

Final Submissions on behalf of the Native Women's Association Of the Northwest Territories

**To the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous
Women and Girls**

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Honouring

We need to help the women rise up. They know what to do. They know how to heal. Let them create what you need. The mothers have the power to heal their children, to heal their communities.¹

We honour the lives of murdered and missing women, girls and two spirited persons from across all of the Nations within and crossing over the boundaries of Northwest Territories. We honour the resiliency of their children, grandchildren and families. We honour the strength of those who have survived violence or are still surviving violence.

We commit never to cease believing in and working for dignity, respect and equality for all Indigenous women, girls and two spirited persons.

¹ James Norman Jenka, Transcript of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Truth-Gathering Process – Part 1 Public Hearings, Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, Wednesday January 24, 2018, Public Volume 41 at lines 4-7 at p.178.

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Background

The Native Women's Association of the Northwest Territories

1. The Native Women's Association of the Northwest Territories ("NWA NWT") is a non-profit organization dedicated to empower and support Indigenous women and their families across the Northwest Territories. The NWA NWT's guiding principle is that all Indigenous ancestry must be treated with dignity, respect and equality and that benefits and services will be extended to all no matter where one lives and regardless of tribal heritage.

2. The NWA NWT is committed to being the voice of Indigenous women in the Northwest Territories and to building relationships with all levels of government and other organizations to ensure all Indigenous women and their families will live free from social and economic distress; to promote their sacred roles as valued and respected members in the community; and to preserve their culture, language and heritage.

3. Since 2014, the NWA NWT has been involved with the National Inquiry first as a gathering point for families and survivors in advance of the pre-Inquiry meetings. We hosted a pre-Inquiry meeting in the Northwest Territories and provided detailed feedback for the design of the Inquiry. We also partnered with the Government of the Northwest Territories to act as a Family Liaison Unit leading up to and throughout the Inquiry, a role that included hosting the Truth Gathering in Yellowknife in January 2018. We have worked with survivors and families to help them prepare to tell their Truths as part of this national process and continue to work with them to provide support and access to counselling resources.

4. In August 2017 we were granted standing as a party for Parts two and three of the Inquiry. A decision on our application for funding was "deferred" until September 2018. Upon approval, we immediately took steps to participate at the fall combined institutional and expert hearings and to offer final submissions and recommendations.

The Northwest Territories

5. The Northwest Territories is comprised of 33 communities in five regions spread out over 1,346,106 square kilometers from the southern border with Alberta to the Arctic Ocean. There are 11 official languages: Chipewyan, Cree, English, French, Gwich'in, Inuinnaqtun, Inuktitut, Inuvialuktun, North Slavey, South Slavey and Tlicho.

6. There are eight Indigenous regional governments: Akaitcho Dene First Nations, Dehcho First Nations, Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated, Akaitcho Territory Government, Gwich'in Tribal Council, Northwest Territory Metis Nation and Tlicho Government. There are also four community governments: Acho Dene Koe First Nation, Nahannie Butte Dene Band, Kat'odeeche First Nation, and Salt River First Nation. The latter two are the only reserve communities in the Northwest Territories.

7. The three territories fit differently within the federal structure of Canada compared to the provinces. All the provinces are part of the Constitution, which gives them clear areas of legislative authority. In contrast, the NWT is a creature of statute, its legislative authority is defined by a piece of legislation. The territory's legislative authority is more fluid, and can be devolved from the federal government to the territorial government through amendments to the legislation. Additionally, there are several active land claims throughout the territory as well as settled land claims with self-governance agreements.

8. In light of this unique government structure, federal funding flows differently to the three Territories and the Indigenous governments within these geographic borders than it does in the rest of Canada. Federal funding for all government services is determined by a federal funding formula, and it is not broken down between the services being provided. The territorial government can seek separate funding for other initiatives. This means for example, that it is impossible to determine how much funding the federal government is providing the Department of Child and Family Services, despite the fact that the majority of children in care are Indigenous.

Our challenges

9. The Northwest Territories suffers staggering rates of Intimate Partner Violence (“IPV”) and sexual violence against women.

10. As with violent crime overall, the territories consistently have the highest rates of police-reported violence against women in Canada. In 2013, the rate of violence against women was nine times the national average.² In 2014, 75% of victims of reported IPV in the northern territories were Indigenous and 93% suffered “the most severe forms of spousal violence that is having been beaten, choked, threatened with a weapon or sexually assaulted.”³ By 2016, the rate of IPV in the NWT was the second highest in Canada.⁴ The real numbers are in fact far worse as it is widely known that IPV is often unreported, particularly in the smaller communities.⁵ The normalization of violence is prevalent and creates significant risk of allowing the behaviour and expectation of violence to be passed on from generation to generation.⁶

11. The population of the Northwest Territories also have below Canadian average education levels, high rates of poverty, lower employment rates, housing shortages, high rates of addiction and multi-sourced inter-generational trauma. These facts are exacerbated for Indigenous northerners.⁷

12. The concept of “remoteness” was discussed as a challenge throughout the National Inquiry. The NWT fits within this concept, in the sense of geographic isolation from larger centres resulting in reduced capacity for service delivery, limited transportation between communities and a high cost of living. These factors also present particular vulnerabilities and challenges for Indigenous women and girls.⁸

² Statistics Canada, Juristat

³ Moffitt, P., & Fikowski, H. (2017). Northwest Territories Research Project Report for Territorial Stakeholders: Rural and Northern Community Response to Intimate Partner Violence, Faculties of Nursing and Social Work, Aurora College. Tabled Document 17-18(3) Tabled on October 17, 2017 in the NWT Legislative Assembly. at p.7. (Accessed at https://www.assembly.gov.nt.ca/sites/default/files/td_17-183.pdf). Previously submitted pursuant to Rule 33 of The Legal Path: Rules of Respectful Practice.

⁴ See note 3 at 7 citing Statistics Canada.

⁵ Faller, Wuerch et al, “A Web of Disheartenment with Hope on the Horizon: Intimate Partner Violence in Rural and Northern Communities,” *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* I-26. Exhibit 53 Parts 2 & 3 Institutional & Expert / Knowledge-Keeper Hearings St John’s, Newfoundland and Labrador St, John’s, October 15-18 2018 Newfoundland “Sexual Exploitation, Human Trafficking & Sexual Assault” Exhibit 53, Witness: Dr. Moffitt.

⁶ See note 3 at p. 25.

⁷ Paula Arrigada, (released March 2016) “Aboriginal Peoples: Fact Sheet for Northwest Territories,” Social and Aboriginal Statistics Division of Statistics Canada.

⁸ See note 3 at p.18.

13. The NWT also has extreme rates of alcohol use. As of 2013, the NWT had the highest Canadian rate of residents report as heavy drinkers (33%). Alcohol is reported as a major factor in IPV across the Territories and a too-common strategy to cope with historic trauma or ongoing violence.⁹

⁹ See note 3 at p.37.

Our Recommendations

14. The NWA NWT recognizes all of our Indigenous women and girls as sacred. We see the impacts on communities when that truth is lost within our communities. The NWA NWT knows that the life of every woman and every girl matters and can impact her family and community. Our final recommendations reflect the necessity and urgency of a change that is transformative and multi-generational. We reached these broad recommendations after a thorough review of specific issues and services, pulling out threads of problematic thinking that linked each recommendation together.

Immediate Change

15. In reviewing the evidence from the Inquiry and relying on our experience across the Northwest Territories, the NWA NWT *initially* devised over 30 specific recommendations. These recommendations build on successful programs, introduce services that are currently lacking and encourage institutional change through education and training. The complete list is included as Appendix A.

16. We are aware and grateful that NWT-specific work is already underway with our partners in the Territory including the Coalition Against Family Violence. Several of our recommendations are inspired by that ongoing work and the challenges felt keenly in the NWT such as:

- Federal, Provincial and Territorial governments pro-actively support Indigenous communities to establish community-based addictions treatment programs including after-care supports that are adequately resourced and culturally safe.
- Provincial and Territorial governments in collaboration with Indigenous governments establish joint working groups with Elders, grandmothers and youth to develop and deliver public education and community awareness in support of: 1) safe and healthy relationships; 2) warning signs of abuse; 3) warning signs of personal crisis; 4) ending the stigma of victimization; 5) rights of access to access community services.

- Federal, Provincial and Territorial governments pro-actively support Indigenous communities including Elders, grandmothers and other knowledge keepers to establish community-based anti-violence programs for persons who have violence in personal relationships.

17. We have heard throughout the Inquiry that many of the challenges seen in the Northwest Territories are also faced in rural or remote communities across Canada and could also benefit from targeted change to programs and services such as:

- Federal, Provincial and Territorial governments in collaboration with Indigenous governments establish working groups to reduce the high turnover rate in front-line community services.
- Federal, Provincial and Territorial governments in collaboration with Indigenous governments support the establishment of a mobile trauma-recovery team relevant to the local Indigenous community or region and capable of returning to remote communities on a regular basis.
- In all cases where an individual must travel from their home community in order to access any government services, the relevant government should have policies and measures to ensure that the individual is supported while away from their community and given all reasonable accommodation to support a choice to return to their community.

18. Still others among our original list were specifically inspired by our day to day work in victim services and community education and training:

- All provincial and territorial governments responsible for victim services ensure that such services are available to all persons appearing in court, including child protection matters, in a manner that is culturally safe and language appropriate.
- Federal, Provincial, Territorial and Indigenous governments ensure that all projects or programs directed to or for Indigenous women actively involve Indigenous women in the research, development and delivery.
- Federal, Provincial and Territorial governments pro-actively engage Indigenous communities including Elders, grandmothers and other knowledge keepers to 1)

identify traditional forms of restorative justice that remain socially and culturally relevant to the community; 2) propose relevant amendments to laws or policy as may be needed to include relevant aspects of restorative justice in community-based criminal court proceedings; 3) propose steps to increase the use of restorative justice principles and methods in all areas of litigation.

- Federal, Provincial and Territorial governments who engage non-government services providers to deliver a government-funded core community-service ensure that the funding or contribution agreements are multi-year and include a contribution towards core-funding as well as program or service-specific funding.
- That Indigenous Elders who contribute to the development or delivery of community services, including but not limited to counselling, victims' services, social services, or rehabilitative supervision of offenders, be compensated at a level reflective of their role and in keeping with community service delivery standards.

19. It is hopeful to note that in some cases work is already underway towards fulfilling what would be among our proposed recommendations. For example:

- Federal, Provincial and Territorial governments, including law enforcement bodies, pro-actively support Indigenous communities to establish Elders councils and grandmothers' councils with adequate resources, including compensation for participants, to support the development and delivery of cultural safety training for all front line community-service providers, including law enforcement officers and persons working in the justice system.
 - We learned recently that Indigenous health and community wellness division of the Northwest Territories Department of Health and Social Services is beginning full day cultural safety training, noting that it is the “beginning of a conversation” that acknowledges the disparity in health outcomes for Indigenous people.¹⁰

¹⁰ Emily Blake, “Cultural safety training to begin for some N.W.T. health-care workers in December” *CBC News* <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/cultural-safety-training-1.4909787> last updated: November 19, 2018.

- Federal, Provincial and Territorial governments ensure that all front-line service providers delivering government funded community services including but not limited to justice coordinators, victims' services, mental health outreach and mental health counselling have access to adequate emergency or enhanced health care or mental health resources to prevent or alleviate vicarious trauma or trauma triggering events to the service provider staff themselves.
 - While not a formal system, we have learned that individual divisions within the Government of the Northwest Territories can help identify supports to non-government employee front line service providers.

20. The NWA NWT believes that recommendations focused on potentially improving the circumstances facing individual women or, in some cases, communities are valuable. However, we also realized that this approach is unlikely to catalyze the kind of fundamental societal and political change that is desperately needed so that all Indigenous Canadian women, girls and two spirited persons have equal opportunities to live wholesome lives.

21. If society and its political leadership underwent a seismic shift in awareness, understanding, acknowledgment and approach, most if not all of these recommendations would occur organically. For example, having holistic, wrap-around services from entry point to after care for individuals struggling with addictions in response to trauma would be expected if we trust the community to identify and deliver services to their people, trust them enough to fund them and see person-centered outcomes as the measure of success.

22. The unique strengths and challenges of the NWT illuminated the need to think in terms of multi-generational change especially in the context of this National Inquiry which has heard testimony from across the country from a multitude of voices. It was therefore not for any lack of northern-centric need that we changed our approach for our final recommendations but out of a desire to think in terms of multi-generational change across our diverse northern landscape.

Transformational Change

23. The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (“National Inquiry”) is an opportunity to change the way Canadians see and think about Indigenous Canadian women, girls and two-spirit persons. By changing the way people think, it is an opportunity to change relationships and transform how Canadian society governs itself. The NWA NWT believes the National Inquiry should take this opportunity to collect and promulgate specific recommendations targeting individual programs or services but also aspire to something more transformative. The National Inquiry should target the underlying basis on which governments govern, legislate and provide services.

24. The NWA NWT also observes that the myriad inequalities and vulnerabilities that impact Indigenous women at high rates across the North and all of Canada cannot be treated in isolation from one another. Dr. Pertice Moffitt and her collaborators used the imagery of a web to depict how multiple factors intersect to anchor oppression. The web illustrates that even if a recommendation were to successfully target one issue such as unavailable housing, lack of transportation or unavailable childcare, the other strands of the web keep the oppression in place.¹¹ If we acknowledge that our best efforts to date have not dislodged the web, what is needed is a broader vision that looks at the roots where the web is anchored and dismantles these strands with a new vision and a new approach.

Guidance towards Transformational Change

25. The NWA NWT is guided by the overarching principle and vision of the National Inquiry, as stated in the Interim Report, that our women and girls are sacred and that we should build a foundation that allows Indigenous women and girls reclaim their power and place.¹²

26. The NWA NWT is also guided by the approach in the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples:

We realized that the usual strategy - tackling the problems one at a time, independently - is tantamount to putting a band-aid on a broken leg. Instead we propose a comprehensive agenda for change.

We talk at some length about new structures of governance, new strategies for economic development, new kinds of social programs. But at heart, what we want to do is something more radical. It is to bring about change in human lives. It is to ensure that Aboriginal children grow up knowing that they matter - that they

¹¹See note 5 at pp 8-9, 19.

¹² “Our Women and Girls Are Sacred” (2018) Interim Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Girls, p. 3.

are precious human beings deserving love and respect, and that they hold the keys to a future bright with possibilities in a society of equals.¹³

27. Further, the NWA NWT is conscious of the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission towards meaningful reconciliation and in particular the stated guiding principles of truth and reconciliation:

- 1) The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is the framework for reconciliation at all levels and across all sectors of Canadian society.
- 2) First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples, as the original peoples of this country and as self-determining peoples, have Treaty, constitutional, and human rights that must be recognized and respected.
- 3) Reconciliation is a process of healing of relationships that requires public truth sharing, apology, and commemoration that acknowledge and redress past harms.
- 4) Reconciliation requires constructive action on addressing the ongoing legacies of colonialism that have had destructive impacts on Aboriginal peoples' education, cultures and languages, health, child welfare, the administration of justice, and economic opportunities and prosperity.
- 5) Reconciliation must create a more equitable and inclusive society by closing the gaps in social, health, and economic outcomes that exist between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians.
- 6) All Canadians, as Treaty peoples, share responsibility for establishing and maintaining mutually respectful relationships.
- 7) The perspectives and understandings of Aboriginal Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers of the ethics, concepts, and practices of reconciliation are vital to long-term reconciliation.
- 8) Supporting Aboriginal peoples' cultural revitalization and integrating Indigenous knowledge systems, oral histories, laws, protocols, and connections to the land into the reconciliation process are essential.
- 9) Reconciliation requires political will, joint leadership, trust building, accountability, and transparency, as well as a substantial investment of resources.
- 10) Reconciliation requires sustained public education and dialogue, including youth engagement, about the history and legacy of residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal rights, as well as the historical and contemporary contributions of Aboriginal peoples to Canadian society.¹⁴

28. Finally, we make our submissions cognizant of the existing Master List of Previous Recommendations ("Master List") prepared by the MMIWG2S research team that already contains 233 pages of recommendations collected from 98 different inquiries, inquests and reports from across the country. The recommendations found on these 233 pages include both

¹³ Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, <https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100014597/1100100014637#chp4>

¹⁴ Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, "What We Have Learned: Principles of Truth and Reconciliation" <http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Principles%20of%20Truth%20and%20Reconciliation.pdf>

general and highly specific proposals whose creators hope will help make women and girls safer, healthier and better educated. These pages include recommendations targeting racism, colonialism, socio-economic factors and the justice system. They include directives aimed at specific governments or government departments as well as calling for amendments to legislation ranging from the *Indian Act* to the *Canadian Human Rights Act* to band bylaws.

29. In addition, in the course of hearing final submissions, we are confident that the National Inquiry will be in receipt of hundreds of prospective recommendations similarly wide ranging in their scope.

30. The NWA NWT does not endorse each of the individual recommendations that come from across the country, at different times and from diverse perspectives. However, the Master List is an invaluable resource that we hope will be available to leaders, policy makers and advocates across the country so that individuals or individual organizations can be inspired by ideas that work appropriately for their needs. Again while we cannot necessarily endorse the breadth of recommendations you will likely receive, we anticipate that they will be thoughtful and reflect the diverse needs of Indigenous women across Canada. We hope the Master List will be expanded to reflect the recommendations that we anticipate will result from the National Inquiry.

Believing in the Possibility of Transformation

31. When seeking a change to the way society and governments function, there is easily a tension between specific recommendations that can immediately make a positive change to a particular service or program versus sweeping calls for system change that can be talked about philosophically without any actual change ever coming to pass in the delivery of services to real people.

32. That said, we also heard that recommendations proposed by a particular witness are very often not new but indeed may have been not only said before but already formally adopted in one of the reports reviewed in preparation of the Master List. Another question asked repeatedly throughout the National Inquiry was, “what can be done so that these recommendations are actually followed?”

33. As discussed above, we are alive to the likelihood that no one single program, service or government department will provide the fundamental change in social and political thinking that is needed to alter the attitude towards and treatment of Indigenous women, girls and their families across Canada's expansive geography and political landscape.

34. We believe that changes in the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians that were called for in RCAP have begun. We also believe that reconciliation has begun. Like any other relationship, it will need work and will face challenges. We hope that the National Inquiry will be an opportunity to showcase the strength, nurturing power and resiliency of Indigenous women, girls and two spirited persons as we work on these relationships within a spirit of reconciliation.

35. We are inspired by the relationships across the Northwest Territories between and among different Indigenous nations, the consensus-based Territorial government, local municipalities, Federal government and individual citizens.

Our Ultimate Recommendations

36. We propose **four recommendations** directed at all levels of Canadian leadership including the federal, provincial, territorial and indigenous governments:

1. We must acknowledge that violence against Indigenous women and girls including members of the 2SLGBTQ communities is a national crisis that demands an urgent and active response.
2. We must re-establish, build and foster trust between all levels of government, service providers, communities and every one of their citizens.
3. We must ensure that the purpose and objective of all government services is to be community and person centered.
4. We must establish a meaningful entity with accountability to monitor and evaluate the acknowledgement by governments, efforts towards rebuilding trust and establishment of and outcomes from community and person-centered government services.

37. The NWA NWT believes our approach fits with the principles and vision of the National Inquiry including decolonization and respect for Indigenous self-determination. We hope to build upon the resiliency of all indigenous peoples and communities that was emphasized in the testimony of families and survivors as well as by institutional and expert

witnesses and knowledge keepers. Our proposed recommendations attempt to use a strength based approach for shifting our collective consciousness against systemic causes of violence and vulnerability of Indigenous women, girls and two-spirit persons in Canada. Fundamentally, our four recommendations focus on re-building the relationship between all levels of Canadian governments and Indigenous Canadians.

Acknowledgement

38. Changing societal attitudes cannot happen through force. We can be inspired to change through knowledge and understanding.

39. During these hearings, families and survivors testified to the isolation and loneliness of having their experiences silenced, overlooked or misunderstood and the empowerment of having supports and being heard by communities, governments and service providers. After years of inquiries, inquests and recommendations, it is clear that if the crisis is not acknowledged by all levels of governments, including Indigenous governments and communities, there will be no sense of urgency or momentum towards the sustained and systematic response that is necessary to address the issues.

40. The NWA NWT agrees with the recommendation contained in the Interim Report of the National Inquiry that Federal, provincial and territorial governments should publicly acknowledge and condemn violence against Indigenous women girls and 2SLGBTQ peoples.

41. This acknowledgement needs to be far more than an apology¹⁵ and should reflect a meaningful understanding of history, our ongoing challenges and the needs for the future. It should include acknowledging the reality that Canada is not a country of equals.¹⁶ An apology that fails to acknowledge the full reality allows programs to continue being developed or delivered under the false assumption that there are quick fixes to complex problems rooted in Canada's history as a colonial country.¹⁷ Dr. Cindy Blackstock observes that “without understanding, [leadership] continue to replicate the inequality.”¹⁸ Similarly, Dr. Janet Smylie says, “we have to have a renewed relationship.”¹⁹

42. We also believe that the acknowledgement of the crisis facing Indigenous women, girls and two spirit persons can and should be done without shame. Having Canadian leaders

¹⁵ Dr. Cindy Blackstock, Transcript of the National Inquiry into Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women & Girls Truth-Gathering Process – Parts II & III Volume XII “Child and Family Welfare” Winnipeg Manitoba October 3, 2018 at pp.24-45.

¹⁶ See note 15 at p.32 and pp. 77-78.

¹⁷ Ellen Gabriel, Transcript of the National Inquiry into Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women & Girls Truth-Gathering Process – Parts II & III Volume IX Panel V; “Indigenous Rights & Grassroots Activism” Quebec City Quebec September 21, 2018 at lines 21 and 22, at p. 11.

¹⁸ See note 15 at p.25.

¹⁹ Dr. Janet Smylie, National Inquiry into Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women & Girls Truth-Gathering Process – Parts II & III – Volume III “Colonial Violence” Iqaluit Nunavut September 12, 2018 at p.58.

honestly and meaningfully acknowledging the complexity of the crisis empowers all Canadians to work honestly towards meaningful solutions. As said by Ellen Gabriel, “Canadians have to move beyond the guilt and help us progress because we are spinning our wheels in the mud of colonialization.”²⁰

43. Like many other recommendations, the kind of acknowledgement we propose is not new but inspired by work on which this Inquiry is building. As stated by the RCAP:

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples calls for a realistic look at Canadian history and an acknowledgment that government policies built on 150 years of colonialization is was wrong.

Every Canadian will gain if we escape the impasse that breeds confrontation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people across barricades, real or symbolic. But the barricades will not fall until we understand how they were built.

Studying the past tells us who we are and where we came from. It often reveals a cache of secrets that some people are striving to keep hidden and others are striving to tell. In this case, it helps explain how the tensions between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people came to be, and why they are so hard to resolve.²¹

44. Beyond being mere recitation of historical facts, a meaningful acknowledgment requires awareness of false narratives that have robbed all Canadians of their true history. With the nation now focusing the need for acknowledgement and reconciliation on the crisis facing Indigenous women, girls and two spirit persons, this acknowledgment needs to build on a more complete knowledge of Canadian history and contextualize the impact of the false history on Indigenous women. This was already highlighted in the Interim Report:

RCAP found that “the stereotyping and devaluing of Aboriginal women, a combination of racism and sexism, are among the most damaging of attitudes that find expression in Canadian society.” Indigenous women told the Commission that although they had been calling for holistic healing for their children, families, and communities, they were too often excluded from decision-making on these issues. Virtually all of the reports that discuss root causes point to the historical legacies and continuing impacts of colonization on Indigenous communities in Canada.²²

45. The pervasive impacts of false, racist and colonialist history effect all peoples, and ripples through all levels of leadership and government across Canada. The NWA NWT hopes that the steps needed to reach the necessary understanding that will allow for a meaningful acknowledgement will be a positive and powerful show of leadership. The NWA NWT

²⁰ See note 17 at lines 2-5 at p.163.

²¹ See note 13.

²² See note 12 at p.38.

therefore urges that an acknowledgment be sought from every level of Canadian leadership. This includes not only the Federal, provincial and territorial governments but Indigenous governments as well.

Re building Trust

Together, Canadians must do more than just talk about reconciliation; we must learn how to practise reconciliation in our everyday lives—within ourselves and our families, and in our communities, governments, places of worship, schools, and workplaces. To do so constructively, Canadians must remain committed to the ongoing work of establishing and maintaining respectful relationships.²³

35. Acknowledging the ongoing crisis is a first step towards re-establishing broken trust. However, the success of what comes next depends on those with historical power and authority trusting those whose lives are being impacted to be engaged in the design and delivery of change. To do that, respectful relationships must be built aware of the potential power the imbalances from which each party may be starting.

36. As for how to in fact go about establishing and building trust, Dr. Blackstock says the following to existing governments:

For so long, the communities have been told, “no, you can’t have it.” So I think it’s a duty on the government, and in fact, I think its an obligation on the government under UNDRIP, to go out to the communities and say, “not only are we changing the page ourselves, we realize that our previous approach was not the one we should have taken, but we are sincerely interested in this and we would like to do something around either a self-governance approach [if] you’d like to put to us or alternatively, underrate something like the Touchstones of Hope to allow that communal visioning to happen. ... They shouldn’t be waiting in their offices. They need to get out there and really speak to people.”²⁴

37. Witness after witness made it clear that Canadian governments cannot continue to impose an external world view on Indigenous Nations and expect Indigenous people to conform. It has worked only to break down trust not towards the government but within communities. The effect of historic trauma and its impact on trust for government institutions is proposed as a contributing factor for women’s observed hesitancy in access services even when they are in dire need.²⁵

38. In Iqaluit, Elisapi David Aningmiuq quoted, “Not for us without us” to explain the importance of ensuring that those who are supposed to benefit from a program or service be

²³ Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, “Honouring the Truth, Reconciling the Future” *Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada* at p.20.

²⁴ See note 15 at p.82.

²⁵ See note 3 at p 24.

engaged in the design and delivery.²⁶ She points out that local peoples are often best placed to understand what ideas will succeed versus what will be inappropriate.

39. The need to re-establish respectful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canada is not a new recommendation. Some version of this recommendation can be found throughout the Master List. Indeed, a version of this recommendation is already present in the interim report:

any meaningful efforts to address violence against Indigenous women, girls, and LGBTQ2S people must be based on a true partnership between Canadian and Indigenous jurisdictions. This must include Indigenous and non-Indigenous leadership, service providers, advocates, and communities. These reports²⁷ concluded that the solutions to ending this violence must be led by self-determining Indigenous people, communities, and Nations. They recognized that this will require transformational change to the core relationship between Canada and Indigenous Peoples.²⁸

40. The NWA NWT wants the National Inquiry to pursue this vision. We ask that all governments be required to take steps to demonstrate trust in the ability of Indigenous women, girls and two spirit persons to identify ways of healing, strengthening and working towards equality, safety and fulfillment.

41. It is predictable that there could be some fear. That need not undermine the recommendation. As put by Dr. Cindy Blackstock:

...governments are worried we're going to screw up...we might screw up, but we have survived our own mistakes for thousands of years. We may not survive theirs...And it's time for them to learn how to give up control and to understand that it's not going to be chaos on the other side. That we demand much more of ourselves than that.²⁹

Ways of Building Trust

42. A meaningful acknowledgement of the crisis facing Indigenous women is an important start towards re-establishing trust. Efforts to truly understand our diversity as Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians is another.

²⁶ Elisapi Davidee Anigmuiq, Transcript of the National Inquiry into Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women & Girls Truth-Gathering Process – Parts II & III – Volume I “Colonial Violence” Iqaluit Nunavut September 10, 2018 at p.120.

²⁷ See note 12 referencing the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry of Manitoba (1991), the Royal Canadian Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996) and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015) at p. 9.

²⁸ See note 12 at p.38.

²⁹ See note 15 at lines 11-18 at p. 183.

43. Dr. Blackstock developed a road map for governments to rebuild the trust of Indigenous Canadians in the Spirit Bear Plan.³⁰ The plan has five clear steps including the establishment of holistic plans created with First Nations specifying timelines and confirmed investments as well as undergoing a thorough and independent 360 degree evaluation. The evaluation process is designed to identify discriminatory ideologies, policies or practices and address them. The need for a complete and holistic review was explained by Dr. Blackstock, “Unless governments reform themselves in a serious way, not tinkering around the edges, but by actually undertaking an independent evaluation, independent 360 degree evaluation, of themselves to identify and remediate any vestiges of colonial philosophy, policies and practices, they will continue to pile up...”³¹

44. Another example of how this trust can be built is by inviting people with decision making authority to travel and actually be in the places of those about whom they purport to exercise a decision making power. For example, asked how Nishnawbe-Aski Nation was able to create a better awareness on the needs of northern communities when negotiating police services delivery with southern counterparts, the Chair of the Nishnawbe-Aski Police Service Board replied:

one of the things we did was invite the negotiating parties from both Canada and Ontario to come visit in our communities because most negotiation processes take place in an urban setting. The reason to take them up north was to see firsthand what any specific community has to deal with, whether it is a poor facility or even the geographic layout itself. Most people don’t know anything about the North.³²

45. The NWA NWT shares this experience: too often decision makers know too little about the north and the places impacted by the decisions being made. Such efforts show understanding and, thus, build trust.

³⁰ Exhibit 28 “Spirit Bear Plan” National Inquiry into Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women & Girls Truth-Gathering Process – Parts II & III Volume XII “Child and Family Welfare” Winnipeg Manitoba October 3, 2018. Witness: Dr. Cindy Blackstock

³¹ See note 15 at lines 21-25 at p.35.

³² Chair Mike Metatawabin, Transcript of the National Inquiry into missing & Murdered Indigenous Women & Girls Truth-Gathering Process – Parts II & III Volume V September 17, 2018 Quebec City, Quebec Panel I “First Nations Policing, Agreements & Legislation in Ontario” at lines 9-19 at p. 201.

Education

35. Ellen Gabriel describes it as an “injustice” that through our education system, Canadian children are denied historical truth.³³ She calls for decolonialization of the education system so that the next generation of Canadians will have access to knowledge that was denied in the past.³⁴

36. Dr. Blackstock sees education as the way to inspire greater empathy across the Canadian public by showing them the realities of what is happening. She too sees the education system as the path to generational change: “Let’s raise a generation of Indigenous kids who do not accept inequality and non-Indigenous kids who understand that an injustice was done and that it was done to all Canadians.” “If we can raise a generation of First Nations, Metis and Inuit kids who do not accept this inequality and a generation of non-Indigenous children that, no, it is not charity to give First Nations, Metis and Inuit children an opportunity to live the lives they wish to have. But, in fact, that an injustice to those Metis, First Nations and Inuit children is an injustice to all children, then we will have done something for this country, then finally reconciliation will grow.”³⁵

37. Unfortunately, as Dr. Moffitt observed, the recent history of residential schooling left many communities distrustful of schools. Again, we believe this trust must be proactively rebuilt. It must be rebuilt within by education system not only because knowledge and education is central to understanding but because of its practical impacts to reduce vulnerability. As Dr. Moffitt observed, “women need better education so that they can get better jobs so that they can get better housing so that they can care for their children. [T]here is an intersection of all these things.”³⁶ Done in a way that promotes culture and community, Dr. Moffitt sees education as a cascading process that can break the complex web of vulnerability facing too many indigenous women but first people need to trust it.

38. The NWA NWT is delivers adult training programs and sees first hand the impact of a holistic and culturally safe approach to education. Many of those we serve in these

³³ See note 17 at pp. 129-130.

³⁴ See generally note 17.

³⁵ See note 15 at pp.133-134.

³⁶ Dr. Pertice Moffitt National Inquiry into Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women & Girls Truth-Gathering Process – Parts II & III Volume XVI “Sexual Exploitation, Human Trafficking & Sexual Assault” October 16, 2018 St John’s, Newfoundland-and-Labrador p. 101.

programs could not complete training programs in environments where they were seen one dimensionally and not as individuals often recovering from trauma or as single parents with complex child care obligations. We accept our students as they are and where they are and address their learning needs as whole people. Many of our programs have opportunities for students to connect to the learning through Indigenous languages and cultures.

39. We hope a similar approach can be expanded across programs and ages. We see many opportunities to engage with children and youth across the Territories in order to instill and cultivate Indigenous cultural pride and resiliency while also educating non-Indigenous Canadians about the complexity and strength of our full national history.

40. A renewed education curriculum should include input from local Indigenous nations and engagement with local Elders as teachers in the schools. Accurate and improved knowledge about Canadian history can reinvigorate pride in Indigenous peoples for their founding role in this country. It will ensure that Canadians have no misunderstanding about the ongoing existence of colonialism, racism and others factors leading to the deep crisis that faces Indigenous women, girls and two spirit persons. With knowledge we hope that we can collectively rebuild our national trust.

Cultural Safety Training

41. The need for those who run our governments from leaders and managers to policy drafters and services providers to actually understand those who they are purporting to lead, manage and serve was spoken to repeatedly across disciplines during the Inquiry.

42. In Iqaluit, one of the Qikiqtani Truth Commission (“QTC”) representatives, Inukshuk Aksalnik, notes that a number of the recommendations that came out of the Commission emphasize the need for Canadians to understand the negative impacts of imposing programs and policies on Inuit peoples simply because those programs or policies might have had some success in a southern environment. The QTC recommendations also emphasize the need for better understanding of Canada’s significant cultural and environmental.³⁷ The same theme was picked up in Iqaluit by Elisapi David Aningmiuq when she spoke about the need for better

³⁷ Exhibit 8: “QTC Final Report: Achieving Saimaqatiqiingniq,” in *Qikiqtani Truth Commission Thematic Reports and Special Studies 1950-1975 National Inquiry into Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women & Girls Truth-Gathering Process – Parts II & III – Volume III “Colonial Violence”* Iqaluit Nunavut September 10-13, 2018

understanding from all sides about where people come from and the historical traumas experienced and the importance of a safe place, linguistically and culturally, from which people can express and talk about these things.³⁸

43. Having government employees, especially service providers, participate in cultural safety training specific to our diverse Indigenous nations was raised repeatedly by many witnesses as an important recommendation to will build understanding and better relationships.

Inter department Collaboration

44. We see a need to establish and build trust not only between citizens and government but within government services as well.

45. In the Northwest Territories, there is a very high turnover in front line service providers across all disciplines and communities. This makes it difficult to develop trust not only between clients and their service provider but also between different institutional entities.

46. Dr. Moffitt, like many other experts, highlighted the need for agencies to talk to one another. Although such interagency meetings are becoming more common, they are hampered by high turnover rates in many relevant positions in the Territories as well as heavy workloads. According to Dr. Moffitt, this leaves service providers with “no institutional memory” and forces the people receiving services to re-tell their story every time. There needs to be more and better collaboration between service providers but it needs to be institutionalized in a way to compensate for the immediate reality that those attending interagency meetings are likely going to continue to change positions frequently.³⁹

47. The importance of effective institutional-level communication is one of the most important challenges identified by the manager of community justice and policing, Leanne Gardiner, during the Institutional hearings in Calgary:

service provision to victims is best delivered when all of the stakeholders are communicating well, and especially given the small community, the reality that we have in our communities, maybe one victim services

³⁸ See note 26 at p. 83.

³⁹ See note 36 at p.106.

provider and two or three RCMP officers, whenever there's any turnover in any of those positions, that impacts that relationship.⁴⁰

48. Ms. Gardiner talked about the benefits of formalizing cross-institutional relationships so that those relationships are not dependant on individuals but are built and developed between institutions themselves. While that will not completely eliminate the problems for clients, if the institutions are better at coordinating and communicating that this could translate to better continuity for clients even when individual workers change; in turn, this sets a better foundation for trust.

⁴⁰ Leanne Gardiner, the transcript of the National Inquiry Into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Truth-Gathering Process Part II Volume I Institutional Hearings; "Government Services" Monday May 28, 2018 Calgary, Alberta at p.107.

Person and Community Centered Government Services

49. The NWA NWT envisions a system of government services where every person-related service places the wellness of the whole person as the object and purpose of the service rather than focusing on the specific nature of the service itself. This will require seeing clients as complex people often with needs far beyond the specific request being presented and sometimes with families whose needs are intimately intertwined with those of the presenting client. By shifting the purpose of government services at every entry point to being whole-person centered, there can be a better sense of trust from the client knowing their needs will be met and less gaps in between services resulting in more efficiency and better final results.

50. The NWA NWT also recognizes the importance of keeping services community-centered. Community-centered does not necessarily demand decentralization but is an approach that prioritizes the availability of culturally safe and language-specific services within every community. In contrast, too often government services at present tend towards trying to put externally trained professionals into communities with inconsistent cultural and language training. A community-centered priority should encourage consideration of the reverse: rely on cultural and linguistic experts within communities and provide them training to achieve external academic competencies.

Seeing the Whole Person

35. Wrap around or “holistic” services as the best way to achieve the goals of government services was echoed by witnesses throughout the Inquiry. This includes not only a safe intake process to identify a client’s needs but ensuring access to appropriate services to address inter related needs and adequate after care when someone has attended any form of treatment or counselling. It also includes accepting a person or their needs in the state that they are in when they seek support. Jasmine Redfern warns against expecting people to “suffer in dignified ways” and instead being prepared as service providers to adopt the approach that “I am the one providing the service, you are the one that needs the service, I am coming to you ... because you need help, because you want support and you, as you are, deserve that.”⁴¹

⁴¹ Jasmine Redfern, Transcript of the National Inquiry into Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women & Girls Truth-Gathering Process – Parts II & III – Volume IV “Colonial Violence” Iqaluit Nunavut September 13 at p. 156.

36. Dr. Turpel-Lafond highlighted the importance of ensuring that government services are provided in a way that sees the whole person they are serving and not as just one piece of a puzzle. The latter risks wasting stretched social resources. Dr. Turpel-Lafond spoke of both a “continuum of care” and a “care plan” to achieve a goal of person-centered service when providing counselling and addictions treatment.

37. By way of examples, she observes that at times people from remote communities will need to visit a medical facility in a major centre but without a care plan, they risk being released “in downtown Winnipeg and never get home again.” She also observed that supporting the treatment of parents with addictions requires seeing the patient as not only the addict but also the parent but at present, many do not accommodate this entire aspect of the person they are supposed to be serving.

38. In another example, Dr. Turpel-Lafond observed, “poor quality, short term addictions treatment for moms is not working... we need to create a priority that you incentivize and support post-treatment, like at-home supports.” Dr. Turpel-Lafond described work happening through the First Nations Health Authority in British Columbia to establish Indigenous-focused, strength-based, culturally involved addictions services. The clients are seen as “whole individuals,” including their roles as parents. One of the focuses of the approach is to put the client’s child at the centre. As a result, instead of saying, “you have to take care of your child” which, she observes, the parents already know, instead the system’s focus shifts to asking, “how can we work to make sure they have the supports that they will need to be healthy and understand the needs of their child? The focus is very different. It is not on shaming and blaming as much as it is on motivating and supporting.”⁴²

39. Dr. Turpel-Lafond also agrees that a holistic approach will not necessarily require dramatic cash investments, “the question isn’t where is all this new money going to come from? We are actually paying for emergency bad outcomes, so we might as well put some

⁴² Dr. Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond, transcript of the National Inquiry into Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women & Girls Truth-Gathering Process – Parts II & III, Volume XIII : “Child & Family Welfare” Winnipeg Manitoba Thursday October 4, 2018 Panel IV: “A Voice for Children and Youth” at lines 9-16 at p. 199.

money into a healthier space in which women who are parents can be more supported to be parents.”⁴³

40. Encouraging the presence of a person’s full life in government places can be a sign of a healthy community. As observed during the Yellowknife family hearings, “A healthy community has the babies around and the Elders around. It it’s a place for a person, it is a place for a family. How are our children expected to learn if they’re not there to observe the behaviours?”⁴⁴

41. An approach to services that includes the option to look at a person’s needs from the perspective of that person as a member of a family was suggested by Elisapi David Aningmiuq. She points out that the focus on confidentiality as crucial to therapy is not the only way to look at a therapeutic healing approach; a therapeutic system could also be family oriented to include an individual’s circle as part of their healing.⁴⁵ She argues against too narrow a definition of what it means for a person to be in a “program” observing, “My life is not a program, it is my way of life. Our life is not a program. It is the way of life and that has to be recognized.”⁴⁶

42. Dr. Cindy Blackstock also calls for reclaiming a more holistic vision of people and therefore government programs and services. She suggested an example of how to make addictions treatment more community and person centered:

Far too often what was happening in the NWT when I was hearing community members is these community members were being flown out, they would be disconnected from their family and support system and culture. They may address [their addiction] on a short-term basis but then they would go right back to the social context that was arising through the addictions issue and things would lapse back. ... There needs to be a community – and family – based treatment approach that supports everyone to address the causes of addictions.⁴⁷

43. The challenges for people sent “away” for addictions treatment then dropped back into their community without a plan to continue their wellness within the social or family

⁴³ See note 44 at pp. 193-195.

⁴⁴ Geraldine Sharp, transcript of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Truth-Gathering Process – Part 1 Public Hearings, Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, Wednesday January 24, 2018, Public Volume 41 at p. 126.

⁴⁵ See note 26 at p. 93.

⁴⁶ See note 26 at p.95.

⁴⁷ See note 15 at p 86

dynamic they were prior to treatment are immense. The pattern is repeatedly observed.⁴⁸ This conveyor belt is also an example of not seeing the wholeness of a person; namely, an understanding of where they are from, their family and their social reality.

44. If all government services become person-centered, this would improve inter-agency collaboration, effective communication and the efficient resolution of a client's needs because all agencies and departments would have more closely shared goals.

Ensuring Adequate Skill and Training

45. Throughout the National Inquiry we heard repeatedly that Indigenous Nations and communities have the requisite knowledge to support emotional and spiritual healing and wellness. The value of this Traditional Knowledge needs to be acknowledged and used alongside the Western approach to personal wellness. If so, then the insistence on formal academics might give way to a more collaborative and cooperative community-centered service.

46. If, in fact, government services are prioritizing a community-centered approach, then the focus should be on the strength of the community and supports to and working to improve on those strengths; rather than worrying about deficits to the point of insisting on service provision by external "experts." Dr. Smylie addressed what is often a tension between adequate formal training and linguistic and cultural fluency.⁴⁹ A community-centered solution might look at ways those community members with specific skills in community service delivery can be supported in gaining the academic component of more formal training to deliver those services. The current system favours hiring persons from outside the community with the requisite academic credentials assuming they can adequately learn and understand the local language, cultural and social values. However, the evidence of the Inquiry suggests that it may be just as lengthy, difficult and complex to become fluent in local knowledge as is acquiring formal academic skills for someone who has the community language, culture, connections and trust already.

⁴⁸ See note 3 at p.38.

⁴⁹ See note 19 at pp. 55-56.

The Example of Victim Services in the NWT

47. In the Northwest Territories, victim services are offered through a community-based model. The territorial government, supplemented by federal funding, funds eight different community-level organizations to provide services directly to the communities in which they are based. Services are frequently provided in the client's language of choice and by someone with a shared cultural background. Funding is not restricted to the provision of services within the confines of a courtroom.⁵⁰ It is understood and expected that "victim services" may involve not only accompanying a complainant at the RCMP detachment but also to the hospital and to subsequent meetings with the RCMP or Crown prosecutor as well as connecting, sometimes in person, the individual to counselling, housing and legal aid services. Being person-centered, when a person enters government services through a need for victim services they not "released" or handed off until all of their government services needs are met.

48. Some of the success that comes from being community-based is knowing that members of a particular community can best identify the public outreach and public service approaches that work for the people in their community, often in the local language of the community. In short, the community-based model engages local experts in knowing how to best get things done within their community context.⁵¹

49. Flexibility does not mean that the services overall are not hampered by funding challenges: as the division's manager, Ms. Gardner explained that she was only recently able to extend the funding agreements that are in place with the eight sponsoring community organizations from single year to year funding to now two-year funding. She also noted that victim services are not available in every NWT community though there is no evidence that keeping the positions internal to the government rather than community-organization based would be any more successful at recruitment and retention. During cross examination, it was acknowledged that more stable funding would likely make the provision of services more stable as well.

50. The more person-centered service is a shared mandate between service providers, the easier that mandate will be for each provider to fulfill. It is the experience of the NWA

⁵⁰ See note 40 at pp. 86-87.

⁵¹ See note 40 at pp. 96-108.

NWT as one of the community-level providers of victim services in the NWT that the needs of victims are sometimes highly complex and may be technical. It is not uncommon for clients to present with a multitude of needs including not only a need for personal support after a traumatic event but also housing instability, income support applications, child care needs, etc. Clearly some needs are outside the skill or scope of service that we can provide. However, in aiming to provide a person-centered service, we work with clients to support them and ensure that they access the best suited services in the least complex way possible. The more front-line service providers adopt a similar approach; the more clients could have their needs attended to uniformly rather than piece-meal as or only when particular providers are available, leaving clients vulnerable and drawing off other services perhaps unnecessarily. It would make it more streamlined for every entity providing front-line service if we are all be working towards the same ultimate goal: a healthy whole person.

51. Another challenge of having community-based services is the enhanced risk of compassion fatigue to front line workers but this, too, would be better served by more person-centered services overall.⁵² Ms. Gardiner noted the added level of emotional impact that can be felt when a person being helped is from the worker's own community.⁵³ The NWA NWT experiences first hand both the benefits of being community-experts and the impacts of vicarious trauma as front line workers. If all government services were person-centered with holistic outcomes as their object and purpose, the challenges in seeking adequate support for front line workers should be reduced since they, too, would be welcomed in as whole persons with needs relevant to their professions when accessing services themselves.

⁵² See note 3 p. 35.

⁵³ See note 40 at pp.105-106.

Accountability

52. Many experts testified to the importance of leadership accountability as a necessary element for change. No matter which recommendations are accepted or acted on, without accountability there is no ability to ensure that progress is meaningful or effective.

53. Dr. Turpel-LaFond testified to the importance of accountability in order to effect systemic change and ways in which accountability can be encouraged. She noted that any purported shift in political culture must identify a point of leadership within the institution that responsible for each component part of the institutional changes. This point of leadership must have the capacity to conduct detailed reviews and sufficient authority to change the process being used. There must also be clear timeframes and a process through which the entire department or institution can see and understand how the shift is happening and what is going to happen next.⁵⁴ Further, the accountable position of leadership must be expected to report back publically.

54. Besides ensuring accountability within individual institutions that are undergoing systemic change, Dr. Turpel-Lafond points out that when there are many different or overlapping systems all in flux, there must be a point of accountability between those systems. By way of example, Dr. Turpel-Lafond described senior-level meetings among stake holders engaged with child welfare in British Columbia, including the Director of child welfare, the public guardian, ombudsmen and the coroner's office. Each member held the others to be accountable for their role in the system.

55. Effective accountability will require having adequate information including information that allows for comparison overtime. Dr. Pertice Moffitt said, "we need to be able to monitor what's happening and we need research that actually measures solutions that we put in place to see if they're effective."⁵⁵ It is therefore also recommended that sufficient attention be paid towards ongoing data creation and collection.

56. The NWA NWT proposes that Federal, Provincial, Territorial and Indigenous governments should establish a senior level entity mandated to be accountable for monitoring

⁵⁴ See note 42 at pp. 21-22.

⁵⁵ See note 36 at p 110.

and reporting on progress on measures of Indigenous women’s safety, health, education levels and any other socio-economic indicators relevant as measures of their equality, dignity and wellness.

Conclusion

57. The NWA NWT looks forward to a future for our children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews to grow up proud of their Indigenous cultures and confident of their place in Canadian society. In this future, Indigenous women, girls and two spirited persons do not fear receiving dignity, respect and equality comparable to all other Canadians.

58. This is not yet a reality in Canada today.

59. We hope that the National Inquiry will catalogue the wealth of recommendations that already exist to address violence against Indigenous women and girls and to improving the relationship between Indigenous Canadians and all levels of Canadian government. We hope any such catalogue will include the recommendations being heard and presented throughout this Inquiry.

60. Finally, the NWA NWT urges the National Inquiry to take a multi-generational view of systemic change. We are seeking recommendations for change that aspire to transform how Canadians and Canadian institutions understand Indigenous women and girls by acknowledging through understanding the profound crisis we are currently in; committing to rebuilding trust within and between Indigenous women, our communities and government institutions; changing the focus of government services to being person and community centered; and establishing meaningful accountability to report back on the progress that we know must be made.

All of which is respectfully submitted on behalf of the Native Women's Association of the Northwest Territories this 13th day of December, 2018.



Caroline Wawzonek, Counsel

With Amanda Thibodeau and Jessi Casebeer

Appendix I: Recommendations

1. We must acknowledge that violence against Indigenous women and girls including members of the 2SLGBTQ communities is a national crisis that demands an urgent and active response.
2. We must re-establish, build and foster trust between all levels of government, service providers, communities and every one of their citizens.
3. We must ensure that the purpose and objective of all government services is to be community and person centered.
4. We must establish a meaningful entity with accountability to monitor and evaluate the acknowledgement by governments, efforts towards rebuilding trust and establishment of and outcomes from community and person-centered government services.

Appendix II: Additional recommendations that address specific challenges, services or programs

1. Federal, Provincial, Territorial and Indigenous governments ensure that all projects or programs directed to or for Indigenous women actively involve Indigenous women in their research, development and delivery.
2. Federal, Provincial and Territorial governments in collaboration with Indigenous governments establish working groups to reduce the high turnover rate in front-line community services.
3. Provincial and Territorial governments in collaboration with Indigenous governments establish joint working groups with Elders, grandmothers and youth to develop and deliver public education and community awareness in support of: 1) safe and healthy relationships; 2) warning signs of abuse; 3) warning signs of personal crisis; 4) ending the stigma of victimization; and 5) ways to access community services.
4. That Indigenous Elders who contribute to the development or delivery of community services, including but not limited to counselling, victims' services, social services, or rehabilitative supervision of offenders, be compensated at a level reflective of their role.
5. Federal, Provincial and Territorial governments in collaboration with Indigenous governments support the establishment of a mobile trauma-recovery team relevant to the local Indigenous community or region and capable of returning to remote communities on a regular basis.
6. Federal, Provincial and Territorial governments pro-actively support Indigenous communities to establish community-based addictions treatment programs including after-care supports that are adequately resourced and culturally safe.
7. Federal, Provincial and Territorial governments pro-actively support Indigenous communities including Elders, grandmothers and other knowledge keepers to establish community-based anti-violence programs for persons who have violence in personal relationships.
8. Federal, Provincial and Territorial governments pro-actively support Indigenous communities including Elders, grandmothers and other knowledge keepers to establish community-based recovery programs for survivors or witnesses to violence that are trauma informed and culturally safe.

9. In all cases where an individual must travel from their home community in order to access any government services, the relevant government have policies and measures to ensure that the individual is supported while away from their community and given all reasonable accommodation to support a choice to return to their community.
10. Federal, Provincial and Territorial governments who engage non-government services providers to deliver a government-funded core community-service ensure that the funding or contribution agreements are multi-year and include a contribution towards core-funding as well as program or service-specific funding.
11. Federal, Provincial and Territorial governments ensure that all front-line service providers delivering government funding community services have access to adequate emergency or enhanced health or mental health resources to prevent or alleviate vicarious trauma or trauma triggering events to the service provider staff themselves.
12. Federal, Provincial and Territorial governments in collaboration with Indigenous governments and by engaging Privacy Commissioners proactively establish a working group to determine best practices for the sharing of personal information between service agencies when in the best interests of a client.
13. As appropriate to a child's jurisdiction, the Federal, Provincial or Territorial government ensure that where a member of a child's family assumes their full time care instead of the child being apprehended and placed in the child welfare foster system, the caregivers be eligible for financial supports up to an amount that might otherwise be paid to a foster family and will not have other government financial support or benefit removed or reduced by virtue of receiving additional financial supports for the purpose of caring for the child.
14. Federal, Provincial and Territorial governments pro-actively support Indigenous communities including Elders, grandmothers and other knowledge keepers with adequate resources to develop and deliver culturally safe, community-based programs that encourage positive parenting and healthy families.
15. Federal, Provincial and Territorial governments pro-actively engage Indigenous communities including Elders, grandmothers and other knowledge keepers to establish working groups to
 - 1) identify traditional forms of justice that remain socially and culturally relevant to the

community; and 2) propose steps to increase the use of restorative justice principles and methods in all litigation.

16. Federal, Provincial and Territorial governments pro-actively support Indigenous communities including Elders, grandmothers and other knowledge keepers to development community-based programs and contact-points for all offenders.
17. All lawyers serving an indigenous community shall inquire with each client or witness whether she or he would prefer the court proceedings or their testimony to take place in an Indigenous language and, if so, that all efforts be made to accommodate that choice.
18. All provincial and territorial governments responsible for victims services ensure that such services are available to all persons appearing in court, including child protection matters, in a manner that is culturally safe and language appropriate.
19. Federal, Provincial and Territorial governments, including law enforcement bodies, pro-actively support Indigenous communities to establish Elders councils and grandmothers' councils with adequate resources, including compensation for participants, to support the development and delivery of cultural safety training for all front line community-service providers, including law enforcement officers and persons working in the justice system.
20. All persons working within the justice system including judges, lawyers, law enforcement, victim assistance workers, social workers, justice coordinators and relevant front-line support staff receive training on trauma informed justice processes.