

## **Mira Knox: Wrap-up**

Hello everyone, my name is Mira Knox, and I am absolutely thrilled to be here and to do the wrap up for all of you today.

Thank you to Robert, all the other conference organizers and steering committee members, panelists, volunteers and our host institution St. Paul's.

I would also like to thank Dr. Stephen Hare who recommended me for this role and whose confidence in me is truly appreciated.

My background is not in ethics. I am a sociologist by training and a recent graduate of Carleton's Master's Program. That is not to say I am not interested in or involved in ethics. In 2016 I started in the Public Service with the Defence Ethics Program, which is where I first read the Tait Report and was exposed to discussions about ethics in the Public Service.

What is clear from all of today's amazingly accomplished speakers is that the issues raised in the Tait Report have occupied the minds of academics and public servants for years, and will likely do so for many years to come.

In an increasingly complex world, with new kinds of relationships amongst diverse peoples, globalizing markets, LGBTQ\* activists, indigenous reconciliation, Me Too movements, and shifting perceptions of truth courtesy of Fox and Friends; ethics is a more valuable tool than ever. Ethics as Ann Fraser stated, allows us to distinguish between right and wrong and then to do something about it.

On that note, I would like to tease out three elements from today's discussions:

1. Andrew Treusch and Mary Dawson mentioned the role of the media and the increasing transparency of the Public Service and how this climate makes our ethical (or unethical) behaviour as Public Servants more visible; and therefore our understanding of ethics and Public Service values, more important.
2. Kent Aitken stated that we are no longer in a slow-moving public context and approaches to ethics based exclusively on rules and compliance are no longer useful. Therefore we need to move to principles-based ethics that allows for flexibility and adaptability in the interpretation and application of public service values, something that the Tait Report recommended (as noted by Roger Scott-Douglas).
3. Finally as highlighted by Ralph Heintzman, the Tait Report missed a discussion of the importance of communications. It is this element I would like to discuss in conclusion.

In my current work at Transport Canada, I no longer deal directly with ethics education and training. I have a communications role.

This role has helped me to see that as Public Servants who are also ethics enthusiasts, our job is to communicate the practical importance of values and ethics

for the work all Public Servants do every day. We need to make ethics real and show people how it is a part of their lives already.

If ethics has become a 15 minute training session at the beginning of a career, then its value as a tool that enables the fearless speaking of truth to power, has been lost.

As a young, millennial Canadian and Public Servant, I see the Public Service as a barometer for truth and objectivity and as an institution that provides stability in a changing world.

Educating Public Servants in Ethics ensures that the institution remains a trusted and valued entity, and that the timeless lessons of the Tait Report are not lost.

Thank you.

### **Robert Czerny: Concluding remarks**

Thank you Mira. In the absence of Anne Scotton, who was to join you in this wrap-up but found herself briefing deputies and ministers all day, I'll add a few more observations.

The Indigenous Policing Bureau of the Ontario Provincial Police loaned us the banner of the Seven Grandfather Teachings that has stood beside our speakers throughout the day. It's significant that the OPP created this Bureau after the Ipperwash Inquiry. Among other things, it provides training to police on Indigenous history and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. From almost no takers ten years ago, that training nowadays is oversubscribed. So things can change after a crisis. We heard about the downsizing crisis and then the Sponsorship Scandal that gave rise to the Tait Report and subsequent measures. Things do change. If serious people who know their principles and values are present and put in the time and effort in dialogue – after all, such developments are not the product of a single mind – then positive growth is possible.

Today's 'tête à Tait' has fulfilled the intentions of the title and logo of the Conference. We looked back to original intentions and insights, assessed present conditions, and looked ahead to emerging challenges. And as the Conference logo suggests, our 'tête à Tait' has proven that *A Strong Foundation* continues to provide footings and underpinnings to a public service for which ethics and values are essential. But not in a static way: rather, as we have undertaken here today, by achieving renewal through dialogue.

After all, the grand enterprise that rests on these foundations is our parliamentary democracy. Always remember that Parliament is a *parlement*; it is not merely a 'votement' where power is exercised without regard for dialogue. Let us continue, through our dialogue, to constantly renew the strong foundations that underpin our parliamentary democracy.