cases were resolved within one month

**Municipalities with the most complaints:** Bonfield (13), London (9), Elliot Lake (8)

**Municipalities with the most illegal meetings:** Elliot Lake (3), Ryerson Twp. (2)

**Ombudsman's message (pages 5-18):**

- Bill 8 marks “historic turning point” for municipal accountability
- Few local accountability officers appointed since 2008
- Municipal elections brought welcome change
- Ombudsman oversight is nothing to fear
- Sunshine Law still provides inconsistent, “patchwork” oversight
- Penalties should be added to *Municipal Act* for violating open meeting law
- Rules for municipal corporations are too confusing – province should fix

**Municipalities that began making audio or video recordings of closed meetings (as recommended by the Ombudsman) since Sept. 1, 2013:**

- Midland
- Welland
- Adelaide Metcalfe
- McMurrich-Monteith
- Brudenell, Lyndoch & Raglan Twp.
- Brighton

**Common issues in investigations (pages 20-27):**

- **Illegal closed meetings with outside parties, no notice or reason given**  
Elliot Lake, Adelaide Metcalfe, Killarney
- **Complaints apparently driven by ulterior motives**  
London (municipal election), Bonfield (labour dispute)
- **Confusing rules for municipal corporation boards**  
Niagara Central Airport Commission, White Mountain Academy (Elliot Lake)
- **Inadequate public notice**  
Larder Lake, Bluewater, Adelaide Metcalfe, Carleton Place, Owen Sound and Brudenell, Lyndoch & Raglan

**Most commonly misused/misunderstood reason for closing meetings (page 23):**

**Personal matters about an identifiable individual** – Billings, Midland, Owen Sound, Russell Twp.